

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 5 January 2026 at the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 10.00 am

Committee

Members Present:

Cllr L Shires (Deputy Chair)
Cllr A Brown
Cllr A Varley
Cllr J Boyle

Cllr T Adams (Chair)
Cllr J Toye
Cllr L Withington

Officers in

Attendance:

Chief Executive, Democratic Services Manager and Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr H Blathwayt
Cllr C Ringer

91 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

92 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

93 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

94 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Chair advised members that they could ask questions as matters arose.

95 MHCLG STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN NORFOLK - A RESPONSE BY NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Chair introduced this item. He explained that, following the submission of final proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Norfolk in September 2025, the Government was now undertaking a process of statutory consultation on the proposals. Key local stakeholders, including District Councils, were invited to comment on the three submissions made to the Government for the introduction of unitary councils in Norfolk.

The Chair explained that three proposals for unitary local government had been

submitted. Norfolk County Council had submitted a proposal for a single unitary authority, South Norfolk DC had proposed a two unitary model and the remaining six Norfolk Councils (North Norfolk DC, Great Yarmouth BC, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk BC, Breckland DC, Broadland DC and Norwich City Council), had developed and submitted a three unitary model. NNDC's draft response to the Government consultation was attached as an appendix to the report and set out in detail its objections to the proposals for both single and two unitary proposals, whilst outlining the support for the three unitary model.

The Chair then outlined the proposal for a three unitary model for Norfolk in more detail, explaining that the distinct geographies of the county – urban, rural and coastal - were fully reflected and that 'one size' would not fit all and could cause an imbalance in terms of service provision, economic and housing growth.

He went onto speak about concerns relating to the impact on democratic representation for the single and two unitary proposals, with large numbers of councillors meeting in a single place whilst facilitating a greater overall reduction in the number of elected members, resulting in a perception of remoteness and inaccessibility for both residents and local businesses.

The Chair went onto say that the other two proposals lacked detail around implementation, something which was covered in considerable detail in the three unitary model. He said that the other proposals seemed to rely on service cuts in the initial years to make the numbers 'stack up'. In contrast, the three unitary model set out a vision for financial sustainability from day one based on service improvement and transformation, through linking existing statutory services. The other proposals were based on centralisation rather than localism. In addition, three unitaries would provide a greater voice for the County when the new Strategic Authority was created.

The deadline for submitting responses to the consultation was 11th January and he urged members to encourage residents and local stakeholders to respond.

The Chair invited members to speak:

Cllr J Toye, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, thanked the Chair for his succinct summary and said that he hoped central Government would recognise that the key issue was about representation and bringing decisions to local people and not removing them from them, adding that the three unitary proposal was the only model to provide true representation.

Cllr A Varley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Net Zero, thanked officers for their hard work in preparing the final submission and the response to the consultation and said that they had worked extremely hard to meet the criteria set out by the Government. He said that no one was supportive of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) but that the three unitary model went into more detail than the other two proposals and it provided the best outcome for North Norfolk and its residents. The Chair thanked him and added that in the coming years there would be increasing pressure on social care and this was of huge concern and it was vital that a plan for social care was developed and the three unitary model had the ability to do this, alongside financial sustainability.

Cllr L Withington, Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing, agreed with the Chair's comments on social care and said that this was an opportunity to break down existing systems and ensure that they related much more closely to the County's

regional demographics, adding that NNDC had experience of working in partnership to bring services together.

The Chair thanked members for their comments and acknowledged that it was not a high profile issue for most residents but said it was important to encourage them to engage as much as possible. He said that the postponement of elections had been a central Government decision and understandably had caused concern with the public.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED

To approve the Council's corporate response to the statutory consultation process being carried out by the Government in respect of proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Norfolk (attached at Appendix A to the report)

Reason for the decision:

To respond to the statutory consultation process being carried out by the Government in respect of proposals for local government reorganisation in Norfolk.

96 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

97 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 10.13 am.

Chairman