

**CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026****LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION: RESPONSE TO
CONSULTATION****SUPPLEMENTARY EXEMPT JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF
EXECUTIVE AND THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the County Council's response to the Government consultation on local government reorganisation (LGR) in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The responses are attached as Appendices to the report.

Recommendations

2. The Cabinet is recommended to:
 - (a) Approve the consultation response for submission to the Government by the deadline of 26 March 2026, as set out in Appendices A-C;
 - (b) Approve the consultation response ratings for submission to the Government by the deadline of 26 March 2026, as set out in Appendices D;
 - (c) Authorise the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader and the Director of Corporate Resources, to make any necessary amendments to the consultation response before it is submitted to the Government provided that these do not change the underlying principles of the response as presented in this report.
 - (d) Note the comments from the Scrutiny Commission.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The Government is undertaking consultation on the proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for 7 weeks between 5 February and 26 March 2026. The County Council is a statutory consultee.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. The Scrutiny Commission received a presentation which provided an outline of the consultation response at its meeting on 18 March. The Commission's comments are set out in paragraphs 12-22 of this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. These have previously been set out in the main report.

Resource Implications

6. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation in this report.
7. Work completed to date on LGR has primarily been delivered using internal resources. Where external support has been required this has been paid for from the Government's Local Government Reorganisation Proposal Development Contributions grant, the main expenditure has been the financial modelling.
8. LGR will be a significant undertaking that will have a material impact on the Council's financial position in future years. The costs and benefits will be heavily dependent upon the option chosen by Government, with this decision expected before the summer recess of parliament. Regardless of which option is chosen a significant investment will be required before the new authority (s) come into existence, to support this £10 million was allocated as part of the MTFs approved in February 2026.
9. The council will need to continue the process of preparing for re-organisation, working alongside other local authorities in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. This work has begun and will continue in the intervening weeks and subsequent to the government decision in the summer. The Council will need to ensure that it has resource to co-ordinate activity and input into this joint work.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

10. This report has been circulated to all members of the Council.

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PART B

Background

11. The Government is undertaking a consultation on the proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland for 7 weeks between 5 February and 26 March 2026. The County Council is a statutory consultee.

Scrutiny Commission

12. The Scrutiny Commission received a presentation which provided an outline of the consultation response at its meeting on 18 March 2026. Arising from the discussion, the following key points were made:
13. Members stressed the importance of preserving the distinct civic and historic identities of the County and Rutland. The County Council's single unitary proposal commits to honouring this heritage; alternative north/south proposals risk diluting it.
14. Concerns were raised that current language implies a "County Council takeover," which could mislead the public. The Commission requested more neutral, professional wording, avoiding political or emotive phrasing, suggesting responses should be evidence-based and clearly explain the strengths of the single unitary model and risks of alternatives.
15. A benefit of the County's proposal related to how planning would operate. Emphasising that a north/south unitary option would centralise planning and reduce local democratic input, whilst the County Council's single unitary proposal intends to keep local engagement through area planning bodies. It was suggested that the concerns raised about reducing this under the north/south model also applied to the City Council's bid.
16. LGR would strengthen spatial planning and allow consistent policy-making across the county. A single unitary could also integrate housing, infrastructure, and service decision-making more effectively. Unifying housing land supply would support balanced decisions across housing, roads, schools, and community facilities.
17. There was concern that the City Council's proposal appears driven by land acquisition for housing and residents concerns in affected areas who fear diminished service quality if moved into the City were emphasised.
18. It was suggested that the City Council's proposal lacks detail on managing parished areas despite having no current experience of administering them.
19. Whilst it was accepted that boundary reviews are inevitable this would vary in complexity with a single unitary requiring minor adjustments, and no need for changes before 2027 elections. The commission suggested that the Council's

response should emphasise the boundary risks of alternative models; notably the north/south split or City expansion would be more complex, lengthy, and costly.

20. Public concerns about large authorities feeling remote was highlighted but it was acknowledged that this would apply to any LGR model. It was felt that clarification was needed on population figures and their implications, but the Commission noted that a single unitary population size falls within the Boundary Commission's guidance.
21. High costs of disaggregating services were noted.
22. There was strong support for a unified model due to opportunities to improve adult and children's services through integrated housing and related services.

Equality Implications

23. Due to the complexity and scope of the proposal and possible wide scale impact of the changes proposed the Council will adopt a strategic approach to conducting Equality Impact Assessments during all programme phases and stages.

Human Rights Implications

24. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

These have previously been set out in the main report.

Appendices

A – Leicestershire County Council – Consultation Response

B – Consultation on the Proposal from Blaby District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Melton Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, and Rutland Council – Leicestershire County Council Consultation Response

C – Leicester City Council Proposal – Consultation Response

D – Consultation ratings