

Governance Reform and Democracy
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
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please reply to:

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roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk

2021-04-19

Dear Sir / Madam,

Unitarisation for Cumbria, Somerset, North Yorkshire

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passengers and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities.

We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in transport and development planning.

We offer the following brief comments only on the principle of single-tier local government, not on any of the specific proposals in any of the three areas currently under consideration.

We support the principle of single-tier local government as in our experience it provides a better basis for the vitally-necessary integration of transport and development planning policies and practice under a single unified management and leadership structure. Objectives which are aligned within and owned by a single governance framework are in our judgement most likely to produce the best outcomes for spatial planning and place-making.

The advent of sub-national transport bodies in recent years we believe further strengthens the case for fewer local authorities in two-tier local government structures. On balance, we believe that unitary authorities have a better chance of reflecting the economic geography of their areas, and of taking a more strategic view of both the public and the private sectors' policies and key decisions on the locations of investment in economic development and in the transport infrastructure which is essential to support it.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Blake BA, MRTPI (Rtd), MTPS
Railfuture
Director for Infrastructure & Networks, national Board

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