

Guildhall Gainsborough

Lincolnshire DN21 2NA

Tel: 01427 676676 Fax: 01427 675170

**This meeting will be webcast and published on the Council's website**

## AGENDA

Prayers will be conducted prior to the start of the meeting.

Members are welcome to attend.

**Notice** is hereby given that a meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA, , on **Monday, 7th July, 2025 at 7.00 pm**, and your attendance at such meeting is hereby requested to transact the following business.

**To: Members of West Lindsey District Council**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Full Council held on 12 May 2025.

**(TO FOLLOW)**

3. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members may make any declarations of interest at this point and may also make them at any point during the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Setting out the current position of previously agreed actions as at 27 June 2025.

**(PAGES 5 - 7)**

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- i) Chairman of Council
- ii) Leader of the Council
- iii) Head of Paid Service

**(VERBAL REPORT)**

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Questions, if received, under this Scheme will be published by way of supplement following closure of the deadline.

**(TO FOLLOW)**

7. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

Questions, if received, under this Scheme will be published by way of supplement following closure of the deadline.

**(TO FOLLOW)**

8. MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

**Motion 1 – The Council resolves to remove Cllr Trevor Young as Leader of the Council**

Council at its meeting on 12th May 2025 resolved to appoint Cllr Trevor Young as Leader of Council for the civic year, Minute 6 refers.

Since that time, I believe that Cllr Young has lost significant support from the Liberal Democrat Administration, Article 6.3 (c) of our Constitution states, the Leader of the Council will:

“be the lead member for matters regarding the priorities and aims of the administration and its political manifesto”

As Cllr Young has unfortunately, I believe, lost the support of his Group, he can longer, in my view, fulfil this function of the Constitution. Therefore, in the interests of the Council and its need for clear and concise leadership, and in concordance with the spirit of the Constitution, acknowledging Council Procedure Rule 13 – the required 10 signatories have been received to seek Council support to rescind that decision.

As such Council resolves: -

1. to rescind the decision made at the AGM on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 to elect Cllr Trevor Young to office of Leader (minute 6 relates); and

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2. by resolution of this Council, in accordance with Article 6.1 (c) remove Cllr Trevor Young from office of Leader.

I so move  
Cllr Trevor Bridgwood

**Motion 2 – The Council resolves to remove Cllr Lesley Rollings as Deputy Leader of the Council**

Council at its meeting on 12th May 2025 resolved to appoint Cllr Lesley Rollings as Deputy Leader of Council for the civic year, Minute 7 refers.

Since that time, I believe that Cllr Rollings has unfortunately lost significant support from the Liberal Democrat Administration. Article 6.4 of the Constitution of West Lindsey District Council states that the Deputy Leader of Council is appointed to fulfil the functions of the Leader of the Council in their absence, thus, they too must be able to be the lead member for the administration's priorities and aims. As Councillor Rollings, I believe, no longer commands the confidence of a significant number of the Liberal Democrat Administration, acknowledging Council Procedure Rule 13 – the required 10 signatories have been received to seek Council support to rescind that decision.

As such Council resolves: -

1. to rescind the decision made at the AGM on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 to elect Cllr Lesley Rollings to office of Deputy Leader (minute 7 relates); and
2. by resolution of this Council, in accordance with Article 6.1 (c) remove Cllr Lesley Rollings from office of Deputy Leader.

I so move  
Cllr Trevor Bridgwood

9. **REPORTS FOR DETERMINATION**

- a. Adoption of the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan  
**(PAGES 8 - 13)**

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- b. Review of the Allocation of Seats to Political Groups on Committees / Sub Committees

To note the Group Leaders of each Group and the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government Act.

**(PAGES 14 - 25)**

- c. Appointment of Committees for the Remainder of the Civic Year 2025/26

In accordance with the provisions of Section 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, to appoint Members to Committees for the Civic Year, in accordance with the wishes expressed by the Political Groups.

**(TO FOLLOW)**

- d. Appointment of Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen for the remainder Civic Year 2025/26 and to Confirm the Normal Commencement Time for Each Committee

**(TO FOLLOW)**

- e. Recommendation from Chief Officer Employment Committee - Appointment to Statutory Position of Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

**(TO FOLLOW)**

- f. Local Government Reorganisation

**(PAGES 26 - 69)**

Ian Knowles  
Head of Paid Service  
The Guildhall  
Gainsborough

Friday, 27 June 2025

## Council Matters Arising Schedule

### Purpose:

To consider progress on the matters arising from previous Council meetings.

**Recommendation:** That Members note progress on the matters arising.

### Matters arising Schedule

| Status | Title   | Action Required  | Comments  | Due Date | Allocated To         |
|--------|---|--|---|----------|----------------------|
| Black  | <b>Members Allowance Scheme</b>                                       | New Scheme to be published on 1 April<br>Statutory Notices to be published   | <b>Statutory Notices published. New Scheme will be added to Constitution on 1 April and circulated to all Members – item will now be removed from schedule</b>  |          | Katie Storr          |
| Black  | <b>Letters of thanks to County Councillors</b>                        | Following the county elections on 1 May 2025, letters of thanks to be sent to those County Councillors who lost their seats. | <b>Letters sent – no further action required</b>  |          | Ian Knowles          |
| Black  | <b>Motion to Council - BESS Sites Statutory Consultees - Lobbying</b> | Letters issued responses awaited   | <b>UPDATE: Govt announced there will be a review, and legislation to be drafted. Item allocated on the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee to receive a presentation on the legislation once it is released – item will now be removed from Council schedule.</b> |          | Sally Grindrod-Smith |
| Black  | <b>Motion to Council - Extension to Household Support Fund</b>        | All actions required completed<br><br>Responses awaited  | <b>UPDATE: Household Support Fund has been extended – see minutes of meeting of the CP&amp;R Committee held on 12 June 2025 – will now be removed from schedule</b>   |          | Nova Roberts         |
| Black  | <b>Motion - Winter Fuel Payments</b>                                  | All actions undertaken.<br><br>Responses awaited   | <b>UPDATE: Govt has amended eligibility criteria for winter fuel payments increasing the numbers of those who will receive payment in 2025 – this item will now be removed from the schedule</b>  |          | Ian Knowles          |

|                |  |   |  |          |                      |
|----------------|--|---|--|----------|----------------------|
|                |  |   |  |          |                      |
| <b>Black</b>   | <b>Motion – Banking Hub</b>  | Motion to Council January 2025 supported requiring a report to CPR by November 2025 on whether a banking hub is necessary and deliverable   | <b>Item added to CPR Workplan for September meeting</b>  |          | Sally Grindrod-Smith |
| <b>Black</b>   | <b>Motion to Council - Lincolnshire Police Fairer Funding Letters/Lobbying</b>       | Council passed a motion relating to the Fairer Funding for Lincs Police at their meeting on 4 November requiring letters to be issued - letters issued responses awaited  | <b>UPDATE: Govt have announced additional funding for the police service – this item will now be removed from the schedule</b>   |          | Ian Knowles          |
| <b>Black</b>   | <b>Motion to Council to improve GP Access</b>  | Council at its meeting on 2 September passed a motion to call on the ICB to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to demonstrate accurate need around GP provision, and to engage with local health authorities, NHS representatives, and community stakeholders to gather input and support for the initiative. | <b>Initial communication has been sent to the ICB - Council will be updated of any progress through this matters arising</b>     |          | Ian Knowles          |
| <b>Black</b>   | <b>Motion To Council – Protecting British Farms and Preserving Rural Communities</b> | Motion to Council Jan 2025 Chief Executive and Leader to write to the chancellor setting out DC views on this matter and negative impact on communities   | <b>Letters have been issued . Progress or responses to the letters will be reported through Council Matters Arising Schedule</b> |          | Katie Storr          |
| <b>Green</b>   | <b>Updated Contract Procedure Rules</b>  | New rules to be published in the constitution   |  | 01/04/25 | Katie Storr          |
| <b>Black</b>   | <b>Constitution Amendments</b>   | AGM 12.05.25: Constitution to be updated and republished in line with details contained within the Monitoring Officer's report.   |  | 01/07/25 | Katie Storr          |
| <b>On hold</b> | <b>Public Participation Schemes - Review of</b>                                      | AGM Mtg 23/5/23<br>When considering the Annual Review of Constitution, the Leader advised the Administration would wish to undertake a fundamental review of the participation schemes in year  | <b>Initial conversation to be held at Chairs Brief as to how the Group would like to proceed - ITEM ON HOLD</b>                  |          | Katie Storr          |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | Scope and time line of this work to be discussed with Administration |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

# Agenda Item 9a



|                    |
|--------------------|
| FULL COUNCIL       |
| Monday 7 July 2025 |

**Subject: Adoption of the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Report by:         | Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities  |
| Contact Officer:   | Nev Brown<br>Senior Neighbourhood Planning Policy Officer<br><a href="mailto:nev.brown@west-lindsey.gov.uk">nev.brown@west-lindsey.gov.uk</a> |
| Purpose / Summary: | To adopt the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan.  |

**RECOMMENDATION(S): To adopt the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.**



## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

This work is a duty under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

Regulation 18A of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, stipulates that a neighbourhood plan must be made (adopted) within 8 weeks of the referendum, which is to be held on 26 June 2025. This requirement will be met if the Council adopts the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) at its meeting on 7 July 2025.

### **Financial: FIN/40/26/MT/MK**

For every neighbourhood plan (NP) successful at examination the Council receives a grant of £20k from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to help support its neighbourhood planning role in the district. A grant of £20k has already been received for the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan (RNP).

### **Staffing:**

Internal resources are in place to deal with neighbourhood planning.

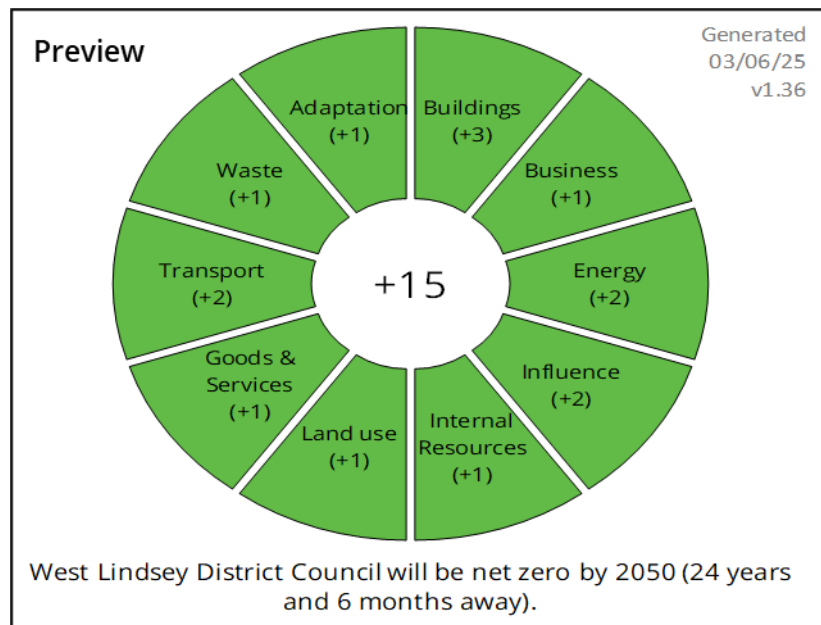
### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

The RNP has been examined under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations for any issues relating to equality and diversity.

### **Data Protection Implications: n/a**

### Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The RNP received positive outcomes when it was evaluated using the Council's Climate, Environment, and Assessment tool. Please see below. The RNP scored well in terms of enhancing green/blue infrastructure and working with the local community and partners.



The RNP has been the subject of a Strategic Environmental and Habitats Regulations Assessments Screening Report which concluded that the RNP would be unlikely to give rise to any significant effects on protected sites.

### Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

The RNP seeks to protect and create safe and accessible open spaces and active travel routes for residents to enjoy.

### Health Implications:

The RNP expects developments to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and to have regard to amenity expectations of neighbouring users.

### Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

[Reepham Neighbourhood Plan | West Lindsey District Council](#)

Risk Assessment : n/a

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

☐

**No**

**x**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**x**

**No**

☐

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' approval to adopt (make) the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) as part of the West Lindsey Development Plan. The report follows the RNP's successful referendum which was held recently.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 NPs were introduced in the Localism Act 2011. They are important and powerful tools that give parish and town councils the statutory planning powers to shape how their communities develop. A NP is a document written by parish/town councils that sets out planning policies for a parish area which are used to help decide planning applications.
- 2.2 There are legal steps to creating a NP which must be followed, and they are: area designation, plan preparation, consultation, examination, referendum, and finally adoption (making). At each step, West Lindsey District Council strongly supports parish/town councils with their NPs. Currently, West Lindsey has 26 adopted NPs covering a large part of the district.
- 2.3 Following a NP's successful referendum, it is a requirement that the NP should be adopted by Full Council for it to formally become part of the West Lindsey Development Plan for that NP area alongside the Local Plan. As part of the Development Plan, the RNP will be given full weight in helping determine future planning applications within Reepham parish. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.4 Regulation 18A of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, stipulates that a neighbourhood plan must be made (adopted) within 8 weeks of the referendum, which was held on 26 June 2025. This requirement will be met if the Council adopts the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) at this meeting.

## **3. Decision & Reasoning**

- 3.1 Reepham Parish Council (PC), as the qualifying body, received Council approval in July 2017 to prepare the RNP. The RNP was submitted by the PC to the Council for consultation and examination during 2024 and comments were invited from the public and stakeholders.
- 3.2 The Council, in agreement with the PC, appointed an independent examiner to examine whether the RNP met the basic conditions required by legislation and if it should proceed to referendum.
- 3.3 The Examiner's Report concluded that the RNP met the basic conditions, and that subject to the modifications proposed in the report, the RNP should proceed to a referendum. The RNP was examined alongside the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and was prepared in

accordance with EU obligations or Convention rights. The examination involved a hearing which was held on 25 September 2024 at Reepham Village Hall.

3.4 The Examiner's Report was considered under the Council's delegated powers, and it was agreed that the RNP should proceed to a referendum and if successful should be recommended for adoption (making) by the Council.

3.5 The RNP referendum met the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. It was held on 26 June 2025 in Reepham and posed the question:

***'Do you want West Lindsey District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Reepham to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'***

3.6 At the referendum ??% of residents who voted were in favour of the RNP. Legislation requires that the Council must make the NP if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of it. Greater than 50% of those who voted were in favour of the RNP being used to help decide planning applications in the plan area.

|   |                |            |
|---|----------------|------------|
| The results of the referendum were:     | Votes Recorded | Percentage |
| Number of votes cast in favour of 'yes' | 126            | 86.3%      |
| Number of votes cast in favour of 'no'  | 20             | 13.7%      |

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Electorate           | 742    |
| Ballot Papers Issued | 146    |
| Turnout              | 19.68% |

3.7 In accordance with national planning guidance, an adopted (made) RNP should be given full weight in the determination of planning applications within the parish area.

3.8 NPs have given many of West Lindsey's local communities the tools to help protect and enhance their areas. West Lindsey performs well in terms of NP coverage and this should continue. In addition to its 26 made NPs, West Lindsey currently has 16 NPs in preparation, 8 under review, and also around 40 areas that are suitable for future NPs .

3.10 For the latest on NPs in West Lindsey please go to:

[Neighbourhood planning | West Lindsey District Council \(west-lindsey.gov.uk\)](https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning)

#### 4. Recommendation:

**4.1 That Members formally agree to adopt (make) the Reepham Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.**

# Agenda Item 9b



**Council**

**Monday 7 July 2025**

**Subject: Review Of The Allocation Of Seats To Political Groups On Committees/Sub -Committees**

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

Katie Storr  
Democratic and Elections Manager and Deputy  
Monitoring Officer  
katie.storr@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

This report sets out the details of the political groups on the Council, the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each committee and the allocation to different political groups of seats on the committees.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1) that the details of political groups, as set out in Appendix A, be noted;**
- 2) that the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each Committee, arising from the Head of Paid Service's delegated decision, and following consultation will all Group Leaders be noted; and**
- 3) that the allocation to different political groups of seats on committees, as set out in Appendix B, arising from the Head of Paid Service's delegated decision following consultation with all Group Leaders, be noted.**

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

Council is required to review the allocation to different political groups of seats on committees and sub-committees, in accordance with the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, when either a trigger is met (election, resignation change in Group Membership) or at least annually at its annual meeting as set out in the Constitution.

This review is borne out of due notice having been received from Councillor Karen Carless advising that she wished to leave the Administration Group (Liberal Democrat) to join the Consensus Independent Group.

LI

### **Financial :**

None directly arising as a result of this report.

### **Staffing :**

None directly arising as a result of this report.

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

None directly arising as a result of this report.

### **Data Protection Implications :**

None directly arising as a result of this report.

### **Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**

None directly arising as a result of this report.

### **Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :**

None directly arising as a result of this report.

### **Health Implications:**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:</b> |
|--|

|   |
|---|
| Working Papers and Options considered in June 2025 held by Democratic Services. |
|---|

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| <b>Risk Assessment :</b> |
|--------------------------|

|     |
|-----|
| n/a |
|-----|

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

☐

**No**

**x**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

☐

**No**

**x**



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council is required to review the allocation to different political groups of seats on committees and sub-committees.
- 1.2 The last review of the allocations took place in May 2025 at the Annual General Meeting,
- 1.3 This review is borne out of due notice having been received from Councillor Karen Carless advising that she wished to leave the Administration Group (Liberal Democrat) to join the Consensus Independent Group.
- 1.4 Existing political groups for the purposes of the Local Government (Committees & Political Groups) Regulations 1990 are as follows:

| Group                                     | No. of Members | Leader                      | Deputy                     |
|---|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
|   |                |                             |                            |
| The Liberal Democrat Administration Group | 17             | Councillor Trevor Young     | Councillor Lesley Rollings |
| The Opposition Group                      | 14             | Councillor Ian Fleetwood    | Councillor Roger Patterson |
| The Lincolnshire Independent              | 2              | Councillor Paul Key         | Councillor Chris Darcel    |
| The Consensus Independent Group           | 3              | Councillor Trevor Bridgwood | Councillor Jeanette McGhee |

- 1.5 The Council currently has no unaligned Members.
- 1.6 The Council has delegated authority to the Head of Paid Service to agree, following consultation with the Group Leaders, the overall allocation of seats to groups resulting from the application of rounding.
- 1.7 Full details of group membership are set out in Appendix A.

## 2. The Allocations

- 2.1 In accordance with the provisions of section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Duty to allocate seats to political groups), the

Council is required to give effect, so far as reasonably practicable, to the following specified principles:

- (a) that not all the seats on a Committee/Sub-Committee are allocated to the same political group;
  - (b) that the majority of the seats on a Committee/Sub-Committee are allocated to a particular political group where the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
  - (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary Committees which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary Committees of that authority as is borne by the number of Members of that group to the membership of the authority;
  - (d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of seats on the Committee/Sub-Committee which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that Committee/Sub-Committee as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.
- 2.2 (b) above applies to a lesser degree as there is no one Group with a majority of seats on the Council. External advice has been undertaken to ensure the application of the rules has been applied equitably.
- 2.3 All of the Group Leaders were consulted on the number of Members to be appointed to serve on the Committees. Any "trading" required to achieve the mathematical requirement is a matter for Group Leaders to determine between themselves.
- 2.4 In order to give effect, so far as is reasonably practicable, to the principles specified above and in consultation with Group Leaders as required by the delegation, it has been determined that the best fit to meet the political balance rules is for the: -
- Planning Committee, Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, Prosperous Communities Committee, Chief Officer Employment Committee to comprise 11 Members;
  - Standards Committee and Governance and Audit Committee to comprise 6 Members.
  - Licensing Committee, Regulatory Committee to comprise 13 Members \*
  - Overview and Scrutiny Committee to comprise 13 Members
- 2.5 Applying group numbers to the seats available on the Committees gives the allocation set out in Appendix B, which was supported by **all** Group Leaders as the most reasonably practical in the circumstances.

- 2.6 The selected option required the two Independent Groups to each give up one seat from any of the Ordinary Committees allocated to them, with both surrendered seats going to the Opposition Group in order to meet the political balance rules.
- 2.7 The Lincolnshire Independent Group have surrendered a seat on the Planning Committee. The Consensus Independent Group have surrendered a seat on the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 2.9 \*As agreed as part of the Annual Review of the Constitution during 2017/2018, the same 13 Members must comprise both the Licensing Committee and the Regulatory Committee. Licensing Committee, and due to the linked nature Regulatory Committee, are the only Committees which fall outside of the Political Balance Rules.
- 2.10 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not deemed “an ordinary” Committee, and whilst it must be politically balanced, it sits separate to the “ordinary committees” Group Leaders indicated they would like see all Groups afforded representation on the Committee and as such its Membership has been set at 13

**Local Government & Housing Act 1989**

**The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990**

**Political Groups on the District Council – July 2025**

**Liberal Democrat Administration Group (17 Councillors)**

**(Comprising 16 Liberal Democrat Councillors and 1 Independent Councillor)**

***Liberal Democrat (16)***

Councillor Emma Bailey

Councillor Eve Bennett

Councillor Matthew Boles

Councillor Stephen Bunney

Councillor Liz Clews

Councillor David Dobbie

Councillor Jacob Flear

Councillor Sabastian Hague

Councillor Lynda Mullally

Councillor Lesley Rollings

Councillor Jim Snee

Councillor Mandy Snee

Councillor Paul Swift

Councillor Moira Westley

Councillor Baptiste Velan

Councillor Trevor Young

***Independent Councillor***

Councillor Paul Howitt Cowan

**(Comprising 13 Conservative Councillors and 1 Independent Councillor)**

***Conservative (13)***

Councillor John Barrett

Councillor Owen Bierley

Councillor Jackie Brockway

Councillor Frazier Brown

Councillor Adam Duguid

Councillor Ian Fleetwood

Councillor Angela Lawrence

Councillor Paul Lee

Councillor Peter Morris

Councillor Maureen Palmer

Councillor Roger Patterson

Councillor Roger Pilgrim

Councillor Tom Smith

***Independent Councillor***

Councillor Diana Rodgers

**Consensus Independent Group (3 Councillors)**

**(Comprising 1 Reform Councillor and 2 Independent Councillors)**

Councillor Trevor Bridgwood

Councillor Karen Carless

Councillor Jeanette McGhee

**Lincolnshire Independents Group (2 Councillors)**

Councillor Chris Darcel

Councillor Paul Key

## Appendix B

Political Make-up of the Council, on which calculations have been based: -

| Political balance on the Council |     |          |
|----------------------------------|-----|----------|
| Group                            | No. | %        |
| Lib Dem                          | 17  | 47.2222% |
| Conservative                     | 14  | 38.8889% |
| Lins Ind                         | 2   | 5.5556%  |
| Consensus Ind                    | 3   | 8.3333%  |
| Vacant                           | 0   | 0.0000%  |
| Council of                       | 36  | 100%     |

Number of Seats allocated to each Group based on vary size Committees and rounding applied for each individual Ordinary Committee.

| Single committee spread (or sub-committee) |       |                  |              |              |              |         |         |  |  |  |  |
|--|-------|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------|---------|--|--|--|--|
| Committee Size                             | % LD  | Rounded to whole | Con          | LI           | Cons Ind     | Vacant  | check   |  |  |  |  |
| 18   | 8.500 | 8 or 9           | 7.000 7      | 1.000 1      | 1.500 1 or 2 | 0.000 0 | #VALUE! |  |  |  |  |
| 17   | 8.028 | 8                | 6.611 7      | 0.944 1      | 1.417 1      | 0.000 0 | 17      |  |  |  |  |
| 16   | 7.556 | 7 or 8           | 6.222 6      | 0.889 1      | 1.333 1      | 0.000 0 | #VALUE! |  |  |  |  |
| 15   | 7.083 | 7                | 5.833 6      | 0.833 1      | 1.250 1      | 0.000 0 | 15      |  |  |  |  |
| 14   | 6.611 | 7                | 5.444 5      | 0.778 1      | 1.167 1      | 0.000 0 | 14      |  |  |  |  |
| 13   | 6.139 | 6                | 5.056 5      | 0.722 1      | 1.083 1      | 0.000 0 | 13      |  |  |  |  |
| 12   | 5.667 | 6                | 4.667 4 or 5 | 0.667 1      | 1.000 1      | 0.000 0 | #VALUE! |  |  |  |  |
| 11   | 5.194 | 5                | 4.278 4      | 0.611 1      | 0.917 1      | 0.000 0 | 11      |  |  |  |  |
| 10   | 4.722 | 5                | 3.889 4      | 0.556 0 or 1 | 0.833 1      | 0.000 0 | #VALUE! |  |  |  |  |
| 9  | 4.250 | 4                | 3.500 3 or 4 | 0.500 0 or 1 | 0.750 1      | 0.000 0 | #VALUE! |  |  |  |  |
| 8  | 3.778 | 4                | 3.111 3      | 0.444 0      | 0.667 1      | 0.000 0 | 8       |  |  |  |  |
| 7  | 3.306 | 3                | 2.722 3      | 0.389 0      | 0.583 1      | 0.000 0 | 7       |  |  |  |  |
| 6  | 2.833 | 3                | 2.333 2      | 0.333 0      | 0.500 0 or 1 | 0.000 0 | #VALUE! |  |  |  |  |
| 5  | 2.361 | 2                | 1.944 2      | 0.278 0      | 0.417 0      | 0.000 0 | 4       |  |  |  |  |
| 4  | 1.889 | 2                | 1.556 1 or 2 | 0.222 0      | 0.333 0      | 0.000 0 | #VALUE! |  |  |  |  |
| 3  | 1.417 | 1                | 1.167 1      | 0.167 0      | 0.250 0      | 0.000 0 | 2       |  |  |  |  |

