



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

Cllr Tim Oliver  
Leader  
Surrey County Council

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**Luke Hall MP**  
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Dear Cllr Oliver

I know in Surrey you have been discussing and are making considerable progress on developing proposals for unitary local government across the county. Such reforms could enable you to better serve your local people and businesses, to address the challenges of today including on housing, climate change, and those arising from the pandemic, and to contribute more effectively to our agenda for levelling up opportunity and prosperity across the country. We in Government are ready to work with you, helping you to achieve your ambitions for reform.

You may be aware that the Secretary of State has now issued formal invitations to councils in Cumbria, Somerset and North Yorkshire, including the associated unitary councils, to submit proposals for unitary local government. Whilst I recognise you have also asked for an invitation, the pandemic has rightly necessitated resources across Whitehall and in local government being re-allocated to tackling Covid-19 and on economic recovery, and this must be Whitehall's and town halls' number one priority at present.

I know this will be disappointing. However, I would value an opportunity now to see how your vision for the future of local government in Surrey is developing and the ideas you have for future unitary structures. If you wish, I would be happy for you to send me the business plan and proposals you are developing including the evidence you have about the level of local support. I will be interested to consider this material, which will help me develop my thinking for the future.

Finally, I would stress this is not a formal invitation kickstarting the process of unitarisation. If and when the Secretary of State were to issue an invitation to Surrey councils, it would then be for each council to decide whether to submit a unitary proposal, and if so what form that should take.

If it would be helpful, I would be happy to discuss with you. I am copying this letter to all local MPs.

Yours sincerely,

**LUKE HALL MP**