

MHCLG statutory consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk

A response by North Norfolk District Council

Executive Summary	<p>Following the submission of final proposals for local government reorganisation (LGR) in Norfolk at the end of September 2025; the Government, through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), is now undertaking a process of statutory consultation on the proposals, inviting key local stakeholders to comment on the three submissions made to the Government for the introduction of unitary councils in Norfolk moving forward.</p> <p>This report is a covering report, with a detailed appendix as a draft response to the Government consultation; which Cabinet is asked to agree as the Council's formal submission to the statutory consultation process.</p>
Options considered	<p>Option:1: Cabinet is asked to agree / propose amendments to the draft response (as included in this agenda) and approve its submission as the District Council's response to the statutory consultation process on Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk.</p> <p>Option 2: The Council agrees not to submit a response to the statutory consultation (not recommended).</p>
Consultation(s)	<p>Internal consultation has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leader• Deputy Chief Executive• Section151 Officer• Monitoring Officer• Communications Manager
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <p>1. Comments on the draft response to the statutory consultation as attached as an Appendix to this report, proposes any amendments and approves its submission to Government as the Council's corporate response to the statutory consultation process.</p>
Reasons for recommendations	<p>To respond to the statutory consultation process being carried out by the Government in respect of proposals for local government reorganisation in Norfolk.</p>

Background papers	The Government's statutory consultation process which can be found at - Proposals for local government reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk - GOV.UK
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Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr. Tim Adams (Leader)
Contact Officer	Steve Blatch – Chief Executive

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	The 2025/26 Corporate Plan Action Plan prepared in March 2025 included a specific action relating to Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation – Action 25 refers
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	The proposals for local government reorganisation in Norfolk will require the District Council to provide some funding in support of transition costs. At the present time such costs are not budgeted for or known. Thought will be given to this as part of the 2026/27 budget process.
Council Policies & Strategies	Not Applicable

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	Yes
Has the public interest test been applied	Not Applicable
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Full Council 24 th September 2025 - (Public Pack) Agenda Document for Council, 24/09/2025 18:00

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper (Dec 2024) and Norfolk's inclusion in the Devolution Priority Programme (early 2025), Norfolk's county and district councils gave consideration to the options for unitary local government in the County against six criteria published by the Government.
- 1.2 Between February and September six District Councils (Breckland, Broadland, Great Yarmouth, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, North Norfolk and Norwich City) developed a three-unitary model. South Norfolk District Council proposed and developed a two-unitary model; and Norfolk County Council proposed a single unitary authority which would cover the whole of Norfolk. All three proposals

were developed in detail over the summer period and submitted to the Government by the invitation deadline of 26th September 2025.

2.0 Current position

- 2.1 Following an initial review of the proposals during October, the Government announced on 19th November 2025 that it would undertake a process of statutory consultation inviting comments from key stakeholders and the public on the three proposals – with the consultation running across the Christmas and New Year period, and closing on Sunday 11th January 2026.
- 2.2 As an existing authority, North Norfolk District Council is invited to submit comments on the three proposals for LGR in Norfolk as part of the statutory consultation process.
- 2.3 A draft response for Cabinet's consideration is therefore attached as an appendix to this report and Cabinet is asked to propose any amendments or additions to the draft response and then approve its submission as the Council's corporate response to the consultation.

3.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial or resource implications for the authority in submitting a response to the statutory consultation.
- 3.2 There will however be costs associated with the implementation phase of any LGR model approved for Norfolk and this will require the District Council to provide some funding in support of transition costs. At the present time such costs are not budgeted for or known. Thought will be given to this as part of the 2026/27 budget process.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

This consultation is a significant opportunity to share the Council's views on the three proposals submitted to MHCLG for LGR. The inevitable costs of LGR are not yet defined but due consideration will be given to this demand in the 2026/27 budgeting process.

4.0 Legal Implications

- 4.1 The legal process governing local authority restructuring is set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Once a decision is taken on which model to implement in Norfolk, MHCLG will prepare the necessary legislation – the Structural Changes Order (SCO) – for Parliamentary approval. The SCO will establish the new single tier of local government in Norfolk and make provision to dissolve the predecessor councils.
- 4.2 SCOs place a duty on all impacted councils to consult and co-operate with each other, take any steps necessary to prepare for the transfer, and provide any information that any of those councils may reasonably request to enable the implementation of the approved model of new councils.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

The attachment to this report sets out the proposed response by the Council to the Government's statutory consultation on local government reorganisation. A response is not obligatory, or binding upon the Council, but will enable the Council to have its views considered in the process, prior to a decision being made.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 The Secretary of State can decide to take forward proposals that are submitted by areas with or without modification. Furthermore, the Government has the power to initiate and implement LGR, even if local councils choose not to propose changes.
- 5.2 It is therefore considered important for the District Council to submit detailed comments through the statutory consultation process which reflect the perceived strengths and shortcomings of the different proposals for unitary councils in Norfolk and the implications of each proposal on North Norfolk's coastal and rural communities.

6.0 Net ZeroTarget

- 6.1 There are no Net Zero implications for the Council in responding to this statutory consultation process.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 7.1 There are no Equality, Diversity & Inclusion for the Council in responding to this statutory consultation process.

8.0 Community Safety issues

- 8.1 **8.1 There are Community Safety issues** for the Council in responding to this statutory consultation process.

9.0 Recommendation:-

That Cabinet:

Comments on the draft response to the statutory consultation as attached as an Appendix to this report, proposes any amendments and approves its submission to Government as the Council's corporate response to the statutory consultation process.