## Selected Committee Size Option and Balance Across Total Number of Ordinary Committees

Fig 1

| V4 Committees (exc O&S)   | Places       | LD        | C         | LI       | CI       | check     |
|---|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Prosperous Communities  | 11           | 5         | 4         | 1        | 1        | 11        |
| Corporate Policy and Resources  | 11           | 5         | 4         | 1        | 1        | 11        |
| Governance and Audit  | 6            | 3         | 2         | 0        | 1        | 6         |
| Planning  | 11           | 5         | 4         | 1        | 1        | 11        |
| Chief Officer Employment  | 11           | 5         | 4         | 1        | 1        | 11        |
| Standards   | 6            | 3         | 2         | 0        | 1        | 6         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>56.00</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>56</b> |
| Number of committees requiring variation to achieve overall balance of: |              | none      | plus 2    | minus 1  | minus 1  |           |
|   |              | 26        | 22        | 3        | 5        |           |

Fig 2

| GROUP      | Proportion | % of C/I | Rounded to whole | % comparator of whole numbers |
|------------|------------|----------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Lib Dem    | 26.4320    | 0.4720   | 26               | 47.2                          |
| Conservati | 21.7784    | 0.3889   | 22               | 38.8                          |
| Con Ind    | 4.6665     | 0.0833   | 5                | 8.3                           |
| Lincs Ind  | 3.1111     | 0.0556   | 3                | 5.5                           |
|            | 56.00      |          | 56               |                               |

**TABLE 1 –**

**ORDINARY COMMITTEES SPLIT PER GROUP HAVING APPLIED ANY VARIATIONS REQUIRED AND AGREED BY GROUP LEADERS (shown in red circle in Fig 1)**

|  | LDA | OGrp   | LI     | CI     | Total |
|--|-----|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| <b>Prosperous Communities (11)</b>         | 5   | 4      | 1      | 1      | 11    |
| <b>Corporate Policy and Resources (11)</b> | 5   | 4      | 1      | 1      | 11    |
| <b>Governance and Audit (6)</b>            | 3   | 2 (+1) | 0      | 1 (0)* | 6     |
| <b>Planning (11)</b>                       | 5   | 4 (+1) | 1 (0)* | 1      | 11    |
| <b>Chief Officer Employment (11)</b>       | 5   | 4      | 1      | 1      | 11    |
| <b>Standards (6)</b>                       | 3   | 2      | 0      | 1      | 6     |
| <b>Total no. of seats (56)</b>             | 26  | 22     | 3      | 5      | 56    |

**\*These are the seats which the smaller groups have offered up in trading to the Opposition Group (resulting in the +1) to meet the Political balance equation (shown in red circle in Fig 1)**

**TABLE 2 – NON-ORDINARY COMMITTEES**

| <b>WITH POLITICAL BALANCE APPLIED</b>       | LDA | OGrp | LI | CI | Total |
|---|-----|------|----|----|-------|
| <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (13)</b> | 6   | 5    | 1  | 1  | 13    |



**TABLE 3**

|                                | <b>LDA</b> | <b>OGrp</b> | <b>LI</b> | <b>CI</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| <b>Licensing (13)</b>          | <b>6</b>   | <b>5</b>    | <b>1</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>13</b>    |
| <b>Regulatory (13)</b>         | <b>6</b>   | <b>5</b>    | <b>1</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>13</b>    |
| <b>Total no. of seats (26)</b> | <b>12</b>  | <b>10</b>   | <b>2</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>26</b>    |

**Note the membership of the two committees above has to be identical**

**Licensing Committees must comprise at least 10 Members in accordance with the LA 2003**

**These meetings do not have to be politically balanced.**

# Agenda Item 9f



**Council**

**Tuesday 07<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

**Subject: Local Government Reorganisation**

Report by:

Chief Executive

Contact Officers:

Ian Knowles  
[ian.knowles@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:ian.knowles@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Purpose / Summary:

To update members on government proposals in respect of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), following the receipt of Initial Plan Feedback Letter

## **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That Council:

1. Notes the matters set out in this report, including government feedback on the interim proposals submitted by councils in Greater Lincolnshire.
2. Approves option two as the Council's next course of action, this being to undertake 'Supportive Engagement' working across all Final Proposals being developed for Greater Lincolnshire, with further assessment and decision-making opportunities for members at a future Council meeting.
3. Notes the financial and resource implications for the Council in preparing for LGR and the allocation of £50,000, which will be approved in line with financial procedure rules, which will facilitate the initial preparation of data and evidence to enable the Council to engage effectively with the Final Proposals being worked on across Greater Lincolnshire.

## IMPLICATIONS

### Legal:

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government presented the English Devolution White Paper to Parliament. The overarching intention of the White Paper is for Devolution to become the universal position across England, accompanied by a large-scale, England wide programme of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

In respect of LGR, the White Paper sets out the intention to facilitate a programme of reorganisation for two tier areas, and for unitary councils where there is evidence of failure or where the size or boundary may be hindering their ability to deliver sustainable and high-quality public services. The legal framework for unitarisation is provided by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Under the legislation, the Secretary of State may invite a principal authority to propose single tier local government arrangements, and then consult upon these proposals before making a decision under this legislation

Following the publication of the White Paper, on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution wrote to Council Leaders in two-tier areas inviting Councils via a Statutory Invitation to develop proposals for reorganisation. The letter includes two key dates for submission of proposals: these being 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025 for submission of interim proposals and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025 for submission of detailed proposals.

It is the Government's intention that both Devolution, and Local Government Reorganisation Proposals will be delivered in two waves, the first being by March 2027 and the second being by March 2028. In respect of Devolution, a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) has already been established in Greater Lincolnshire. The focus of this paper is purely on the Local Government Reorganisation element of the White Paper.

The Government have since provided all areas who received the Statutory Invitation on 05<sup>th</sup> February 2025 with an Interim Plan Feedback Letter. These were sent by MHCLG to areas across a staggered timeline from early May through to early June. Greater Lincolnshire received the feedback letter on 03<sup>rd</sup> June.

It is clear that despite the delay in the receipt of the Interim Plan Feedback letter the Government still require the Final Proposal to be submitted on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

**Financial: FIN/53/26/CL/SL**

Following the receipt of the Interim Plan Feedback letter, appendix 3, the Minister followed up with a letter relating to funding to support the development of the Final Proposal. Greater Lincolnshire was allocated £357,246. It was agreed by Chief Executives that this funding would be allocated to Lincolnshire County Council who will disseminate the funding to those Councils developing a final proposal as required.

The Interim Plan Feedback letter and the funding allocation letter make it clear that collaboration across areas is required, specifically in relation to information and data sharing. Therefore, it is anticipated that some of this money will be used to develop a shared data baseline and that the remaining monies will then be allocated to specific proposal development. This ensures a fair share of monies and also accounts for any local authorities that have chosen not to engage in the broader LGR programme.

Whilst it is understood that the exact extent of the evidence, resource and financial implications has not yet been fully scoped, it is acknowledged that there are resource implications as a result of the Council actively engaging with other Councils in the development of a number of Final Proposals. A sum of £50,000 can be drawn down from reserves or contingencies to support and facilitate the Council's involvement.

**Staffing: HR Ref: HR241-06-25**

LGR is a new priority workstream for the Council which will, by its nature, put pressure on the capacity and resources of some corporate and other service areas who will be required to respond to the different elements of the LGR process. This includes, but is not limited to, input from the Policy & Strategy Team, Finance Team, People Services, Change, Performance and Programmes Team, Communications Team, and Senior Management Team. Depending on the option resolved by Council. Whilst the allocation of £50,000 will support the initial work involved to deliver a position for the Final Submission date of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025, there will be implications for the Council's own resources which will need to be considered as part of the broader staffing structure. This will be considered in a future paper.

Council staff are being kept informed of key developments relating to LGR via a dedicated page on the Council's intranet, through weekly staff messages, and all staff corporate updates as required. This will continue throughout the next stages of the indicative LGR timeline.

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

High-level consideration has been given to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications and more detailed considerations will be undertaken over the course of the summer, as part of the Council's options appraisal. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken ahead of any final proposal that may be submitted in November 2025, subject to the decision of this Council.

**Data Protection Implications:**

Effective collaboration through the development of shared assumptions and datasets is a key requirement as part of the government's criteria for assessing the Final Submission. In order to do this, it is expected that Local Government will openly and effectively share data and information.

Across Greater Lincolnshire there is an intention to create a shared financial and demand baseline for all to use, allowing all bids put forward on behalf of Greater Lincolnshire to be based on the same principles, and allowing for alternative forecasting and assumptions to be tested to support the variety of models being promoted.

Most of the data required to develop these baselines will be open-source datasets. However, in order to safeguard data and ensure that it is handled in accordance with GDPR regulations a data sharing framework is being drafted for all authorities to sign up to, to ensure that high standards of data management are adhered to at all times.

This data framework has been drafted with the input of Lincolnshire authorities and will be reviewed by legal representatives prior to signing up to the framework and sharing data.

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

None arising from this report

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:**

None arising from this report

**Health Implications:**

None arising from this report

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

[English Devolution White Paper 2024](#)

[Statutory Invitation from the Minister for Local Government & English Devolution to Greater Lincolnshire Council Leaders 5th February 2025.](#)

[https://LGR WLDC Interim Proposal 18.03.25](#)

Link below is to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England website, LGR FAQs

[https://www.lgbce.org.uk/local-government-reorganisation](#)

**Risk Assessment:**

The Government has stated its intention to reorganise all two-tier local authority areas within this Parliament.

In providing feedback on the interim proposals, government was clear that Councils should work together to develop a single proposal for the area. It is therefore important that all Councils engage in the process to ensure their area is appropriately represented in discussions and decisions.

Not engaging in the discussions creates a risk that any future decisions regarding local government structures in Lincolnshire do not represent the best interests of West Lindsey. Likewise, not submitting or supporting a final proposal on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025 risks West Lindsey's priorities and interests not being taken into consideration by MHCLG when undertaking their assessments and making any final decisions. These risks are mitigated by regular and consistent engagement in LGR discussions at the local, regional and national level by both members and senior officers.

Where agreement has not been possible, government has stipulated that Councils can submit individual proposals if they wish, but that these should be limited to one option per council.

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

☐

No

x

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

x

No

☐

## **Executive Summary**

On 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025 West Lindsey District Council (“the Council”) submitted an Interim Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This paper sets out the next steps for the Council post the interim submission and following the receipt of the Interim Plan Feedback letter, appendix 2, on 03<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.

The paper considers the requirements of developing a Final Proposal, a shared evidence base, robust financial testing, including efficiencies, public sector reform and engagement, all of which is required to ensure that any Final Proposal meets the set criteria and overarching purpose of LGR.

In the context of these requirements, the paper presents three options for members consideration and decision, noting the pros and cons of each option as set out in this report.

The three options have been designed to balance the timescales, resource and financial implications against delivery of the Council’s priorities in order to best meet the needs of the residents, communities and businesses in West Lindsey. In considering the options, members are asked to support Option B as described in recommendation two.

