Cabinet

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Monday, 24 November 2025 at 4.00 pm
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Supplement

4. **Local Government Reorganisation** (Pages 3 - 694)
To consider the final LGR proposal for submission to government.

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01476 406080
Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
www.southkesteven.gov.uk

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SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet
Monday, 24 November 2025

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of the Council,
Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development

Local Government Reorganisation – Proposal for Greater Lincolnshire

Report Author

Charles James, Policy Officer

Charles.James@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the draft proposal for submission to Government relating to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The Chairman of Council on 27 October 2025 has agreed that this decision of Cabinet was not subject to call-in. This was due to the time constraints between this meeting and the final deadline for submission to Government by 28 November 2025.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Consider the resolution of the Full Council meeting of 20 November 2025 relating to the draft proposal for Local Government Reorganisation for Greater Lincolnshire.**

2. **Approve the attached proposal for Local Government Reorganisation for submission to Government by 28th November 2025.**

3. **Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any minor changes to the submission document prior to the final submission.**

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

1.1 The financial impacts of local government reorganisation are significant and wide reaching.

Whilst high level financial impacts have been sought, the exact impacts cannot be fully captured until work begins in earnest in terms of direction. Certainly, the likely efficiencies have been captured but not in granular detail, which at this stage is not possible.

Based upon independent financial analysis led by the Council's s151 Officer and senior finance professionals from North Kesteven District Council, the financial case for the creation of a unitary authority incorporating the existing boundaries of South and North Kesteven and South Holland is a financially positive proposal.

However, throughout the modelling work it has been recognised that the modelling is underpinned by a number of assumptions and caveats that could compromise the financial outcomes that are put forward. The single biggest assumption is the medium-term financial outlook of each Authority as the proposals are being put forward ahead of the Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Reset – both of which of having the potential to fundamentally change the financial outlook of most Councils. A multi-year settlement has been promised although this will not be received as a provisional settlement until some weeks after the LGR proposal has been submitted.

The modelling has also been undertaken at pace and is therefore relatively high level and based on a number of assumptions with respect to the potential of service efficiencies, transformation and the potential financial gains arising from economies of scale. Similarly, the additional costs of removing two tier responsibility and the disaggregation of upper tier services have been undertaken at a high level. PwC (Pricewaterhouse Coopers) has been challenged on the

assumptions throughout the process to ensure the final modelling proposal is as robust as possible. At the request of both North and South Kesteven Councils, a series of 'stress test' modelling was undertaken on a number of material assumptions to ensure the financial outcomes remain a positive return.

The analysis indicates that there will be up front one-off transitional costs which will need to be funded from all Councils that are included in the submission, although the basis for the sharing of these costs has not yet been determined.

Therefore, if the proposal proceeds, a dedicated LGR Reserve will need to be established in order to provide funding for the Council's agreed share of the upfront costs. At this stage it is not possible to confirm the amount of the reserve allocation but the Council should bear in mind this future requirement when considering the 2026/27 Budget Framework and medium-term financial planning.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 The submission of a proposal for a single tier of local government under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 is an executive function.

1.3 All authorities in the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area have taken legal advice regarding the status of North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council. Under current legislation, the government is unable to directly merge two or more existing unitary authorities. It is expected that future legislation will resolve this issue. Presently however, a proposal to merge North Lincolnshire with North East Lincolnshire without involvement of other authorities in the Lincolnshire County Council area would risk legal non-compliance. A proposal to merge North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire with parts of the Lincolnshire County Council area would be permissible, but there is limited economic or public service rationale for such a jurisdiction.

1.4 The link to the 'exemption from call-in notice' agreed with the Chairman of Council can be accessed:

https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Local%20Government%20Reorganisation%20-%20Exemption%20from%20c&ID=462&RPID=14390124

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

2.1. On 5 February 2025, the Government issued statutory invitations to all Councils in the 21 two-tier areas across England, and smaller unitaries, to develop proposals for unitary (single status) local government.

2.2. Initial proposals for reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire were to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025. The Council worked with North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) to develop the initial Interim Proposal. Full Council endorsed the initial proposal on 18 March 2025, after which it was submitted to the Government.

2.3. On 3 June 2025, feedback was received from Government; this directed each council to develop and submit a full proposal to government by 28 November 2025.

2.4. The submission of a proposal for a single tier of local government under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 is an executive function.

2.5. On 20 November 2025, Full Council considered a proposed Submission. Council resolved to recommend the proposed Submission to the Cabinet.

2.6. The Government has advised that it will consider all the options submitted in the 20 remaining two tier areas. A decision has recently been made for the Surrey Invitation Area.

2.7. In the Statutory Invitation, the Government outlined the following six criteria against which proposals will be assessed. These criteria are not weighted.

1) *A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.*

2) *Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.*

3) *Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.*

4) *Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.*

5) *New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.*

6) *New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.*

The Proposed Submission

2.8. The Council has worked in partnership with North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) to develop a full draft proposal to Government (the Submission). The draft Submission sets out in detail the Council's case for reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire **(Appendix A)**.

2.9. The Council has also collaborated with all authorities within the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area and with Rutland County Council (RCC) to share data and information to facilitate the development of reorganisation proposals.

2.10. The Council has sought to minimise the costs of developing the full proposal and has used existing internal resources and expertise wherever possible. Nevertheless, it was recognised that, in some areas, external expertise and support would add value to deliver a robust case to government. These included: financial modelling of the proposal costs and financial benefits: independent resident engagement; and the development and assessment of approaches for the most critical county services including Children's Services and Adult Social Care.

2.11. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) were engaged to undertake financial baselining and modelling. The principal financial assumptions are detailed in the draft Submission at **Appendix A**. Further detailed outputs are presented in **Appendices E-H**.

2.12. PeopleToo are consultants who specialise in transformation in the local government sector. They were engaged jointly with City of Lincoln and the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP) councils to establish financial baselines and core assumptions (**Appendix I**).

2.13. The Cratus Group were commissioned to deliver a programme of public engagement during September and October 2025. This consisted of an online survey, which received over 5,500 responses, and online resident focus groups. The Council delivered seven pop-up events across the four market towns of South Kesteven, including attendance at the Bourne, Grantham and Stamford markets and the Deepings Community Centre. The full results of the engagement exercise are presented as **Appendix L**.

2.14. Kath O'Dwyer was commissioned to develop an approach for Children's Services **(Appendix J)**. Kath O'Dwyer is the former Chief Executive of St Helens Borough Council and Cheshire East Council. As a senior leader of Children's Services and a former Director of Children's Services, Kath O'Dwyer has led or supported the improvement of multiple local authority Children's Services, including work in authorities previously under government scrutiny or intervention. She has also served as a National Director for Ofsted.

2.15. Kath O'Dwyer also delivered analysis on the critical role of culture and people in reorganisations - drawing on her experience as a senior leader in Cheshire after its reorganisation **(Appendix N)**.

2.16. Gate One were commissioned to develop an approach for Adult Social Care using the proposed southern unitary (Unitary 1) as a deep dive case study **(Appendix K)**.Gate One have been recognised by the Financial Times as a leading management consultancy with particular specialisms in the public sector and life sciences.

Next Steps and Timeline

2.17. The Government aims to undertake formal stakeholder consultation on compliant proposals in 2026.

2.18. It is possible that some proposals will be assessed as non-compliant under the terms of Statutory Invitation and these would not proceed to full consultation.

2.19. The Government is expected to make a decision on its preferred proposal for Greater Lincolnshire reorganisation before the parliamentary recess of summer 2026.

2.20. During this period, all the councils in Greater Lincolnshire will continue to work collaboratively to planning the delivery phase of LGR, albeit without knowing the new geographies until July 2026.

2.21. Elections to 'shadow' unitary Councils are expected to take place in May 2027. A shadow authority is elected to carry out the preparatory functions of a new unitary council until the day it formally comes into being which is known as 'Vesting Day' and is anticipated to be 1 April 2028. All existing councils across Greater Lincolnshire would continue to operate and deliver services until Vesting Day.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. The proposed submission includes an options appraisal and recommends that Council endorses the proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire creating two new Unitary Authorities in the Lincolnshire County area:

- Unitary Authority 1 being comprised of the geographies of the districts of North Kesteven, South Holland and South Kesteven.
- Unitary Authority 2 being comprised of the geographies of Boston Borough, Lincoln City and the districts of East and West Lindsey.
- The existing unitaries of North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire would remain unchanged, with optionality for a future merger.

3.2. The full and detailed rationale for the proposed configuration and alignment with LGR criteria is set out in the proposed Submission (Appendix A).

3.3. Supplementary information on the financial modelling, the approach to critical county services and the results of the public engagement exercises are available in Appendices E-L.

3.4. On 20 November 2025, Full Council considered the proposed Submission and resolved to recommend the proposed Submission to the Cabinet.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The Council has no obligation to submit a full LGR proposal to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and there would be no legal penalty for not doing so. However, the Government has stated that LGR will proceed whether or not any proposal is submitted. Therefore, if the Council does not submit a proposal, it will miss a unique opportunity to shape and influence local government and the future delivery of the strategic interests of South Kesteven's residents.

4.2 A full options appraisal is contained within the proposed Submission at (Appendix A).

4.3 The Kesteven Interim proposal submitted in March 2025, included the geography of Rutland CC in 'Unitary 1'. This was based primarily for economic alignment in accordance with government's mission for growth.

The inclusion of Rutland county has been considered and rejected during the options appraisal for the following reasons:

- Rutland is outside the Lincolnshire Invitation area. It is in the Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Invitation Area. Proposals which cross over different invitation areas are possible, but will require a very strong rationale. The inclusion of Rutland into Unitary 1 would involve a very significant risk of being regarded as non-compliant with the statutory requirements.
- A cross-invitation area proposal ought to have the clear commitment of all parties and, thus far, there has been no clear indication of support from Rutland CC.
- There is further risk from uncertainty on the degree of modelling required by MHCLG on impacts to the neighbouring Invitation Area.
- The inclusion of Rutland within a proposal for Lincolnshire would require clear proposals for the remainder of the Leicestershire and Rutland invitation area.
- Rutland currently has separate provision of several key services including Fire and Rescue. Clear arrangements for the delivery of these services would need to be included within the proposals.

- Rutland is not part of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority and therefore the inclusion would arguably not meet Criterion 5 which requires that requires that proposals support devolution.

Compliance would be a matter of MHCLG discretion. MHCLG has communicated that if Rutland CC were to be included, it would have to be as part of the core proposal, not as an additional variation. It is considered that the risk of noncompliance is too high for a proposal that includes Rutland CC to be submitted. Therefore, the Rutland option is not taken forward.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 The Government has invited councils to submit full proposals for LGR by 28 November 2025. The draft Submission was considered by Full Council on 20 November 2025. Council voted to recommend the draft Submission to the Cabinet.

6. Consultation

6.1. A public engagement exercise has been undertaken (see section 2.10). Full consultation has not taken place because the Council is not permitted to consult on the options. The Government is expected to undertake a formal consultation on shortlisted options in the Spring of 2026.

6.2. Extensive engagement has been undertaken to inform the LGR proposal, which is detailed in the proposed Submission (Appendix A).

6.3. Three sets of briefings for all elected Members have been held since March 2025 (July, September and November – six sessions in total).

6.4. The South Kesteven Youth Council has considered LGR in two sessions since March. On 6 November 2025, the Youth Council voted to endorse the proposed submission.

6.5. Since March 2025, seven all-staff LGR briefings have been delivered. The Chief Executive has delivered on-site presentations by to the Waste and Housing Repairs teams. A dedicated intranet site has been set up and LGR has been a standing item on all staff communications. UNISON's South Kesteven branch have praised the high level of engagement with staff.

6.6. Two rounds of briefings (nine sessions in total) have been delivered to Town and Parish Councils across the district.

6.7. The Leaders and Chief Executives of North and South Kesteven Districts have engaged with key stakeholders and partners across Greater Lincolnshire,

including MPs, the Mayor, the Police & Crime Commissioner, the NHS, the Armed Forces and business.

7. Appendices

- Appendix A – NKSK Submission to Government for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire
- Appendix B – LGR Submission Appendix 1 Greater Lincolnshire Facts and Figures
- Appendix C – LGR Submission Appendix 2 Literature Review
- Appendix D – LGR Submission Appendix 3 Economic Data Tables
- Appendix E – LGR Submission Appendix 4a PwC Financial Assumptions
- Appendix F – LGR Submission Appendix 4b PwC Financial Baselining and Modelling Executive Summary
- Appendix G – LGR Submission Appendix 4c Financial Sensitivity Analysis
- Appendix H – LGR Submission Appendix 4d PwC Council Tax Harmonisation
- Appendix I – LGR Submission Appendix 4e PeopleToo Financial Baseline Assumptions
- Appendix J – LGR Submission Appendix 5a Approach for Children's Services
- Appendix K – LGR Submission Appendix 5b Approach for Adult Social Care
- Appendix L – LGR Submission Appendix 6 LGR Engagement Report
- Appendix M – LGR Submission Appendix 7 Future Councillor Numbers – background data
- Appendix N – LGR Submission Appendix 8 Organisational Culture in Local Government Reorganisation
- Appendix O – LGR Submission Appendix 9 Partnership Working with Lincolnshire Police

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NOVEMBER 2025

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BEST4GreaterLincolnshire



PREPARED BY:

North Kesteven DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire

Appendix A

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4. Financial Baselining and Modelling
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   b. PwC Financial Baselining and Modelling Executive Summary
   c. PwC Financial Sensitivity Analysis
   d. PwC Council Tax Harmonisation
   e. PeopleToo Financial Baseline Assumptions
5. Approach for Children's Services and Adult Social Care
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   b. Adult Social Care
6. LGR Engagement Report
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9. Partnership Working with Lincolnshire Police

SECTION 1

1

1.1 Foreword

1.2 Executive Summary

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Foreword

from the LEADERS of NORTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL & SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

"Any proposed model must balance the practical need for effective service delivery with the emotional and cultural importance of local identity and trust, ensuring that reform strengthens rather than distances the connection between councils and the people they serve."

Not our words, but the summation of the words of the 5,556 residents who took the time to complete our LGR engagement survey.

On behalf of North Kesteven and South Kesteven District Councils, we confidently set out a proposal, focused on people and place and underpinned by firm and sustainable financial foundations, for local government reorganisation within Greater Lincolnshire.

BEST4GreaterLincolnshire

We propose a four unitary model:

- a new unitary will reunify the districts of North and South Kesteven along with South Holland,
- a second new unitary will reunify the districts of East and West Lindsey along with the neighbouring authorities of Boston Borough and City of Lincoln.

We envisage a future merger of the two existing unitary councils on the south bank of the Humber to complete a Greater Lincolnshire of three unitary councils of relatively even population. However, we respect the current intention of North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire councils to remain as separate unitary councils and consequently we make no proposal to change their current status.







Our proposal is both practical and pragmatic. Respecting the geography of this hugely diverse area and bringing local government closer to residents, not further away. Keeping local government – **local**.

Our proposal fully meets the six criteria set by Government. Underpinned by a robust evidence base and rooted in reality; we will not promise undeliverable figures but will deliver financially sustainable unitary councils fit for the future. Focused on the things that our residents have said that matter:

- strong local economies creating meaningful jobs,
- strong, safe and flourishing communities,
- housing to meet the needs of future generations,
- a healthy and sustainable environment,
- locality based service delivery.

All our services, including adult social care, children's services, housing and homelessness services and waste collection will have a local feel and focus, designed and managed at the right scale to ensure resilience, high quality and value-for-money. Our proposal builds on strong working relationships with police and fire, proposing a combined Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner model for Lincolnshire which keeps current working geographies in place.

Our proposal supports the aspirations for broader devolution for Greater Lincolnshire. It will create evenly-sized new unitaries to deliver balanced representation and ensure a Greater Lincolnshire genuinely "for all". No other proposal for Greater Lincolnshire balances efficiency, identity, fairness, size, tradition and representation. We avoid the potential fragility of overly small units and prevent the remoteness of larger ones.

Our proposal builds on partnerships, builds on devolution, and aligns with the aspirations of the White Paper. It will deliver a safe and legal transition and prepare the foundations for genuine transformation and wider public sector reform.

We commend this proposal as the BEST4GreaterLincolnshire:

- **B**oosting economic growth and housing delivery
- **E**mpowering local communities
- **S**ecuring a sustainable financial future
- **T**ransforming the way we do business.



Cllr Richard Wright
Leader North Kesteven
District Council

Cllr Ashley Baxter
Leader South Kesteven
District Council

Executive Summary

North Kesteven and South Kesteven District Councils' submission sets out a comprehensive vision to shape Greater Lincolnshire's future through local government reorganisation (LGR) and delivers on the key objectives for the Government's White Paper published last December. Our proposal is a robust and evidence-based case for two new unitary councils within the footprint of the existing district councils and retaining as now the two existing unitaries on the south bank of the Humber. Both new unitaries use existing district boundaries as their building blocks.

Invitation Area

The seven existing Lincolnshire districts:

- **Boston Borough Council,**
- **East Lindsey District Council,**
- **City of Lincoln Council,**
- **North Kesteven District Council,**
- **South Holland District Council,**
- **South Kesteven District Council,**
- **West Lindsey District Council.**

Lincolnshire County Council.

The two existing unitary councils of North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.

We have carefully considered the alignment of North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire councils. We see a strong theoretical logic in those councils, both having populations of less than 175,000, to merge into a larger single unitary authority thus complementing the two new unitaries proposed within Lincolnshire.

However, for two primary reasons this has been discounted. Firstly there is no provision in current legislation that allows the councils to propose this. Secondly in the short to medium term there are economic risks of national significance in distracting from those authorities' strategic role within the Humber region in shaping industrial restructuring and in accelerating growth.



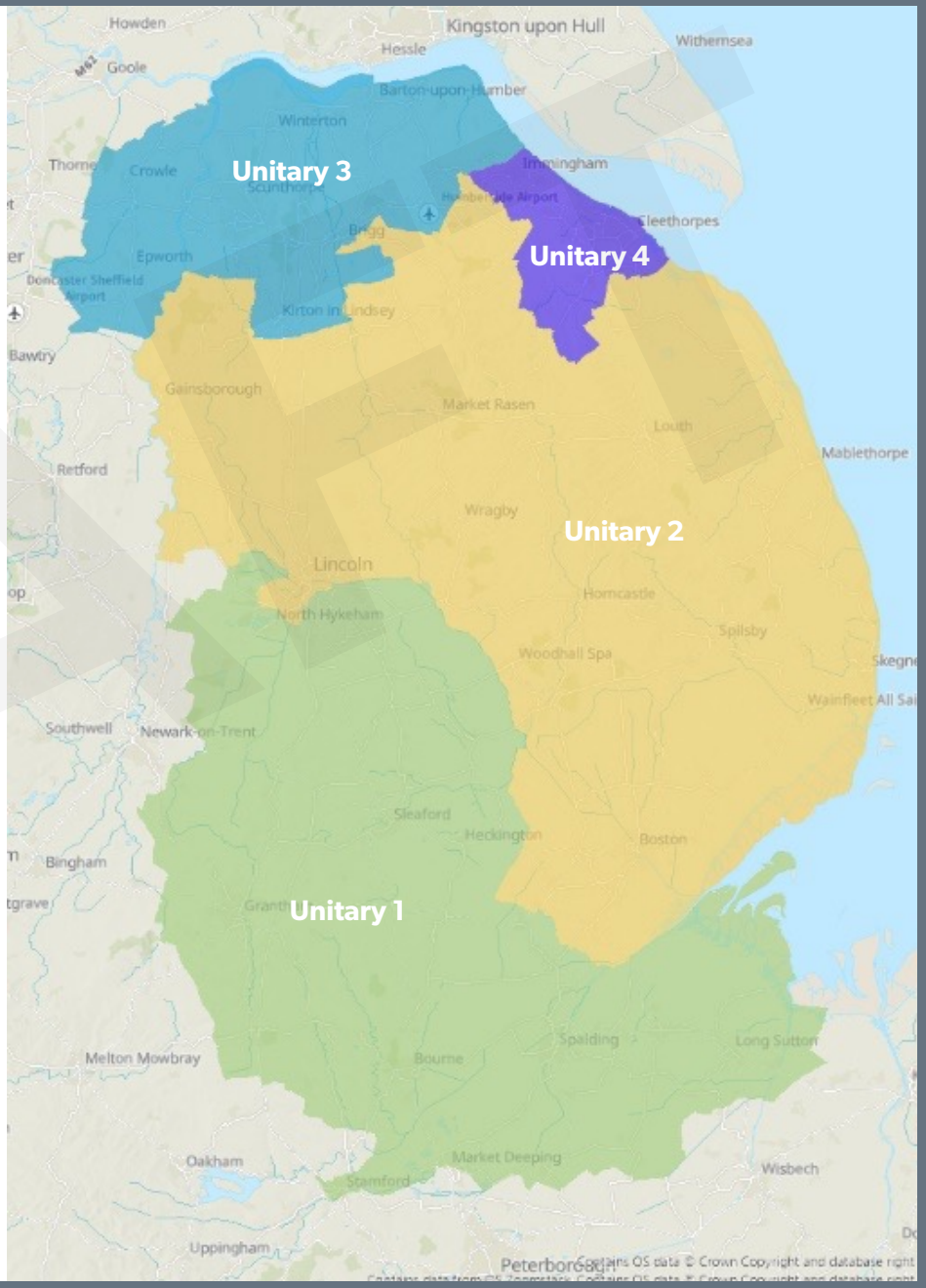
Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area

Proposal

Greater Lincolnshire is the largest of all the LGR Invitation Areas and in many cases multiple times larger. It covers almost 7,000 sq km – the equivalent of four Surreys – and is home to just over 1.1m people, slightly less than a single Surrey. From the industry on the bank of the Humber, the outstanding natural beauty of the Wolds, the key RAF bases, through to the rich agricultural land covering much of south Lincolnshire, Greater Lincolnshire has a unique place in the future success of our nation as the source of clean energy, carbon capture opportunities and both food and wider national security. Only Devon amongst the other 21 Invitation Areas can match its rurality and size.

Our proposal for two new unitary councils is based on this "local" reality – two right-sized unitary councils with sufficient scale but grounded in local roots, and with a locality-based focus to deliver financially sustainable councils and better outcomes for all.

It is designed both to meet the six criteria set out by Government that proposals must meet, whilst also championing local place and local voice. It supports the aims and ambitions of the White Paper, drives economic growth, supports local prosperity and wellbeing, and aligns with the Government's Plan for Change.



Proposal Headlines (1)

Proposal	Current Districts / Unitaries	Population	Size sq km	NEW unitary sq km ranking vs existing single tier councils in England
Unitary 1 (UA1)	North Kesteven South Holland South Kesteven	368,917	2,615	**11th Largest**
Unitary 2 (UA2)	Boston City Of Lincoln East Lindsey West Lindsey	420,585	3,322	**7th Largest**
Unitary 3 (UA3)	North Lincolnshire	171,336	847	N/A
Unitary 4 (UA4)	North East Lincolnshire	159,911	193	N/A

500,000 Population Exception

MHCLG criteria sets out that:

a. As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.
b. There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.

