

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 25 November 2025.

PRESENT

Mr. D. Harrison CC (in the Chair)

Mr. C. Abbott CC
Mr. K. Crook CC
Mr. H. Fowler CC
Mr. C. Pugsley CC

Mr. V. Richichi CC
Mr. M. Squires CC
Mr. A. Tilbury CC

In attendance

Mr. J. Boam CC, Mr. A. Innes CC and Mrs. D. Taylor CC

71. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

72. Declarations of interest.

Mr. C. Abbott CC, Mr. K. Crook CC, Mr. H. Fowler CC, Mr. D. Harrison CC, Mr. C. Pugsley CC, Mr. V. Richichi CC, Mr. M. Squires CC and Mr. A. Tilbury CC declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 3 – Local Government Reorganisation: Business Case – as elected members of Leicestershire County Council.

73. Local Government Reorganisation: Business Case.

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance which presented the County Council's business case for local government reorganisation (LGR) in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for approval. Copies of the report and supplementary report, both marked 'Agenda Item 3', are filed with these minutes.

The draft business case had been considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10 November 2025 and by the County Council at its meeting on 12 November. A summary of the comments made by the Scrutiny Commission and the responses is attached to the report, filed with these minutes.

Mr. D. Harrison CC, as Leader of the Council, gave thanks to the officers who had worked to ensure the proposal was finalised for approval, and to the Scrutiny Commission, which had helped to shape the final proposals. Mr. Harrison CC stated that the business case represented a robust plan to streamline local government, eliminate duplication and deliver ongoing savings, which would help to maximise efficiency, strengthen financial sustainability and ensure that more resources were directed to frontline services. Mr. Harrison CC also stressed that the financial modelling had been independently verified and there had been a range of engagement with stakeholders and he believed that the business case would deliver for the residents of Leicestershire and Rutland.

Mr. H. Fowler CC reiterated that the Council's proposal to the Government was the only one to have been independently verified. He stated that it was the only proposal which demonstrated long term sustainability and which did not require further borrowing and increases to service costs. Mr. Fowler CC indicated that creating a single unitary council for Leicestershire and Rutland was the right option for local communities and would ensure that the counties retained their identities. He also said that the proposal would save over £40m, reduce duplication, cut back office costs and streamline leadership. It would ensure that countywide services remained intact and strengthen financial stability.

Mr. C. Pugsley CC, as Lead Member for Children and Family Services, felt that the business case presented more effective support for children's services, along with a greater working relationship with Health.

Mr. C. Abbott CC stated that there would be more accessible, community based services for residents and integration across services. He felt that there would be clearer accountability and a reduction in duplication.

Mr. V. Richici CC highlighted the role played by the Trading Standards Service in communities in protecting vulnerable residents. He stated that the Leicestershire Trading Standards Service was high performing and it was important to acknowledge what could be lost if the service became fragmented. It was also problematic for smaller councils to recruit specialist staff. He felt that a single unitary council would enable trading standards, environmental health and licensing to collaborate better for the benefit of residents and businesses.

Members agreed that the proposal for a single unitary council for Leicestershire and Rutland was the only viable option; it respected the message from residents, reduced duplication and would help to strengthen financial stability. By simplifying structures, it would ensure that the new council was fit for the future.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the business case for submission to the Government by the deadline of 28 November 2025 be approved;
- b) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader, the Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance, be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the business case before it is submitted to the Government provided that these do not change the underlying principles of the business case as presented in the report;
- c) That the response to the feedback from the Scrutiny Commission be noted.

(KEY DECISION)

REASON FOR DECISION:

The letter received from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution on 5 February set out the formal invitation to all local authorities in remaining two-tier areas and neighbouring unitary authorities to develop a proposal for Local Government Reorganisation and required final proposals to be submitted to the Government by 28 November 2025.

74. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

There were no items referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

2.00 - 2.22 pm
25 November 2025

CHAIRMAN