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In publishing the English Devolution White Paper 2024, the Government set out its intention to redraw the Local Government landscape in England via an enhanced programme of devolution, and the reorganisation of all remaining two-tier local government areas in England. Such change, if delivered, represents the largest reform of the Local Government sector since 1974.
- 1.2 This paper sets out the latest position with regards to Local Government Reorganisation, following the issue of the Interim Plan Feedback letter on 03<sup>rd</sup> June 2025, appendix 2, and seeks approval to work with Councils across Greater Lincolnshire to meet the requirement to develop a proposal for a new single tier of Local Government.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Following the Statutory Invitation, appendix 1, issued on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution (“the Minister”), Jim McMahon OBE MP wrote to all council Leaders in remaining two-tier areas formally inviting the submission of proposals for LGR.
- 2.2 Following the receipt of this letter initial, work was undertaken to appraise the various options around a geographical split of Greater Lincolnshire, taking into consideration the strengths and weaknesses of each option based on metrics that aligned with the Corporate Plan priorities. This work resulted in six options being presented to members for consideration at an extraordinary meeting of Council in March 2025. A copy of these options is included for context as appendix 4. At this meeting, Council resolved to:

- Note the matters set out in the report and receive further updates in respect of LGR.
- Agree to submit the options included as the Councils interim position with a covering letter indicating initial preference for two options (these being options A and E).
- Note the requirement by government for councils to work together to develop and agree to work with other Greater Lincolnshire councils to develop proposals for LGR.
- Agree to support officers and provide further direction for further development of proposals for LGR, with referral back to Council for any decisions required in accordance with the timeline set out by government.

### 3.0 Current Position

3.1 Following submission of the Council's Interim Proposal, MHCLG provided their initial feedback in a letter to all ten Greater Lincolnshire councils on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025, six weeks later than anticipated. A copy of this letter is attached as appendix 2 and summarised within this report.

3.2 The letter reaffirms the broader timelines set out in the original Statutory Invitation, as depicted in Fig. 1 below.

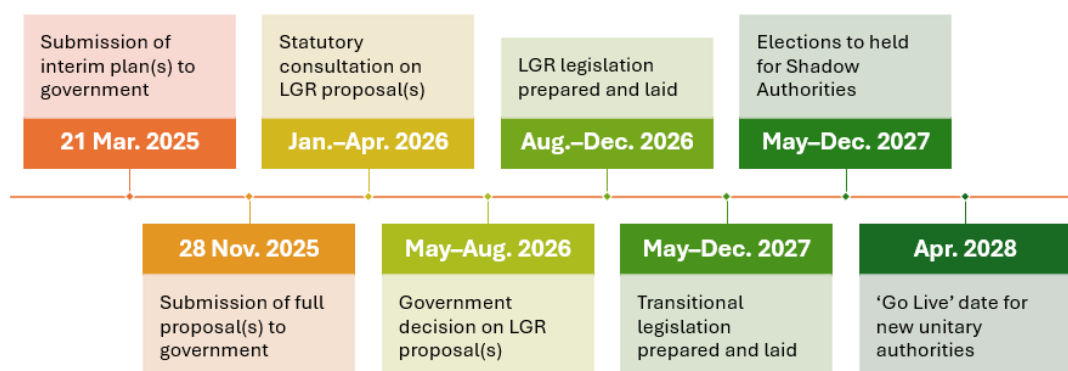


Fig 1. Indicative timeline for local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire

### 4.0 Criteria for Developing Final Reorganisation Proposals

4.1 The Ministerial Feedback Letter acknowledges and provides an overview of the proposals submitted by organisations across Greater Lincolnshire and acknowledges and welcomes the work undertaken by Local Government to facilitate reorganisation plans.

4.2 The letter is clear that the Final Proposal will be evaluated against the criteria outlined in the Statutory Invitation, summarised below.

- A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.
- Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks
- Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens



- Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views
  - New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements
  - New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment
- 4.4 The feedback provided highlights areas where more detail may help but is clear the list is not exhaustive and that additional materials are welcome. A named MHCLG official has been allocated to Greater Lincolnshire as the point of contact for support and it is anticipated that an initial meeting will take place in due course.

## **5.0 Guiding Principles for the final submission as detailed in the Interim Feedback Letter**

- 5.1 The letter sets out key elements of the feedback and reaffirms the expectations of Government from all Local Government organisations developing their Final Proposals. The feedback is summarised thus:

### **1. Collaboration and Evidence Base**

- The Government welcomes interim planning efforts and intentions for future joint working.
- Councils are encouraged to strengthen collaboration, particularly around data sharing, to support a robust shared evidence base.
- Final proposals should:
  - i. Use consistent assumptions and datasets.
  - ii. Clearly demonstrate how data supports proposed outcomes and aligns with assessment criteria.
  - iii. Include an options appraisal to justify the preferred approach.

### **2. Proposal Structure and Coordination**

- Each council may submit one Final Proposal with a clear single option and defined geography.
- Joint Final Proposals are encouraged to reduce duplication and resource strain.
- Proposals should aim to consolidate differing views into fewer, well-supported submissions.

### **3. Geographic Scope and Neighbouring Areas**

- Acknowledge that some Interim Proposals included areas like Rutland, which lies outside the GLCCA invitation area.
- Confirms Councils may explore cross-boundary options but must:
  - i. Assess impacts on the entire neighbouring area.
  - ii. Engage and share data with affected councils.
  - iii. Reflect any cross-boundary support in both sets of proposals.

### **4. Population Considerations**

- While a population of 500,000+ is a guiding principle, flexibility is allowed.
- All proposals should clearly justify their population rationale, whether above or below the guideline.

## **5. Boundary Changes**

- Boundary changes are permissible with strong justification.
- Proposals must specify the proposed unitary area, using clear identifiers (e.g. parish/ward boundaries or maps).
- Councils may alternatively propose unitary structures using existing boundaries and request a Principal Area Boundary Review (PABR) later.

## **6. Implications for GLCCA**

- Proposals should detail the governance implications for GLCCA and how each option supports local communities.
- Engagement with the new GLCCA Mayor is recommended.
- Proposals involving Rutland should explain the impact on GLCCA and Leicestershire proposals.

### **6.0 Response to specific barriers and challenges raised as part of Interim Proposal submission by Lincolnshire Authorities**

6.1 Many of the Interim Proposals made raised specific issues or concerns, these were also covered within the feedback letter and are summarised below.

#### **1. Ministerial Engagement**

- While direct ministerial engagement was requested, support will be provided equally across all councils.
- Alex Jarvis has been appointed as the MHCLG point of contact to facilitate engagement with government.

#### **2. Capacity Funding**

- £7.6 million will be distributed across 21 areas to support Final Proposal development.

#### **3. Funding Reform and Transitional Protection**

- Further consultation on funding and transitional arrangements will follow the June Spending Review.

#### **4. GLCCA Boundary Review,**

- The boundary review option in relation to North and North East Lincolnshire's role and relationship to Humber and the Hull and East Yorkshire County Authority (HEYCA) will remain an option and will be monitored as part of the devolution journey.
- Final Proposals should assess how proposed unitary structures will align with Combined Authorities across Humber and Lincolnshire.

#### **5. Financial Pressure**

- Final Proposals should include detailed financial positions and modelling.

- Councils are expected to manage transitional costs using existing budgets and capital receipts.

## **6. Timescales**

- The November deadline is designed to allow sufficient time for Final Proposal development.
- Councils are encouraged to continue collaborative working to meet the deadline.

## **7. Structural Transition**

- Post-reorganisation, all new unitary councils will become constituent members of the GLCCA.
- Further details on the transition process will be provided, and implications for GLCCA governance should be included in Final Proposals.

## **8. Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs)**

- Funding concerns are acknowledged; MHCLG is working with Defra on long-term solutions.
- The 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement includes a £5 million grant to support authorities impacted by IDB levies.

## **9. Application of Criteria**

- The 500,000 population guideline is flexible; proposals should clearly justify their approach.
- Criteria are not weighted; decisions will be based on overall evidence and alignment with guidance.

## **10. Timely Feedback**

- This document serves as the Government's feedback to support Final Proposal development.

### **7.0 Engagement Activity to Date**

Following the submission on the Interim Proposals, there has been limited formal engagement with members on LGR across Greater Lincolnshire and internally within the Council. This is in part due to the May elections, but also the delay in receiving the Interim Plan Feedback Letter.

- 7.1 At officer level, high-level collaboration continues through existing networks such as Chief Executive meetings, and meetings of Finance, Communications, and Policy Leads.
- 7.2 At these informal sessions information and intelligence is shared and exploration of opportunities to collaborate discussed, specifically in relation to the creation of a shared data and evidence baseline on which assumption and projections can be applied to support the development of Final Proposals ready for November.
- 7.3 A meeting of Greater Lincolnshire Chief Executives was held on 04<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to discuss the implications of the feedback letter and give partners an opportunity to confirm their positions on Final Proposals

and next steps where known. The feedback which includes the mapped areas can be found in appendix 2.

- 7.4 It was clear that, currently, at least four separate Final Proposals will continue to be worked up with a view to submit on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.
- 7.5 A summary of each Greater Lincolnshire Council's position is included in the table in appendix 5, noting that this position is fluid and subject to change depending on the formal decisions made by each Council.
- 7.6 Officers are also regularly attending online briefings delivered by Government and other bodies such as the Local Government Association (LGA), and District Councils' Network (DCN).

## **8.0 Options for Consideration**

- 8.1 In considering the position of the Council, the requirements set out in the feedback letter, and the position of other Greater Lincolnshire authorities, three possible options have been worked up for member consideration and decision. An update position was shared with members via an all-member briefing on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.
- 8.2 During this session, members discussed the opportunities and challenges presented by each of the four proposals currently known to be in development across Greater Lincolnshire, and the potential implications each proposal may have for West Lindsey. The feedback from the workshop has been used to shape the options further, which are presented below for Council decision. Each option included an overview of risks and opportunities associated with each, which are also summarised below for context.
- 8.3 **Option One – ‘No Engagement’ *Do not submit a Final Proposal for LGR in Greater Lincolnshire and do not engage with the development of any other Final Business case's being developed by other authorities in Greater Lincolnshire.***  
This option would result in the Council choosing not to engage with LGR or the development of any of the proposals being worked on across the Greater Lincolnshire area. By extension, this would mean that the Council would not submit or support a Final Proposal to government in November.

Fig. 2 Key Risks and opportunities for option 1

| Finance & Resource  | Public Service Reform  | Collaboration & Engagement   | Governance  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No requirement to earmark any resource or finances for development of a business case proposal or supporting evidence</li> <li>Will still need to allocate funding for transitional &amp; set up costs for the future organisation</li> <li>With little or no oversight of emerging proposals, will be difficult to assess finance and resource implications on WLDC</li> <li>Unable to claim a portion of enabling funding allocated to Greater Lincolnshire (£357K)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to collaborate &amp; share good practice</li> <li>No opportunity to provide ideas on new public service design</li> <li>Council will not be in a position to inform thinking regarding the needs of WLDC's residents, communities, businesses and third sector organisations; as such these stakeholders will not be represented during the LGR process in Lincs.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No opportunity to influence district service development areas</li> <li>Can't advocate for WL communities &amp; businesses</li> <li>No need for engagement with WL businesses &amp; communities</li> <li>No opportunity to demonstrate what works in West Lindsey for our residents, businesses etc. Good/strong practice developed over years will be lost, as non-engagement means that the Council has no ability to shape strategic thinking, operating model design, place leadership</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to influence option development around democratic coverage</li> <li>Removes WL decision making opportunities</li> </ul> |

#### 8.4 Option Two – ‘Supportive Engagement’ *Work across all Final Proposals being developed for Greater Lincolnshire*

Under this option, the Council would engage and collaborate proactively with all partners across Greater Lincolnshire to influence and share intelligence in the advancement of the existing four Final Proposals that are currently known to be in development.

8.5 The Council would not ‘hold the pen’ on writing its own final submission, rather, it would play a facilitative role in all, with further assessment and decision-making opportunities for members in September and November as to which, if any, of the four proposals could be supported by the Council.

8.6 Of the three options, it was considered that this was the most feasible and preferred option. Support was indicated by members in attendance at the LGR briefing held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June that this was the preferred option.