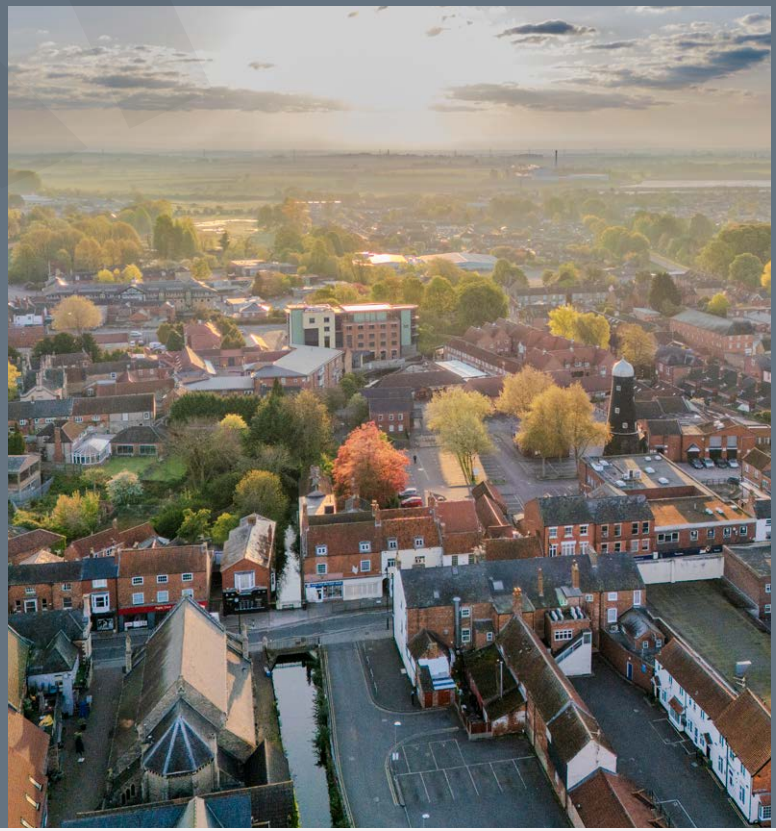
Our approach to this recognises that:

1. Design should be tailored to each unique Invitation Area.
2. LGR is a balancing act.

Exception Criteria

- **Geographic vastness**
- **Competing interests such as identity and belonging**
- **Delivery of other policy objectives, principally devolution and housing**

We consider that Greater Lincolnshire is an Invitation Area where all three grounds for exception should be applied



Headlines (2) Meeting the Six MHCLG Criteria

Sensible Single Tier of Local Government	Right-sized Local Government	High Quality, Sustainable Services
• Proposal aligns with functional economic areas • OECD recommends alignment of governance to economic geography is optimal for growth • Fully aligns with and will support delivery of the Greater Lincolnshire Innovation Strategy	• Detailed financial baselining and modelling undertaken with PwC • Recognition that the scale of impacts from the Fairer Funding Review and Business Rates Reset are not yet known • Pragmatic and conservative approach to projections • Delivers financial sustainability • £24m - £80m range of net annual benefit by year 5	• Detailed consideration of critical county council services with expert external support • Locality based service model for Children's Services and Adult Social Care • Disaggregation risks identified and considered • Greater local insight and improved local outcomes • Focus on early intervention • Fire & Rescue governance to be transferred to the PCC, single county wide footprint retained
Informed by Local Views	**Devolution**	**Local Engagement and Empowerment**
• Collaborative working and proactive data sharing with all Invitation Area councils • Proposal informed by engagement, and reflects key messages • **5,556** responses to the engagement survey • Informal engagement with wide range of stakeholders including partners, parish and town councils and employees • Clear resident message – **"local not remote"**	• Fully supports the devolution agenda • Proposal targets balanced representation • Consolidates devolution in Greater Lincolnshire	• Best foundations to deliver the Government's flagship Plan for Change's ambitions for civic renewal • Enhanced local empowerment through Area Neighbourhood Committees • Minimise any significant impact on local democracy • Scale is a failsafe if area committees fail or local and national priorities change • 68 and 72 councillors proposed for UA1 and UA2 respectively

Detailed arguments for all criteria are fully set out in Section 4 of the submission.

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Headline Expansion – Criterion 1: Sensible Single Tier of Local Government

"Everything we hope to achieve as a government is only possible if we get Britain building"

(Rt Hon Steve Reed Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government)

Our proposed jurisdictions deliver the evidence led 'best fit' alignment to the functional economic areas of Greater Lincolnshire. Establishing the optimal foundations for accelerating economic growth.

The OECD recommend for economic and administrative geography to be aligned to ensure that local reorganisation drives economic growth.

Alignment will maximize the impact of the government's planning reforms. Our proposal delivers this in Greater Lincolnshire.

Evidence from Travel to Work patterns identifies three clear functional economic zones in Greater Lincolnshire: North, Central, South.

Our proposal is the only economically rational solution that aligns with the underlying data and the LGR criteria.

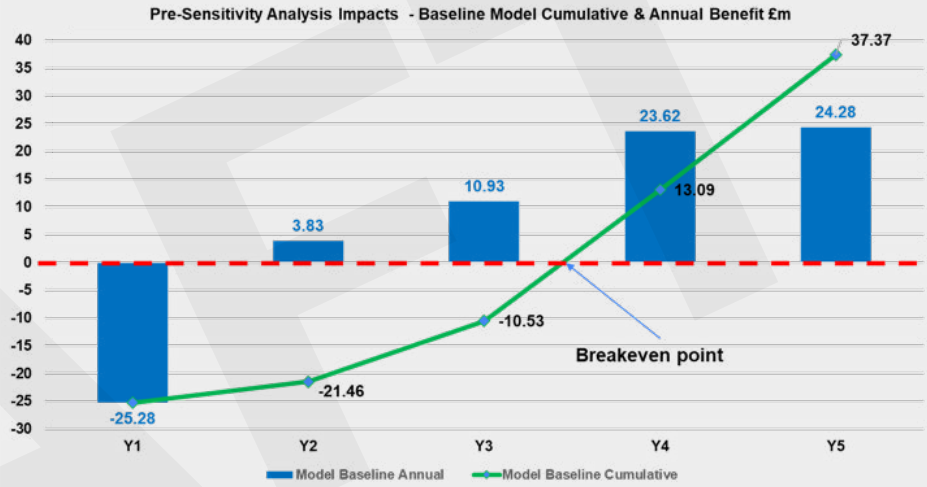


Indicative Innovation Opportunities in Greater Lincolnshire - GLLEP Innovation Routemap 2024

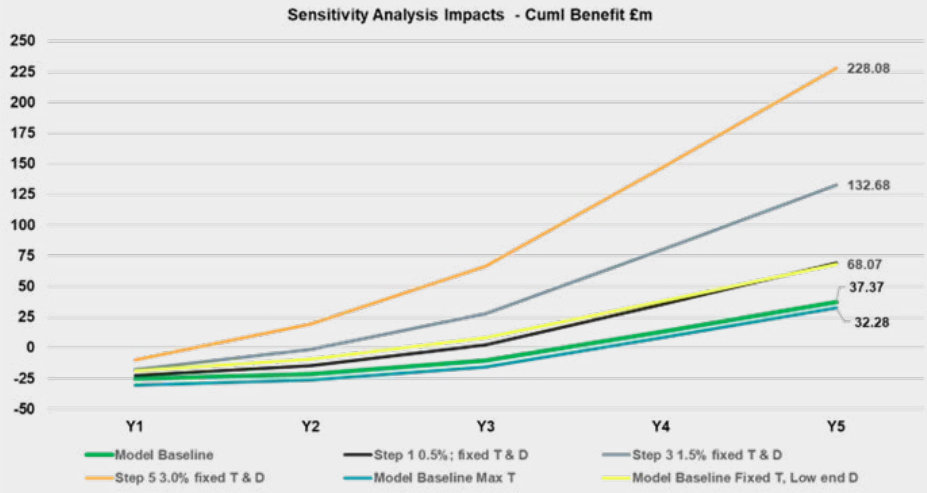
Headline Expansion – Criterion 2: Right-sized Local Government

Baseline Financial model – conservative and prudent approach with payback coming part way through the fourth year and c£24m annual saving for the two new unitaries.

Sensitivity analysis worked through with PwC highlights that more ambitious assumptions, if delivered, would significantly increase the range – with the mid-point projecting £130m in savings over 5 years, and the upper end over £230m over 5 years – equivalent to annual savings of £80m per year by year 4.



Criteria in 2 Table 17	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Total 5 year Benefit / (Costs)
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	10.83M	14.44M	16.25M	18.05M	18.05M	77.62M
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	-64.70M
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	-22.52M
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00M	3.96M	9.91M	19.82M	19.82M	53.51M
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65M	-1.64M	-2.29M	-1.31M	-0.65M	-6.54M
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	-25.28M	3.83M	10.93M	23.62M	24.28M	37.38M



Headline Expansion – Criterion 3:
High Quality, Sustainable Services – Critical Services

Children's Services	Adult Social Care	Fire and Rescue
Disaggregate to create Children's Services directorate in each new unitary	Disaggregate to create Adult Social Care directorate in each new unitary	Maintains service on county wide footprint
Statutory DCS role in each new unitary	Statutory DASC role in each new unitary	Avoids any disaggregation
Builds on existing county local teams' delivery model	Builds on existing county local teams' delivery model	Transfer to sit alongside Police under the Police Crime (and Fire) Commissioner
Integrated Locality Approach	Integrated Locality approach	Current PCC open to transition
Strong governance with clarity and feasibility of accountability	Enables place-based delivery tailored to geographic and demographic variation	Aligns with evolving best practice seen in other recent LGRs
Balanced approach – broader delivery model beyond new unitary footprints where appropriate – eg Adoptions	Supports targeted resource deployment in high need areas	Avoids any conflict with existing Humberside arrangements
Stand alone senior teams in each new unitary with middle management streamlining opportunities in both	Integrated approach with external partners and internal Housing, Safeguarding, Homelessness and Wellbeing services	
	Designed to align with the emerging Government 10 Year Plan	





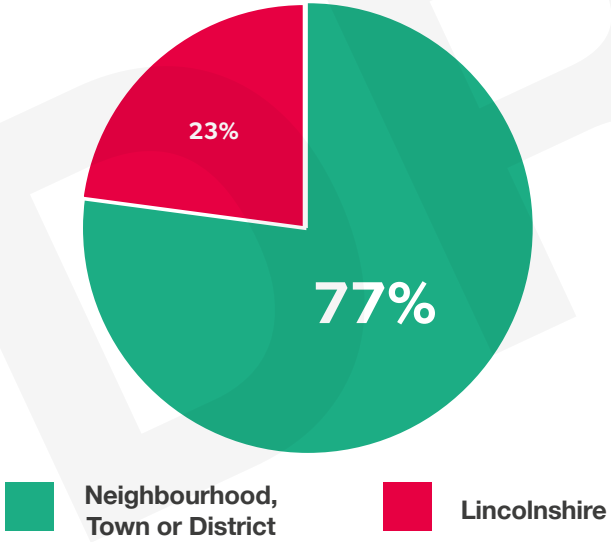


Headline Expansion – Criterion 4: Informed by Local Views

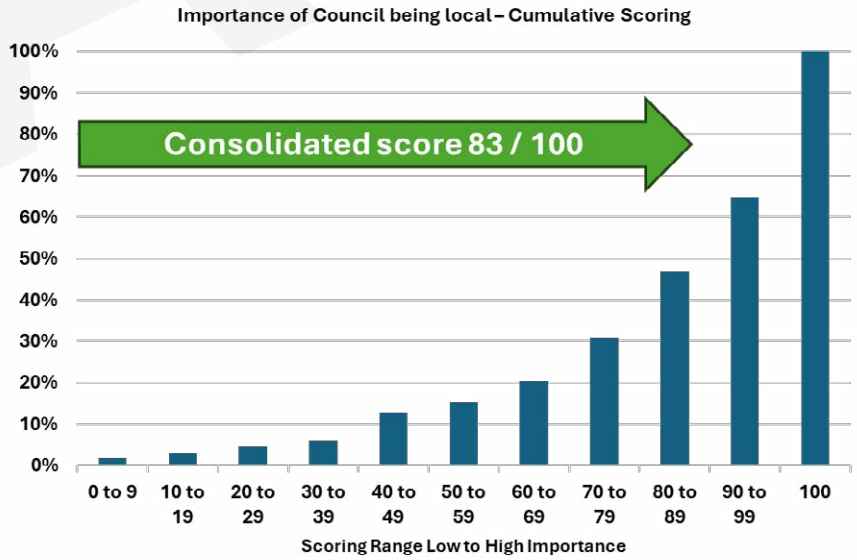
Our widespread engagement with both residents and a wide range of stakeholders focused on explaining what LGR is, understanding what matters to them and then applying these insights to develop our proposal.

The message from residents was clear - a **local** council delivering **local** services informed by **local** insight

When asked where do you feel most connected to 77% of respondents selected one of the three "local" options rather than the county



When asked how important it is that your council is local to your area on a scale of 0 to 100 respondents returned an average score of 83 / 100, with close to half giving a score of or near to 100 / 100



5,556 residents responded to our online survey, near to four times higher than the response received by the LCC survey

Headline Expansion – Criterion 5: Devolution

Both North Kesteven and South Kesteven are active and engaged in current devolution arrangements, with leading roles supporting strong governance and a commitment to extending this into the future.

The new unitaries will rebalance the Invitation Area, ensuring the consolidation of the mayoral authority and enabling devolution to be deepened in Greater Lincolnshire on the strongest possible foundations.

The rebalanced Greater Lincolnshire CCA will be compliant with MHCLG's required ratios between principal and strategic authorities providing for effective multi-level governance. Our authorities, as leaders of the 'places of places' within Greater Lincolnshire will be the ideal complement to the sub-regional strategic role of the mayoral authority.

Optionality is provided for the future expansion and deepening of devolution to England.





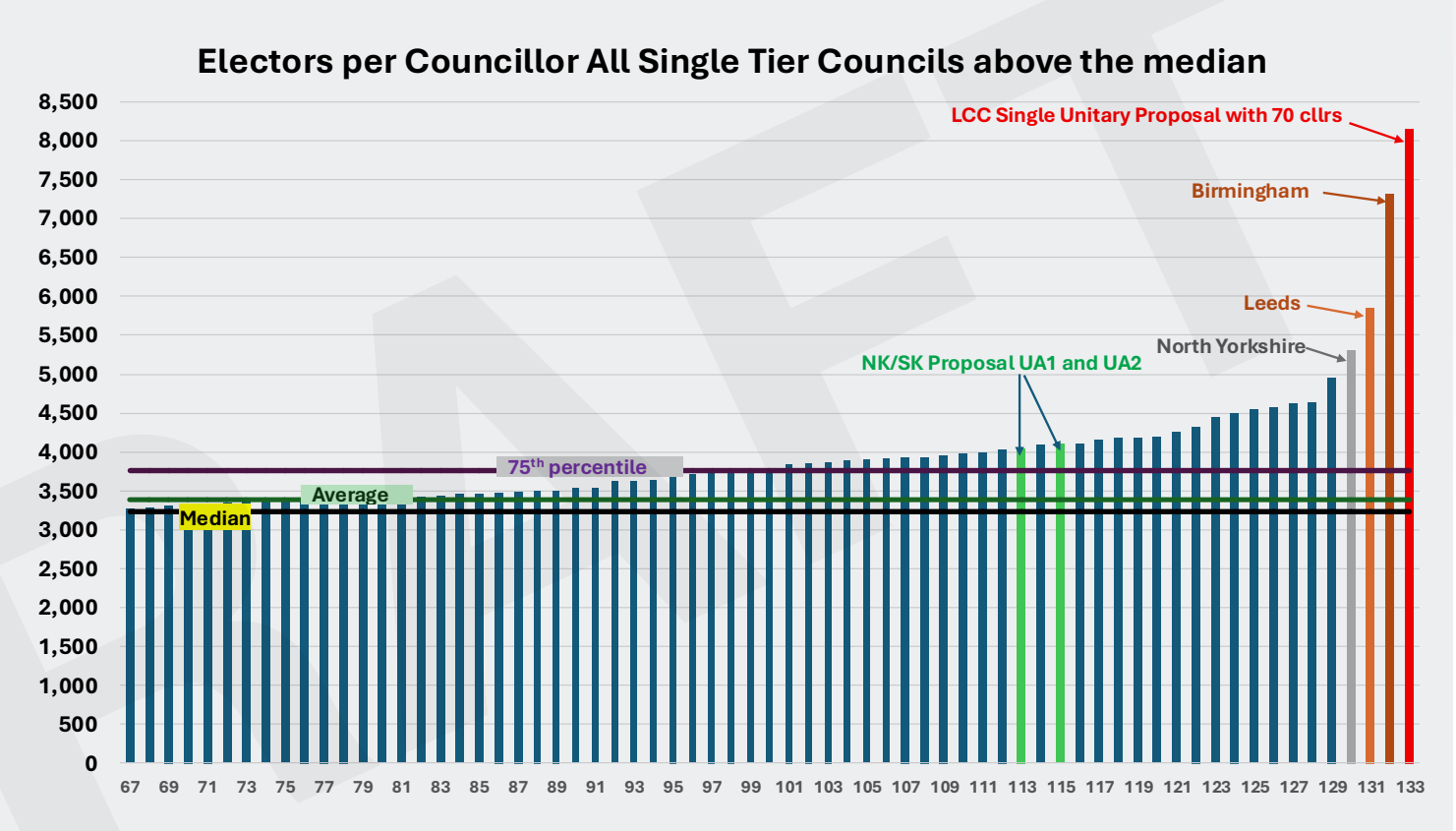


Headline Expansion – Criterion 6: Local Engagement and Empowerment

Two new unitaries with governance cultures that aim to *do with* not *do to* communities. We and our residents know that too large scales or incoherent footprints will damage local voice, democracy and trust. Our proposal is designed to minimise that.

The scale means that area decentralisation mechanisms like area committees, will be supplementary, enhancing resident voice and empowerment, not token compensatory mechanisms for an oversized unit.

This provides the best and only viable opportunity to deliver the civic renewal and empowerment of the Government's flagship Plan for Change throughout Greater Lincolnshire.



Though a reduction the overall proposed number of councillors remains within the relative norm of existing unitary councils – the two proposed new unitaries have councillor to electorate ratios of 4,046 and 4,110 respectively. Strongly balanced, and though such a ratio would place each in the top 10% (highest ratios of electorate to councillors) it is not excessively beyond the current median figure of 3,234. Birmingham has the highest current ratio standing at 7,319 based on LGBCE figures. A single county unitary with just 70 councillors as proposed by Lincolnshire County Council would have a wholly unprecedented ratio of 8,158.

Given the expanse of Lincolnshire our proposal would still result in each new unitary councillor, on average, covering 38 and 46 sq km respectively; the Lincolnshire County Council proposal is 85 sq km per councillor.

Options Appraisal

We considered a number of configurations as shown by the maps below:



A two unitary north-south split.



A single unitary for Lincolnshire (as proposed by LCC).



A two unitary north-south split covering the entirety of Greater Lincolnshire (as proposed by the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership).



A two unitary north-south split that includes Rutland.



An enlarged Lincoln unitary model and a second unitary covering the rest of the county (as proposed by City of Lincoln council).



A two unitary east-west split with 4 existing districts in the east and 3 in the west.



A two unitary east-west split with 3 existing districts in the east and 4 in the west.

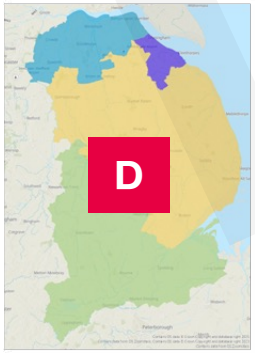
With the exception of option C all the alternatives considered maintain the existing structure for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.

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Our Stage 1 analysis identified three proposals: A, B, and C to progress to the Stage 2 assessment

Application of STAGE1 analysis										
Option	Legal Compliance		Population Size Test		Population Size Exception Test			No Boundary Changes required	Proposal coterminous with Invitation Area	Progression to Stage 2
	Status	North East/ North Lincs. Treatment	500,000+	350,000+	Geographic Vastness	Identity & Belonging	Delivery of other Policy Objectives			
Option A	✓	Separate	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Option B	✓	Separate	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
Option C	✓	Merged with Lincolnshire	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
Option D	✗	Separate	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Option E	✓	Separate	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Option F	✓	Separate	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Option G	✓	Separate	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗

Ruled out by Stage 1 Assessment

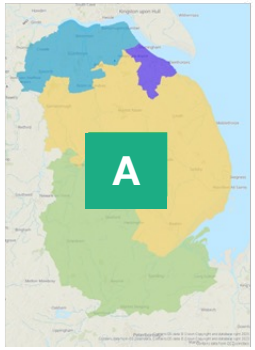


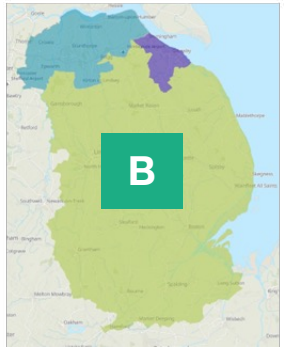






Taken forward to Stage 2 Assessment







Our Stage 2 assessment identified Option A as the clear preference

STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT Alignment with LGR Criteria					
LGR Criteria	**Criteria Title**	**MHCLG LGR Criteria**	**Option A**	**Option C**	**Option B**
1	Sensible Single Tier of Local Government	A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.	5	2	3
2	'Right-sized' Local Government	Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.	3	3	3
3	High Quality, Sustainable Services	Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.	4	3	4
4	Meets Local Needs	Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.	4	2	2
5	Supports Devolution Arrangements	New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.	5	3	2
6	Local Engagement & Empowerment	New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.	5	3	1
TOTAL			26	16	15







Implementation

Our implementation plan – set out in detail in Section 5 of this submission – builds on our previous evidence led approach. It sets out how these new councils would be delivered, including a programme timeline, governance arrangements, shared principles and robust risk mitigation measures.

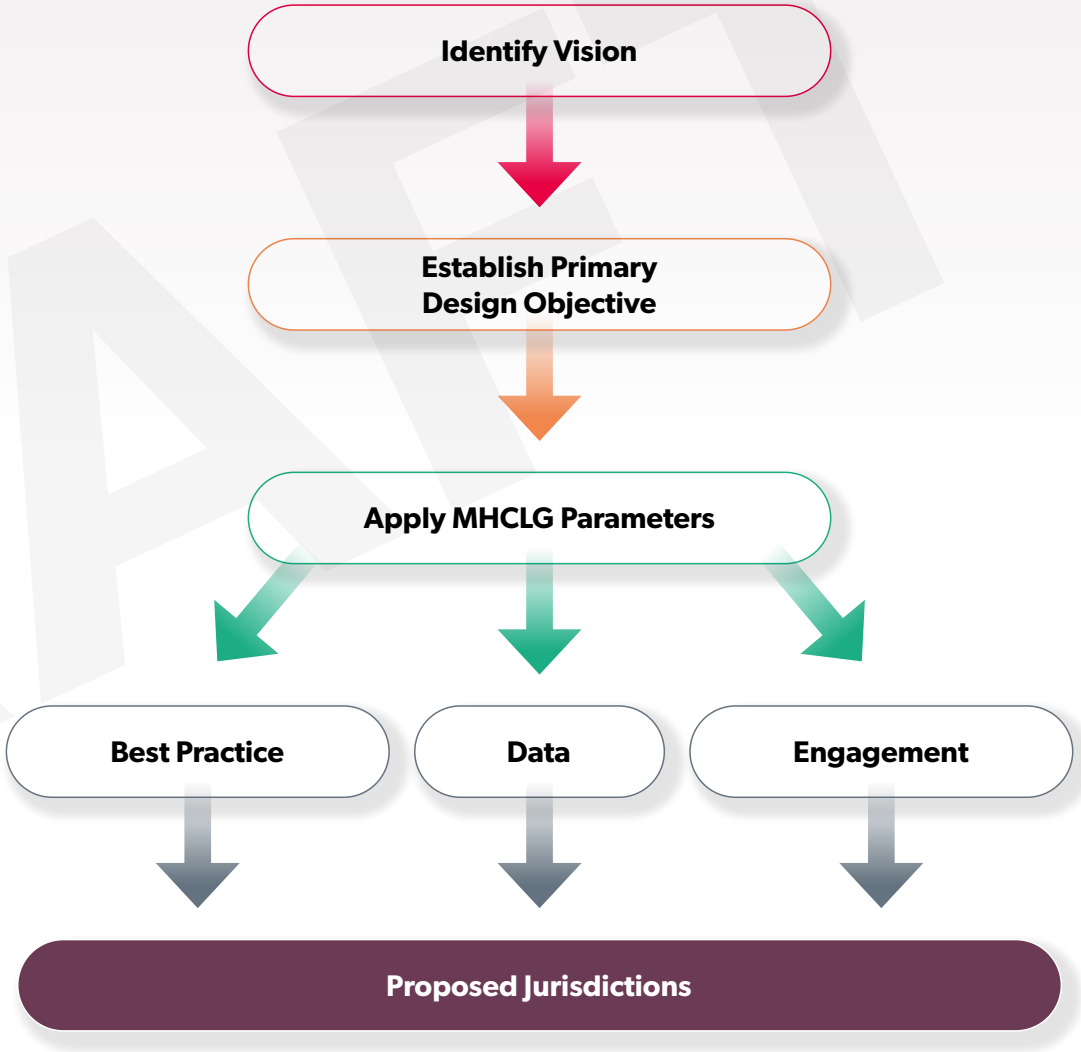
We will learn from lessons of past LGRs, particularly around the criticality of people and culture. We will take heed of real-time learning from the Surrey implementation – also implementing two unitaries within an existing county footprint – and work with the wider sector acknowledging that 20 other Invitation Areas will be taking the same journey.

