

Report to: **District Council of Easington**

Date: **4<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

Report of: **Chief Executive**

Subject: **Government Consultation Paper 'Councils' Proposals for Unitary Local Government: An Approach to Implementation'**

## 1 **Purpose of the Report**

To seek endorsement of the actions of the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, in responding to the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) consultation document, Councils' Proposals for Unitary Local Government: An Approach to Implementation.

## 2 **Consultation**

The response has been formulated as a joint response of the Durham District Forum, and, hence, represents the views of all 7 District Councils. Awareness of the issues considered in the CLG Paper has been raised in correspondence with stakeholders across the County.

Informal discussions and briefings have been held with members, Management Team and Heads of Service.

## 3 **Background**

Following the announcement on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2007 of the Secretary of State's decision on proposals to implement unitary local government in 9 areas of the country, including County Durham, CLG issued a consultation paper which proposed an approach to implementation in affected areas.

The paper sets out, as the basis for dialogue with affected councils, the Government's current intentions as to the approach to be adopted, and seeks views on certain specific issues. The deadline for responses was 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

Members will recall that at Council on 6<sup>th</sup> September I was given delegated authority to submit the response of this Council, in full consultation with the Leader. In addition to considering the paper itself, the Leader, Deputy Leader and I have been heavily engaged in discussions with officials of CLG and Government Office North East.

## 4 **Position Statement**

The Durham District Councils have agreed a joint response, which accompanies this report, and deals with issues which include:-

- Method of Implementation
- Political Representation and Joint Committees
- Elections
- Cooperation and Continuity
- Staffing Issues

- Financial Issues
- Ceremonial Arrangements

## 5 **Implications**

### (i) **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### (ii) **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### (iii) **Policy Implications**

There are no policy implications arising from this report.

### (iv) **Risk**

The report is primarily for information and there are no material risks in the recommendation.

### (v) **Communications**

A Communications Plan is in place in respect of the Local Government Review.

### (vi) **Corporate**

None

### (vii) **Procurement**

None

### (viii) **Equality and Diversity/Social Inclusion**

None

## **Recommendation**

That Council endorses the actions of the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, in agreeing and submitting the accompanying response to the Government consultation paper.

## **Background Papers**

Councils' Proposals for Unitary Local Government : An Approach to Implementation – Department for Communities and Local Government, August 2007