Fig. 3 Key Risks and opportunities for option 2

| Finance & Resource   | Public Service Reform   | Collaboration & Engagement   | Governance   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocation of resources or finances necessary to develop evidence to promote the interest of WL communities &amp; businesses</li> <li>Will still need to allocate funding for transitional &amp; set up costs for the future organisation</li> <li>Will have a good oversight of emerging proposals, to support the assessment of finance and resource implications on WLDC</li> <li>Opportunity to access some of the enabling funding allocated to Greater Lincolnshire to work up proposals, however unlikely to be able to claim a full 5<sup>th</sup> share</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides an opportunity to collaborate &amp; share good practice</li> <li>Ability to promote WL priorities within each proposal</li> <li>Influence the design of new public services, using WL cases studies to support opportunities i.e. DFG budgets &amp; prevention</li> <li>Allow WL to promote strong place leadership principles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows WLDC to better understand the impact of all of the current proposals on WL</li> <li>Can advocate across all proposals for WL communities &amp; businesses</li> <li>Engagement on WL priorities can be included in broader engagement strategies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to influence option development around democratic coverage</li> <li>Enables further WL decision making opportunities over the next 5 months &amp; keeps the Councils options open</li> <li>Can share risk and mitigation strategies on key service areas</li> </ul> |

#### 8.7 Option Three – ‘Directive Engagement & Full Submission’ The Council develop it’s own Final Proposal and work up a full

## business case which accords with the requirements of the Governments criteria

This final option would see the Council 'hold the pen' and submit its own proposal to government in November 2025. Should members choose this option a further decision is required from Full Council as to which proposal to develop into a final submission.

*Fig. 4 Key Risks and opportunities for option 3*

| Finance & Resource  | Public Service Reform   | Collaboration & Engagement  | Governance  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant allocation of resources &amp; finance to enable the final assessment &amp; then working up of WL final proposal</li> <li>• Will still need to allocate funding for transitional &amp; set up costs for the future organisation</li> <li>• Full oversight &amp; control of emerging proposals, to inform the assessment of finance and resource implications on WLDC</li> <li>• Some potential challenges around full oversight of financial modelling for services led by upper tier authorities, such as social care</li> <li>• Able to request a 5<sup>th</sup> share of the enabling fund allocated to Greater Lincolnshire (Approx. £71.5k)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WL priorities at the heart of the proposal</li> <li>• Lead the design of new public services, however, knowledge gaps may restrict cases studies used to support opportunities for reform</li> <li>• WL strong place leadership principles at the heart of the submission</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited oversight of other proposals &amp; impact on WL</li> <li>• Advocacy for WL limited to just our proposal</li> <li>• WL to lead all engagement with communities both within WL and across the wider GL area</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the option development around democratic coverage</li> <li>• WL lead all decisions around the proposal right up to submission – may require additional meetings &amp; decision points beyond those scheduled</li> </ul> |

8.8 Given the short time frame left (five months), the extensive work and associated cost, in the region of £200 - £300 thousand pounds required to meet the government's criteria in full, it is not considered feasible for the Council to pursue this option.

## 9.0 Finance & Resource implications

9.1 Whether or not the Council plays an active role in LGR, there will be a requirement to develop specific evidence either in support of a final proposal, or in order to understand the impacts and implications any final proposals submitted by other councils will have on West Lindsey. This is necessary in order to begin the work required to transition West Lindsey services into the new unitary authority.

9.2 This evidence will be developed in such a way that it will support the Council's priorities and ensure the needs of West Lindsey residents, businesses and stakeholders can be well represented across each of the proposals, as well as specifically influencing public sector service reform proposals. Further the evidence can be used to support the implementation of any new unitary once the decision on the final geography has been made by Government.

9.3 The exact extent of the evidence, resource and financial implications has not yet been fully scoped however it is estimated that a sum of £50,000 will be required which will be approved in line with financial procedure rules, to support and facilitate the Council's involvement in the 4 Final Proposal's currently being considered.

9.4 As well as facilitating the development of the 4 Final Proposals, any data and evidence commissioned will be done so for the dual purpose of supporting the Council's response to the Final Submission



requirements in the short term, but also longer term in supporting the Council's corporate priorities and helping to shape the priorities of the new unitary council with replace West Lindsey District Council.

- 9.5 Council will receive updates on commitment and spend, as well as reporting on the outcomes and recommendations of that work in due course.
- 9.6 Finally, whilst the resource allocation will support the initial work involved to deliver a position for the Final Submission date of 28th November 2025. There will be implications for the Council's own resources as a result of LGR and the requirements for policy development, implementation and service transformation which will need to be considered as part of the broader staffing structure. This will be considered in a future paper.

## **10.0 Summary**

- 10.1 In considering the contents of the Interim Plan Feedback letter, Council is asked to note the government's feedback and requirements for the development of the Final Proposal submission on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025, specifically:

- Fully appraised whole area options which supports devolution and the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral County Combined Authority (GLCCA)
- Robust evidence base & financial modelling to demonstrate long term sustainability of future unitary organisations
- Delivers high quality public services through innovative service reform
- Clear evidence and positive risk mitigation where proposals recommend service disaggregation, particularly in relation to social care and other high risk and high-cost services
- Include evidence of thorough engagement and strong community voice
- Demonstration how the new organisation will maintain close links to the community

- 10.2 The 'supportive engagement' option has been recommended acknowledging that there remains a number unknown and untested elements of each of the 4 Final Proposals.

- 10.3 It is anticipated that each of the 4 Final Proposals will need further detailed work and evidence to meet the assessment criteria. In order to do this each proposal will need to be able to demonstrate reliance on robust data and financial modelling, support through feedback from residents and stakeholders across the whole Greater Lincolnshire area and be formally supported by organisations that are either in other administrative areas, such as Rutland in Leicestershire or those areas who have chosen not to engage in LGR.

- 10.4 As such the opportunity for the Council to work with partners promoting the 4 Final Proposals to shape and influence inputs and considerations is appropriate. This also allows the Council time to refine thinking around priorities which promote the best outcomes for residents and business of West Lindsey, particularly around quality service provision, appropriate levels of democratic representation and maintaining good local linkages between a new larger unitary organisation and the community it serves.
- 10.5 Acknowledging there remains much work to be done both by the Council, and across Greater Lincolnshire to prepare a Final Proposal submission by November 2025, Council is asked to support the recommendations laid out in this report to allow work to take place across all four Final Proposals, including the development of a bespoke evidence base to support the Council's priorities and promote the best interests of the West Lindsey district.





# Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Jim McMahon OBE MP**

*Minister of State for Local Government and  
English Devolution*  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Your reference:

Our reference:

To: Leaders of two-tier councils and  
unitary councils in Lincolnshire

Boston Borough Council  
City of Lincoln Council  
East Lindsey District Council  
Lincolnshire County Council  
North Kesteven District Council  
South Holland District Council  
South Kesteven District Council  
West Lindsey District Council  
North East Lincolnshire Council  
North Lincolnshire Council

5 February 2025

Dear Leaders

This Government has been clear on our vision for simpler, more sustainable, local government structures, alongside a transfer of power out of Westminster through devolution. We know that councils of all political stripes are in crisis after a decade of decline and instability. Indeed, a record number of councils asked the government for support this year to help them set their budgets.

This new government will not waste this opportunity to build empowered, simplified, resilient and sustainable local government for your area that will increase value for money for council taxpayers. Local leaders are central to our mission to deliver change for hard-working people in every corner of the country through our Plan for Change, and our councils are doing everything they can to stay afloat and provide for their communities day in, day out. The Government will work closely with you to deliver these aims to the most ambitious timeline.

I am writing to you now to formally invite you to work with other council leaders in your area to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation, and to set out further detail on the criteria, guidance for the development of proposals, and the timeline for this process. A formal invitation with guidance for the development of your proposals is attached at Annex A. This invitation sets out the criteria against which proposals will be assessed.

## **Developing proposals for reorganisation**

We expect there to be different views on the best structures for an area, and indeed there may be merits to a variety of approaches. Nevertheless, it is not in council taxpayers' interest to devote public funds and your valuable time and effort into the development of multiple proposals which unnecessarily fragment services, compete against one another, require lengthy implementation periods or which do not sufficiently address local interests and identities.

The public will rightly expect us to deliver on our shared responsibility to design and implement the best local government structures for efficient and high-quality public service delivery. We therefore expect local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area to which this invitation is issued, rather than developing competing proposals.

This will mean making every effort to work together to develop and jointly submit one proposal for unitary local government across the whole of your area. The proposal that is developed for the whole of your area may be for one or more new unitary councils and should be complementary to devolution plans. It is open to you to explore options with neighbouring councils in addition to those included in this invitation, particularly where this helps those councils to address concerns about their sustainability or limitations arising from their size or boundaries or where you are working together across a wider geography within a strategic authority.

I understand there will be some cases when it is not possible for all councils in an area to jointly develop and submit a proposal, despite their best efforts. This will not be a barrier to progress, and the Government will consider any suitable proposals submitted by the relevant local authorities.

### **Supporting places through change**

It is essential that councils continue to deliver their business-as-usual services and duties, which remain unchanged until reorganisation is complete. This includes progress towards the Government's ambition of universal coverage of up-to-date local plans as quickly as possible. To support with capacity, I intend to provide some funds for preparing to take forward any proposal, and I will share further information later in the process.

Considering the efficiencies that are possible through reorganisation, we expect that areas will be able to meet transition costs over time from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.

The default position is that assets and liabilities remain locally managed by councils, but we acknowledge that there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices. Where that is the case, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation, and Commissioners should be engaged in these discussions. We will continue to discuss the approach that is proposed with the area.

I welcome the partnership approach that is being taken across the sector to respond to the ambitious plans set out in the White Paper. My department will continue to work closely with the Local Government Association (LGA), the District Councils Network, the County Councils Network and other local government partners to plan how best to support councils through this process. We envisage that practical support will be needed to understand and address the key thematic issues that will arise through reorganisation, including managing service impacts and opportunities for the workforce, digital and IT systems, and leadership support.

### **Timelines and next steps for interim plans and full proposals**

We ask for an interim plan to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025, in line with the guidance set out in the attached Annex. My officials will provide feedback on your plan to help support you to develop final proposals.

I will expect any full proposal to be submitted **by 28 November**. If I decide to implement any proposal, and the necessary legislation is agreed by Parliament, we will work with you to move to elections to new 'shadow' unitary councils as soon as possible as is the usual arrangement in the process of local government reorganisation.

Following submission, I will consider any and all proposals carefully before taking decisions on how to proceed. My officials are available throughout to discuss how your reorganisation and devolution aspirations might work together and what support you think you might need to proceed.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to work together to put local government in your area on a more sustainable footing, creating simpler structures for your area that will deliver the services that local people and businesses need and deserve. As set out in the White Paper, my commitment is that clear leadership locally will be met with an active partner nationally.

I am copying this letter to council Chief Executives. I am also copying this letter to local Members of Parliament and to the Police and Crime Commissioners for Lincolnshire and Humberside.

Yours sincerely,



**JIM MCMAHON OBE MP**

Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

### INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS FOR A SINGLE TIER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in exercise of his powers under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act'), hereby invites any principal authority in the area of the county of Lincolnshire, to submit a proposal for a single tier of local government.

This may be one of the following types of proposal as set out in the 2007 Act:

- Type A – a single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned
- Type B – a single tier of local authority covering an area that is currently a district, or two or more districts
- Type C – a single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned, or one or more districts in the county; and one or more relevant adjoining areas
- Combined proposal – a proposal that consists of two or more Type B proposals, two or more Type C proposals, or one or more Type B proposals and one or more Type C proposals.

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 to 3:

1. Any proposal must be made by **28 November 2025**.
2. In responding to this invitation an authority must have regard to the guidance from the Secretary of State set out in the Schedule to this invitation, and to any further guidance on responding to this invitation received from the Secretary of State.
3. An authority responding to this invitation may either make its own proposal or make a proposal jointly with any of the other authorities invited to respond.

Signed on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.



**F KIRWAN**

A senior civil servant in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

5 February 2025

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Guidance from the Secretary of State for proposals for unitary local government.**

#### **Criteria for unitary local government**

**1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.**

- a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.
- b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.
- c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.
- d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.

**2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.**

- a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.
- b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.
- c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.
- d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.
- e) For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.
- f) In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.

**3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.**

- a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.
- b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.
- c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.

**4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.**

- a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.
- b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.
- c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.

**5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.**

- a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor.
- b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.
- c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.

**6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.**

- a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.
- b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.

**Developing proposals for unitary local government**

The following matters should be taken into account in formulating a proposal:

### **Boundary Changes**

- a) Existing district areas should be considered the building blocks for your proposals, but where there is a strong justification more complex boundary changes will be considered.
- b) There will need to be a strong public services and financial sustainability related justification for any proposals that involve boundary changes, or that affect wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, due to the likely additional costs and complexities of implementation.