Ahead of Government's decision for Greater Lincolnshire – not currently expected until July 2026 – we will work collaboratively with councils across our Invitation Area on preparatory activities.



In Summary Our Proposal:

- Is based on insight and evidence.
- Meets all six MHCLG criteria set for LGR.
- Delivers financial sustainability.
- Deploys a rationale and evidence based assessment for different LGR options.
- Evidences significant stakeholder value placed on better outcomes and value-for-money whilst keeping Local Government local.
- Addresses and meets the challenge of disaggregating critical Children's and Adults' services and takes a locality based approach to drive further improvement and improved outcomes.
- Retains a Lincolnshire footprint for Fire & Rescue.
- Provides rigour and confidence for implementation through to Vesting Day and beyond – both "Safe and Legal" and focused on "transformation".



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SECTION 2

2

2.1 Greater Lincolnshire: A Place of Places

2.2 Our Approach to the submission including Population Exception

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SECTION 2.1 Greater Lincolnshire: A Place of Places

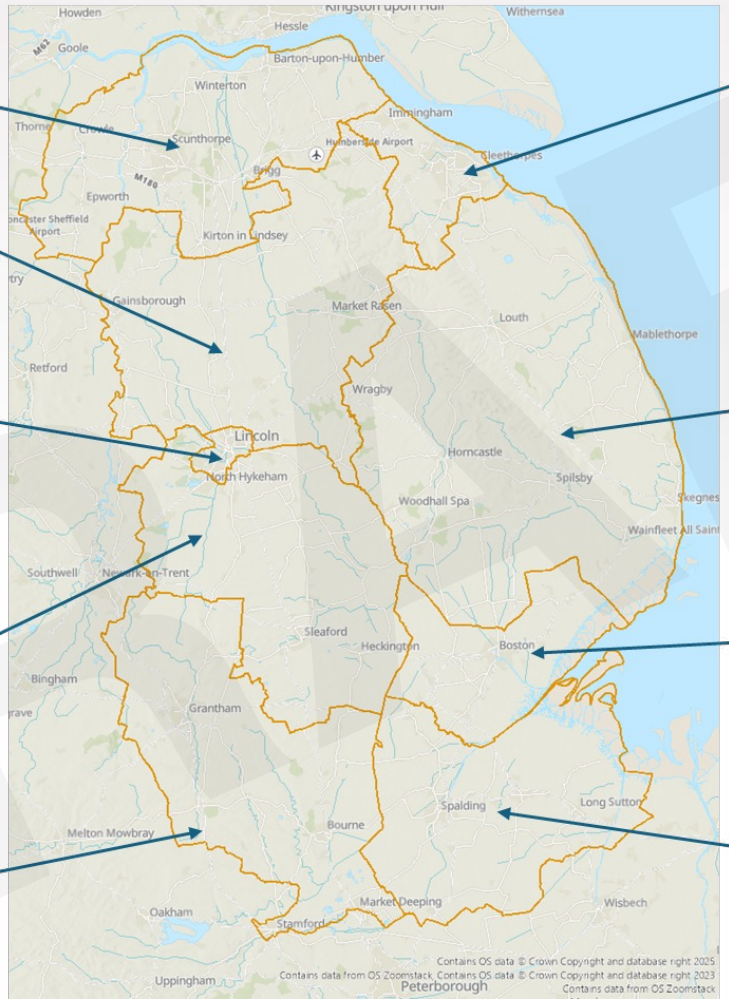
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE – UNITARY AUTHORITY				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
171,336	847	202	43	6,794

WEST LINDSEY - DISTRICT				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
99,208	1,156	86	36+9	1,960

LINCOLN - DISTRICT				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
105,114	36	2,945	33+8	3,026

NORTH KESTEVEN - DISTRICT				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
122,468	922	133	43+11	3,188

SOUTH KESTEVEN - DISTRICT				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
147,151	943	156	56+14	3,202



NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE - UNITARY AUTHORITY				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
159,911	193	830	42	4,059

EAST LINDSEY - DISTRICT				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
145,183	1,767	82	55+13	2,695

BOSTON - DISTRICT				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
71,080	384	195	30+6	1,591

SOUTH HOLLAND - DISTRICT				
POP	AREA	DENSITY	Cllrs	GVA £m
99,298	750	132	37+9	2,468

Area – sq km; density = population per sq km

Greater Lincolnshire comprises the existing county of Lincolnshire with its seven constituent districts – Boston, East Lindsey, Lincoln, North Kesteven, South Holland, South Kesteven and West Lindsey – plus two existing unitary authorities on the south bank of the Humber, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.

From a regional perspective Lincolnshire sits within the East Midlands. North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire are within Yorkshire and the Humber. The two northern unitary areas receive services from different police, fire and NHS organisations to the current county of Lincolnshire. At the mayoral level the whole Invitation Area is a single entity led by the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire.

Greater Lincolnshire has a population of 1,120,749 people according to the most recent ONS mid-year population estimate, with 789,502 spread across the seven Lincolnshire districts, 159,911 in North East Lincolnshire, and 171,336 in North Lincolnshire. With an area of 6,977 sq km Greater Lincolnshire is the largest of all the LGR invitation areas, in many cases significantly so being four times larger than each of Hertfordshire, Surrey, East Sussex and Worcestershire; and three times bigger than each of Warwickshire, West Sussex, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. The seven Lincolnshire districts cover 5,937 sq km, only Devon at 6,564 sq km covers a larger countywide area.

As the area and population indicate population density across Greater Lincolnshire at 161 people per square kilometre is the lowest of all 21current LGR Invitation Areas. Lincolnshire at 133 people per sq km is lower again and only marginally higher than the 128 per sq km figure for the Devon county area. The City of Lincoln is the only settlement with a population in excess of 100,000 (and only marginally so) but lacks the size and economic importance to be featured in the Centre for Cities listing of primary urban areas (PUA).[1] South bank of the Humber aside the area is a large and rural geographic expanse.

Governing such an expansive and diverse area has been a practical challenge for generations of local policymakers. At some time before the Norman Conquest, the geography was subdivided into three upper administrative zones - the Parts of Lincolnshire (equivalent to the Yorkshire Ridings). The three Parts were composed of Kesteven and Holland in the south and Lindsey in the centre and north. So naturally aligned to the physical and social geography of Lincolnshire were the Parts – highly coherent places of places in modern governing parlance - the jurisdictions served as the upper administrative zones for over a millennium.



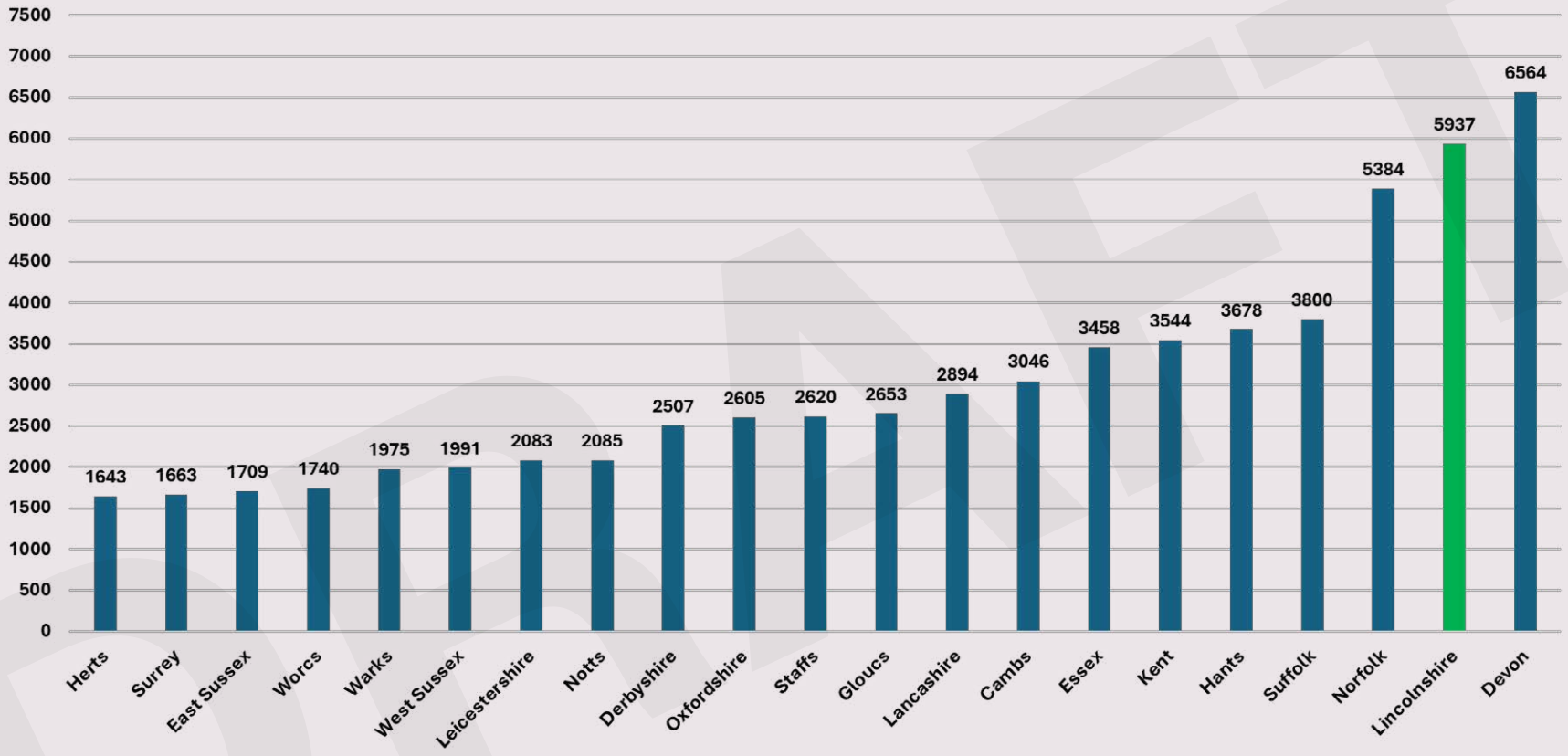
Figure 1 - The Parts of Lincolnshire by Bartholomew Howlett (1805)

1974 saw the temporary sequestration of the heavily industrialised northern coastal strip (in which Great Grimsby was a county borough) into Humberside County Council and the establishment of the present configuration in Lincolnshire. The enduring influence of the Parts can be clearly seen in the modern functional economic geography, which is composed of three distinct and largely self-contained zones: north, central and south.

1. Centre for Cities, City by City, [Online]. Available at: https://www.centreforcities.org/city-by-city/ [Accessed 4 November 2025].

Invitation Areas ranked by Size			
Invitation Area	**Area (sq km)**	**Population MY2024**	**2024 people per sq. km**
Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire	6,977	1,120,749	161
Devon, Plymouth and Torbay	6,707	1,254,506	187
Norfolk	5,384	940,359	175
Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton	4,148	2,062,619	497
Suffolk	3,800	786,231	207
Kent and Medway	3,738	1,931,684	517
Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock	3,664	1,929,610	527
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	3,390	933,972	276
Lancashire, Blackburn and Blackpool	3,066	1,601,645	522
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent	2,714	1,177,578	434
Gloucestershire	2,653	669,380	252
Derbyshire and Derby	2,625	1,096,526	418
Oxfordshire	2,605	763,218	293
Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland	2,538	1,175,364	463
Nottinghamshire and Nottingham	2,159	1,188,090	550
West Sussex	1,991	915,037	460
Warwickshire	1,975	632,207	320
East Sussex and Brighton	1,791	844,752	472
Worcestershire	1,741	621,360	357
Surrey	1,663	1,248,649	751
Hertfordshire	1,643	1,236,191	752

Relative Size (sq km) of Lincolnshire vs All Other LGR Counties



The Greater Lincolnshire Vision 2050, adopted in the early 2020s, identifies the overall invitation area as a unique place for the future success of our nation; the source of clean energy, carbon capture opportunities, and food security. Vision 2050 identified that Greater Lincolnshire is a diverse place of places powering and feeding the nation. It has highly rated education, a visitor economy worth over £2 billion per annum, and is a leader in ports, logistics, defence, engineering, food production, and energy production. Many residents enjoy easy access to its beautiful countryside, miles of coast and wide beaches.

However, Vision 2050 also recognised that the economy doesn't work for everyone and the potential of Greater Lincolnshire is more significant than what is currently realised. As of the early 2020s, around 150,000 residents were economically inactive with lower opportunities to come back into the workforce. 7.4% of Greater Lincolnshire residents have no qualifications (compared to 6.2% nationally). Latest available data indicates a slight deterioration in those numbers to 155,000, 7.8% and 6.8% respectively. All in Greater Lincolnshire are ambitious to support all working age adults to have opportunities to enhance their skill levels.

Based on the latest data six out of nine authorities rank in the worst 25% in England for mortality from cardiovascular disease and 15.4% of households in Greater Lincolnshire are fuel poor – an increase of two percentage points since the Vision 2050 document was published. The lack of public transport connectivity and infrastructure holds back the economy, contributes far too much air pollution and compounds isolation and loneliness for some of the area's more vulnerable residents. Services are expensive to deliver and Greater Lincolnshire does not get its fair share of government funding to deliver services across a large area, which creates a risk that too many people are dependent upon the state or charitable donations. Thousands of our homes and businesses, and hectares of productive land are at risk of coastal erosion, rising sea levels and flooding.

Lincolnshire has a rich history of innovation and independence of mind. Isaac Newton's family home is famously situated near Grantham and was the location for many of his truly groundbreaking experiments. The story of the pilgrim separatist movement that founded the United States started in Gainsborough and Boston. The county was at the forefront of mechanising agriculture through the invention of the tractor, and later revolutionised our national security with the adaptation of tractors to tanks.

Greater Lincolnshire has been the home of many reformers from political leaders such as John Wesley to Edith Smith, the UK's first female Police Constable. Our towns feature in British literary classics by world renowned authors including D. H. Lawrence and George Elliot. Stamford's Georgian architecture is so outstanding that it was designated the UK's first conservation town. Greater Lincolnshire can even claim the world's first rock festival, with Jimmy Hendrix headlining Spalding's Barbeque 67, two years before Woodstock.



In the early 2020s our economy was worth more than £20bn per annum. The strengths and opportunities in specific sectors were agri-foods, energy and water, ports & logistics, the digital economy, visitor economy, and health & care. In all these sectors, Greater Lincolnshire was experiencing positive jobs growth and business birth rates. We were increasingly recognised as an agri-food centre of excellence and our ports and logistics hubs already acted as gateway to other regions including the Northern Powerhouse.

Our history has shaped the communities that have settled here and our local economy. Many areas in Greater Lincolnshire, such as Sleaford, Grantham and Lincoln, have a rich military history, and continue to be home to an extensive defence network that includes army and RAF bases. These sector-specific opportunities, together with relatively low house prices and an outstanding natural environment make Greater Lincolnshire a very attractive place to call home.

Appendix 1 sets out further detail and context for the area.



Case Study: Uniting Lincolnshire to Honour and Support Our Armed Forces

Lincolnshire has a countywide commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, uniting all district councils, Lincolnshire County Council, NHS bodies, charities, and voluntary organisations under a shared pledge. With 5.6% of Greater Lincolnshire's population, and 9% of residents in North Kesteven being veterans, this collaboration ensures that serving personnel, veterans, and their families are treated fairly and supported in accessing housing, health, education and welfare services. South Kesteven District Council is a proud holder of the prestigious Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award, an accolade awarded by the Ministry of Defence to less than 900 organisations within the UK. The Council employs a dedicated Armed Forces Officer, supported by an elected member Armed Forces Champion, and has designated officers delivering specialist support within the revenues and benefits, cost of living and housing teams. An Armed Forces Covenant Officer for the county, funded by contributions from local authorities and the Integrated Care Board oversees the work of the Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership (LAFCCP), chaired by the South Kesteven elected member Armed Forces Champion. These important roles helps to ensure that all statutory duties placed on the funding partners are met. The LAFCCP coordinates joint initiatives, shares best practice, and promotes community integration through events and projects. Councils work together to maintain resources such as the Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Directory, and the Armed Forces Community Directory on Connect to Support and embed national services into local strategies. Regular forums and joint projects such as the Armed Forces Community Handbook strengthen this network and create a consistent local approach. Our new unitary authorities will further build on the strong foundations we have already established.

Rutland has close economic ties with south Lincolnshire, and South Kesteven in particular. Prior to the establishment of the mayoral authority for Greater Lincolnshire Rutland was part of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP). As set out in the Options Appraisal section of this document, given its strong economic links, the inclusion of Rutland was considered as a realistic evidence-based proposal for consideration.

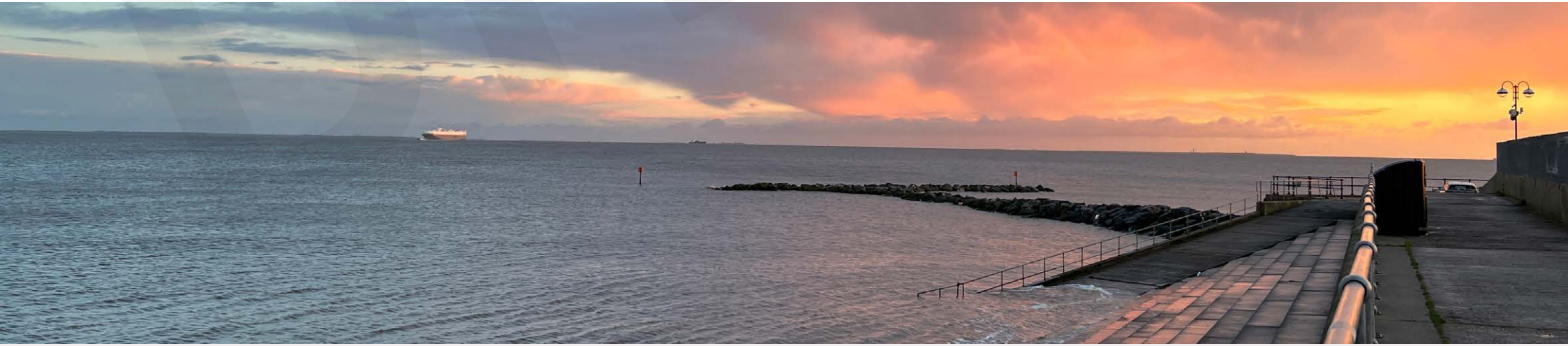
Rutland, whilst part of the Leicester and Leicestershire LGR Invitation Area, is one the smallest councils in England in population terms. Whilst already a unitary council, its population of 41,443 places it as the third smallest in England – only the City of London Corporation and the Council of the Isles of Scilly have a smaller population. Every existing district council in England has a bigger population than Rutland. Rutland covers 382 square kilometres, thus very close in area to that covered by Boston Borough Council.



Case Study: Supporting British Steel

Greater Lincolnshire councils collectively played a strong role in supporting British Steel in Scunthorpe during a period of significant uncertainty. The steelworks is one of the UK's last integrated plants and employs thousands of people, making its survival crucial for the regional economy and national infrastructure. Local authorities across Lincolnshire signed the UK Steel Charter to prioritise domestic steel in procurement and backed British Steel's £1.25 billion decarbonisation plan, which includes installing an electric arc furnace to reduce emissions. Councils also lobbied the government for intervention, resulting in emergency legislation to keep blast furnaces operational and safeguard jobs. In addition, they collaborated on plans for an advanced manufacturing park to attract green technology firms and create future employment opportunities. These actions demonstrate how regional leadership, strategic planning, and advocacy can protect critical industries while supporting long-term sustainability and economic resilience for communities dependent on heavy manufacturing.

Public Service Geography of the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area								
Authority	**Strategic Authority**	**Integrated Care Board (ICB) Cluster**	**Integrated Care Board (ICB)**	**Sub Integrated Care Board Location (SICBL)**	**Police Force Area**	**Community Safety Partnership**	**Fire & Rescue Authority**	**Local Resilience Forum**
Boston	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire	NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Lincolnshire ICB - 71E	Lincolnshire	Boston	Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
City of Lincoln	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire	NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Lincolnshire ICB - 71E	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
East Lindsey	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire	NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Lincolnshire ICB - 71E	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
North Kesteven	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire	NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Lincolnshire ICB - 71E	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
South Holland	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire	NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Lincolnshire ICB - 71E	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
South Kesteven	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire	NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Lincolnshire ICB - 71E	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
West Lindsey	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire	NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Lincolnshire ICB - 71E	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
North East Lincolnshire	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Humber & North Yorkshire	NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Humber and North Yorkshire ICB - 03H	Humberside	North East Lincolnshire	Humberside	Humber
North Lincolnshire	Greater Lincolnshire CCA	Humber & North Yorkshire	NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board	NHS Humber and North Yorkshire ICB - 03K	Humberside	North Lincolnshire	Humberside	Humber



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SECTION 2.2 Our Approach Taken for the Submission & Population Exception

Local government reorganisation (LGR) is a once in a generation opportunity for Greater Lincolnshire. The successful proposal will define the local sub-national institutional architecture for possibly the rest of the 21st century. However, an ill-thought through proposal rooted in expediency, not attuned to place and prioritising anticipated paper efficiencies and the preservation of current arrangements to the exclusion of the government's wider strategic goals will risk dysfunction and fail to fully realise the opportunities reorganisation offers. It is crucial that we get reorganisation right.

Consideration of how to deliver the English Devolution White Paper's objectives has shaped the development of our proposals. Our fundamental ambition, shared with the government, is that, at the end of this project, people in every part of Greater Lincolnshire should feel that they have more control over their area and more responsive, better provided local public services.

LGR forces us to engage with the fundamental questions of what local government is for and seeks to achieve. Once that is established, a jurisdiction can be designed, in line with MHCLG criteria, to best deliver those aims.

It is thus necessary to systematically set out our approach to jurisdiction design. Our approach is post-functionalist: local government units must effectively deliver services, but also effectively represent and align with the diverse communities they exist to serve. Ultimately, a local council in a democratic society is a vehicle for community self-governance of place.

Our approach to reorganisation is underpinned by two core principles:

1. **Design should be tailored to each unique Invitation Area.** We do not consider there is a single optimal LGR configuration that should be applied universally. For some areas, a single unitary may be the best solution for local conditions and the LGR criteria, in others two, three or more.

2. **LGR is a balancing act.** The MHCLG size requirements have to be sensibly and responsibly balanced with the other LGR criteria, the disbenefits and risks of scale and the unique challenges of Greater Lincolnshire's geography. MHCLG has built flexibility into the LGR criteria in order to deliver the appropriate balance.

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We are conscious that Greater Lincolnshire is not being reorganised in isolation. This is not a voluntary sector-led initiative, but a national programme with national objectives. The right LGR solution for Greater Lincolnshire will be the one that is not only best for our residents but also enables the most effective fulfilment of the government's strategic objectives. These objectives are separate to the LGR criteria, and as set out in the White Paper are to:

- Rewire the relationship between the centre and the localities to restore financial stability and public trust.
- Renew local democracy and empower local residents, so that policies are done with and for communities rather than done to them.
- Deliver devolution across England by providing the foundations for optimal working between strategic (focused on regional strategic leadership) and principal authorities (focused on core service delivery).
- Deliver the government's key missions for economic growth and house building through greater devolution and aligning economic and administrative geography.

We have designed our jurisdictions to answer the question of how can we best deliver the government's ambitions locally in the context of the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area and the parameters of the LGR Criteria. We did this by applying expert best practice on jurisdiction design and local government amalgamation, principally the OECD Handbook for Policymakers: Making Decentralisation Work[2], to a data driven assessment of the operating context of Greater Lincolnshire.

2. OECD (2019), Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers, OECD Multi-level Governance Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en [Accessed 4 November 2025].



Statement of MHCLG Population Size Policy

The 500,000 population figure has caused significant public debate and confusion. It has been variously described as a 'target', 'benchmark', 'guiding principle' and 'aspiration'. Various sector interests have advanced competing interpretations – mandatory threshold by county councils, flexible aspiration by districts. The government's rhetoric has significantly softened since February 2025, resulting in further uncertainty.

