



**Bob Neill MP**  
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Dear Leader

### **Local Government Restructuring in Norfolk**

I am writing to let you know that the Queen's Speech today announced that the Government will introduce a Bill to stop the restructuring of councils in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Devon.

The proposed legislation will revoke the Orders that create from 1 April 2011 unitary councils for the cities of Exeter and Norwich, and will also have the effect that the unitary proposals for Suffolk remaining on the table cannot be implemented. The Bill will also provide that where any councillor's term of office has been extended by one year to May 2011 by the Orders being revoked, that extension will continue; thereafter each City Council will return to its usual pattern of elections for one third of the council annually. This avoids by-elections on the revocation of the Orders with the associated costs that would arise.

We want to move very quickly, so that councils can have the certainty they need as soon as possible. Our intention is to introduce the Bill this week, and subject to the will of Parliament, to seek its enactment by the summer. Meanwhile we would not expect councils to take any further steps or incur expenditure on taking forward plans to implement unitary structures.

Stopping this restructuring represents good value for money and will avoid fragmenting and potentially damaging major services, such as children's services, across the county. We are also clear that without restructuring it is just as possible for Norwich City Council to achieve their vision for the City, and to do so in a way that genuinely benefits communities both in the City and across the wider county. The key will be sensible co-operation and effective collaborative partnership working between all councils and their partners across the county area. I am confident of your and your colleague Council Leaders' commitment to this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Neill", written in a cursive style.

**BOB NEILL MP**