

Gateshead

Personal Details:

Name: Mrs Brenda Clelland
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Organisation Name: (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Number of elected members

I've previously submitted sine views but wanted to add to that submission.

Bring a councillor, a local representative of a community, is so much more than just attending meetings. That's particularly true of Gateshead which has huge pockets of social and economic deprivation, ironically paired with some of the lowest voter turnout. Being a local councillor - and it's a shameful thing to have to say in 2023 - is about supporting the local foodbank (actually we call it a pop up shop to avoid embarrassment, but the end product is the same - families, hard-pressed by an ever increasing cost of living crisis, are dependant on food handouts. And these are working people, but stuck on low wages. It's also about actively supporting the local community centre - because it offers the opportunities to combat social isolation and help people to live healthier, happier, more informed lives. It's about actively supporting a local youth group - because it offers a positive alternative to young people who would otherwise become engaged in anti-social behaviour, alcohol or drug abuse.

I'd said, in my previous submission, that a reduction in the number of Gateshead's councillors would mean that the remaining councillors would have to attend more meetings and I thought that would jeopardise effective governance and the scrutiny of cabinet decisions. But the other consequence of a reduction in the number of councillors is that the remaining councillors would be unable to effectively support the myriad voluntary and community bodies which - thanks to the effective dismantling of the councils support network by the financial squeeze of central government - are absolutely necessary to community cohesion

Attached Documents:

None attached