Thus it is essential to clarify our understanding as determined by the White Paper, Statutory Invitation and Interim Plan Feedback letters, and clarifying oral evidence made by the then Minister for Local Government and English Devolution Jim McMahon M.P. and the Director General of Local Government, Growth and Communities to the House of Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee. **MHCLG have stressed that there has been no change of policy in respect to LGR following the September 2025 reshuffle.** Further confirmed by the evidence of the Minister for Devolution Miatta Fahnbulleh M.P. to the parliamentary committee scrutinising the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.

500,000 is the minimum population target, unless an exception can be applied.[3] MHCLG policy from the Statutory Invitation onwards has been consistent that the proposals can claim the exception and for that to be accepted, rather than being purely theoretical. On 25 February 2025, senior MHCLG officials stated to local government senior officers that jurisdictions with populations under 500,000 were appropriate for areas with 'vast' or 'extensive' geographies. If the exception is claimed, then the proposal must detail the rationale. The exception is intended for areas where the population target would be inappropriate, due to the particular context and challenges of the geography or if it would impede the delivery of other policy objectives. Three grounds for an exception are specified (own explanatory commentary):

- **Geographic vastness**[4] - in these geographies, the desired scale would necessitate effectively sub-regional not local governments, creating basic problems for governance, delivery of some services, coherence, democratic legitimacy and relations with the actual sub-regional governance tier (strategic authorities).

- **Competing interests such as identity and belonging**[5] - an overriding pursuit of scale may create authorities unmoored from and at odds with how residents identify and local pride in place.

- **Delivery of other policy objectives, principally devolution and housing**[6] – for example the delivery of devolution in Surrey will require a minimum of two authorities to form the combined authority, ruling out a single unitary solution.

3. As clarified by Will Garton, Director General of Local Government, Growth and Communities in response to questioning by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on the whether the 500,000 figure constituted a minimum target with exceptions. (HoC, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral evidence: English Devolution, HC 600, Tuesday 25 February 2025, Q41, page 22.)
4. As described by Jim McMahon MP, then Minister for Local Government and English Devolution in response to questioning by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on how competing LGR priorities would be balanced. (HoC, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral evidence: English Devolution, HC 600, Tuesday 25 February 2025, Q36, page 21.)
5. Ibid.
6. As described by Jim McMahon MP, then Minister for Local Government and English Devolution in response to questioning by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on clarifying the grounds for exceptions (HoC, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral evidence: English Devolution, HC 600, Tuesday 25 February 2025, Q41, page 23).

Minister for Devolution Miatta Fahnbulleh M.P. stated that places have been empowered to use their judgement (within the parameters of the LGR criteria) to come forward with a scale and geography that makes sense to deliver outcomes for communities. Ultimately the solution (within the parameters of the LGR criteria) 'has to be aligned with what local communities believe is the right geography to deliver the outcomes they want'.[7]

The contestation dynamic of LGR has resulted in authorities in every Invitation Area claiming the exception. **Logically the grounds for claiming the exception will be significantly stronger and more appropriate in some Invitation Areas over others.** MHCLG is anticipating that this programme will result in the establishment of authorities with populations of 500,000 or greater in the vast majority of areas undergoing reorganisation.[8] **MHCLG have not provided a lower acceptable population threshold in cases where the exception is applied, however populations in the 300,000 to 350,000 range[9] or to the 'mid 200,000s'[10] have been expressly ruled out.**

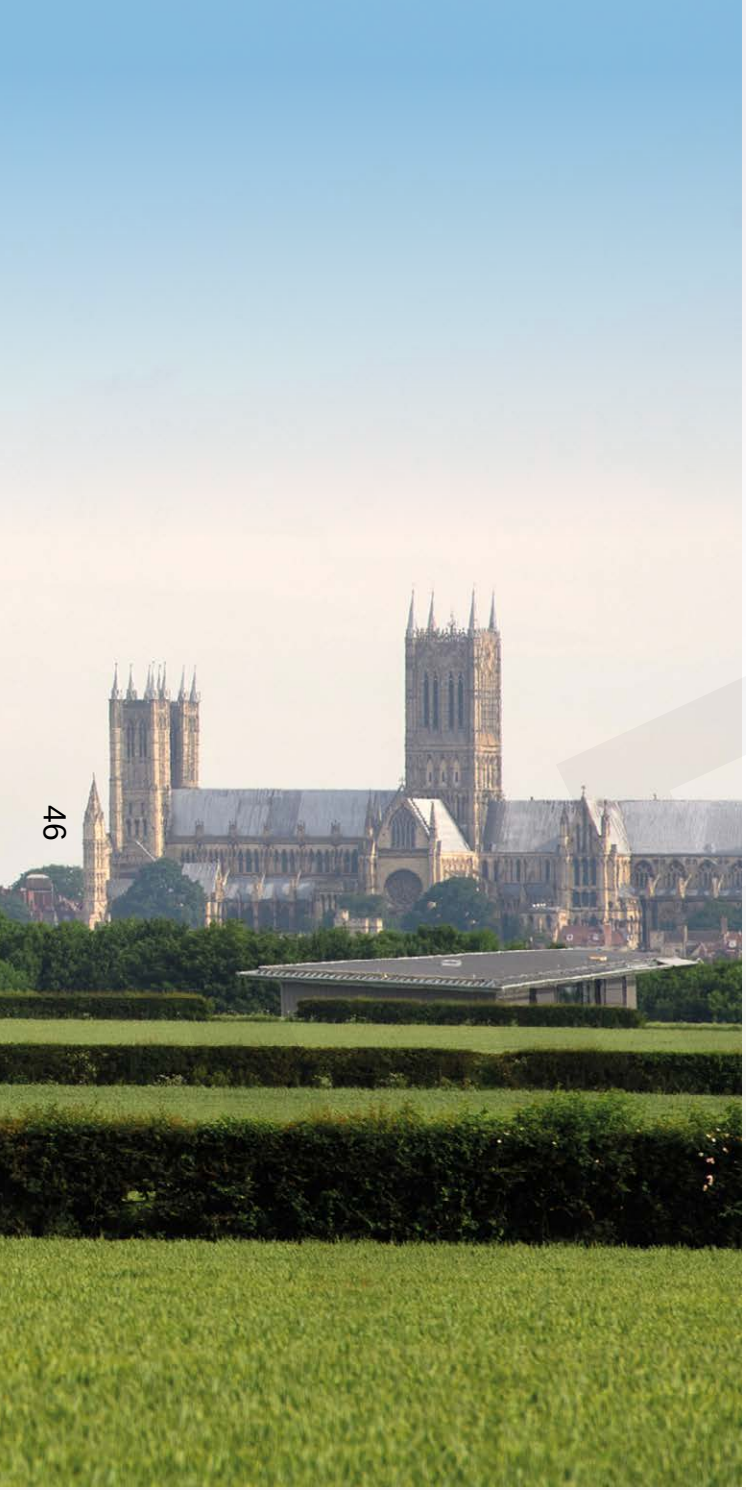


7. As described by Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, Minister for Devolution in response to questioning by the HoC General Committee scrutinising the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill on the population size policy post the September 2025 ministerial changes (English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (Second Sitting). House of Commons Public Bill Committee – Hansard, 16 Sept. 2025, Q87, page 87).

8. MHCLG, White Paper: English Devolution, 2024, page 108.

9. As described by Angela Rayner MP, then Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in response to questioning by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on the lower acceptable population figure. (HoC, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral evidence: The Work of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, HC 409, Tuesday 07 January 2025, Q47, page 30).

10. As described by Jim McMahon MP, then Minister for Local Government and English Devolution in response to questioning by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on the lower acceptable population threshold. (HoC, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral evidence: English Devolution, HC 600, Tuesday 25 February 2025, Q45, page 24).



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It must be emphasised that distance from residents, or a generalised and asserted risk of remoteness, and subsequent community disconnection and adverse impact to local democracy, is not in itself sufficient grounds to claim the exception under this framework. That argument has been made (primarily) by district councils in every reorganisation round. **Larger authorities are necessarily more remote with the consequent disbenefits, there is an expert and common sense consensus on that fact, MHCLG recognises and accepts this as a trade off in delivering system consolidation and simplification.**[11] We note that this sits in tension with the core diagnosis and policy prescription of the English Devolution White Paper to enhance community empowerment and restore trust in the local state. The uncritical creation of unitaries of the strict required scale within some geographies would be actively counterproductive to the White Paper's goals, due to the well evidenced academic and expert consensus for the negative impact of larger units on political trust, influence and participation, and the complex relationship between size and service efficiency and performance.

Local policy makers have been tasked with developing innovative mechanisms to maintain and enhance community connection and mitigate the disbenefits of scale. It is clear that the judgement has been made that the tensions can be managed through compensatory democratic mechanisms like area committees within the relatively compact geographies of the majority of invitation areas. Therefore, we recognise that the remoteness argument only carries significant weight, when made in geographically expansive areas, where greater stress will be placed on compensatory community engagement mechanisms with a higher risk of failure. **It is invitation areas with geographies like Greater Lincolnshire, where the tension becomes too acute and further intensified by an oversized unitary that the differentiated exception has been designed for.**

Our approach then recognises that government policy is LGR proposals must prioritise scale, only deviating if absolutely necessary where the **local context presents significant practical challenges to good governance that would outweigh the potential consolidation savings**.

We consider that Greater Lincolnshire is an Invitation Area where this is the case and the exception should be applied.

11. As described by Will Garton, Director General of Local Government, Growth and Communities in response to questioning by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on the evidence base and rationale for the 500,000 population figure. (HoC, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral evidence: English Devolution, HC 600, Tuesday 25 February 2025, Q48, page 25).

Rationale for the Exception in Greater Lincolnshire

The Exception is claimed on the grounds that the vast scale and unique geographic context of Greater Lincolnshire poses significant challenges in designing authorities that deliver good governance, align with local identity and fulfil the government's strategic objectives. Further this scale and context intensifies the disbenefits from a sub-optimal LGR solution. The physical, social and economic geography of the Invitation Area suggests that multiple unitaries are the most appropriate solution.

If MHCLG wishes for the aspirations of the White Paper to be fulfilled and reorganisation to be a positive reform, then the future unitaries in invitation areas with vast geographies must have sensible footprints to facilitate rather than hinder good governance, efficient service delivery and community empowerment.

Current Unitary Authorities serving areas greater than 2,000 square km (with proposed options for Greater Lincolnshire)
*indicates potential new unitary authorities based on Greater Lincolnshire LGR proposals

Authority	Rank by Area Size	Population (mid-year 2024)	Area (sq. km)	2023 people per sq. km
North Yorkshire	1	635,270	8037	79
Lincolnshire (single unitary)	2*	789,502	5937	133
Lincolnshire Rural*	3*	589,000	5250	112
Northumberland	4	331,420	5020	66
South Lincolnshire*	5*	585,180	4746	123
Westmorland and Furness	6	230,185	3756	61
Cornwall	7	583,289	3545	165
Somerset	8	588,328	3450	171
Lindsey, Lincoln, Boston*	9*	420,585	3322	127
Wiltshire	10	523,700	3252	161
Shropshire	11	332,455	3197	104
Cumberland	12	280,495	3012	93
Kesteven & Holland*	13*	368,917	2615	141
Dorset	14	389,947	2491	157
East Riding of Yorkshire	15	355,844	2404	148
North Lincolnshire (new)	16	535,569	2231	240
County Durham	17	538,011	2226	242
Herefordshire, County of	18	191,047	2180	88

NB size ranking includes all theoretical new unitaries in Greater Lincolnshire based on the varying proposals

Comparison to North Yorkshire

Comparison to other areas is illustrative. A superficial analysis may draw an equivalence between Greater Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire, based on the observation that both areas are very large. A single unitary solution was enacted there in 2023 and so could theoretically provide a model for a successful unitary covering a vast expanse. It is important to note that North Yorkshire was reorganised under the 2019-2024 Conservative government and a different policy context. The then LGR criteria and White Paper *Levelling Up* (2022) placed a significantly lower emphasis on neighbourhood empowerment than the White Paper *English Devolution* (2024) and subsequent LGR criteria and English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill.

Deeper engagement with the geographic context and challenges of Greater Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire, however, makes clear that North Yorkshire found a solution that does not work for Greater Lincolnshire.

The salient features of North Yorkshire's geography are:

- Two concentrated population cores centred on Harrogate/Selby in the south and Scarborough on the east coast. A further smaller core is present in the A1 corridor through former Hambleton DC.
- Extremely rural sparsity in the areas covered by the two National Park Authorities (technically North Yorkshire has an additional layer of government not present in Greater Lincolnshire). Districts in those areas had total populations only marginally bigger than mid-sized towns (e.g. Grantham) in Greater Lincolnshire.
- Absence of mid-sized towns in the 20,000 to 50,000 population bracket.
- Exclusion of the York metropolitan area, which has a separate identity and governance structure.
- Exclusion of Tees Valley, which has separate identities and governance structures.

Without York, it is impossible to create multiple authorities of sufficient size to have the critical mass to deliver services over such a large area. With York, significant questions on the coherence and alignment to local identity of the proposed authorities are raised. The foundation of mid-sized towns to grant the demographic and economic heft to practically tie distinct local identities to governance was lacking outside of Harrogate and Scarborough. Identity was recognised as being county wide rather than with particular towns, with particular emphasis placed by the government on the North Yorkshire brand. The reorganisation was a local voluntary initiative rather than being a wholesale review of the region, so preventing solutions involving Tees Valley to the north and the East Riding of Yorkshire or West Yorkshire in the south. The then government was clear in its decision that the City of York would not be involved in the reorganisation.

LGR Options in North Yorkshire

Successful Proposal			Unsuccessful Proposal		
Unitary	**Composition**	**Population MY 2022**	**Unitary**	**Composition**	**Population MY 2022**
North Yorkshire	All districts within the former county	623,896	Eastern Unitary (with York)	Ryedale, Scarborough, Selby, York	465,375
			Eastern Unitary (without York)	Ryedale, Scarborough, Selby	256,457
York	Existing Unitary	208,918	Western Unitary	Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire	363,297

A differentiated approach to jurisdiction design would note that none of those general conditions are replicated in Greater Lincolnshire. Unlike York, Lincoln lacks either the existing autonomy or necessary scale to be workably detached from the wider county. The differences can be seen from a glance at a population density map.

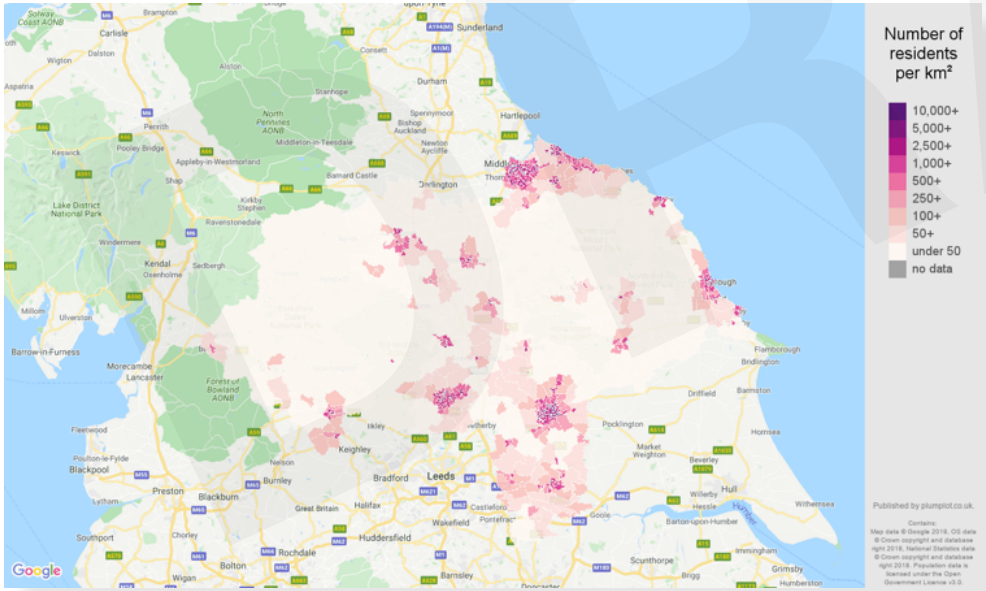


Figure 2 - Population Density Map of North Yorkshire

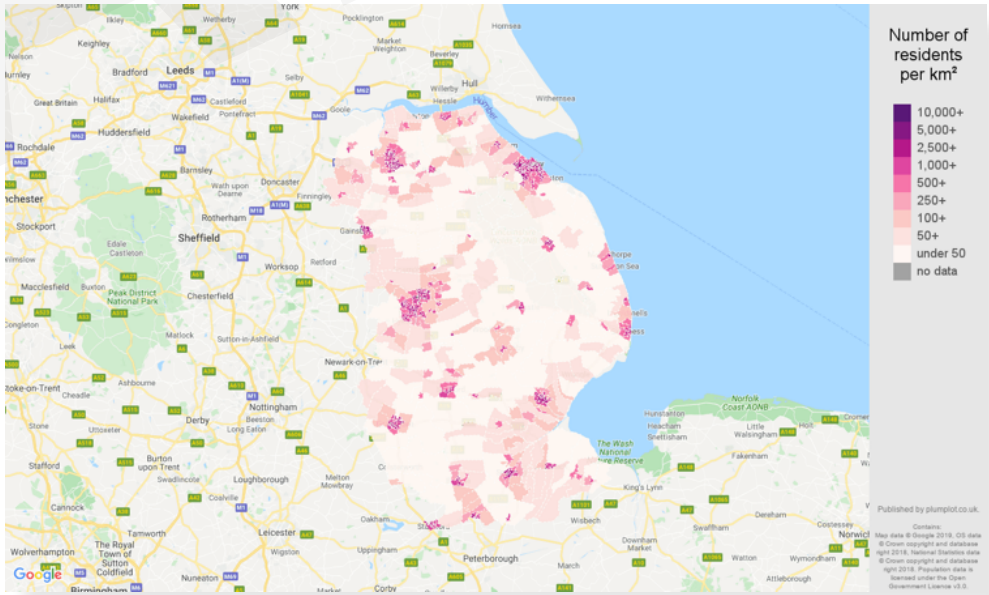


Figure 3 - Population Density Map of Greater Lincolnshire

Approach to Jurisdiction Design

To engage with LGR is to do jurisdiction design. Jurisdictional design is a comprehensive plan for the construction of a system of governance. Comprehensive in that it encompasses a tier of governance, rather than a single jurisdiction and systemic in that individual jurisdictions are conceived as part of an interrelated whole.[12]

There are two basic approaches to jurisdictional design:

- Scale design – local government as an instrument for the efficient provision of public goods. The individual is the unit of jurisdictional design, the inhabitants of the country are interchangeable, except for preferences over different baskets of public goods. Design is undertaken rationally by the centre to maximise administrative efficiency, suppressing local particularities if necessary.

- Community design – local government as an expression of local self-rule. The community is the unit of jurisdictional design, existing as historical facts that determine and constrain design. Central design will acknowledge or empower local identity to minimise resistance to central rule.

A hybrid or post-functionalist approach seeks to balance the two. The post-war history of Rutland provides a case study for both approaches: aborted 1962 Leicestershire amalgamation due to local resistance, 1974-1997 Leicestershire amalgamation, 1997 to present unitary independence.

The recent history of the North East and North Lincolnshire unitary authorities within the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area offers another warning. Humberside County Council was created in 1974 based on functionalist economic and service rationality. The present service configuration for health, police and fire remain cross-Humber highlighting the underlying alignment. Despite the apparent natural economic alignment and public service logic, more so than with agrarian Lincolnshire, the authority faced widespread and protracted local resistance. The identity of Humberside was considered to be an artificial imposition from residents on both banks, and the authority was assessed as lacking a coherent identity leading to its premature dissolution in 1996. **The lesson is the ultimate test for the success of a new authority is resident affinity, not service efficiency, savings or economic growth.**[13] **A functionalist case may be sound, but if that proposed geography is incoherent to the patterns of residents' real lives and identities, then dysfunction will follow. Post-functionalist design seeks to solve this problem and has been applied in developing our proposal.**

12. Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks, Community, Scale, and Regional Governance: A Postfunctionalist Theory of Governance, Volume II, Transformations in Governance, [Online]. Oxford Academic. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198766971.001.0001 [Accessed 4 November 2025].

13. Hickson, J. and Newman, J. (2025), Localism, Levelling Up and Taking Back Control: Tensions in the Ambiguous Justification of English Devolution. The Political Quarterly. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.13570 [Accessed 4 November 2025].

Jurisdiction design is fundamentally a political choice, not a technical problem. Local authorities are simultaneously institutions for political representation and service delivery. It is clear that a meaningful democratic institution must be of a size and sophistication to effectively deliver local priorities, however, logically there is a size where the institution ceases to be an effective vehicle for local community self-governance of place or a 'place of places' and becomes a sub-regional government of undifferentiated places.[14] In that scenario, the authority becomes primarily an enabling and delivery agency for the central state.

Greater Lincolnshire is very large and diverse, the needs and aspirations of residents of one part of the Invitation Area may not coincide with those of another. An oversized governance structure may dilute the political and administrative articulation of the existing geographic differentiation. The benefits to strategic and delivery capacity would be offset by the loss of representation for minority interests, the diminution of democratic accountability and the failure to empower communities.

A vision for what local government is for, is needed to define the geography to be governed. To say there is an optimal size for local government and an objective way to determine that necessitates engaging with this fundamental question.

To answer, we have applied the vision of the White Paper. The White Paper sets the clear objective of the rewiring centre and local relations, in order to renew the local state and restore public trust. This is central to the government's Plan for Change and sense of mission as consistently communicated by the Prime Minister.

The core problem that devolution and reorganisation seeks to solve is powerfully expressed (own emphasis):

'England is made up of thousands of communities – towns, cities and villages – where people look out for one another and feel proud of where they live. But a national politics that hoards power means their interests and values have too often been treated as an afterthought. ***Policies have been done to communities, rather than for and with them****, with one-size fits all approaches and complicated funding processes that reflect the silos of Whitehall rather than the needs of communities. This has left people feeling as if their lives, and the places they call home, have slipped out of their control. Communities need power returned back to them. We want to support local people – those with skin in the game – so that they can better affect the decisions impacting their areas.'* [15]

14. The two conceptions of local government are well known. The specific phrase 'self-governance of place' is adopted from Pike's (2025) commentary on the National Audit Office (NAO) report Local Government Financial Sustainability (2025).
15. MHCLG, White Paper: English Devolution, 2024, Page 93

The assessment that local renewal is inextricable from residents taking back control and having greater influence on decision-making or input legitimacy, indicates that MHCLG sees local government as facilitating community self-governance first, service delivery second. A service delivery first organisation (an agency), whilst incorporating elements of co-production and having a degree of democratic oversight would primarily derive legitimacy from outputs as assessed by the central state.[16]

This understanding allows us to refocus on the core question of purpose and subsequent jurisdiction design.

We are designing the jurisdictions of democratic institutions first, not agencies or field offices.
The White Paper identifies councils as the foundation of the state, essential vehicles for community self-governance of place.[17] In England, local authorities are the only substantial elected bodies below Parliament, able to represent the wishes of residents and shape the circumstances of their lives. Renewing the democratic local state is the core objective of the White Paper. This is to be delivered through enhanced resident control, voice and influence. Therefore the institution design must prioritise a scale and jurisdiction that residents can meaningfully relate to and so actively participate in governance, rather than be governed service consumers. The White Paper recognises this, describing local authorities as 'leaders of place'. Place leading and shaping through the convening and marshalling of local partners is seen as the key to delivering preventative services, civic renewal and public service reform.[18] **Both an oversized subregional unit that necessarily prioritises output legitimacy at the expense of input legitimacy (resident voice), or incoherent units misaligned to the economic, social, and service features of the Invitation Area will struggle to deliver the vision of the White Paper. The White Paper can only be practically delivered in sensibly scaled units that are coherent 'Places of Places' in the expansive Greater Lincolnshire context.** This may come into tension with the optimal scales of some policy areas and current delivery configurations, if so then we consider the democratic requirements must come first.

Some may seek to speciously equate the current service configuration with Lincolnshire itself, as if alteration to the present administrative arrangements is breaking up Lincolnshire, and any division of the county area will necessarily create artificial units. Plainly this is incorrect.



