

APPENDIX B**RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

Comment	Response
Options appraisal is cluttered – suggest reducing the number of options being considered.	Number of options reduced to six – County Interim Plan option and the option with the city boundaries expanding to include Oadby and Wigston and Blaby.
Options appraisal – reconsider the appraisal of the three unitary option.	The Administration supports the current appraisal of the three unitary option.
Emphasise more strongly the point about not changing administrative boundaries that do have a direct link to service improvement. Also strengthen point about the delay boundary changes could cause.	Point has been amended in case for change to give it more emphasis. The delay caused by complex boundary changes has been referenced in the section on unlocking devolution as well.
Make the document more visually appealing.	The County Council's design team have worked on the document.
Ensure the business case doesn't read as an LCC takeover.	Changed 'will' to 'would' when talking about the new unitary authority. The executive summary, case for change and introduction to core proposal have all been amended to clarify that this proposal is not a continuation or expansion of the County Council. All current councils will cease to exist and a new organisation will be established with its own leadership, constitution and identity which will bring together the best of all councils to deliver improved, joined up services for every resident. A disclaimer has been added to the introduction to the core proposal that the proposals in this business case are subject to decisions made by the new unitary authority.
Add detail of how planning decisions will be taken.	The following has been included.

	<p>Planning governance could largely be local, with area planning committees handling the majority of applications, except those with a significant impact on the wider new unitary authority area, which should be considered by a central committee. The central committee would have the experience of dealing with larger applications, including developer contributions.</p> <p>Planning policy, set out in Local Plans, will continue to be based on district geographies until such time as a single Local Plan for the area is developed. Once a Strategic Mayoral Authority has been established, it will prepare a Spatial Development Strategy to guide land use and development across LLR. At this stage, planning governance would need to be reviewed.</p> <p>The unitary authority would also be required to have a licensing committee and it is suggested that, given the likely volume of work, area licensing subcommittees could be set up. These would meet in the relevant local area and determine licensing applications that have been delegated by the main licensing committee.</p>
Include a table on the gross expenditure and staffing of all authorities across LLR as an appendix.	A table setting out net expenditure for the County Council, district councils and Rutland Council has been included - district councils and Rutland all receive a housing benefit subsidy which inflates gross figures. It has also been clarified that the County Council employs 75% of local government staff across Leicestershire and Rutland.
Strengthen the acknowledgement/respect that this is not a Leicestershire takeover of Rutland.	The introduction to the core proposal has been amended to clarify this point.
Include reference to single member wards.	This amendment has been made, explaining that member workload will not necessarily increase as there are more councillors for county council services than is currently the case. Members will also benefit from dealing with less confusion from residents and from the join up between district and county services.

<p>Give a sense of area committee boundaries.</p>	<p>Added the following along with an illustrative map:</p> <p>However, for the purposes of illustration, a model of Area Committees based on parliamentary constituency boundaries has been developed. This model has been successfully implemented in the North Yorkshire Unitary Council. The rationale for this is that it would reflect a scale at which local decision-making, joint working and support to local priorities would be effective and would be cost-effectively supported. There would be eight area committees, each would have 10 to 12 unitary councillors, ensuring members' workload remains manageable.</p>
<p>Acknowledge that, whilst Rutland CC may look elsewhere, we believe Leicestershire is the best fit.</p>	<p>Added in the options appraisal for the preferred option:</p> <p>While Rutland may consider alternative options for local government reorganisation, the County Council's analysis demonstrates that Leicestershire offers the best strategic fit. The proposal for a single unitary council for Leicestershire and Rutland is not only the most financial sustainable, but also provides the greatest resilience and breadth of services for Rutland's residents. It respects Rutland's unique identity and ensures dedicated representation, while unlocking access to high quality services and economies of scale that would not be achievable in smaller or fragmented arrangements. This partnership is the optimal solution for both areas, delivering joined up services, stronger community engagement and a viable future for local government.</p>
<p>Be clearer that there is no political support for City expansion.</p>	<p>Amendment made in the conclusion to the Executive Summary on page 9 and the conclusion at the end of the document.</p>
<p>Ask for the ability to take City expansion to a referendum if that</p>	<p>Amendment made in the conclusion to the executive summary and in the conclusion.</p>

is the option that the Government is minded to implement.	
Strengthen information on what Parish Councils could take on, clarify that it is up to them and add reference to the existing quality standard.	Amendment made in the section on parish councils.
Make the reference to keeping district council offices as service points more prominent.	Finance Section states that existing council buildings and operational depots can be retained without complex negotiations over ownership or disposal, ensuring continuity for frontline services
Consider including the Annual Delivery report as an appendix.	A two page summary has been incorporated into the section on high quality and sustainable public services.
Include evidence of confusion felt by the public over which council to contact.	Included at the start of the section on high quality and sustainable public services.
Population growth over next decade	<p>The context and case for change has been amended to confirm that the population of Leicestershire and Rutland is projected to grow from 764,000 in 2022 to 858,000 in 2035, an increase of 12%. The population of Leicester is projected to grow from 372,000 to 396,000 over the same period, an increase of 6%.</p> <p>A section on strategic land use states that approximately 12,500 hectares of developable land across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. It clarifies that the areas of developable land will remain the same regardless of administrative boundary and that ultimately responsibility for strategic planning and investment will transfer to a Strategic Mayoral Authority. However, in the meantime the establishment of two unitary authorities will streamline planning and ensure the most strategic and effective delivery of housing, employment sites, and essential infrastructure</p>