

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET 19 MARCH 2025 FROM THE JOINT PANEL MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN NORFOLK

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The Interim Assistant Director, Transformation and Change presented the report as included in the Agenda, outlining the processes carried out to date, the timeline for Local Government Reorganisation, the recommendations as contained in the Report and the preferred option which was the three Unitary Model.

The Chair thanked the Interim Assistant Director for the report and invited questions and comments from the Joint Panel Members.

The Leader of the Council addressed the Panel and outlined the process followed to date and reiterated that there was no option to maintain the status quo, so Members should focus on the recommendations as set out in the report.

Questions and comments from Members are summarised below:

- The importance of getting the deal right for local communities, and what was best for the people of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.
- Triplication of resources and the potential to jointly commission services and other options which could be explored to create economies of scale.
- Impact on Council Tax.
- Noted that detail would come later, at this point it was a very high level assessment due to the limited timescale for submission.
- Consideration needed to be given to the number of Councillors to ensure local representation. Noted that Norfolk County Council had recently completed a Boundary Review.
- The population numbers within each Unitary, noting that not many other Unitary Councils already in existence had a population of over half a million.
- The importance of political and local oversight of the shadow Board and the Strategic Authority.
- Ensuring that Parish Councils were involved in the process.
- It was confirmed that the Government discouraged cross boundary authorities in the White Paper.
- Noted that there was ongoing discussions and dialogue with the other District Councils in Norfolk and there would hopefully be a single Norfolk submission to the MHCLG.
- Officers responded to questions relating to debt, assets and staffing, noting that detail would come later on in the process and the financial savings included in the report were indicative at this stage.
- Burden funding was likely to be available from Government, but areas were expected to fund the transition themselves.
- The Assistant Director agreed to forward to Members a briefing note on the Local Plan and the impact of Local Government Reorganisation.

RESOLVED: The Joint Panel supported the recommendation to Cabinet as set out below.

That Cabinet recommend to Full Council:

1. To note the content of the Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk report (Appendix B), 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. To endorse the **three unitary model for LGR as this Council's preferred option for submission to MHCLG**
3. To delegate authority 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.