16. Skelcher, Chris, 'Jurisdictional Integrity, Polycentrism, and the Design of Democratic Governance', Governance, 18: 89–110, [Online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2004.00267.x [Accessed 4 November 2025].
17. MHCLG, White Paper: English Devolution, 2024, Page 95.
18. MHCLG, White Paper: English Devolution, 2024, Page 97.



Lincolnshire will still exist. The current arrangements are administrative creations of the 1970s. We are concerned with the optimal arrangement of governance structures. The current moment demands imagination and boldness in reform.

The wicked problem is local authorities, if assessed by share of spending, would be more accurately called social care agencies. The local representative body label risks becoming a misnomer, as costs levied on residents continue to spiral to be funnelled into an increasingly narrow number of statutory services used by a very small proportion of the population, whilst the visible services used by all and widely perceived by the public to be the core functions degrade. The logic of consolidations to stabilise social care will simply continue to degrade that local aspect, and resident empowerment and meaningful choice further. The White Paper highlights this vicious cycle as a risk to the viability of local government and the democratic link between residents and their council.[19] Reorganisation alone will not solve this problem, however sensible jurisdiction design can provide the foundations for resolution. Poor jurisdiction design in regards to size and coherence will exacerbate the tension.

Our task is to design jurisdictions that function as both sensible and coherent local democratic units and have the critical capacity for service delivery. These will be the local partners for central government, whose task it is to undertake the reform of local funding, division of responsibility and scope of the local state over the coming years.

A prudent policy of multi-level governance would suggest that those functions should then be re-allocated to a more suitable tier of government, for example the new sub-regional tier that devolution has established, or the optimal scale created through shared services, partnerships or alternative delivery models. It is unfortunate that MHCLG's territorial strategy and design of the LGR criteria has created the scenario when applied to the Greater Lincolnshire geography, that sensible jurisdiction design in line with expert best practice and delivery of the White Paper's ambitions has been set in opposition to the preservation of some high-performing county services.

To be distilled further, LGR in Greater Lincolnshire is a trade-off between preserving the current configuration in conditions of system disruption with the necessary cost of disempowering residents further versus positively implementing the English Devolution White Paper and rewiring the local state.

19. MHCLG, White Paper: English Devolution, 2024, Page 95.

Our proposed jurisdictions have been designed to deliver the vision of the White Paper.

Uniting the two visions is the recognition that there are two overarching strategic objectives of the government's territorial strategy:

- Decentralisation will empower local people who know their area best. Scope is created for greater policy experimentation and tailoring to reflect the diverse needs of the localities, rather than a one size fits all policy from Whitehall.

- Decentralisation through local government consolidation will create larger units and so boost subnational capacity and simplify the local landscape from a central strategic view. Whitehall gains more effective local lieutenants that are easier to coordinate, enhancing central control of the localities.

The two objectives are not necessarily in tension. **Our solution maximises the achievement of both**. The strategic authority is consolidated, and the principal authorities of sufficient scale are created that are the objective best fit to the economic, social and physical geography of the Invitation Area. **These are the ideal units for both local governance and leadership of place and to act as local agencies of the central state**.



Evidence Led Design Process

At its core, evidence led jurisdiction design is straightforward.

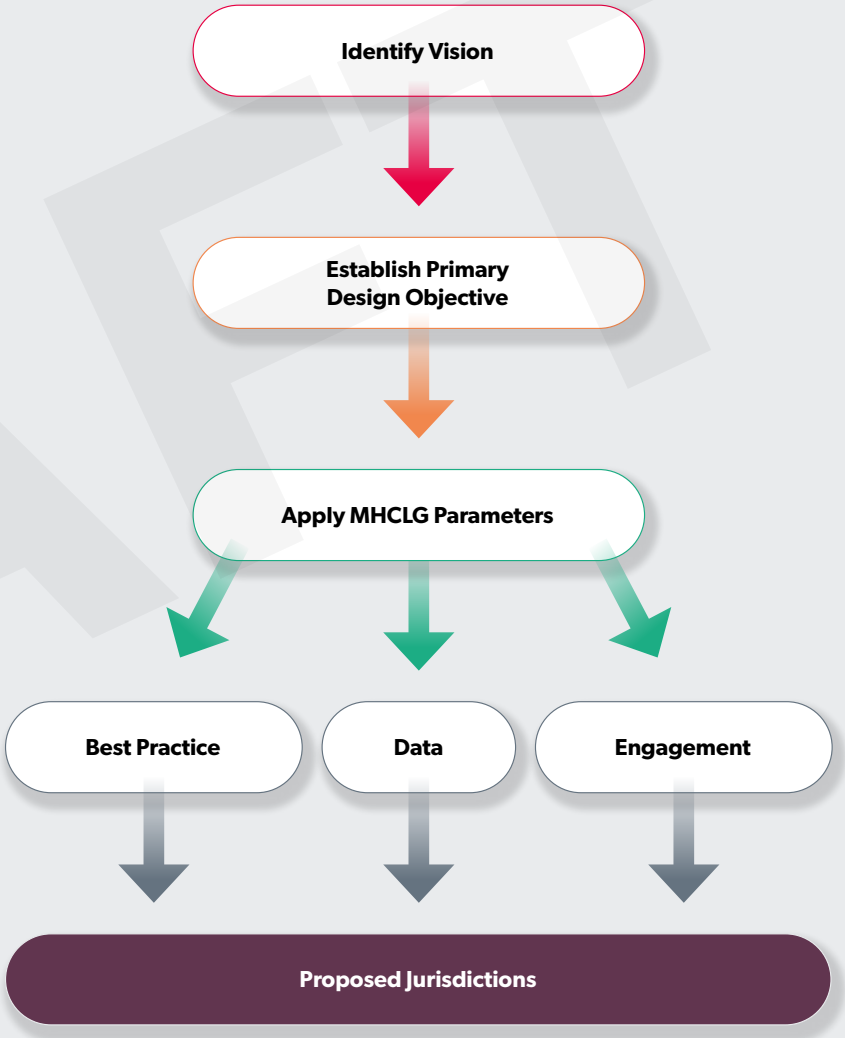
The first step is to identify your vision of what the reform is intended to achieve and your conception of what local government is for. This is essential to successfully navigate the inherent trade-offs of jurisdiction design, balance multiple interests and consistently apply a national whole-of-system reform programme to diverse geographies.

Our vision is that of MHCLG, as expressed in the White Paper, and detailed over the previous pages. LGR is a transformative opportunity to renew the local state – restoring local control of their area to residents and delivering more responsive and sustainable public services that meet the needs of the 21st century. Crucially the new unitaries will be part of multi-level system, empowering and supporting the hyperlocal and the sub-regional strategic authorities to embed devolution and unlock growth.

That established we applied the central lesson of the OECD policymakers handbook on how to do jurisdiction design and local government amalgamation.[20] Ensure the proposed jurisdictions are a coherent best fit with the Places of Places of your Invitation Area within the parameters of the LGR criteria. This was our primary design objective.

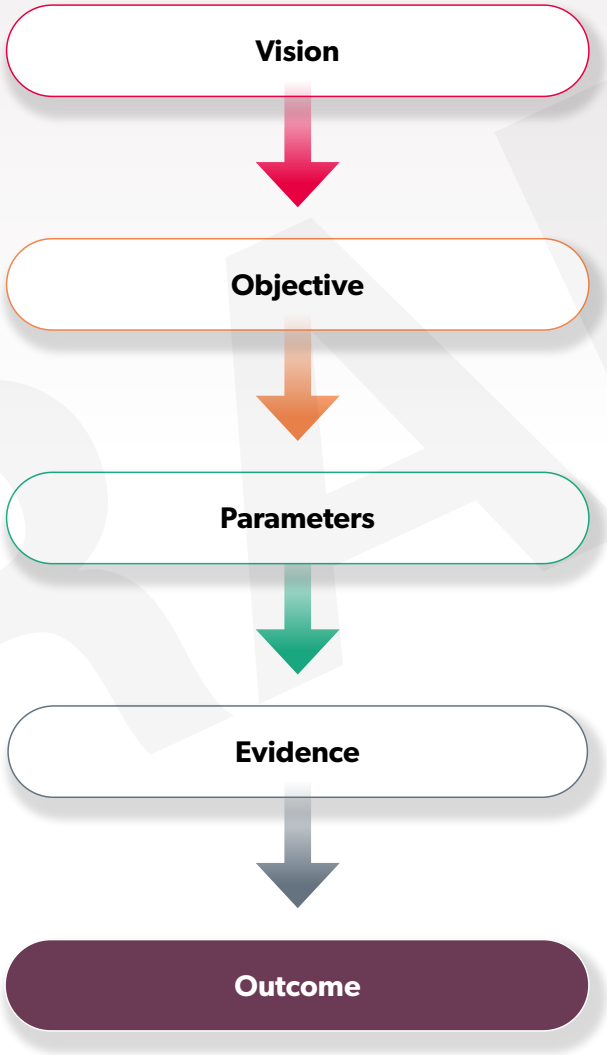
The process is then a matter of applying best practice in a data driven exercise to objectively identify coherent Places of Places in the unique context of each Invitation Area. This is combined with a holistic understanding gleaned from engagement of what our residents value, to ensure that the jurisdictions are not artificial constructs, but have affinity with how residents live their lives.

The result is our proposed unitaries.



20. OECD (2019), Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers, OECD Multi-level Governance Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en [Accessed 4 November 2025].

Design Steps



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Use of External Support

We have endeavoured to deliver our proposal in house as far as practical. External support was utilised sparingly and only where true value add alongside independent and expert knowledge was identified.

Financial Analysis

PwC were engaged (by both Lincolnshire County Council and North Kesteven and South Kesteven) to undertake financial baselining and modelling. It is expected that the methodology, assumptions and outputs of the Lincolnshire County Council and Kesteven proposals will be directly comparable.

PeopleToo were engaged jointly with City of Lincoln and the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP) to undertake financial baselining and core assumptions.

Engagement

Cratus Group were engaged to provide independent public engagement through both an online survey and focus groups.

Critical Upper Tier Services

Treatment of these critical services is a traditional weakness of district led proposals - the complexity of and risk to the services are underestimated, and overly optimistic improvement schemes or alternative delivery models are proposed which do not stand up to scrutiny. We would be the first to acknowledge that as districts, we lack direct experience and expertise in those services. Therefore:

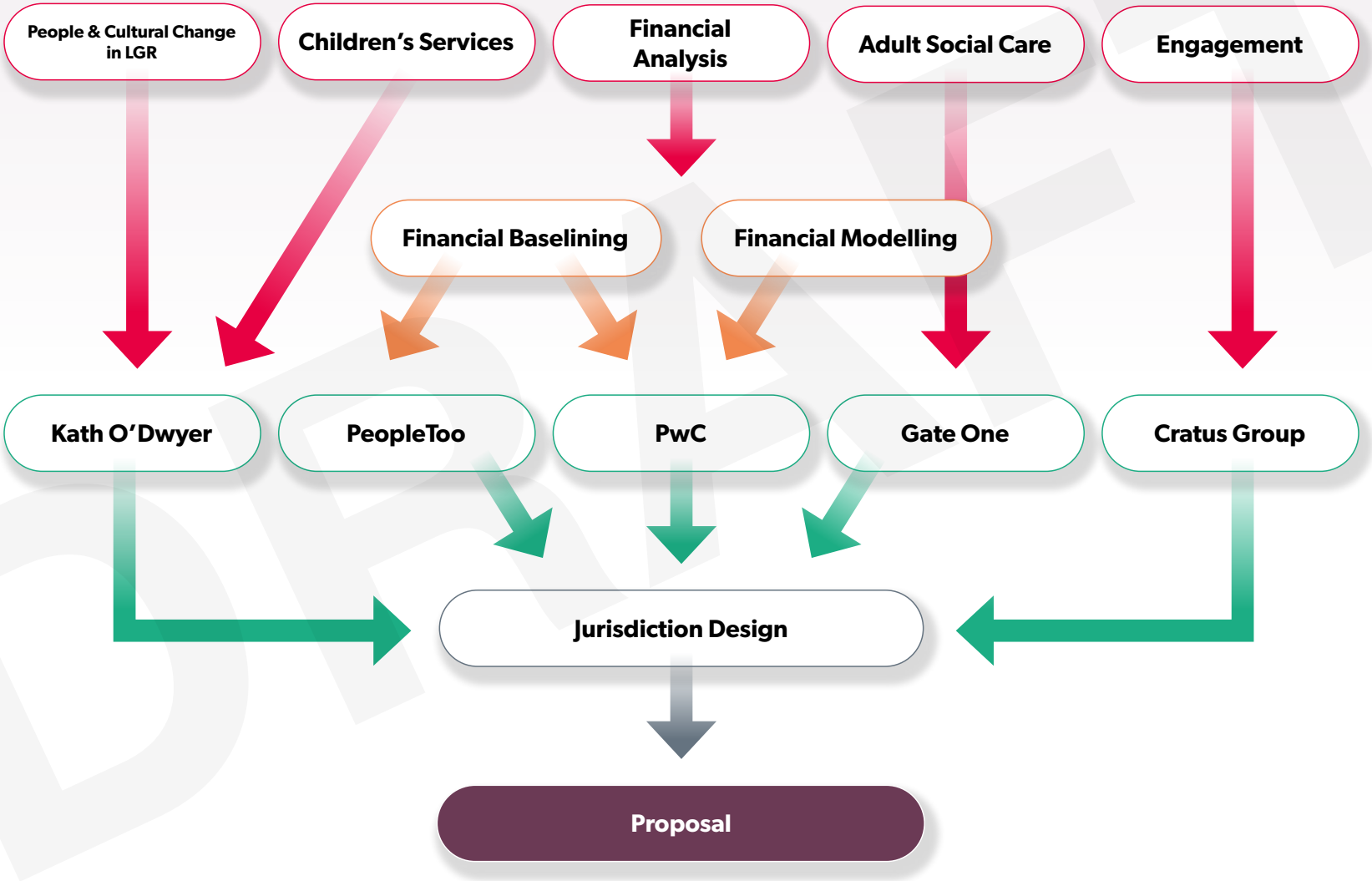
Gate One were commissioned to develop an approach for Adult Social Care using our proposed southern unitary as a deep dive case study.

Kath O'Dwyer was commissioned to develop an approach for Children's Services. Kath O'Dwyer is the former chief executive of St Helens BC and Cheshire East Council. As a senior children's services leader and former Director of Children's Services, Kath O'Dwyer has led or supported the improvement of multiple local authority children's services, including work in authorities previously under government scrutiny or intervention. She also served as a National Director for Ofsted.

Culture & People

Kath O'Dwyer undertook a separate piece of work on the role of culture and people in reorganisations – critical for success, but often neglected in the focus on structures, resources, assets and systems – drawing on her experience as a senior leader in Cheshire post reorganisation. The failure for culture to be prioritised during the LGR process led to significant later challenges for Cheshire East.

Use of External Support



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SECTION 3

Options Appraisal

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SECTION 3: Options Appraisal

Reorganisation Options for Review

Justification for Evaluation of Actual Competing Proposals

The appraisal will include an evaluation of the actual proposed jurisdictions by various submissions in Greater Lincolnshire. We believe that strategic clarity is enhanced by engaging substantively and critically with the proposed options on the table. This approach has been taken for four reasons:

1. LGR proposal development is a three stage process. Interim proposals were submitted in March 2025, MHCLG feedback was received in July 2025, final proposals will be submitted in November 2025. The outputs of each stage have been considered in the public sphere.

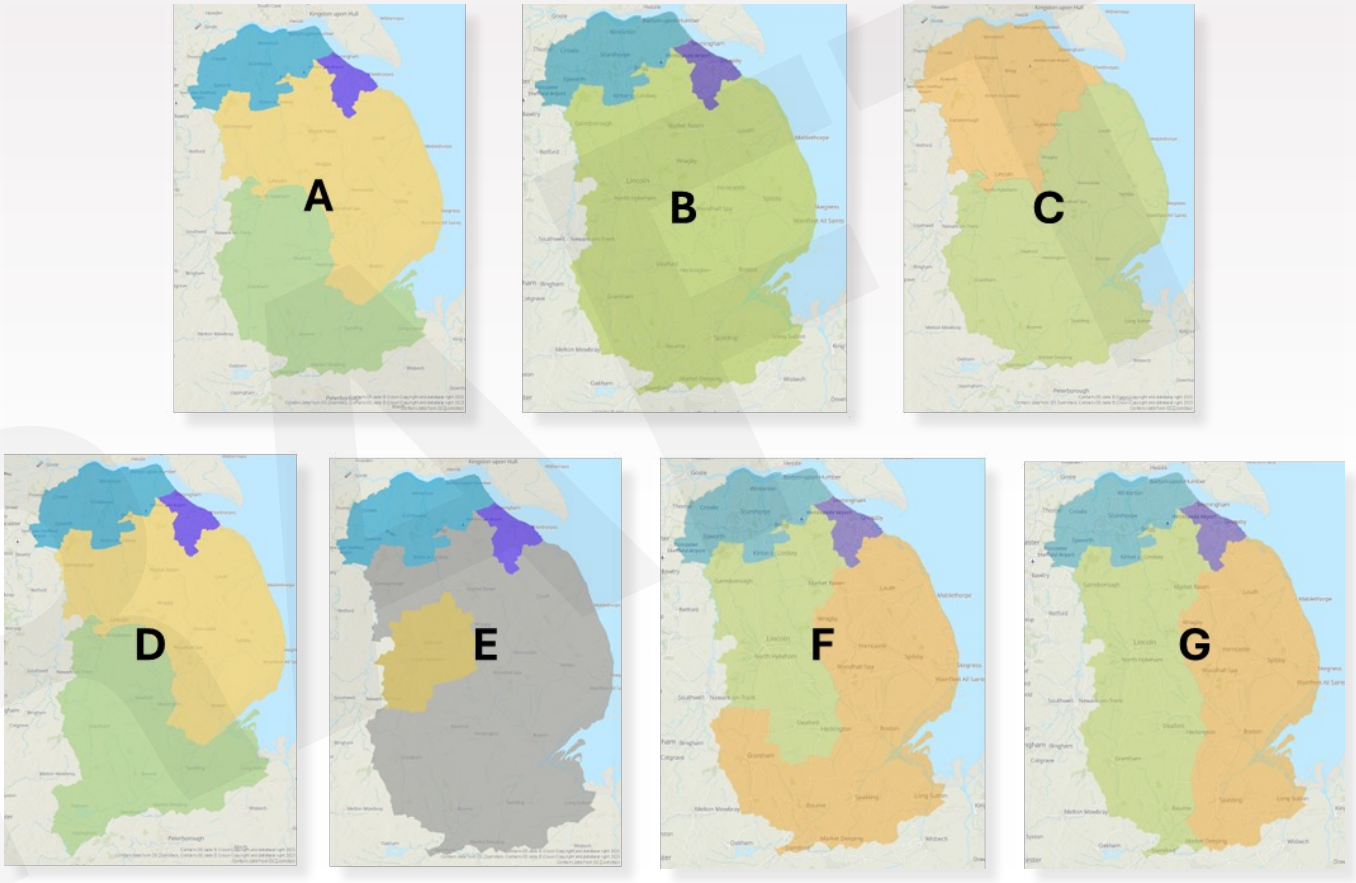
2. The geographic size and diversity of the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area has resulted in a higher number of proposals than many other Invitation Areas. The interim proposals have rightly attracted significant public interest and have driven the Greater Lincolnshire debate since March 2025.

3. LGR is an exercise in jurisdictional design. This is inextricably tied to geography. There is greater value in substantively engaging with proposed geographies than more abstract theoreticals.

4. There is limit to the total practical partitions of Greater Lincolnshire within the MHCLG LGR criteria. This appraisal captures and engages with seven of the primary variations:

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- **Option A** - A partition on north/south lines with status quo North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
- **Option B** - A single county unitary with the status quo North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
- **Option C** - A partition on east/ west lines including a merger with North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
- **Option D** - A partition on north/south lines including a merger with Rutland and the status quo North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
- **Option E** - An expanded Lincoln city
- **Option F** – An asymmetric partition on east/west lines with status quo North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
- **Option G** – A straight partition on east/west lines with status quo North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire



Approach to the Options Appraisal

Jurisdictional design is not a purely objective exercise of technical rationality. If it was, MHCLG would have simply drawn the lines on the map with the approval of the localities. Instead recognising this, MHCLG drew up the rules of the exercise and invited local authorities, who know their areas best, to apply those rules to best meet the LGR criteria and government objectives with sensitivity to the unique context and needs of each Invitation Area.

Local application of the LGR criteria is inherently a question of trade-offs. The trade-off challenge is intensified in a very expansive Invitation Area like Greater Lincolnshire, where core critical questions of local democratic governance and jurisdiction coherence assume a greater salience than in more compact IAs, where the risk to local connection from larger units is significantly lower. How one navigates those trade-offs is informed by one's LGR vision and conceptualisation of local government, which can result in divergent policy responses and design outputs.

For example, a proposal that approaches LGR as a positive opportunity for reform and renewal and sees local government as primarily a mechanism for community self-government of place and so seeks to emphasise local voice and governing coherence, will logically design jurisdictions of multiple units of sufficient scale with an according considered openness to service disaggregation.

A proposal that sees local government as primarily a service delivery agency and so takes a negative and defensive posture to the disruption of LGR, seeking to preserve the current service configuration, and maximise convenience and paper savings will logically seek to consolidate the IA into a single larger unit, with an according acceptance that a degree of local disempowerment is a necessary cost to prevent service disaggregation and minimise instability. A sub-regional not local governance unit will be created. This is in tension with the White Paper and the government's overarching objective to renew the local state and enhance community empowerment.

The fundamental underlying visions are different, but each is eminently reasonable. There is no objective right answer. The judgement of the diverging proposed jurisdictions cannot be reduced to an objective cost benefit analysis, until the assessor makes clear their conceptualisation of local government.

To proceed and present an options appraisal that is a meaningful decision-making tool, a proposal must present clearly and honestly their underlying vision for local government, so demonstrating how the inherent trade-offs of LGR were navigated. We have set this out at length in preceding sections. **To restate, we have followed the MHCLG vision for local government as presented in the English Devolution White Paper: Local authorities are first and foremost institutions for self-community governance of place.**

This sophisticated approach to an options appraisal is further imperative due to the tensions between the individual LGR criteria. It is impossible to maximise all the criteria simultaneously without an explicit vision for local government, because they are reciprocally constrained.

For example, the establishment of a large authority designed to achieve Criteria 2 will prevent the maximisation of Criteria 6 and vice versa. As Greater Lincolnshire is very large and diverse, the particular local needs and aspirations of residents of one part of the Invitation Area will not coincide with those of another. An oversized governance structure will dilute the political and administrative articulation of the existing geographic differentiation. The benefits to strategic and delivery capacity would be offset by the loss of representation for minority interests, the diminution of democratic accountability and the failure to empower local communities. However, a structure designed to maximise local empowerment would limit the desired system consolidation with enhanced capacity, and rather than delivering simplification, the governance apparatus of area committees, boards and partnerships may be more opaque and less accountable to residents.

One could resolve this issue by noting that the strict language of the Statutory Invitation is Criteria 2, 3 & 5 'must' be delivered, whilst Criteria 1, 4 & 6 'should' be delivered. However, latest and consistent MHCLG policy does not acknowledge the 'must/should' distinction, clearly stating in the Interim Plan Feedback letter that:

'The criteria are not weighted…Decisions on the most appropriate option for each area will be judgements in the round, having regard to the guidance and the available evidence.'

This position was reiterated in verbal feedback from senior MHCLG officials and subsequent communications. Further the government's Plan for Change and accompanying policy in the Pride of Place Strategy and the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill clearly demonstrates that local civic renewal and community empowerment are not secondary or merely rhetorical objectives.

We have pragmatically approached this problem, through application of our self-community governance first vision of local government. Therefore if the strict delivery of the 'must' Criteria 2 is counterproductive to the delivery of the 'should' Criteria 6, for example the delivery of 'genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment', then the proposal on size for the 'must' Criteria 2 should be moderated to enable the base achievement of Criteria 6. Options are then scored accordingly.

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Commentary on Specific Issues and Assumptions

Baseline

MHCLG have made clear that the status quo is not an option. Therefore we do not consider there to be a natural baseline option to evaluate other options against. Options appraisals in other Invitation Areas, for example Kent County Council's (KCC), have presented a single county unitary as a neutral baseline.[21] We consider that this understates the degree of radical change to local governance inherent in such proposals, and so is inappropriate for a baseline.