### **Engagement and consultation on reorganisation**

- a) We expect local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area to which this invitation is issued, rather than developing competing proposals.
- b) For those areas where Commissioners have been appointed by the Secretary of State as part of the Best Value Intervention, their input will be important in the development of robust unitary proposals.
- c) We also expect local leaders to engage their Members of Parliament, and to ensure there is wide engagement with local partners and stakeholders, residents, workforce and their representatives, and businesses on a proposal.
- d) The engagement that is undertaken should both inform the development of robust proposals and should also build a shared understanding of the improvements you expect to deliver through reorganisation.
- e) The views of other public sector providers will be crucial to understanding the best way to structure local government in your area. This will include the relevant Mayor (if you already have one), Integrated Care Board, Police (Fire) and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority, local Higher Education and Further Education providers, National Park Authorities, and the voluntary and third sector.
- f) Once a proposal has been submitted it will be for the Government to decide on taking a proposal forward and to consult as required by statute. This will be a completely separate process to any consultation undertaken on mayoral devolution in an area, which will be undertaken in some areas early this year, in parallel with this invitation.

## Interim plans

An interim plan should be provided to Government on or before **21 March 2025**. This should set out your progress on developing proposals in line with the criteria and guidance. The level of detail that is possible at this stage may vary from place to place but the expectation is that one interim plan is jointly submitted by all councils in the area. It may be the case that the interim plan describes more than one potential proposal for your area, if there is more than one option under consideration. The interim plan should:

- a) identify any barriers or challenges where further clarity or support would be helpful.
- b) identify the likely options for the size and boundaries of new councils that will offer the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, along with indicative efficiency saving opportunities.
- c) include indicative costs and arrangements in relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.
- d) include early views as to the councillor numbers that will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of your cities, towns, rural and coastal areas, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.
- e) include early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.
- f) include a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with your further plans for wide local engagement to help shape your developing proposals.
- g) set out indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team as well as any arrangements proposed to coordinate potential capacity funding across the area.
- h) set out any voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward and to help balance the decisions needed now to maintain service delivery and ensure value for money for council taxpayers, with those key decisions that will affect the future success of any new councils in the area.





Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

3 June 2025

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

### **INTERIM PLAN FEEDBACK: LINCOLNSHIRE, NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE**

To the Chief Executives of:

Boston Borough Council

City of Lincoln Council

East Lindsey District Council

Lincolnshire County Council

North Kesteven District Council

South Holland District Council

South Kesteven District Council

West Lindsey District Council

North East Lincolnshire Council

North Lincolnshire Council

#### **Overview**

Thank you for submitting your interim plans. The amount of work from all councils is clear to see. For the final proposal(s), each council can submit a single proposal for which there must be a clear single option and geography and, as set out in the guidance, we expect this to be for the area as a whole; that is, the whole of the area to which the 5 February invitation was issued, not partial coverage.

Our aim for the feedback on interim plans is to support areas to develop final proposal(s). This stage is not a decision-making point, and our feedback does not seek to approve or reject any option being considered.

The feedback provided relates to the following interim plans submitted by Lincolnshire councils:

- The City of Lincoln Council's proposed interim plan.
- The letter and interim plan in relation to Local Government Re-organisation in Greater Lincolnshire from East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council.
- The interim plan submitted by Lincolnshire County Council and North Lincolnshire Council.

- The report submitted by North East Lincolnshire Council setting out the preferences of each political grouping regarding local government reorganisation.
- The interim proposals jointly prepared by North Kesteven District Council and South Kesteven District Council and letter of formal recognition from Rutland County Council.
- The interim plan submission from West Lindsey District Council.
- The letter from Boston Borough Council.

We have provided feedback on behalf of central government. It takes the form of:

1. A summary of the main feedback points,
2. Our response to the specific barriers and challenges raised in your plans,
3. An annex with more detailed feedback against each of the interim plan asks.

We reference the guidance criteria included in the invitation letter throughout, a copy can be found at [LETTER: LINCOLNSHIRE, NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE AND NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE – GOV.UK](#). Our central message is to build on your initial work and ensure that the final proposal(s) address the criteria and are supported by data and evidence. We recommend that final proposal(s) should use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference.

We welcome the work that has been undertaken to develop local government reorganisation plans for Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. This feedback does not seek to approve or discount any option, but provide some feedback designed to assist in the development of final proposal(s). We will assess final proposal(s) against the guidance criteria provided in the invitation letter and have tailored this feedback to identify where additional information may be helpful in enabling that assessment. Please note that this feedback is not exhaustive and should not preclude the inclusion of additional materials or evidence in the final proposal(s). In addition, your named area lead in MHCLG, Alex Jarvis, will be able to provide support and help address any further questions or queries.

### **Summary of the Feedback:**

We have summarised the key elements of the feedback below, with further detail provided in the Annex.

1. We welcome the steps you have taken to prepare interim plans and the intentions set out in some of the plans for future joint working (as per criterion 4).
  - a. **Effective collaboration between all councils will be crucial; we would encourage you to continue to build strong relationships and agree ways of working, including around effective data sharing. This will support the development of a robust shared evidence base to underpin final proposal(s).**
  - b. **It would be helpful if final proposal(s) use the same assumptions and data sets.**

- c. It would be helpful if your final proposal(s) set out how the data and evidence supports all the outcomes you have included, and how well they meet the assessment criteria in the invitation letter.
  - d. You may wish to consider an options appraisal that will help demonstrate why your proposed approach in the round best meets the assessment criteria in the invitation letter compared to any alternatives.
- 2. Each council can submit a **single** proposal for which there must be a clear single option and geography. Councils can and are encouraged to submit joint proposals. We know there can be different views on the best structures for an area, and indeed there may be merits to a variety of approaches. **We would encourage you to work together to reduce the number of proposals under development for the invitation area – this is in the best interests of your valuable time and resources.**
- 3. We note that some proposals submitted cover varying geographies, and that one option under consideration includes Rutland which is not part of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) area and sits outside of your invitation area. **As noted in the invitation, it is open to you to explore options with neighbouring councils in addition to those included in the invitation. Where final proposal(s) have implications for a neighbouring invitation area you should consider the impact of your proposals on the whole of the neighbouring invitation area. In addition, we would expect to see engagement and effective data-sharing between council(s) in the invitation area and council(s) in the neighbouring invitation area that are directly impacted. If one or more council(s) in a neighbouring invitation area support the proposal(s) put forward, we would also expect to see this reflected in proposal(s) submitted in response to the letter to the neighbouring invitation area, including a clear single option and geography covering the whole of the neighbouring area, not partial coverage.**
- 4. In some of the options you are considering populations that would be above or below 500,000. As outlined in the Statutory Invitation guidance and in the English Devolution White Paper, we outlined a population size of 500,000 or more – this is a guiding principle, not a hard target – we understand that there should be flexibility, especially given our ambition to build out devolution and take account of housing growth, alongside local government reorganisation. **All proposals, whether they are at the guided level, above it, or below it, should set out the rationale for the proposed approach clearly.**
- 5. Some of your plans include options which would involve boundary changes. In relation to potential boundary changes, as the invitation letter sets out boundary changes are possible, but “existing district areas should be considered the building

blocks for proposals, but where there is a strong justification more complex boundary changes will be considered”.

The final proposal must specify the area for any new unitary council(s). If a boundary change is part of your final proposal(s), then you should be clear on the boundary proposed, which could be identified by a parish or ward boundary, or if creating new boundaries by attaching a map.

Proposals should be developed having regard to the statutory guidance which sets out the criteria against which proposals will be assessed (including that listed above).

If a decision is taken to implement a proposal, boundary change can be achieved alongside structural change. Alternatively, you could make a proposal for unitary local government using existing district building blocks and consider requesting a Principal Area Boundary Review (PABR) later. Such reviews have been used for minor amendments to a boundary where both councils have requested a review – such as the recent Sheffield/Barnsley boundary adjustment for a new housing estate. PABRs are the responsibility of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England who will consider such requests case-by-case.

6. We welcome the consideration of the implications and benefits of unitarisation for GLCCA in proposals. Across all local government reorganisation proposals further information would be helpful on the implications of the proposed options for the governance arrangements of GLCCA. It would also be helpful to outline how each option would interact with GLCCA and best benefit the local community. We would also recommend consulting with the new Mayor of GLCCA. We note that some of the interim plans include Rutland, which is not part of the GLCCA area. For proposals that include this option, we would welcome further information on the impact this would have on GLCCA.

### **Response to specific barriers and challenges raised**

Please see below our response to the specific barriers and challenges that were raised in your interim plans.

#### **1. Direct Ministerial engagement with Leaders**

We note your request for direct engagement with Ministers as you develop your proposals.

We are committed to supporting all invited councils equally while they develop their proposal(s). Alex Jarvis has been appointed as your MHCLG point person and is ready to engage with the whole area and support your engagement with government as a whole.

#### **2. Capacity funding**

You asked for adequate capacity funding to support final proposal development and support to ensure that the benefits of devolution can be realised alongside local government reorganisation.

£7.6 million will be made available in the form of proposal development contributions, to be split across the 21 areas. Further information will be provided on this funding shortly.

### **3. Implementing the Funding Review and protection from the impacts of funding reform**

You requested that Government introduce the Fairer Funding Review in order to help councils deliver local government reorganisation.

Government recently consulted on funding reforms and confirmed that some transitional protections will be in place to support areas to their new allocations.

Further details on funding reform proposals and transition measures will be consulted on after the Spending Review in June. We will not be able to provide further clarification on future allocations in the meantime but are open to discussing assumptions further if we can assist in financial planning.

### **4. Review of the boundaries of GLCCA**

We note that several interim plans either described the uncertainty arising from the Government's intention to review the boundaries of GLCCA or requested that Government abandon the boundary review entirely so that local government reorganisation can proceed on an agreed footprint.

The letter sent to Greater Lincolnshire leaders in November 2024 set out that we consider this devolution agreement the first step in Greater Lincolnshire's journey on devolution. It also stressed that together we would review the effectiveness of governance arrangements across the Humber and Lincolnshire to deliver successful economic and public service outcomes to ensure that the benefits of devolution are being maximised for yourselves and your communities; it is essential this review continues.

We would welcome further assessment in the final proposal(s) of how the proposed unitary structures would work with the new Combined Authorities across the Humber and Lincolnshire area to the benefit of local communities.

### **5. Long-term and ongoing financial pressures.**

We note the issue raised about long-term financial pressures on local authorities and the potential implications of local government reorganisation.

In terms of transitional costs, as per the invitation letter, we expect that areas will be able to meet transition costs over time from existing budgets, including from the flexible

use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.

It would be helpful if detail on the councils' financial positions and further modelling is set out in detail in the final proposal(s).

## **6. Timescales**

You expressed concern about the timelines set for local government reorganisation and noted the time pressures on discussions to reach a local consensus on a preferred option ahead of the November deadline.

The deadline for submissions has been designed to give areas as much time as possible to develop their final proposal(s). The timescales for submission are generally more generous than in previous reorganisation exercises. We recognise your hard work to develop interim plans and encourage you to continue to work together to build strong relationships and further agree ways of working, so as to develop your final proposal(s) for November.

As above, Alex Jarvis has been appointed as your MHCLG point person and will be ready to engage with the whole area, to support you to enable this work to continue at pace.

## **7. Structures**

With regard to GLCCA, you raised the process of transition from existing two-tier arrangements to new constituent councils post local government reorganisation.

We expect that unitarisation will mean that GLCCA will become a combined authority, following reorganisation and that all of the unitary councils within the combined authority's footprint would become constituent members. We will set out further detail on the process of this transition in due course, and are happy to discuss this with you further. As above, across all local government reorganisation proposals further information would be helpful on the implications of the proposed options for the governance arrangements of GLCCA.

## **8. Internal Drainage Boards**

You noted that funding arrangements for the Internal Drainage Boards remain a significant concern for a number of authorities within Greater Lincolnshire.

Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) play a crucial role managing water levels and flood risk. MHCLG recognises the need for a long-term solution and is working with Defra to explore potential approaches. In line with the previous two years, the Government announced at the provisional 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement that it will provide £3 million in funding for authorities most impacted by Internal Drainage Board Levies. This grant has been uplifted at the final settlement to £5 million in recognition of the continued increases in IDB levies.

## **9. Clarity around the application of criteria**

You asked for clarity on the application of criteria, especially around population size, to ensure you are working within the parameters of the Government's guidance.

