

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CABINET

**Minutes from the Special Meeting of the Cabinet held on
Wednesday, 19th March, 2025 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Town
Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillor A Beales (Chair)
Councillors M de Whalley, J Moriarty, C Morley, S Ring, J Rust, S Squire and
A Ware

CAB143 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

CAB144 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

As Norfolk County Councillors Councillor Moriarty and Ring declared non pecuniary interests in the Norfolk LGR report, but pointed out that they were not able to influence the decision taken by the Norfolk County Council Cabinet.

CAB145 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

None

CAB146 MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor A Ware attended the meeting.

CAB147 CALLED IN MATTERS

No matters called in.

CAB148 FORWARD DECISIONS

The Forward Decision List was noted.

CAB149 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES

The Joint Panels meeting the previous day had considered the report on Local Government Reorganisation and supported the recommendations.

CAB150 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN NORFOLK

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

The Interim Assistant Director, Transformation and Change presented the report as included in the Agenda and provided background on the Priority Programme, processes carried out to date and timelines for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.

The Interim Assistant Director referred Members to the recommendations as set out within the report which were that the Council's preferred option was the three Unitary model and provided background on the alternative options which had also been considered.

The Interim Assistant Director highlighted the high level appraisal of the options, the criteria from Government and the scoring system used. It was noted that this was a high level appraisal due to the short timescales involved.

Attention was drawn to the positive and useful meeting of the Joint Panels which had been held the previous evening. They made numerous points, and supported the recommendations.

The Chair thanked the Interim Assistant Director for the report and invited questions and comments from Cabinet Members. The following points were raised:

- A well run authority was best value for the tax payer and in a strong financial position.
- The savings of a larger authority were not necessarily as high as shown.
- There was high level joint working already taking place between the district councils.
- Differences in savings put forward by the County Council and Deloitte.
- It was down to the quality of the Management of the organisation.
- The issue of the Mayoral Authority was a discussion to be had at a later date.
- Current county councillors did not feel able to have influence in a large authority. Concern their decision was taken by the County Council Cabinet.
- The fact that savings were proposed by the County Council by not having county elections, but they were now only put off by one year.
- Arguments in favour of reasonable sized unitaries was persuasive.
- Savings proposed were only 1 of 6 criteria, and the weightings were unknown.

- The proposals should be about the place and the community and local engagement.
- The county council's interest payments were harmonised through the council tax and were not new debt.
- Large parts of west Norfolk were a very large distance from Norwich.
- The overall local focus on County services could improve.
- It was useful to have an Independent view going into the discussions without being tied to party persuasions. The Leader had full input to the discussions and attempted to bridge divides between differing views.
- The arguments for the recommendations were driven by the data.
- The proposal was supported by 6 of the 8 Leaders in the County.

Thanks were given to the Leader and the Officers involved in the process for coming to a conclusion whilst working closely with other authorities.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Ware confirmed that following the explanations and briefings given, she supported the recommendations.

As this decision was deemed urgent and could not be deferred, under standing order 12.15, Councillor Long, the Chair of the Corporate Performance Panel had agreed that this decision could not be called in.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the content of the Interim Plan for Local Government Re-organisation in Norfolk report (Appendix B to the report) be noted, alongside the report's conclusion that the three unitary model option scored best overall against the government criteria and is therefore the preferred option for Norfolk.

2) That **the three unitary model** for LGR be endorsed as this Council's preferred option for submission to MHCLG.

3) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader to finalise and submit the Interim Plan to MHCLG on 21st March 2025 based on the endorsement of recommendation 2 above.

4) That following the submission of the Interim Plan and subject to the feedback received from MHCLG, the council, continue to work with the Norfolk Districts to conduct resident and stakeholder engagement on the LGR proposals for Norfolk to inform the full business case.

5) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, for the development of the full business case for LGR in Norfolk to be returned to full Council for approval prior to submission.

Reason for Decision

To respond to the Governments request that the council work with other local authorities in Norfolk to submit proposals for Local Government Reform in Norfolk by 21 March 2025.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am