Scale

Our comprehensive review of the literature on local government scale and performance found there is insufficient evidence to support conclusions of bigger is better or that there is an optimal unit size. The academic evidence suggests that multi-level governance is the optimal configuration for service efficiency, delivery and democratic voice. In the context of English unitary government this would imply greater exploration of the potentiality for sub-regional Strategic authorities to deliver services that are optimally delivered on a sub-regional scale[22] and careful consideration of the size ratio between principal and strategic authorities. There is further very strong evidence on the negative impacts of democratic health and political trust from greater scale. We consider this to be of critical importance to jurisdiction design to support the successful implementation of the government's Plan for Change. Our full Literature Review is set out in Appendix 2.

Therefore we do not consider that there is strong rationale to seek to maximise population numbers within the context of the Greater Lincolnshire IA.

No premium will be placed on options that achieve or exceed 500,000 population.

We consider that within the specific geography of Greater Lincolnshire there is heightened risk that strict adherence to the letter of the population requirements will create jurisdictions whose primary raison d'être is achieving the threshold. If insufficient consideration is given to coherence, there is risk that a technically compliant jurisdiction will be an incoherent combination of interests, incentivising political dysfunction and local resistance with a heightened risk of early dissolution. MHCLG have provided an exception mechanism for sub-500,000 populations to ensure this scenario is specifically avoided in IA's such as Greater Lincolnshire.

21. Kent County Council (2025), Appendix 2: Rationale for Options Appraisal Scoring. Available at: https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=131449 [Accessed on 4 November 2025]

22. For example, Labour Together's 2025, Pride and Prosperity: A Decade to Restore Civic Power. Available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64f707cf512076037f612f60/t/68d03df81d732947598dfe7a/1758477816067/Pride+and+Prosperity_+a+decade+to+restore+civic+power+%5BLabour+Together%5D.docx.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2025]

Service Disaggregation and Fragmentation

Criteria 3 states that proposals *'should avoid **unnecessary** (own emphasis) fragmentation of services'*. The circumstances that would justify a **necessary** fragmentation of services are not specified. **We have interpreted necessary circumstances, as being the circumstances in which the population exception can be reasonably claimed and to enable the delivery of the critical policy goals of the White Paper.**

Therefore, no premium is placed on avoiding service disaggregation in itself.

We consider that service disaggregation is fundamentally an operational matter, which although not without significant challenge and risk can be delivered safely and effectively by skilled managerial leadership and practice.

Further it is understood that the balance of expert opinion from Lincolnshire CC service leads and our specialist consultants is that it would be more technically difficult and costly to merge disaggregated county council services with a merged North East and North Lincolnshire, than undertake a strict disaggregation within the current LCC footprint. Estimates from consultants commissioned by North East Lincolnshire range from £35-47 million for a merger of the two northern unitaries, with additional costs for a merger with parts of the Lincolnshire county area.

Asymmetric Jurisdictions and Sub Invitation Area Exceptionalism

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MHCLG are clear that proposals must be for the whole of the Invitation Area and cannot give undue advantage to any one part. Undue advantage is strictly considered by the LGR Criteria in terms of resources: tax bases, pattern of spatial deprivation, the partition of assets and liabilities etc. In addition, we consider this principle should be extended to jurisdictional coherence and democratic voice. **All unitaries in the IA must be big enough to develop quality services but also close enough to understand and respond to local needs and ambitions**. An asymmetric proposal that carves out a small portion/s of the IA to be combined with a significantly larger authority would be inadvisable due to the inequitable difference in electoral representation and greater opportunity for place based policy within the smaller and so more coherent unit. That coherence would have been achieved at the expense of residents in other parts of the IA. Residents would see neighbours across the border receiving governance better attuned to local place and need and rightly question why they have been deemed underserving of similar. This would be unhelpful to legitimacy. Further there would be a divergence in service outcomes, to whose advantage, depends on one's views of the optimal scale for service delivery and value in local policy variation.

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Assumptions

The qualitative options appraisal is primarily focused on the suitability of the proposed jurisdictions as foundations for local governance and as platforms to deliver public service reform and the government's Plan for Change. Successful delivery and realisation of benefits will ultimately be the result of the choices of the future political and managerial leadership. Therefore a number of assumptions are made to ensure that the 'best version' of each option is presented. For example, while it is possible, and indeed likely given the past forty years of practice, for a future government or local administration to deprioritise or cut area decentralisation mechanisms, with the resulting negative impact heightened depending on the scale and geography of the jurisdiction, it would not be fair to assume that this will happen. However an option where this risk is controlled will score higher.

Assumed that all options will attempt to maintain local connection through locality models etc. The test is the conduciveness of the jurisdiction for these measures. For example locality working will likely have better operating conditions for success with less stress on the mechanism in a more compact and coherent jurisdiction, than a larger and less coherent jurisdiction.

Assumed that all options will attempt to empower the hyperlocal through area committees etc. These will be delivered in accordance with all best practice, be suitably resourced and have supportive locally orientated political and managerial leadership and organisational culture to give the mechanisms the best chance of success. The test is whether the scale of the jurisdiction means these mechanisms are compensatory or supplementary in the case of smaller and better designed jurisdictions. In either case it will be very difficult managerial challenge, due to the experimental nature of the governance form and pressure placed on the mechanism to perform to deliver MHCLG's empowerment agenda. It is anticipated that the operation of area decentralisation mechanisms will require a significant allocation of governance and financial resource.

Assumed that double devolution programmes will be delivered with due regard for the capacity challenges of town and parish councils. Capacity varies significantly across the Invitation Area. Assets cannot be simply transferred without careful consideration and support to build hyperlocal capacity.

Assumed that all options will undertake any necessary mergers or disaggregations in accordance with best practice and with care to minimise negative impacts. Fundamentally this is an operational matter that can delivered safely and effectively through managerial skill.

Assumed that all options will seek to deliver efficiency and transformation programmes.

Assumed that all multi-level working between the principal and strategic authorities will be undertaken in the spirit collaborative partnership. The contended risk is structural not of personalities, under the view that the dynamic of and rationale for e.g. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) would be very different if the Greater Manchester County Council (GMCC) was in existence and the combined authority was the GMCC and Blackburn with Darwen. That counterfactual is more appropriate to the current situation in Greater Lincolnshire than the GMCA reality. Hence the MHCLG requirement for appropriate ratios between principal and strategic authorities.

Options Appraisal Process and Methodology

To ensure a robust, objective and evidence-based evaluation of the proposed options, a three-part appraisal methodology has been completed. This approach combines qualitative insights, and balance analysis to assess each option's viability, resilience, and alignment with the MHCLG criteria.

Step	Methodology
Pre-Assessment Analysis	Evaluation of options against minimum MHCLG population thresholds and likelihood of legal compliance i.e. proposals including significant boundary changes or cross-Invitation Area. A Population Size Exception Test has been developed to consistently and objectively assess whether sub-500,000 population proposals are admissible under stated MHCLG policy. The Test is applied on an Invitation Area basis. Options will be scored on a pass/fail basis. Those that are assessed as below the minimum population thresholds without justifiable exception and/or have significant risk of legal non-compliance under the governing legislation are discounted.
Qualitative Analysis	Evaluation of options against the MHCLG criteria. The qualitative options appraisal is primarily focused on the suitability of the proposed jurisdictions as foundations for local governance long term and as platforms to deliver public service reform and the government's Plan for Change. The most aligned option is one that can deliver the foundations for successful local government in the coming years and decades.
Balance Analysis	Reviewing the "balance" of each proposed unitary authority against a basket of indicators ranging from economic strength through to rates of deprivation to support and understanding of the regional context with relation to factors external to councils. This is intended to help paint a richer picture of the existing strengths and challenges of each option's constituent footprints as an insight into potential future service priorities. **Balance in and of itself is not intended to be a goal in itself**. Instead it is used as one of many data inputs to understand the wider context for LGR and provide insight to help make the most informed and reasonable decision possible on the preferred option.

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Stage One: Pre-Assessment Analysis – Detailed Methodology			
Test	**Requirement**	**Requirement Contents**	**Impact for Viability**
Legal Compliance	Treatment of the existing North East and North Lincolnshire UAs	Legal advice received by all authorities in the IA has indicated that the government currently lacks the legal power to forcibly merge two unitaries directly. Therefore there is risk that a proposal to merge the two unitaries without any Lincolnshire authorities would not be legally compliant. There is extremely limited economic rationale and significant complexity and transition costs in merging northern Lincolnshire with elements of the current Lincolnshire county council area.	Options that propose to merge North East and North Lincolnshire UA with Lincolnshire will immediately proceed to the Population Size Test. For options that propose to keep North East and North Lincolnshire UA's separate to Lincolnshire, then the Population Size Test will be applied within the Lincolnshire CC boundary plus any cross-IA options.
Population Size Test	All proposed jurisdictions have populations of 500,000+	MHCLG policy is clear that 500,000 is the minimum population target, unless an exception can be applied.	If successful the option will immediately proceed to Stage 2, unless it is a cross-IA proposal.
	All proposed jurisdictions have populations of 350,000+	MHCLG have not provided a lower acceptable population threshold, however populations in the 300,000 to 350,000 range or to the 'mid 200,000s' were expressly ruled out by the former Ministerial team to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee. The new Ministerial team have not indicated any deviation from this position.	If the option is sub 500,000, then the Size Exception Test will be applied. If unsuccessful then the option will be discounted. If the option is sub 350,000 within the Lincolnshire CC area then it will be discounted.
Population Size Exception Test	Grounds 1: Geographic Vastness	Successfully met if the IA is a very expansive geography. MHCLG recognise that in these geographies, the desired scale would necessitate effectively sub-regional not local governments, creating basic problems for governance, delivery of some services, coherence, democratic legitimacy and multi-level governance with the designated sub-regional governance unit (strategic authorities).	It is considered that the expansive geography of the Greater Lincolnshire IA justifies successful application of the Population Size Exception Test.
	Grounds 2: Identity & Belonging	Successfully met if the IA is a very expansive geography. MHCLG recognise that an overriding pursuit of scale risks the creation of authorities unmoored from and at odds with how residents identify and local pride in place.	
	Grounds 3: Delivery of other Policy Objectives	Successfully met if the particular context (geography and challenges) of the IA suggests the need for multiple authorities below the population threshold. For example, the delivery of devolution in the Surrey IA will require a minimum of two authorities to form the combined authority.	
Boundary Changes	Requirement for Local Government Boundary Changes	MHCLG have indicated a consistent preference for avoidance of boundary changes, directing that existing districts should be used as building blocks. Boundary changes are possible with strong rationale.	An option that successfully meets the Population Size Test, despite boundary changes will proceed to Stage 2.
Cross Invitation Area Proposals	Accounting for impacts on neighbouring IA	MHCLG have indicated that cross IA proposals are possible, however there must be a strong rationale and impacts on the neighbouring IA must be accounted for. There is significant uncertainty on the degree of modelling needed to fulfil this requirement. MHCLG have not provided sufficient clarity for assurance. Legal compliance will be matter of MHCLG discretion in that scenario.	An option that proposes a cross-IA solution will be discounted, due to the risk of legal non-compliance.

Stage Two: Qualitative Analysis – Detailed Methodology				
LGR Criteria	**Criteria Title**	**MHCLG LGR Criteria**	**Core Jurisdiction Design Objectives**	**Key Factors**
1	Sensible Single Tier of Local Government	A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government	The proposed jurisdictions are sensible geographies aligned to economic geography, do not provide undue advantage or disadvantage and facilitate the delivery of public policy goals (e.g. housing).	Sensible economic breakdown: with a tax base which does not create undue inequalities
				Sensible geographic breakdown: which will help increase housing supply and meet local needs
2	'Right-sized' Local Government	Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks	The proposed jurisdictions either meet the minimum 500,000 threshold OR reasonably claim the sub-500,000 exception with appropriate justification (assessed in Stage 1) to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.	Supports efficiencies and value for money for council taxpayers
				Improves capacity and supports the council to withstand financial shocks
				Manageable transition costs
3	High Quality, Sustainable Services	Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens	The proposed jurisdictions are appropriate and conducive footprints to sustainably deliver the full range of high quality local government services and facilitate public service reform.	Improves local government & service delivery, avoiding unnecessary service fragmentation
				Opportunity for public service reform including where this will lead to improved value for money
				Improves delivery of, or mitigates risk to negative impact on crucial services
4	Meets Local Needs	Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.	The proposed jurisdictions take into account local identity, cultural factors, needs and historic communities to achieve coherent units for effective community self-governance of place.	Meets local needs and is informed by local views
				Improves / mitigates risk to issues of local identity, cultural and historic importance
				Addresses local concerns
5	Supports Devolution Arrangements	New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements	The proposed jurisdictions are sensible footprints and size ratios for principal authorities to enable effective multi-level governance with the strategic authority and for the consolidation and deepening of devolution in Greater Lincolnshire.	Helps to support devolution arrangements
				Sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority
6	Local Engagement & Empowerment	New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment	The proposed jurisdictions will enable communities to be empowered, improving resident and neighbourhood voice and decision-making in line with the ambitions of the White Paper and the Government's Plan for Change.	Enables stronger community engagement
				Delivers genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment

Application of Stage 1 Analysis to Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area and Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Invitation Area

Application of STAGE1 analysis										
Option	Legal Compliance		Population Size Test		Population Size Exception Test			No Boundary Changes required	Proposal coterminous with Invitation Area	Progression to Stage 2
	Status	North East/ North Lincs. Treatment	500,000+	350,000+	Geographic Vastness	Identity & Belonging	Delivery of other Policy Objectives			
Option A	✓	Separate	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Option B	✓	Separate	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
Option C	✓	Merged with Lincolnshire	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
Option D	✗	Separate	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Option E	✓	Separate	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Option F	✓	Separate	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Option G	✓	Separate	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗

The following proposals successfully pass Stage 1 and proceed to Stage 2 of the Options Appraisal:

- **Option A**
- **Option B**
- **Option C**

The following proposals either fail to meet the MHCLG basic population requirements or have significant legal risk and so are discounted:

- **Option D**
- **Option E**
- **Option F**
- **Option G**







The following proposals either fail to meet the MHCLG basic population requirements or have significant legal risk and so are discounted:

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Treatment of Option D – Rutland with South Lincolnshire

The Kesteven Interim Proposal included the Rutland County Council area. This was done primarily for economic alignment. The core benefit for local government amalgamation is bringing administrative boundaries in line with the underlying economic geography. This is optimal for economic growth as recommended by the OECD amongst other experts.[23] Using Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) as proxies for functional economic areas as recommended by the Centre for Cities, the alignment of Rutland is with South Lincolnshire and Peterborough. This is also reflected in the Housing Market Areas (HMAs). This reality was acknowledged by all partners as recently as 2023, in the production of the Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland's Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Framework (SIDF) by a joint infrastructure group and the former Local Enterprise Partnership which included Rutland.[24] If designing LGR to maximise local growth, then placing Rutland with south Lincolnshire is the objectively correct solution.

The current misalignment of governance and economic geography is most sharply seen in the complexity of spatial planning in Stamford – a town that is effectively a peninsular into Rutland and acts as an economic and service centre for many Rutland residents. The sustainable future development of the settlement is adversely affected. This is suboptimal for the delivery of the government's growth agenda, and deeply concerning for local residents, who perceive an absence of effective control over how their community will develop.

The option was also advanced in respect to Rutland's unique identity. Success of the new unitary is ultimately dependent on resident affinity. Rutlanders are fiercely proud of their identity, which for obvious historic reasons has greater potential for antagonism with Leicestershire than south Lincolnshire. Alignment with South Lincolnshire would ensure that Rutland positively affirms their independent identity. Alignment with Leicestershire ensures that the period 1997-2028 will be historically presented as a curious anomaly, an interregnum before the inevitable subsuming of the area into Leicestershire.

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23. OECD (2019), Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers, OECD Multi-level Governance Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en [Accessed 4 November 2025]

24. Greater Lincolnshire Infrastructure Group (all Greater Lincolnshire local authorities with the then Local Enterprise Partnership, Rutland CC and the Environment Agency) (2023), Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland's Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Framework. Available at: https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s67961/Greater%20Lincolnshire%20and%20Rutlands%20Strategic%20Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Framework%202023.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025]

The respective population distributions will shape the political economy of the future unitaries. The case for multiple unitaries is significantly weaker in compact Leicestershire than expansive Greater Lincolnshire. Greater Lincolnshire's LGR challenge is the expansive polycentric geography, in hub-and-spoke Leicestershire, the core challenge is Leicester. The extrication of Rutland would not negatively impact this challenge, nor impede reorganisation or devolution. In a single Leicestershire solution, Rutland will be peripheral. In a northern Leicestershire solution, Rutland would be perhaps even more peripheral to the overwhelming concentration of population and economic power in Charnwood and North West Leicestershire. Interaction as assessed by internal commuter flows is minimal. The urbanised and younger northern Leicestershire has different interests and priorities to rural Rutland. Rutland's voice and articulation of distinct local priorities will be diminished. That is not the case with the significantly more distributed population of southern Lincolnshire. There is no single settlement or concentrated population core that would naturally dominate. Rutland has natural economic and cultural alignment with Stamford, and if extended to southern Kesteven within the Peterborough TTWA, then Rutland could effectively triple its population. It would not be a periphery in a southern Lincolnshire unitary. There would be greater opportunity to develop a rural focused service model, reflecting the shared geographies, demographics, priorities and challenges of all partners.

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Local government reorganisation has been the cause of significant debate and political turbulence within Rutland. It is understood that resident opinion is split depending on proximity to the Leicestershire or Lincolnshire border. Two separate engagement exercises have been undertaken; the Leicestershire districts with Rutland County Council (North/City/South proposal) and by Alicia Kearns MP, whose constituency straddles South Kesteven, Rutland and Harborough. Each exercise has found, if the status quo is impossible, a preference towards a solution with Southern Lincolnshire. This preference was as high as 75% in Alicia Kearns MP's engagement, which despite a small sample size, the MP considered to be reflective of the opinion of her constituents. Our independent engagement programme delivered by Cratus was extended into Rutland. In accordance with agreed practice in Greater Lincolnshire and the government's consultation role versus our engagement role, we did not directly ask residents for their views on the various options. Residents who presented their views on this matter in free text questions, engagement event conversations and open focus group discussion indicated an overall preference towards the inclusion of Rutland with South Lincolnshire.



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Analysis by PwC for the Kesteven councils has found that the option would be financially viable, albeit with complex council tax harmonisation.

The latter is true for all of Rutland's options. Rutland CC has the highest council tax in England. The option would entail disruption to Rutland's current public service configuration. Health, police, fire and the vast majority of current partnerships are orientated to Leicestershire, hence Rutland's allocated Invitation Area by MHCLG. In the circumstances of whole-of-system reform, where it is accepted that aligning public service boundaries to the functional economic areas is optimal for growth, and coherent jurisdictions are optimal for resident affinity and public service reform, then a degree of enabling disruption can be tolerated to achieve alignment and so deliver positive reform. However that is not to understate the challenge. An example risk would be fire and rescue. By default new authorities will become Fire & Rescue authorities unless an alternative is found. The multiple Police & Crime Commissioner footprints would complicate a transfer of governance to the PCC. Similar challenges of varying degrees of complexity would be replicated across other services.

The Rutland political and managerial leadership have rightly been acutely conscious of this challenge, informing their strategic position of close collaboration with Leicestershire districts in accordance with the Statutory Invitation, whilst remaining open to the south Lincolnshire option. There is no objective answer as to how the varying requirements of the LGR criteria should be balanced and the trade-offs navigated. An authority's strategic approach to LGR and the consequent best option for Rutland is a matter of leadership.

There is a very significant risk of non-compliance with the statutory requirements. The ambiguity of Rutland is unhelpful for the viability of the option. For a cross-Invitation Area proposal to be accepted it must have the clear commitment of all parties. That is not the case here. There is further risk from uncertainty on the degree of modelling required by MHCLG on impacts to the neighbouring Invitation Area. Compliance would be a matter of MHCLG discretion. This is an unacceptable risk. Therefore the Rutland option is not taken forward. North Kesteven and South Kesteven District Councils remain willing to include Rutland in a unitary council should Rutland County Council and the government agree that it is the optimal solution and should be taken forward.

MHCLG Policy on Cross-Invitation Area Proposals

The 5 February 2025 Statutory Invitation was clear that authorities are open to explore options with neighbouring councils not within their allocated Invitation Area. This position was confirmed by senior MHCLG officials on 25 February 2025, who described the option of Rutland's inclusion with South Lincolnshire authorities as 'absolutely a possibility'. This position was maintained in the Interim Plan Feedback letter received 3 June 2025 and reiterated in verbal feedback from senior MHCLG officials on 2 and 4 July 2025. On 10 September 2025, senior MHCLG officials inferred that an option of including Rutland might be presented as a variation to a core proposal, but this would need to be checked. On 25 September 2025, MHCLG communicated that this route was not possible. If Rutland was to be included it would have to be as the core proposal, not as a variation.

The single precedent in this LGR round so far for a cross-IA proposal was Reigate & Banstead BC with Crawley BC in the Surrey IA.[25] This proposal was assessed as not meeting the statutory requirements by MHCLG and so was not taken forward for consultation. Non-compliance was identified on four grounds:

1. Reigate and Banstead BC was already a signatory to another proposal. Authorities cannot submit multiple proposals.
2. The proposal did not specify the area it was covering.
3. The proposal was merely concerned with Reigate & Banstead and Crawley. How the rest of Surrey and West Sussex would be reorganised was not detailed.
4. There was no financial assessment for the proposed merger nor consideration of the impacts on devolution in Surrey and West Sussex.

Throughout the process, the precise terms in which a cross-IA border proposal could be presented remained uncertain. The consistent position of MHCLG from June onwards is that cross-border proposals must address impacts for the neighbouring Invitation Area. There is a lack of clarity and consequent assurance of the degree to which impacts on the neighbouring IA must be considered and detailed. Is a high level assessment and view of how the neighbouring IA could be reorganised, so demonstrating that the removal of the selected area would not impede reorganisation in the neighbouring IA sufficient? This would fulfil the requirements that Reigate & Banstead BC with Crawley BC failed. Or is modelling of a sophistication equal to the core IA required. An authority could develop and submit a cross-IA proposal in good faith and still be rendered non-compliant on at least two potential grounds:

1. The included neighbouring authority decides to support another proposal within their core IA.
2. The consideration of impacts on the neighbouring IA is deemed insufficient. This would be a matter of MHCLG discretion.

Given the ambiguous political position of Rutland and lack of assurance from MHCLG, it is considered that the risk of noncompliance is too high for a cross-IA proposal with Rutland to be submitted.

25. MHCLG, Letter to the leaders of the borough councils of Reigate and Banstead and Crawley, 17 June 2025 on decision on interim LGR submissions for public consultation in Surrey IA. Available at: Letter - Borough Councils of Reigate and Banstead; Crawley [Accessed on 4 November 2025]

Treatment of Option E - An Expanded City of Lincoln

The expanded Lincoln option has been proposed by City of Lincoln Council and endorsed by Hamish Falconer M.P.. It merits substantive explanation for why we consider that the minimum population threshold exception cannot be reasonably applied beyond a failure to reach 350,000. Although that alone within the LGR criteria disqualifies it, wider MHCLG policy is clear and incompatible with the exceptionalism of an expanded City of Lincoln. A depoliticised application of the LGR criteria with due regard for expert best practice will conclude that the case is very weak.

In short:

- Urban exceptionalism through differentiation is incompatible with MHCLG's territorial strategy.
- The city, even expanded, lacks the critical mass to be extricated from the surrounding county. Statistically by size and population density West Berkshire is a closer peer than York or Bath & North East Somerset.
- The exceptionalism of an asymmetric proposal risks unacceptable inequity within the Invitation Area. It is unclear why residents of Lincoln should have proportionally greater representation and voice than residents elsewhere in the IA, whose voice and focus on their places will have been diluted and reduced through consolidation into larger units. The economic performance of the city does not merit this.

The proposed urban expansion will annex North Kesteven and West Lindsey wards within the Lincoln Strategic Planning Area to increase the authority population to approximately 208,000. The remaining Lincolnshire districts will be reorganised into a single Rural Lincolnshire unitary. North East and North Lincolnshire will be kept separated with a view to merge in future.

