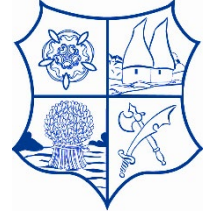


ALTON Town Council



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Town Hall
Market Square
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Hampshire
GU34 1HD

Town Clerk: Tom Horwood

11 January 2026

LGRconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk

Dear Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Re: Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton

I write on behalf of Alton Town Council in response to your consultation on Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

The parish of Alton covers the town of Alton and the village of Holybourne in Hampshire, with direct connections to Basingstoke, Guildford, Southampton, Winchester and London. The parish is one of Hampshire's largest and expected to grow rapidly in the coming years.

Alton TC welcomes the government's intention that reorganisation should "rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal local authorities, [and] strengthen expectations on engagement and community voice." But we are concerned that structural reorganisation into larger unitary councils will reduce the voice of the community in public services and make government more remote. As the most local tier of government, parish/town councils should be closely involved in creating new structures, particularly on community engagement and empowerment. We would ask that the principles of local democratic mandate and strong community voice are embedded within the policies, processes and culture of our new unitary council from the start.

The government white paper refers to "Neighbourhood Area Committees". If these were designed to include areas of tens of thousands of people, as some discussions have indicated, it would be hard to recognise them as genuine "neighbourhoods". We would be concerned if they were to become parallel structures without clarity on their responsibilities, governance and resources. If they were "talking shops", an important opportunity would have been missed.

By contrast, local councils such as Alton have a clear statutory and democratic mandate to advocate for their communities and provide services. The town/parish councils, where they exist, could be the building block of future neighbourhood engagement.

The published proposals differ on the number of new unitary councils and their geographical boundaries. Alton TC does not take a position on these. At its meeting on 10 December 2025, Alton TC resolved that I respond to your consultation and make clear that the response excludes Councillor Kellermann.

Yours faithfully

Tom Horwood
Town Clerk, Alton TC

Cc: East Hampshire Association of Parish & Town Councils,
Hampshire Association of Local Councils,
National Association of Local Councils