As above, the population size of 500,000 or more is a guiding principle, not a hard target – we understand that there should be flexibility, especially given our ambition to build out devolution and take account of housing growth, alongside local government reorganisation. All proposals, whether they are at the guided level, above it, or below it, should set out the rationale for the proposed approach clearly.

The criteria are not weighted. Our aim for this feedback is to support areas to develop final proposals that address the criteria and are supported by data and evidence. Decisions on the most appropriate option for each area will be judgements in the round, having regard to the guidance and the available evidence.

#### **10. Speed of decision-making**

You asked for government to commit to providing meaningful feedback within a timeframe that enables you to progress your work as efficiently as possible.

This is our feedback to support you to develop your final proposal(s). As above, Alex Jarvis has been appointed as your MHCLG point person and will be ready to engage with the whole area to enable this work to continue at pace.

#### **11. The allocation of a named civil servant that will lead discussions locally**

As above, Alex Jarvis has been appointed as your MHCLG point person and will be ready to engage with the whole area, to enable this work to continue at pace.

**ANNEX A: Detailed feedback on criteria for interim plan**

| <b>Ask – Interim Plan Criteria</b>   | <b>Feedback</b>  |
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| <p>Identify the likely options for the size and boundaries of new councils that will offer the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, along with indicative efficiency saving opportunities.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>1 c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement</p> <p>and</p> <p>2 a-f) - Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks</p> <p>and</p> <p>3 a-c) Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens</p> | <p>We welcome the initial thinking on the options for local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire and recognise that this is subject to further work. We note the local context and challenges outlined in the proposals and the potential benefits that have been identified for the options put forward. Your plans set out your intention to undertake further analysis, and this further detail and evidence on the outcomes that are expected to be achieved of any preferred model would be welcomed.</p> <p>For the final proposal(s), each council can submit a single proposal for which there must be a clear single option and geography and as set out in the guidance we would expect this to be for the area as a whole; that is, the whole of the area to which the 5 February invitation was issued, not partial coverage.</p> <p>For final proposal(s) you may wish to consider an options appraisal against the criteria set out in the letter to provide a rationale for the preferred model against alternatives.</p> <p>Where there are proposed boundary changes, the proposal should provide strong public services and financial sustainability related justification for the change.</p> <p>Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs, including future housing growth plans. All proposals should set out the rationale for the proposed approach.</p> <p>Given the financial pressures you identify it would be helpful to understand how efficiency savings have been considered alongside a sense of place and local identity.</p> <p>We recognise that the options outlined in the interim plans are subject to further development. In final proposal(s) it would be helpful to include a high-level financial assessment which covers transition costs and overall forecast operating costs of the new unitary councils. We will assess final proposals against the criteria in the invitation letter. Referencing criteria 1 and 2, you may wish to consider the</p> |



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|  | <p>following bullets that it would be helpful to include in a final proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high-level breakdowns, for where any efficiency savings will be made, with clarity of assumptions on how estimates have been reached and the data sources used, including differences in assumptions between proposals</li> <li>• information on the counterfactual against which efficiency savings are estimated, with values provided for current levels of spending</li> <li>• a clear statement of what assumptions have been made and if the impacts of inflation are taken into account</li> <li>• a summary covering sources of uncertainty or risks, with modelling, as well as predicted magnitude and impact of any unquantifiable costs or benefits</li> <li>• where possible, quantified impacts on service provision, as well as wider impacts</li> </ul> <p>We recognise that financial assessments are subject to further work. The bullets below indicate where further information would be helpful across all options. As per criteria 1 and 2 it would be helpful to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• additional data and evidence to set out how your final proposal(s) would enable financially viable councils, including identifying which option best delivers value for money for council taxpayers</li> <li>• further detail on potential finances of new unitaries, for example, funding, operational budgets, potential budget surpluses/shortfalls, total borrowing (General Fund), and debt servicing costs (interest and MRP); and what options may be available for rationalisation of potentially surplus operational assets</li> <li>• clarity on the underlying assumptions underpinning any modelling e.g. assumptions of future funding, demographic growth and pressures, interest costs, Council Tax, savings earmarked in existing councils' MTFs</li> <li>• financial sustainability both through the period to the creation of new unitary councils as well as afterwards</li> </ul> <p>We welcome the thinking you have already begun around mitigating risk regarding social care and aligning with Integrated Care Boards, the thinking around the impact different models will have on social</p> |
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|  | <p>care and, in some instances, alternative models to deliver social care services across Lincolnshire.</p> <p>For proposals that would involve disaggregation of services, we would welcome further details on how services can be maintained, such as social care, children's services, SEND, homelessness, and for wider public services including public safety. Under criterion 3c you may wish to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how each option would deliver high-quality and sustainable public services or efficiency saving opportunities</li> <li>• what would the different options mean for local services provision, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do different options have a different impact on SEND services and distribution of funding and sufficiency planning to ensure children can access appropriate support, and how will services be maintained?</li> <li>• what is the impact on adults and children's care services? Is there a differential impact on the number of care users and infrastructure to support them among the different options?</li> <li>• what partnership options have you considered for joint working across the new unitaries for the delivery of social care services?</li> <li>• do different options have variable impacts as you transition to the new unitaries, and how will risks to safeguarding to be managed?</li> <li>• do different options have variable impacts on schools, support and funding allocation, and sufficiency of places, and how will impacts on school be managed?</li> <li>• what impact will there be on highway services across the area under the different approaches suggested?</li> <li>• what are the implications for public health, including consideration of socio-demographic challenges and health inequalities within any new boundaries and their implications for current and future health service needs. What are the implications for how residents access services and service delivery for populations most at risk?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>We welcome the desire to maximise the opportunity for public service reform, and it would be helpful for you to provide more details on your plans so we can explore how best to support your efforts.</p> |
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| <p>Include indicative costs and arrangements in relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>2) Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.</p> <p>2d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.</p> | <p>We welcome the indicative views on the potential costs and the type of activity that they will fund.</p> <p>As per criterion 2, the final proposal(s) should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• within this it would be helpful to provide more detailed analysis on expected transition and/or disaggregation costs and potential efficiencies of proposals. This could include clarity on methodology, assumptions, data used, what year these may apply and why these are appropriate</li> <li>• detail on the potential service transformation opportunities and invest-to-save projects from unitarisation across a range of services - e.g. consolidation of waste collection and disposal services, and whether different options provide different opportunities for back-office efficiency savings?</li> <li>• where it has not been possible to monetise or quantify impacts, you may wish to provide an estimated magnitude and likelihood of impact</li> <li>• summarise any sources of risks, uncertainty and key dependencies related to the modelling and analysis</li> <li>• detail on the estimated financial sustainability of proposed reorganisation and how debt could be managed locally</li> </ul> <p>We welcome the work you have done to date and recommend that all options and proposals should use the same assumptions and data sets or be clear where and why there is a difference (linked to criterion 1c).</p> |
| <p>Include early views as to the councillor numbers that will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs</p>  | <p>We welcome the early views provided in some proposals for councillor numbers, which we will be sharing with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).</p> <p>There are no set limits on the number of councillors although the LGBCE guidance indicates that a compelling case would be needed for a council size of more than 100 members.</p>  |

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| <p>of your cities, towns, rural and coastal areas, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>6) New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</p>                   | <p>New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</p> <p>Additional details on how the community will be engaged, specifically how the governance, participation and local voice will be addressed to strengthen local engagement and democratic decision-making would be helpful.</p> <p>In final proposal(s) we would welcome detail on your plans for neighbourhood-based governance, the impact on parish councils, and the role of formal neighbourhood partnerships and area committees.</p>  |
| <p>Include early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>5a-c) New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.</p>  | <p>We welcome your consideration of the devolution implications.</p> <p>Further information would be helpful on the implications of the proposed local government reorganisation options for the governance arrangements in GLCCA. It would also be helpful to outline how each option would interact with GLCCA and best benefit the local community. We note that some of the interim plans include Rutland, which is not part of the GLCCA area. For proposals that include this option, we would welcome further information on the impact of this would have on GLCCA.</p> <p>You should also consider how your options will affect cross boundary working, especially in relation to pan-Humber arrangements and joint working with the Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority (HEYCA). We would also recommend consulting with the new Mayor of both GLCCA and HEYCA.</p> |
| <p>Include a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with your further plans for wide local engagement to help shape your developing proposals.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>6) New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine</p> | <p>We welcome your update against criterion 6, setting out your engagement thus far, and note your plans for further engagement. It is for you to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way with residents, voluntary sector, local community groups and councils, public sector providers, such as health, police and fire, and local businesses to inform your final proposal(s).</p> <p>For proposals that involve disaggregation of services, you may wish to engage in particular with those residents who could be affected.</p> <p>It would be helpful to see detail that demonstrates how local ideas and views have been incorporated</p>  |

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| <p>opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</p> <p>a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.</p> <p>b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.</p>   | <p>into the final proposal(s), including those relating to neighbouring authorities where relevant.</p>  |
| <p>Set out indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team as well as any arrangements proposed to coordinate potential capacity funding across the area.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>2d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.</p> | <p>We welcome the indicative costs set out in some plans and recognise that work is ongoing to consider the costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team.</p> <p>We would welcome further detail in your final proposal(s) over the level of cost and the extent to which the costs are for delivery of the unitary structures or for transformation activity that delivers additional benefits.</p> <p>As above, £7.6 million will be made available in the form of proposal development contributions, to be split across the 21 areas. Further information will be provided on this funding shortly.</p> |
| <p>Set out any voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward and to help balance the decisions needed now to maintain service delivery and ensure value for money for council taxpayers, with those key decisions that</p>   | <p>We welcome the commitments made to work together to develop proposals that are in the best interest of the people of Lincolnshire (see criterion 4).</p> <p>Effective collaboration between all councils will be crucial; areas will need to build strong relationships and agree ways of working, including around effective data sharing.</p> <p>This will enable you to develop a robust shared evidence base to underpin final proposal(s) (see criterion 1c).</p>  |

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| <p>will affect the future success of any new councils in the area.</p> <p>Relevant criteria:</p> <p>4 a-c) Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.</p> | <p>If your final proposal(s) include a neighbouring council(s) from outside of the invitation area then significant engagement between council(s) in the invitation area with any council(s) outside the invitation area that are directly impacted would be helpful during the development of proposal(s), including through effective data-sharing.</p> <p>Should Rutland County Council wish to be included in proposals submitted by a council(s) in Lincolnshire, we would expect collaboration between councils in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire to further develop proposals, and to ensure that the implications of both areas' plans are fully considered within proposal(s) submitted by council(s) in each area.</p> <p>Each council in an area can submit a single proposal for which there must be a clear single option and geography. Councils can and are encouraged to submit joint proposals. We would encourage you to work together and reduce the number of proposals under development for the invitation area.</p> |
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## Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Chief Executives of councils in  
Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North  
East Lincolnshire

Beatrice Andrews and Ruth Miller  
*Co-Deputy Directors, Local Government  
Reorganisation*

### **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government**

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

3 June 2025

Dear Chief Executives,

The Minister of State for Local Government and Devolution is today providing an update to Parliament on Local Government Reorganisation. This will include the allocation of £7.6 million for proposal development contributions and the publication of a summary of all feedback on interim plans. After the Written Ministerial Statement has been made, the Local Government Reorganisation page on gov.uk will be updated. This letter provides some additional practical information on the allocations.

Each of the 21 areas will receive a flat rate of £135,000, plus an additional 20p per person based on the latest ONS population estimates. The allocation for your area is £357,246. Your area must agree on up to three councils to receive an equal share of the funding and notify your area lead Alex Jarvis [[alexandra.jarvis@communities.gov.uk](mailto:alexandra.jarvis@communities.gov.uk)] accordingly. If you would like a payment in June, we would be grateful if you could let us know by 6 June. For a July payment, please let us know by 13 June. If your area is unable to reach an agreement on up to three councils to receive an equal portion of the fund, we are ready to provide support.

In the Statutory Guidance, the Government has outlined its expectation for all local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively by sharing information to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that benefit the entire area. Ideally, areas should submit their final proposals as a single submission, underpinned by a shared evidence base, which includes all options being put forward by councils. Consequently, the Government expects proposal development contributions to support this effort to build a shared evidence base, including sharing non-public data. This could be supported by a Memorandum of Understanding and a data-sharing agreement. The LGA has published helpful data-sharing principles and a checklist that you could utilise. Shortly, CIPFA and F3 Consulting will also release a template to support the presentation of financial information for proposals. This template, or any future templates are not mandatory, but we expect all areas to agree on the consistent presentation of evidence for their area, recognising it may still be used to support a range of alternative proposals.