Summary of City of Lincoln LGR Proposal					
Unitary	**Composition**	**Population (MY 2023)**	**GVA (£ millions 2022)**	**Land Area (sq km)**	**Density**
Expanded Lincoln	Base Lincoln, Lincoln annexed North Kesteven, Lincoln annexed West Lindsey	208,496	5,269	816.17	255.46
Rural Lincolnshire	Existing Lincolnshire CC area minus expanded Lincoln area	573,543	12,861	5121.14	111.99
Expanded Lincoln Composition (Annexed NKDC & WLDC Wards)					
Base Lincoln	City of Lincoln	102,545	2899	35.69	2873.20
Annexed North Kesteven Wards	Bassingham Rural, Bracebridge Heath, Branston, Heighington & Washingborough, Hykeham Central, Hykeham Fosse, Hykeham Memorial, Metheringham Rural, Navenby & Brant Broughton, Skellingthorpe & Eagle, Waddington Rural, Witham St Hughs & Swinderby	69,885	1683	432.31	161.65
Annexed West Lindsey Wards	Bardney, Cherry Willingham, Dunholme & Welton, Nettleham, Saxilby, Scampton, Sudbrooke	36,066	687	348.16	103.59

Three core arguments are advanced to justify the city expansion:

- Urban Governance – An urban area has unique challenges and demographics, and so differentiated governance structures and practices should be deployed for effective governance.
- Identity – Lincoln has a unique identity and long tradition of self-governance which should be preserved.
- Economic – An expanded city allows for a focus on growth areas for both the economy and housing.

In abstract, the core arguments are strong and have been eloquently expressed by Inner Circle Consulting's 2025 report 'A Case for Cities' for a consortium of ten self-identified 'smaller cities of national significance', including Lincoln. However, under the LGR criteria as designed by MHCLG each is unapplicable.

Theoretically, a multi-level approach to jurisdictional design recognises that the practice and demands of governance in an urban area are distinct from that of predominantly rural areas i.e. Lincolnshire. Therefore, a differentiating territorial strategy that sought to preserve smaller cities as self-governing units with expansion to align governance with the built up area to unlock growth, whilst enabling for the sensible rationalisation of the other authorities into coherent units that could combine the advantages of scale, whilst being meaningfully local for place based operating models would be a potential outcome. The embryonic sub-regional government of the strategic authority could be utilised to deliver the services that operate best over a sub-regional scale.

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This is not a novel argument or approach to jurisdictional design, but it is not the view of MHCLG. In developing the LGR policy and subsequently designing the criteria, MHCLG will have fully assessed the arguments and evidence for differentiated urban and more general multi-level governance and the logical policy response for smaller (sub 350,000 population) governance units. MHCLG could have designed the LGR policy as sketched above to facilitate the expansion of smaller cities as an outcome, however this route was not taken. A decision was made for larger minimum populations and a preference against complex boundary changes. The expansion of smaller cities is fundamentally inconsistent with the territorial strategy of MHCLG, which identifies the function of devolved authorities as providing a strategic overlay, rather than a regional government delivering core services. Principal authorities are tasked with delivering core services and must be of sufficient scale and capacity to do so, hence the minimum population requirements.



26. Inner Circle Consulting (September 2025), A Case for Cities: In Local Government Reorganisation and English Devolution. Available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/68c291a8456ed05aa1276bec/t/68e923e5667c846c6453ab77/1760109541164/Case+for+Cities+Report+-+Inner+Circle+Consulting.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2025].

This is aligned with consistent MHCLG policy. Urban differentiation has not been accepted in prior reorganisations. Bournemouth, and Poole are each larger settlements and economies than Lincoln, whilst Carlisle and Chester can each claim comparable antiquity, importance and history of self-government. Nevertheless, all four urban areas lost self-governing status through reorganisation. Successive governments since 1996 have made the same decision for Barrow, Crewe, Durham, Grimsby, Harrogate, High Wycombe, Scarborough, Scunthorpe and Taunton. There is limited rationale and no precedent to justify a different outcome for Lincoln.

Former Self-Governing Built Up Areas within Reorganised Unitary Authorities

Built Up Area (BUA)	Population (Census 2021)	Gross Value Added (£ million 2022)	Unitary Authority	Reorganised	Current Self-Governing Status	Charter Trustee
Lincoln	104,555	3026.387	TBC	2028	YES	TBC
Barrow	55,255	1744.799	Westmorland & Furness	2023	NO	YES
Bournemouth	196,455	5473.272	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole	2019	NO	YES
Carlisle	77,730	2120.695	Cumberland	2023	NO	YES
Chester	92,760	2865.565	Cheshire West & Chester	2009	NO	YES
Crewe	74,120	3400.044	Cheshire East	2009	NO	NO (Parished)
Durham	50,510	2154.479	County Durham	2009	NO	YES
Grimsby	85,925	2327.793	North East Lincolnshire	1996	NO	YES
Harrogate	75,515	2565.161	North Yorkshire	2023	NO	NO (Parished)
High Wycombe	83,535	2873.924	Buckinghamshire	2020	NO	YES
Poole	141,005	5540.453	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole	2019	NO	YES
Scarborough	59,505	1405.196	North Yorkshire	2023	NO	NO (Parished)
Scunthorpe	81,265	2499.502	North Lincolnshire	1996	NO	YES
Taunton	61,665	1882.620	Somerset	2019	NO	NO (Parished)

Fundamentally Lincoln lacks the critical mass to be differentiated. The city's economic relationship with Lincolnshire is not hub and spoke, for example Leicester, where the entirety of the Invitation Area bar Rutland is within the city's economic orbit (as assessed by TTWA and Housing Market Areas). **Rather Lincoln is the largest node within the polycentric Lincolnshire economy**.

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This can be seen immediately through basic comparison with the other nine members of the Inner Circle commissioning consortium. Lincoln has the smallest GVA and population, excluding the three unitaries, by on average 61% and 32% lower respectively. The report's authors implicitly recognise this reality. The city is absent from the tables displaying the economic dynamism of regional cities and is lacking in the presence of the UK Modern Industrial Strategy 2025's ten high potential sectors. The report's narrative leads with Oxford and Cambridge. The dedicated Lincoln section focuses on health outcomes and place based services (applicable to all of Lincolnshire), rather than specific arguments of constrained economic vitality. The Centre for Cities do not categorise the settlement as a Primary Urban Area – spatial concentrations of large amount of economic activity, which the think tank uses to identify places for their annual Cities Outlook and for the implementation of their policy prescriptions.[27]

Commissioning Consortium of the Inner Circle Consulting 'The Case for Cities' Report

Authority	Type	Primary Urban Area	Gross Value Added (£ million 2023)	Population (mid-year 2024)	Area (sq. km)	2024 people per sq. km
Lincoln	Non-metropolitan District	NO	3215	105114	35.69	2945.19
Cambridge	Non-metropolitan District	YES	8900	149352	40.70	3669.68
Exeter	Non-metropolitan District	YES	6798	138399	47.03	2942.59
Gloucester	Non-metropolitan District	YES	3941	138598	40.55	3417.70
Ipswich	Non-metropolitan District	YES	5423	140274	39.51	3550.37
Norwich	Non-metropolitan District	YES	4808	147182	39.02	3771.75
Oxford	Non-metropolitan District	YES	8600	166034	45.60	3640.88
Peterborough	Unitary Authority	YES	7957	223655	343.38	651.34
Reading	Unitary Authority	YES	11008	182907	40.40	4527.64
Swindon	Unitary Authority	YES	12707	243875	230.09	1059.90

This is reinforced by comparison to the potentially expanded Lincoln's peers. Notwithstanding that the proposed population is inadmissible under the LGR criteria, the population density demonstrates that Lincoln is in a qualitatively different category to other smaller historic cities like Bath and York. Further, unlike those metropolitan unitaries, Lincoln does not currently deliver critical services like Children's and Adult Social Care. Excluding Portsmouth, the proposed area is 93% bigger than the average to achieve a comparative population with a population density 90% lower, pointing to the annexation of rural hinterland not urban sprawl.

27. City Definition | Centre for Cities

Current metropolitan unitaries with a similar population to the proposed expanded City of Lincoln authority (with West Berkshire for comparison)				
Authority	**Gross Value Added (£ million 2022)**	**Population (mid-year 2023)**	**Area (sq. km)**	**2023 people per sq. km**
Proposed Expanded Lincoln	5,269	208,496	816.17	255.46
West Berkshire	8,357	163,367	704.18	232
Bedford	4,807	189,891	476.41	399
Bath & North East Somerset	5,075	199,818	345.88	578
Peterborough	7,098	219,509	343.38	639
Telford & Wrekin	5,793	191,915	290.32	661
York	7,705	206,780	271.93	760
Stockton-on-Tees	5,941	202,415	204.93	988
Warrington	9,364	212,389	180.63	1,176
Portsmouth	6,962	210,297	40.38	5,208

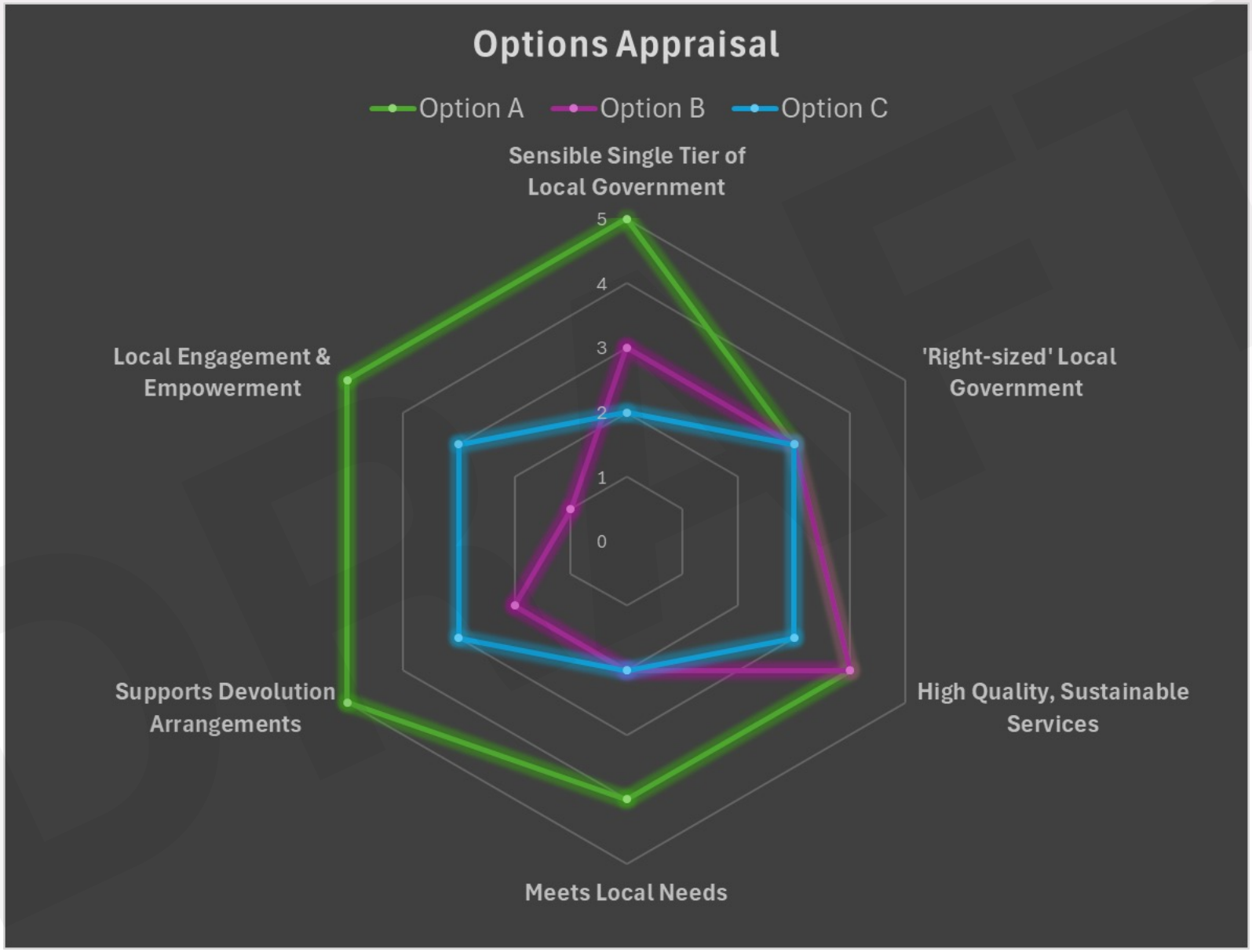
NB * mid-year 2023 populations used in this table as ward level 2024 estimates not yet released

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Qualitative Options Appraisal Outcome

STAGE 2 ASSESSMENT Alignment with LGR Criteria					
LGR Criteria	**Criteria Title**	**MHCLG LGR Criteria**	**Option A**	**Option C**	**Option B**
1	Sensible Single Tier of Local Government	A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.	5	2	3
2	'Right-sized' Local Government	Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.	3	3	3
3	High Quality, Sustainable Services	Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.	4	3	4
4	Meets Local Needs	Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.	4	2	2
5	Supports Devolution Arrangements	New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.	5	3	2
6	Local Engagement & Empowerment	New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.	5	3	1
TOTAL			26	16	15

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Options Appraisal
Option A
Option B
Option C
Sensible Single Tier of Local Government
'Right-sized' Local Government
High Quality, Sustainable Services
Meets Local Needs
Supports Devolution Arrangements
Local Engagement & Empowerment
5
4
3
2
1
0

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Preferred Option: Option A - A partition on north/south lines with status quo North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire

The justification for this preferred option is detailed in the subsequent comparison, which outlines Option A's advantages against each MHCLG criteria.

Criterion	Summary Commentary
1. Sensible Single Tier of Local Government	The option delivers sensibly sized units that can be described as meaningfully local. Objective best fit alignment with economic geography as coherent Places of Places will maximise the opportunity for economic growth and resident affinity.
2. 'Right-sized' Local Government	The option provides local governance of sufficient scale, whilst being tied meaningfully to the local to enhance and maintain articulation of local priorities. Transition costs are manageable.
3. High Quality, Sustainable Services	The option unlocks the transformative opportunity of LGR through the establishment of new organisations with new operating models and cultures. The most innovative techniques for public service reform and the shift to prevention rely on deep local connection, which these jurisdictions aligned to place will be best suited to deliver.
4. Meets Local Needs	The option establishes coherent units of sufficient scale for effective community self-governance of place – fulfilling the core purpose of local government across the Invitation Area. An evidence led approach has identified the intra-Invitation Area identities and sensitively designed jurisdictions to match.
5. Supports Devolution Arrangements	The option provides rebalances to the Invitation Area to ensure an appropriate ratio with strategic authority to consolidate devolution. This provides the optimal foundations for effective multi-level governance moving forward.
6. Local Engagement & Empowerment	The option provides conducive conditions for stronger community engagement and genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. The scale and sensitive jurisdiction design provides the best opportunity for civic renewal to deliver the government's Plan for Change.

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Summary of Options Alignment to MHCLG Criteria

Option	Overall Score	Strategic Trade Off	Summary Assessment
Option A – A partition on north/south lines with status quo North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire	First	Moderately scaled unitaries aligned to place unlock economic growth, public service reform and maintain local connection. However this entails disruption to the current configuration in Lincolnshire.	The option is principally designed for place – maintaining local connection in jurisdictions of a suitable scale aligned to the functional economic areas and identities of the Invitation Area. The trade-off is a degree of disruption that will be limited to within Lincolnshire and can be minimised through good delivery. Jurisdictions are an objective best fit to functional economic geography and intra-Invitation Areas identities within the parameters of the LGR criteria. This creates coherent Places for Places, not artificial constructs. The alignment provides the optimal foundations for economic growth, public affinity, place based preventative public service reform and multi-level governance with the strategic authority. The moderate scale accords with expressed resident views to keep local government as local as possible. The multiple unitaries enable the effective articulation and actioning of diverse local priorities across the Invitation Area. At the proposed scale, the negative impact on resident voice will be minimised. Ratios of electors to councillors will remain within the norms for English local government. Risk of inequity in representation and opportunity for place based policy within the Invitation Area and between adjacent Invitation Areas is eliminated. The scale and jurisdictions are conducive for area decentralisation, which will be supplementary not compensatory, maximising the opportunity for success and enhanced neighbourhood control and empowerment. If the future unitaries decide to undertake very radical transformation, as proposed in Norfolk, this is the optimal scale and geography for success. Right sized and balanced constituent authorities for the Mayoral Combined Authority are created. This option supports devolution and equity in the delivery and governance of the Mayoral Combined Authority. The unique identity and expressed view of northern Lincolnshire to remain separate from the county area is respected, in accordance with service and economic rationality. Potentially excessive transition costs of a merger are avoided. Transition costs within the county footprint are manageable. Overall, if the purpose of local government is local democratic governance, this is the superior option in the Greater Lincolnshire context. The establishment of coherent jurisdictions is the essential foundation to unlocking the transformative potential of the reform package, economic growth and delivering the Government's Plan for Change. This option delivers that.

Option B – A single county unitary with the status quo North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire	Third	Continuity of the current configuration minimises disruption and offers the greatest potential savings. However a strategic sub-regional not local government unit is created, this entails the disempowerment of Lincolnshire residents and is counterproductive to delivering the government's Plan for Change.	The option is principally designed for continuity. The option presents the starkest strategic trade-off. The current configuration of critical statutory county services will be preserved, along with the greatest opportunity for savings, but at the cost of introducing diseconomies of scale for the most visible local services, an inevitable degree of disempowerment of local residents and neighbourhoods and flattening the articulation of local priorities through the establishment of a sub-regional scale, not local authority. Challenges in multi-level governance with the designated sub-regional governance unit will be introduced and a vacuum will be created with the hyperlocal. Given the volume and proportion of allocated expenditure and the critical nature of the statutory county services that is a reasonable strategic choice. This must be assessed against the necessary disbenefits, especially the degree of local disempowerment that can be tolerated, however as a strategic choice it is contrary to the White Paper and the Government's Plan for Change. Community engagement mechanisms will be compensatory not supplementary and with high risk of failure. The requirement to enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment is not met. Very radical transformation to fundamental operating models, as proposed in Norfolk, may offer a degree of mitigation, but this will be an expensive, complex and fundamentally experimental undertaking, which even if successful will remain inferior in terms of service efficiency and effectiveness, resident voice and democratic accountability to a multi-level division of functions between multiple organisations each aligned to place. Challenges of competing intra-Lincolnshire local identities can be circumvented due to the retreat to the sub-regional Lincolnshire identity; however this limits the opportunity for place based public service reform in consequence from the dislocation from the local. The incoherence of a sub-regional scale authority and two small unitaries is a significant challenge. There is no positive argument for the continued existence of the northern unitaries that does not also apply within Lincolnshire and so undermine the rationale for amalgamations. Significant risk of inequity is introduced between residents of Lincolnshire, and northern Lincolnshire within the Invitation Area and between residents of adjacent Invitation Areas with more compact geographies. Those residents will live in smaller more coherent jurisdictions with superior local voice and opportunities for place based policy – local not sub-regional governance. Lincolnshire residents may question why this is possible for residents in northern Lincolnshire and elsewhere, but not for them, damaging local legitimacy and that of the LGR programme. No change to devolution is required. The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) will continue to mature. However this forgoes the opportunity to adjust and strengthen the foundations to reflect the new reality of the White Paper. The MHCLG requirement for appropriate population ratios between the principal and strategic authorities will not be fulfilled. Risks will be created for effective multi-level governance. Overall, if local government is conceptualised as an agency for primarily the delivery of social care, and the overriding strategic priority is to prevent disruption to the current high performing configuration then this is the most viable option. However the option is counterproductive to achieving the government's wider strategic goals and the transformative opportunity of LGR.

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Option C - A partition on east/ west lines including a merger with North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire	Second	Proposed unitaries achieve the 500,000 population threshold. However this entails the creation of incoherent misaligned jurisdictions at the price of significant disruption and expense.	The option is principally designed for arbitrary scale. The trade-off is incoherent jurisdictions and significant disruption across the Invitation Area. The option is a contortion of the Invitation Area to meet the population thresholds, rather than the sensitive design of jurisdictions following expert best practice to deliver the LGR criteria within the unique context of Greater Lincolnshire. Both the unitary footprints are contrary to the functional economic areas of Greater Lincolnshire. There is minimal to non-existent circulation between Lincoln and northern Lincolnshire, and East & West Lindsey with southern Lincolnshire. Instead of aligning administrative and economic geography the option will create combinations of disparate and potentially competing economic interests and local identities. These are not coherent Places of Places, but expansive artificial constructs, limiting the potential for place based public service reform and risking low public affinity. The misalignment is sub-optimal for economic growth. As highlighted with Humberside County Council, the key test for a successful authority is not service efficiency, savings, or economic growth, but resident identification with the jurisdiction as 'their place'. These jurisdictions risk repeating the Humberside mistake. The size will dislocate local decision-making, inherently disempowering residents. Community engagement mechanisms will be compensatory not supplementary at the proposed scale and with high risk of failure. Northern Lincolnshire will be integrated into Lincolnshire creating challenges for current public service boundaries without a strong economic rationale for change, but this will consolidate devolution by delivering two equal sized units and eliminating perception of disproportionate influence for Northern Lincolnshire. Additional government action would be required to amend the Statutory Instrument. A complex and costly merger of disaggregated county services with Northern Lincolnshire will be required. The complexity and cost is greater than a strict disaggregation within the Lincolnshire county area. The incoherent nature of the resulting jurisdictions whose principal justification is to meet the population criteria is a significant risk to the worthwhileness of service disruption. An option that does not advance disruption may be superior to disruption in the service of incoherent jurisdictions. Overall, the option achieves the population criteria but is otherwise sub-optimal to counterproductive for establishing the coherent jurisdictions that are the essential foundation to unlocking the transformative potential of the reform package and delivering the Government's Plan for Change.

