

Tony Sutton
Chair of Rugby Liberal Democrats
Rugby

Alison McGovern MP
Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Alison McGovern,

Rugby Liberal Democrats are in a supply and confidence arrangement with the Labour Group on Rugby Borough Council and work to provide stability and effective leadership for the Borough. That agreement is based on mutual respect and a shared commitment to acting in the best interests of local residents. Both parties recognise that it would be legitimate to hold differing perspectives, if we do, while continuing to work constructively together.

Accordingly the leader of the Labour group has passed us a copy of your letter to give us an opportunity to set out our views on the possible postponement of our local election in May. I would like to thank you for this opportunity.

The Rugby Borough Council constitution is clear that the Cabinet has the responsibility for ensuring resources are available. Any discussion around the timing of elections must be guided by the law, transparency, and a shared respect for democratic principles, with the voices and interests of Rugby residents at the centre of decision-making.

The Rugby Liberal Democrat Executive Committee and Councillors have carefully considered the pros and cons. We acknowledge that there is much to be done, including consideration of the possible formation of a Rugby Town Council and the role of over 40 parish councils. The residents will need to be consulted and the areas of responsibility and budget need to be agreed. The Borough has assets including of land, property and artwork and the ownership of these need to be agreed. They may need to be placed in a trust for the benefit of residents.

We also share the concerns expressed by Liberal Democrat Leader Sir Ed Davey that cancelling scheduled elections risks setting a troubling precedent. As he has stated, postponing elections should be an "*exceptional last resort*", not a matter of administrative convenience. The national party has initiated a petition to the Government to that effect.

We have urged residents to sign the petition because ultimately it is a Government decision and we believe that any decision to postpone should only be taken in the interests of national democracy.

We are grateful for your consideration of our views and hope that you are able to determine this matter as soon as possible to resolve uncertainty and possible wasted and misdirected effort.

Yours sincerely

Tony Sutton

Chair Rugby Liberal Democrats