## **Feedback and support**

We know you have been seeking further clarity on developing your full proposals. We have provided you with feedback on your interim plans and today the Government is publishing a summary of that feedback. This includes a reiteration of the Government's position that a population size of 500,000 or more is a guiding principle, not a strict target. Government understands the need for flexibility, especially given the ambition to build out devolution and take account of housing growth alongside Local Government Reorganisation. All proposals, whether they are at the guided level, above it, or below it, should set out the rationale for the proposed approach clearly. The approach Government has taken from the outset encourages and allows for councils to determine the right fit for their area. What works in one area may not apply in the same way in another, and so it is right that the process allows for flexibility.

The Government welcomes the steps areas are taking to consider how to maintain strong community voice. Local Government Reorganisation should facilitate better and sustained community engagement and needs a clear and accountable system of local area-working and governance. Neighbourhood Area Committees, led by frontline ward councillors, offer a model of place-based engagement and leadership which maximises the structural efficiencies brought about by Local Government Reorganisation and strengthens localism and community participation across all areas. Neighbourhood Area Committees help councils fulfil their commitments to working in partnership with communities at the neighbourhood level. They can also include other service providers, such as town or parish councillors, when applicable, along with co-opted members from local community organisations.

Areas considering new town or parish councils should think carefully about how they might be funded, to avoid putting further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer. The Government recognises the value that town and parish councils offer to their local communities, but they are independent institutions and are not a substitute for meaningful community engagement and neighbourhood working by a local authority. The Government wants to see every local authority hardwiring local community engagement into their own structures, preferably through neighbourhood Area Committees.

We are committed to collaborating with colleagues across Government, the LGA, and its sector support group, to ensure you have the information, tools, and expertise needed to develop the right solutions for their areas. The Government's goal is to set up new councils for success. Accordingly, if there is further support that you consider should be provided, please do get in touch.

The Government also recognises that developing proposals could distract councils from their essential day-to-day activities. However, residents and businesses depend on councils to deliver crucial services and to continue the efforts needed to establish successful new unitary councils. This is particularly important for advancing local plans to allocate land for new homes. As mentioned in the invitation letters, the Government expects local planning councils to work towards adopting an up-to-date local plan as soon as possible. Local Government Reorganisation should not hinder this vital work, nor should the introduction of the new legal framework for local plan-making later this year or our strategic planning reforms. Significant financial support has already been provided to eligible councils to aid in plan-making, and we encourage councils to utilise additional support available through the Local Government Association's Planning Advisory Service.

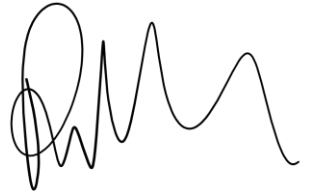


Thank you for your continued commitment to the programme and for the collaborative approach you have taken. We would be grateful if you could share this letter with your Leaders and Police and Crime Commissioner. The Minister will be writing to MPs in your area and to sector bodies. We will also host a webinar later this month, in part as an introduction to new Leaders, as well as providing the opportunity for any questions. You can expect more details to follow shortly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BEA', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**BEATRICE ANDREWS**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RM', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

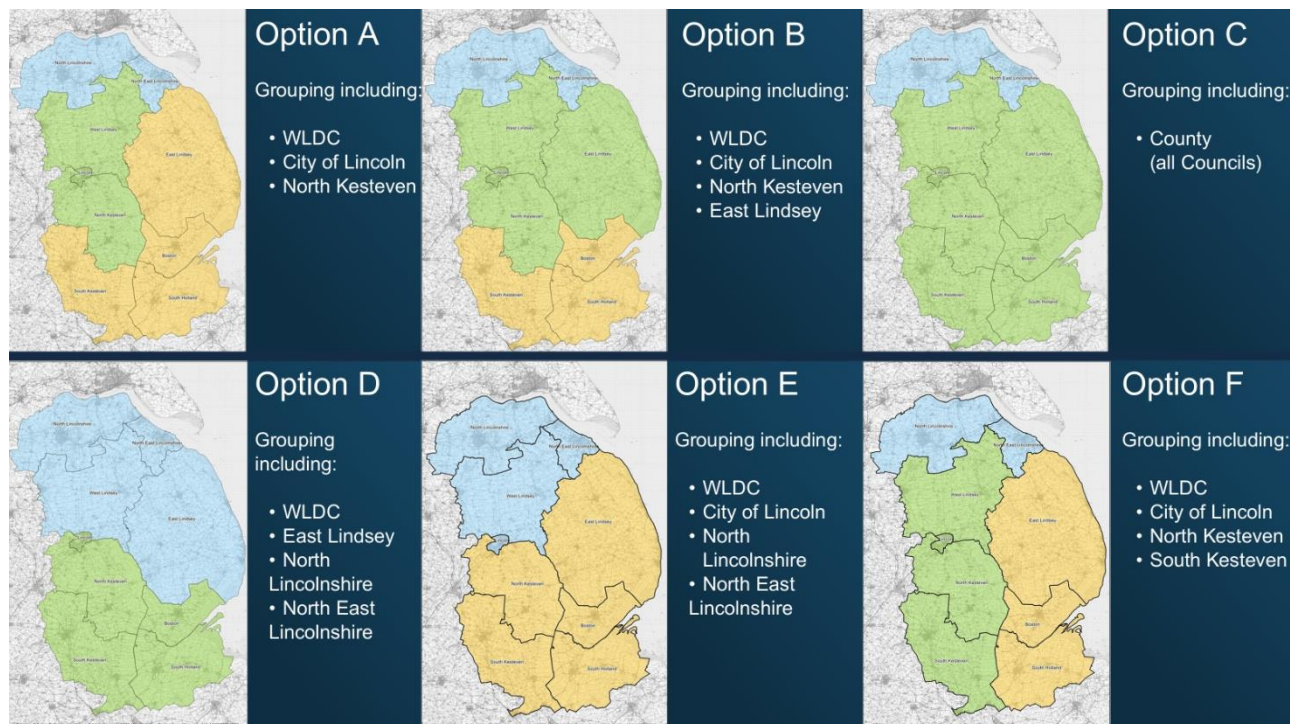
**RUTH MILLER**

**DEPUTY DIRECTORS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

## Appendix D

The 6 Interim Proposal options submitted by West Lindsey District Council on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

A covering letter of support, for options A and E was also submitted, shown in bold below.

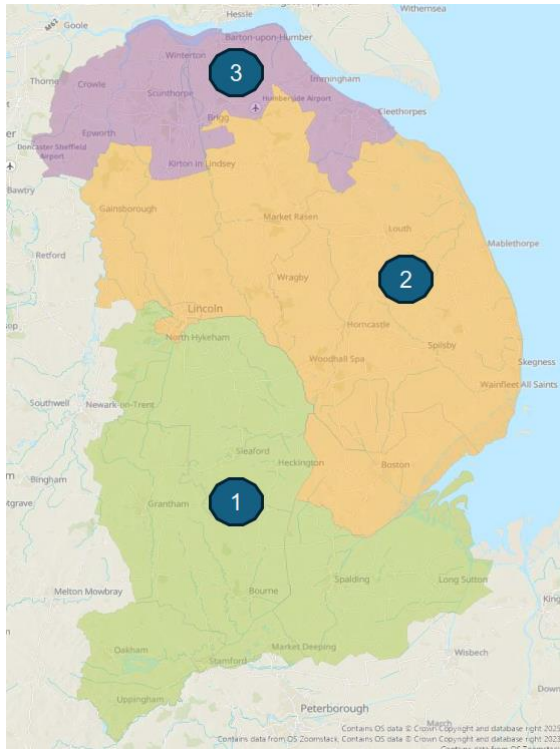




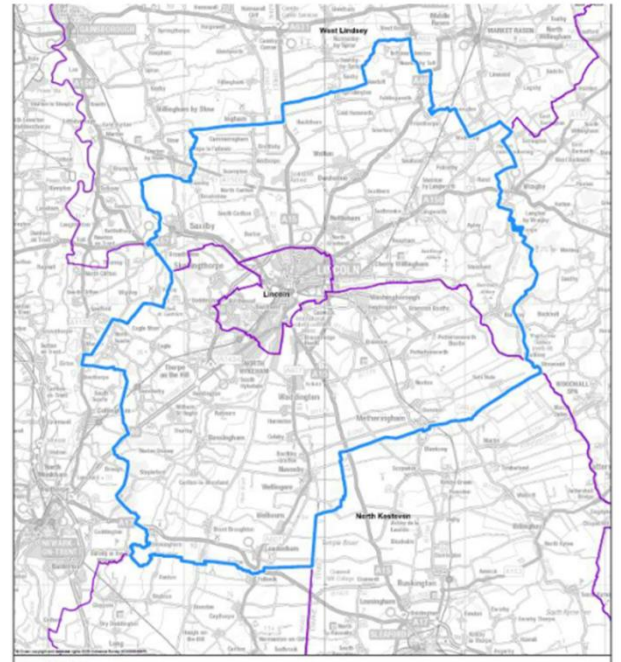
## Appendix 5

Summary of updates from each of the Local Authorities in Greater Lincolnshire as of June 2025. Each update is subject to change as a result of member decisions and is provided as a position at a particular time and not definitive.

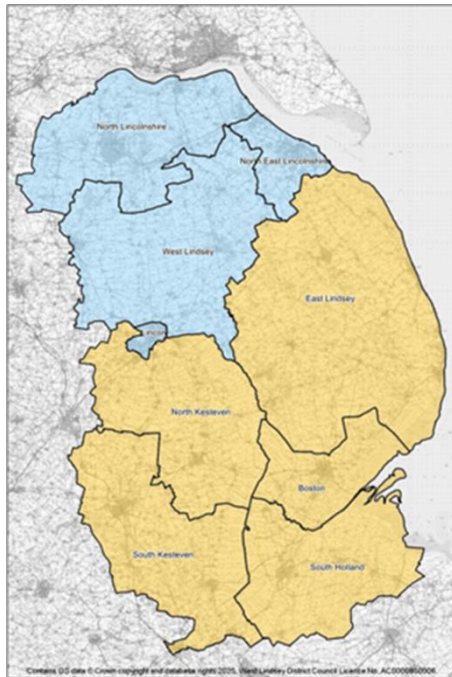
| Council(s)   | Current Position  |
|--|---|
| North Kesteven DC & South Kesteven DC                                      | Continue to develop interim proposal which includes Rutland in Leicestershire into a Final Proposal   |
| South-East Lincolnshire Partnership (Boston, South Holland & East Lindsey) | Boston Borough Council has no current plans to engage in LGR<br>South Holland DC & East Lindsey DC continue to develop South Holland's interim proposal into a Final Proposal   |
| North Lincolnshire Council & North East Lincolnshire Council               | The political position is currently not to engage in LGR, possibly seeking to request to withdraw from the process. A formal decision by each Council to be made in due course. Position unclear regarding data sharing |
| City of Lincoln  | Continuing to develop the Interim Proposal into a Final Proposal  |
| Lincolnshire County Council  | Potentially moving away from the North/South split interim option & pursuing County boundary Interim Proposal into a Final Proposal   |



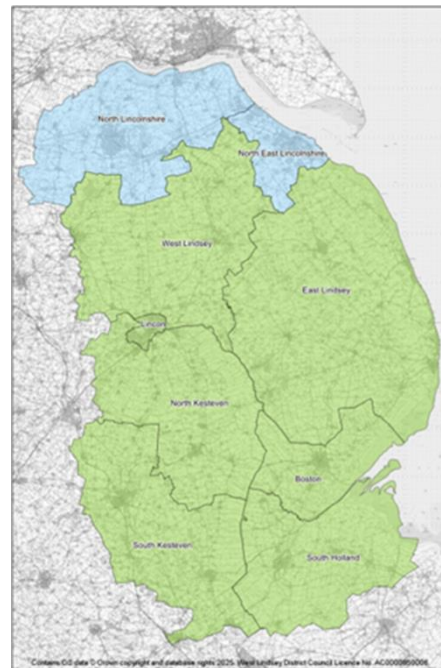
NKDC/SKDC Final Proposal



City of Lincoln Final Proposal



South-East Partnership Final Proposal



Lincolnshire County Council Final Proposal