

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2025 FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2025

CAB63: URGENT BUSINESS - FINAL PROPOSAL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN NORFOLK

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RESOLVED: That under Standing Order 7.2, the Final Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk be considered as Urgent Business at this meeting. It is required to be taken as an urgent decision due to the requirement to submit the final proposal to the Secretary of State by 26th September 2025.

The Chair invited the Chief Executive to provide a summary of the proposals and then invited questions and comments from Cabinet, as summarised below.

In response to questions from Councillor de Whalley, it was explained that the proposal had been cautious and realistic in terms of savings to be achieved. The Deputy Chief Executive provided detail of the savings to be achieved from the three proposals being submitted across Norfolk.

In response to questions from Councillor Lintern, the Chair explained that Leaders had agreed that some services should be kept separate across the three proposed Unitary Authorities so that they could properly reflect local need, however opportunities to work together in the future could be considered, especially where joint working had worked well in the past, for example the Joint Museums Committee.

Councillor Lintern referred to preventative services and the Chair explained that the report analysed the demand, but the detail to come with it would be a matter for the new Unitary to consider. The Leader highlighted opportunities available with ever advancing technology and AI.

In response to a further question from Councillor Lintern, the Chair explained that proposals for a King's Lynn Town Council would be progressed and Full Council would be asked at their meeting in October to consider establishing a Committee to take proposals forward. The Chair outlined the steps that would need to be taken to proceed, including community consultation.

The Chair commented that the proposal being considered was sound, but it would be up to those elected to the new Unitary to implement Policy. He highlighted that the continuity and expertise of staff would be important to take forward to the new Unitary in order to support Elected Members.

Councillor Moriarty reiterated the importance of the input of officers and had confidence that they would support elected Members going forward.

Councillor Rust commended the collegiate and cross-party response but queried why James Wild MP was not included in the list of supporters. The Leader explained that the

MP had wanted to see the Final Submission before putting his name to it and liaison work was ongoing now that the submission had been published.

Councillor Rust commended the high level of engagement which had taken place and the Leader thanked Councillor Rust for her support with the roadshows and engagement sessions.

Councillor Rust commented that she was pleased to see that Marmot had been embedded into the final submission and needed to be pushed out regardless of which model Government decided on. The Chair reiterated the importance of Marmot and the preventative agenda.

Councillor Rust referred to the submission put forward by Norfolk County Council and stated that it had a 'business as usual' narrative and this was not what the people of Norfolk wanted or needed, they needed change and improvement to how services were delivered and this would be achieved through the three Unitary model.

Councillor Morley highlighted and commended the wide range of consultation which had been carried out and showed that local connection and local services was important to residents, whilst remaining financially sustainable.

Councillor Squire commented that a West Unitary was the best for residents as many residents did not feel well supported by Norfolk County Council and the County was huge with all areas having different needs. She commented further that place based, person centred services were crucial within the Community. Councillor Squire also made reference to Joint working arrangements which worked well and could continue.

The Chair explained that the Districts had a good working relationship and would continue to look at opportunities to work together where it benefited residents.

In terms of the new Authority it was explained that the Shadow Authority would work to make sure that the new Authority was Safe and Legal on Vesting Day. After Vesting Day the New Authority would need to implement the required Policies and Procedures.

Councillor Lintern asked about the role of Parish Councils and it was explained that Parish Councils had been kept updated on the proposals and they wouldn't be directly impacted by the proposals and mitigation work would be carried out as required.

Councillor Ring provided an overview of the importance of the preventative agenda and the benefits it would bring to the lives of residents, society and financially.

RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL:

1. Notes the content of this report and the 'Future Norfolk: People, Place, Progress – Final Proposal for a Three-Unitary Model for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk' (Final Proposal) annexed to this report.
2. Endorses the Final Proposal for a three-unitary model for local government reorganisation in Norfolk.

3. Delegates to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, the authority to make any necessary non-material amendments to the Final Proposal and to submit the Final Proposal to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To respond to the statutory invite from the Secretary of State to submit a final proposal for local government reorganisation in Norfolk.

This proposal offers a compelling and credible pathway to reform that is financially sound, strategically aligned, and rooted in local identity. It positions Norfolk to deliver better outcomes for residents, strengthen democratic leadership, and contribute meaningfully to the Government's wider devolution and public service transformation agenda. It is believed that this proposal has the potential to deliver lasting benefits for communities across Norfolk, and to support a model of governance that is fit for the future.