

**Gregory, Eleanor**

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**From:** Gregory, Eleanor  
**Sent:** 19 November 2010 16:12  
**To:** Morrison, William  
**Subject:** FW: Buckinghamshire review of county councilors.

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**From:** Hugh McCarthy [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 18 November 2010 17:15  
**To:** Reviews@  
**Subject:** Buckinghamshire review of county councilors.

For the attention of William Morrison Esq.

Dear Sir.

Following receipt of your recent letter to Parish councils I wish to put before you some comments and observations that may be relevant to your forthcoming review.

I am an elected District and Parish councillor for many years standing and have wide experience of local government at cabinet level in several portfolios serving Wycombe District Council and Hughenden Parish council. This has provided an insight as to the effectiveness of county council elected representatives and their relationship with local government.

The new Localism Bill and the "big society" agenda's focus the disadvantage of top tier councillors failing to engage with local matters where the element of localism conflicts with the county councillors view or opinion. This is especially important and very evident where so called "twin hatters" serve at a senior or cabinet level where conflict of opinions can degrade the local input. It also can have a big impact on key local issues such as education and employment, and traffic management issues.

As a locally elected councillor, I refused on principle to stand for a county seat because of the conflict that I felt could invalidate my electorate's best interests. I feel that county councillors do not engage with their local electorate adequately and sometimes consider themselves above the lower tier authorities.

Therefore in these financially challenging times it is my view that a significant reduction in top tier members would not result in a diminution of democracy. This would seem to fit well with the current government's intention to both reduce the impact and cost of county authorities and increase the responsibility of the lower tier authority.

I offer these views without prejudice in the hope that they may help the commission's thinking and outcome.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Hugh McCarthy.