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### **Learn from the lessons of Keighley, Hopkins tells Parliamentarians**

The mistake of submerging towns like Keighley into much larger local government areas should not be repeated, Cllr Kris Hopkins has told a meeting of MPs and peers in the House of Commons.

The Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Keighley and Ilkley said that the 1974 decision to remove Keighley's status as an independent borough had led to local people feeling "an inevitable loss of clear identity and democratic accountability."

Addressing the influential All Party Parliamentary Group on Community Governance, Cllr Hopkins explained that key decisions affecting the lives of Keighley residents were now taken in Bradford City Hall, "and whilst I believe the majority of decisions in recent times have been the right ones, the people of Keighley have often felt very distant from the process itself."

He argued that the Government should quickly abandon current plans to replace "renowned boroughs and districts with proud histories such as Craven, Harrogate and Hambleton – that are rightly loathe to relinquish their independence – with considerably larger super-councils sited much further away."

And he added: "The great strength of local government is that it is or should be 'local' to the residents it serves. The Government's proposals, particularly in North Yorkshire, will largely destroy this special link."

Cllr Hopkins also warned the MPs and peers in attendance of the dangers posed by the recent electoral successes of the BNP in West Yorkshire and elsewhere.

"These people do not stand for election because they want to make lives better for local residents," he said. "They do so because they want to divide people, spread bitterness, cultivate hatred and destroy lives. I am determined that they will not succeed and intend to continue challenging them at every turn and every opportunity."

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