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Option A – A partition on north/south lines with the status quo for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire

Criteria	Alignment Summary	Rating
1. Sensible Single Tier of Local Government	The option delivers sensibly sized units that can be described as meaningfully local, ensuring responsiveness and enabling the articulation of local priorities with varying place based policy responses throughout the Invitation Area. Alignment with functional economic geography is achieved through sensitive application of good design practice to the unique geography of Greater Lincolnshire. Expert best practice recommends that any division of the Invitation Area into new jurisdictions should be driven by the objective of bringing administrative boundaries into best fit alignment with the underlying functional economic geography. That will maximise the opportunity for economic growth and resident affinity, as the jurisdictions are coherent Places of Places reflecting the areas in which residents live and work. The option achieves this. **Alignment to functional economic geography:** Best fit alignment with the underlying economic geography, creating the optimal conditions for growth. An evidence led approach would recommend a tripartite split of Invitation Area in central, northern and southern zones. This has been followed. **Alignment to public service partner boundaries:** Aligns with the present public service boundaries in Greater Lincolnshire. Some partnerships will need to be adjusted. Area decentralisation models will seek alignment with the Primary Care Network footprints.	**5**
2. 'Right-sized' Local Government	The option achieves the LGR population threshold within the Lincolnshire footprint. This is not achieved in northern Lincolnshire, but that is an acceptable consequence of the legal complexity in merging two unitaries and the overwhelming economic case for their differentiation from Lincolnshire. There is no optimal scale for multi-functional local government. Optimal scale varies by function. 'Right size' will depend on the purpose of the authority. For this option the purpose is to provide local governance of sufficient scale, whilst being tied meaningfully to the local to enhance and empower local voice and maintain articulation of local priorities. However this comes at the cost of disruption to the current county services, which will be a task of operational practice to minimise. The option is the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. **Capacity and Resilience:** Scale will lead to a reduction in administrative overheads in Lincolnshire. Review of the academic and expert practitioner literature suggests there is limited to no evidence to support views that the increased scale in itself will have any positive impact on efficiency, performance, costs and resilience to financial shocks on an organisational level. Impacts will vary by function. Disbenefits to other functions, local governance and democratic health will be incurred. These will be minimised across the Invitation Area. Positive change and realisation of projected benefits will be driven by the decisions and quality of the political leadership and managerial practice. The jurisdictions have been matched to the economic geography and coherent places of places to provide the best foundation and opportunities for future policy makers. **Transition Costs:** Expectation that costs will be manageable. Disaggregation will be required within Lincolnshire however there will be no complex merging of upper tier functions in northern Lincolnshire.	**3**

3. High Quality, Sustainable Services	Delivers short term disruption within the Lincolnshire county footprint. It is expected that the county services will be largely disaggregated with particular focus on Adult's and Children's Services. This is a necessary consequence for the creation of moderately scaled unitaries aligned to place. Alternatives: multi-level governance with the mayoral for the delivery of functions with sub-regional economies of scale or trusts and other ADMs have been ruled out by MHCLG. Shared services are best undertaken by mature not new organisations. A unitary that requires shared services to deliver services is not viable. Disaggregation is an operational problem that can be delivered safely and successfully. The short term disruption unlocks the transformative opportunity of LGR through the establishment of new organisations with new operating models and cultures. The most innovative techniques for public service reform and the shift to prevention rely on deep local connection, which the unitaries aligned to place will be best suited to deliver. A degree of diseconomies of scale will be introduced for former district services, which are the most visible to residents and inform resident perceptions of their area. However there is great opportunity for place based synergies with other services within the moderately scaled coherent jurisdictions with maintained local connection. **Opportunity for Public Service Reform:** The key for a successful shift to prevention and the wider public service reform focus on the neighbourhood is local connection and knowledge. The moderately scaled unitaries aligned to place enable strong opportunity for innovative reform throughout the Invitation Area. **Impact on current County Services:** The option has the necessary strategic trade-off of disrupting the current service configuration. Disaggregation is a risk and a complex operational undertaking; however this can be delivered safely and successfully. **Impact on current District Services:** Typically district and neighbourhood services have significantly lower economies of scale that have already been realised in the current structures. A degree of diseconomies of scale will be introduced, however there is great opportunity for place based synergies with other services within the moderately scaled coherent jurisdictions with maintained local connection. Performance of these highly visible services has an outsized impact on resident perceptions of their area and council.	**4**

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4. Meets Local Needs	The option establishes coherent units of sufficient scale for effective community self-governance of place – fulfilling the core purpose of local government across the Invitation Area. An evidence led approach has identified the intra-Invitation Area identities and sensitively designed jurisdictions to match, within the constraints of the LGR criteria. In terms of expressed views of residents that local government should remain as local as possible, the option is successful. Local connection is maintained throughout the Invitation Area. The particular expressed wish of northern Lincolnshire to remain separate in recognition of separate economic interests and public service boundaries is delivered. Stakeholders will see a degree of short term disruption, which will result in the establishment of authorities aligned to the particular places within the Invitation Area, enabling an appropriate tailoring of governance to meet the distinct needs of different areas and communities. Negative impacts from scale to democratic health are minimised, and a democratic deficit is avoided across the Invitation Area. **Alignment to Local Identity:** Independent engagement highlighted how residents are deeply proud of their area and draw their identity from their local settlement. The option uses travel to work patterns to achieve a best fit of jurisdictions to intra-Lincolnshire identities within the LGR population and resource parameters. Lincoln's self-governing status is not maintained, but this is impossible to achieve within the LGR population requirements and need to balance council tax bases. **Alignment to Local Views:** Independent engagement highlighted how an overwhelming majority of respondents strongly value their council feeling local and that giving residents a voice was the highest priority. The option achieves this within the parameters of the LGR population criteria for both Lincolnshire and northern Lincolnshire. It is understood that the political and public view gauged from engagement in northern Lincolnshire is if the status quo is impossible, then the two unitaries should remain separate from the county area. This is achieved. **Implications for Democratic Representation:** Minimises the risk of democratic deficit from larger scale, through establishing moderate sized unitaries aligned to place. The risk of inequity in democratic representation within the Invitation Area and adjacent Invitation Areas is eliminated. The ratio of electors to elected members will be within the conventional norms of English local government across the Invitation Area. Jurisdiction design to emphasise the creation of coherent places of places – areas with shared interests and identities - ensures that representatives will be incentivised to take both a local view and make decisions in the interest of the whole area.	**4**

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5. Supports Devolution Arrangements	Alters the status quo and requires government action to amend the Statutory Instrument. The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) will continue to mature, and conditional on meeting the governance requirements graduate to established status. The Invitation Area is rebalanced into multiple principal authorities representing the distinct sub-areas of the Invitation Area ensuring an appropriate ratio with the strategic authority. Resident concerns that the mayoral governance provides disproportionate influence to some parts of the devolved area are ameliorated. This provides the optimal foundations for effective multi-level governance moving forward. The alignment to the Invitation Area's functional economic geographies enables local place based policy to complement the strategic function of GLCCA. The provision of multiple principal authorities aligned to coherent places of places offers future optionality for the government's English devolution policy. **Multi-Level Governance:** Delivers principal authorities with appropriate population ratios to the strategic authority, ensuring effective multi-level governance. Each principal authority can develop specialisms aligned with economic clusters supporting locally led delivery, as well as advocate more clearly for place-specific priorities within the devolved area to complement the strategic sub-regional mayoral leadership. **Consolidating Devolution:** Rebalances the Invitation Area through creating principal unitaries to represent northern, central and southern Lincolnshire, ameliorating current concerns of reduced influence for particular locales within the county footprints compared to North and North East Lincolnshire. **Deepening Devolution:** Provides for the graduation of GLCCA to established status with additional government action. Provides optionality for future reform. Northern Lincolnshire could be moved into HEYCA to match the ICB cluster reforms without collapsing devolution for Lincolnshire. In a scenario where a the government looks to cluster devolved areas to create regional scale governments in the polycentric localities to provide the optimal institutional framework to drive economic growth and complement the conurbations, the unitaries each tied to a specific place and functional economic area could be manipulated as required for the optimal regional governance configuration.	**5**

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6. Local Engagement & Empowerment	The option provides conducive conditions for stronger community engagement and genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment. Increased scale necessarily has negative impacts on local democratic health. The twin MHCLG requirements for scale and enhanced resident empowerment are in tension. This option navigates the tension through sensitively designed jurisdictions that align with coherent places of places and balance local connection with sufficient scale. Negative impacts are minimised and a suitable foundation is provided for area decentralisation, which will be supplementary not compensatory. The scale is similar to rural unitaries with long running successful area decentralisation programmes. Area decentralisation thus will not be a step into the unknown, with significant pressure for immediate success. This provides the best opportunity for civic renewal to deliver the government's Plan for Change. **Impact on local voice:** Negative impact on individual local voice will be minimised. Coherent jurisdictions enable the articulation of local area priorities. Greater opportunity from scale for democratic input from organisational actors – mass media, non-governmental organisations etc., as highlighted by the Council of Europe**.** **Opportunity for community engagement:** At the proposed scale, area decentralisation will be supplementary not compensatory. The governance form has a mixed record and will be experimental when applied to the Greater Lincolnshire geography with a high risk of failure. Area committees cannot be relied on to maintain or enhance local connection. The coherent and moderately scaled jurisdictions will provide the best opportunity for success. The moderate scale means the pressure on the mechanisms to immediately perform is less acute enabling a test and grow approach. **Multi-Level Governance with the hyper-local:** The scale will create a manageable gap with the hyper-local. A national initiative to enhance hyperlocal capacity to compensate is not expected.	**5**

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Option B - A Single County Unitary with the status quo for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire

Criteria	Alignment Summary	Rating
1. Sensible Single Tier of Local Government	As an absorption of districts in Lincolnshire and maintenance of the status quo in northern Lincolnshire this offers the simplest structure, meeting key system partner needs, minimising duplication, and reducing management overheads. It consolidates existing service footprints to simplify delivery in theory and strengthens levers of control over wide geographies. However, the large geographic area in Lincolnshire is significantly larger than MHCLG guidance and will reduce responsiveness to local identity and dilute flexibility in local delivery and policy. The footprint is sub-regional scale and cannot be meaningfully described as local. There is an imbalance with northern Lincolnshire, even post a merger of the northern unitaries that is currently prevented by legal technicalities. That risks the legitimacy of the LGR programme in Lincolnshire. Residents will see that local units are possible. **Alignment to functional economic geography:** The subregional scale sits above all internal Lincolnshire TTWAs, enabling sub-regional strategic economic development. This complicates local economic development and creates potential overlap with the strategic authority tasked with sub-regional economic development. An alignment of administrative and economic geography has been achieved in northern Lincolnshire. Does not resolve the economic alignment of southern Lincolnshire to Cambridgeshire, Rutland and Peterborough. **Alignment to public service partner boundaries:** Aligns with the present public service boundaries in Greater Lincolnshire and maintains existing partnerships. It is expected that area decentralisation models would seek alignment with the Primary Care Network footprints.	**3**
2. 'Right-sized' Local Government	The option achieves the LGR population threshold within the Lincolnshire footprint. This is not achieved in northern Lincolnshire, but that is an acceptable consequence of the legal complexity in merging two unitaries and the overwhelming economic case for their differentiation from Lincolnshire. There is no optimal scale for multi-functional local government. Optimal scale varies by function. 'Right size' will depend on the purpose of the authority. For this option if the purpose is to provide critical county services within Lincolnshire without disruption it is the right size. If the purpose is local governance that empowers local residents it is the wrong size. The option implicitly recognises this complexity by the acceptance of significantly undersized authorities in northern Lincolnshire. The option is the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. **Capacity and Resilience:** Scale will lead to a reduction in administrative overheads in Lincolnshire. Review of the academic and expert practitioner literature suggests there is limited to no evidence to support views that the increased scale in itself will have any positive impact on efficiency, performance, costs and resilience to financial shocks on an organisational level. Impacts will vary by function. Disbenefits to other functions, local governance and democratic health will be incurred. These will be minimised in northern Lincolnshire and potentially accentuated in Lincolnshire. Positive change and realisation of projected benefits will be driven by the decisions and quality of the political leadership and managerial practice. **Transition Costs:** Expectation that costs will be low, due to the absence of disaggregation or the complex merging of county or existing unitary functions.	**3**

3. High Quality, Sustainable Services	Delivers service continuity. Existing partnerships will be maintained. In conditions of wider system reform to the NHS, social care etc. local government will be an anchor of comparative stability. However the potential defensive posture of the continuing model, risks missing the transformation opportunity of LGR and establishing new organisations with new operating models and cultures. The most innovative techniques for public service reform and the shift to prevention rely on deep local connection, which the authority will be disconnected from in Lincolnshire. Diseconomies of scale will be introduced for former district services, which are the most visible to residents and inform resident perceptions of their area. **Opportunity for Public Service Reform:** The key for a successful shift to prevention and the wider public service reform focus on the neighbourhood is local connection and knowledge. That will be necessarily capped due to the proposed scale, limiting the application of the most innovative reforms in Lincolnshire. Northern Lincolnshire will have greater opportunity to pursue place based reform. **Impact on current Upper Tier Services:** The current configuration will be preserved. In Lincolnshire, there may be a short term injection of stabilising resources from the former district assets and discretionary services. In northern Lincolnshire opportunities for greater efficiency and sustainability will be lost through the continued operation at scales significantly below the optimal. **Impact on current Lower Tier Services:** Typically district and neighbourhood services have significantly lower economies of scale that have already been realised in the current structures. Diseconomies of scale will be introduced in Lincolnshire. Performance of these highly visible services has an outsized impact on resident perceptions of their area and council.	**4**

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4. Meets Local Needs	Assessment of alignment to local need is challenging for this option. In terms of expressed views of residents that local government should remain local within the constraints of the LGR, it is unsuccessful. For stakeholders who may wish to avoid short term disruption it is suitable. How weight should be accorded to the views of varying stakeholders is a matter for MHCLG. Local connection is maintained for residents of northern Lincolnshire and accords with their expressed views to remain separate from the Lincolnshire county area. As a retreat to the sub-regional Lincolnshire identity, the option does not need to demonstrate alignment with intra-Lincolnshire identities. There is risk for how local particularity and diverse needs would be effectively captured and actioned. There is significant risk in a democratic deficit and the reduction in resident voice as a consequence of scale. This is intensified by the solution for northern Lincolnshire which will likely retain current ratios of electors to councillors. **Alignment to Local Identity:** Independent engagement highlighted how residents are deeply proud of their area and draw their identity from their local settlement. Strong alignment in northern Lincolnshire is achieved. The sub-regional scale means that alignment with intra-Lincolnshire local identities is unnecessary. The retreat to the sub-regional Lincolnshire identity has trade-offs for capturing and articulating local particularities. Responsiveness will be reduced. **Alignment to Local Views:** Independent engagement highlighted how an overwhelming majority of respondents strongly value their council feeling local and that giving residents a voice was the highest priority. The option fails to deliver this for Lincolnshire county area residents but does deliver for northern Lincolnshire residents. It is understood that the political and public view gauged from engagement in northern Lincolnshire is if the status quo is impossible, then the two unitaries should remain separate from the county area. This is achieved. **Implications for Democratic Representation:** Exacerbates the democratic deficit from larger scale. Risks creating inequity in democratic representation within the Invitation Area and adjacent Invitation Areas. Strict adherence to the LGBCE guidance on elected member numbers will bring the ratio of electors to councillors outside conventional norms for English local government (excepting extraordinary cases like Birmingham) in Lincolnshire. This will likely not occur in northern Lincolnshire, or to the same degree in adjacent Invitation Areas. Lincolnshire residents would necessarily have significantly less access to their representatives than they currently receive. Representatives would also be incentivised to take a strategic sub-regional not local view in decision making.	**2**

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5. Supports Devolution Arrangements	Maintains the status quo and requires no alteration to the Statutory Instrument. The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) will continue to mature, and conditional on meeting the governance requirements graduate to established status. However the governance arrangement was designed for the pre-White Paper world, where the principal objective was delivering devolution to Greater Lincolnshire in the face of significant public scepticism, politically expressed at the district level that had resulted in the failure of a previous deal. The new world of principal and strategic authorities that LGR delivers creates a new challenge of ensuring appropriate ratios to the strategic authority and opportunity to deliver balanced representation within the Invitation Area for better strategic fit. A subregional Lincolnshire authority and two northern unitaries does not deliver that, weakening the foundations of devolution moving forward. The ICB cluster reforms have highlighted the strategic tension within the Invitation Area of the cross-Humber orientation of public services in the north. Without service boundary changes that have limited economic rationale, the Greater Lincolnshire mayor's ability to perform the expansive system leader role envisioned by the White Paper will be constrained. That limitation will be preserved, any move of northern Lincolnshire into HEYCA would collapse devolution in Lincolnshire. **Risk to Effective Multi-Level Governance:** Does not meet the MHCLG requirement of sensible population ratios between principal authorities and the strategic. Risk of dysfunction from an oversized principal authority assuming a sub-regional strategic role, so perception that GLCCA is a superfluous additional layer or disproportionate influence for undersized principal authorities in the asymmetric population scenario. **Consolidating Devolution:** Risks exacerbating not ameliorating public scepticism on the mayoral model, which is particularly pronounced in southern Lincolnshire, as highlighted in the public consultation on the devolution deal and mayoral governance model. **Deepening Devolution:** Provides for the graduation of GLCCA to established status without additional government action. Limits the optionality of future reform to cluster devolved areas to create regional scale governments in the polycentric localities to provide the optimal institutional framework to drive economic growth and complement the conurbations as recommended by Re:State. In that scenario, the north and south of the Invitation Area would have divergent strategic interests – the north would look cross-Humber, the south into the East Midlands and East of England.	**2**

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6. Local Engagement & Empowerment	The option fails to provide the conditions for stronger community engagement and genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment throughout the Invitation Area. Sub-regional scale necessarily comes at the cost of disempowering residents and diluting local voice. It is not a scale for local governance or empowerment as conventionally understood and applied. The twin MHCLG requirements for scale and enhanced resident empowerment are in tension. The option navigates the tension by accepting the disempowerment of Lincolnshire residents (but not northern Lincolnshire residents) within the county footprint as a strategic trade off to preserve the current county service configuration. The scale is counterproductive to MHCLG's policy to enhance local voice, empower neighbourhoods and drive civic renewal in line with the Plan for Change. Tension and risk of inequity in the maintenance of local sized unitaries in northern Lincolnshire and the potential creation of similar in adjacent Invitation Areas, which will provide superior local voice for those residents. Mitigation mechanisms for empowerment would be experimental and with acute pressure placed on them to perform. The mixed record of area decentralisation measures in English local governance does not set a positive precedence in this regard. The existence of a sub-regional scale unitary in North Yorkshire is not an applicable precedent. North Yorkshire was reorganised under the 2019-2024 Conservative government. The then government and LGR criteria placed a significantly lower emphasis on neighbourhood empowerment and did not require for LGR to deliver enhancement. **Impact on local voice:** Individual local voice will be reduced along with the articulation of local area priorities in Lincolnshire. This will not be experienced in northern Lincolnshire. Greater opportunity from scale for democratic input from organisational actors – mass media, non-governmental organisations etc., as highlighted by the Council of Europe. **Opportunity for community engagement:** At a subregional scale, area decentralisation will be compensatory not supplementary. The governance form has a mixed record and will be experimental when applied to the Greater Lincolnshire geography with a high risk of failure. Area committees cannot be relied on to maintain or enhance local connection. Success would require a long term commitment to localism over simplistic notions of efficiency from the political and managerial leadership. Community engagement will be weakened compared to the status quo. **Multi-Level Governance with the hyper-local:** The scale will create a significant gap with the hyper-local in Lincolnshire. A national initiative to enhance hyperlocal capacity to compensate is not expected.	**1**

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Option C - A partition on east/west lines including a merger with North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire

Criteria	Alignment Summary	Rating
1. Sensible Single Tier of Local Government	The option is contrary to the underlying economic geography, creating incoherent units to meet the population threshold, rather than a sensitive application of good design practice to the unique geography of Greater Lincolnshire. This risks dysfunction through incoherent combinations of interests that do not reflect residents' sense of place. Expert best practice recommends that any division of the Invitation Area into new jurisdictions should be driven by the objective of bringing administrative boundaries into best fit alignment with the underlying functional economic geography. That will maximise the opportunity for economic growth and resident affinity, as the jurisdictions are coherent Places of Places reflecting the areas in which residents live and work. The option does not achieve this. **Alignment to functional economic geography:** Not aligned with the underlying economic geography. There is minimal to zero commuter interaction between northern Lincolnshire and Lincoln, and East and West Lindsey with southern Lincolnshire. An evidence led approach would recommend a tripartite split of Invitation Area in central, northern and southern zones. **Alignment to public service partner boundaries:** Not aligned with current police, fire and health boundaries. Northern Lincolnshire's public service orientation is cross-Humber. It is expected that area decentralisation models would seek alignment with the Primary Care Network footprints.	**2**
2. 'Right-sized' Local Government	The option achieves the LGR population threshold within the Invitation Area footprint. There is no optimal scale for multi-functional local government. Optimal scale varies by function. 'Right size' will depend on the purpose of the authority. For this option if the purpose is to meet the strict LGR criteria upper threshold for population then it is the right size. However the size is achieved at the expense of alignment with the functional economic geography and intra-Invitation Area identities – limiting the jurisdictions potential as coherent units of local governance. The merging of northern Lincolnshire with elements of the Lincolnshire county footprint causes significant complexity and disruption with attendant costs. The option is the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. **Capacity and Resilience:** Scale will lead to a reduction in administrative overheads in the Invitation Area. Review of the academic and expert practitioner literature suggests there is limited to no evidence to support views that the increased scale in itself will have any positive impact on efficiency, performance, costs and resilience to financial shocks on an organisational level. Impacts will vary by function. Disbenefits to other functions, local governance and democratic health will be incurred. Positive change and realisation of projected benefits will be driven by the decisions and quality of the political leadership and managerial practice. **Transition Costs:** Expectation that costs will be very high, due to the disaggregation and merging of county services and functions from multiple unitary authorities.	**3**

3. High Quality, Sustainable Services	Disrupts service continuity. Complex disaggregation and mergers will need to take place, complicated by the crossing public service boundaries for fire, police and health in the north without economic rationale. The most innovative techniques for public service reform and the shift to prevention rely on deep local connection, which the authority will be disconnected from across the Invitation Area. Diseconomies of scale will be introduced for former district services, which are the most visible to residents and inform resident perceptions of their area. Place based synergies will be constrained by the incoherent geography. The misalignment with functional economic geography and intra-Invitation Area interests and identities makes the justification for disruption challenging. **Opportunity for Public Service Reform:** The key for a successful shift to prevention and the wider public service reform focus on the neighbourhood is local connection and knowledge. That will be necessarily limited to due to the creation of unitaries at a scale divorced from the local and which are also an incoherent misalignment of interests. **Impact on current County Services:** The current configuration would be disrupted. Service disaggregation would be most likely consequence. The balance of expert and professional opinion is that it would significantly more complex and costly to undertake a disaggregation of current county services, then a merger with the two northern unitaries, than a strict disaggregation within the county footprint. An example is Fire & Rescue. The different Fire authority in northern Lincolnshire (Humberside FRA) would complicate a theoretical transfer of governance to the PCC as could be undertaken in Lincolnshire, and thus may require an FRA for each unitary with disruption and consequences for public safety. **Impact on current District Services**: Typically district and neighbourhood services have significantly lower economies of scale that have already been realised in the current structures. Diseconomies of scale will be introduced across the Invitation Area. Place based synergies will be constrained by the incoherent geography. Performance of these highly visible services has an outsized impact on resident perceptions of their area and council.	**3**

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4. Meets Local Needs	The option does not deliver coherent units for effective community self-governance of place. In terms of expressed views of residents that local government should remain local within the constraints of the LGR, it is unsuccessful. In terms of aligning with the intra-Invitation Area interests and identities it is unsuccessful. The expressed views of northern Lincolnshire to remain separate from the Lincolnshire county area is not met. The local connection is not maintained for residents of across the Invitation Area. Stakeholders will experience short term disruption, with particular complex solutions for Fire & Rescue, without the reward of jurisdictions aligned to functional economic areas, identities or interests. Particular risk in the creation of unitaries with sharply divergent or competing interests without a shared identity for political functionality. **Alignment to Local Identity:** Independent engagement highlighted how residents are deeply proud of their area and draw their identity from their local settlement. The option is not aligned with intra-Lincolnshire local identities. Particular concern for the northern unitary which has to balance and articulate the very different interests of Lincoln and northern Lincolnshire. Likewise the pairing of East Lindsey with southern Lincolnshire, which have limited interaction and shared interests. Dysfunctional zero sum politics on resource allocations is risked in both unitaries. **Alignment to Local Views:** Independent engagement highlighted how an overwhelming majority of respondents strongly value their council feeling local and that giving residents a voice was the highest priority. The option fails to deliver this across the Invitation Area. It is understood that the political and public view gauged from engagement in northern Lincolnshire is if the status quo is impossible, then the two unitaries should remain separate from the county area. This is not achieved. **Implications for Democratic Representation:** Does not exacerbate the democratic deficit within the Invitation Area. Ratios between electors and elected councillors are high, but within conventional norms of English local government.	**2**

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5. Supports Devolution Arrangements	Alters the status quo and requires government action to amend the Statutory Instrument. The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) will continue to mature, and conditional on meeting the governance requirements graduate to established status. The Invitation Area is rebalanced into two principal authorities ensuring an appropriate ratio with strategic authority. This provides the foundations for effective multi-level governance moving forward. The place based focus of the principal authorities is impacted by the incoherence of each jurisdiction. For example, the northern unitary which has to balance and articulate the very different interests of Lincoln and northern Lincolnshire. However this does enable the integration of northern Lincolnshire into Lincolnshire consolidating devolution. Public service boundaries will be misaligned in the north. Ideally public service boundaries should be altered to reflect the underlying functional economic areas, currently there is limited economic rationale for altering northern Lincolnshire's cross-Humber orientation to integrate with Lincolnshire. In this option that argument will be significantly stronger, to enable the Greater Lincolnshire mayor to perform expansive system leader role envisioned by the White Paper however it is sub-optimal practically and economically. **Effective Multi-Level Governance:** Achieves the MHCLG requirement of sensible population ratios between principal authorities and the strategic. Risk of dysfunction from an oversized principal authority assuming a sub-regional strategic role, so perception that GLCCA is a superfluous additional layer or disproportionate influence for undersized principal authorities in the asymmetric population scenario. **Consolidating Devolution:** Achieves an integration of northern Lincolnshire into Lincolnshire, rebalancing the devolved area. Potential mayoral role in balancing the competing interests of the incoherent principal authorities. That would be mitigating role, coherent jurisdictions aligned to place would be superior complements to the mayoral authority. **Deepening Devolution:** Provides for the graduation of GLCCA to established status with additional government action. Limits the optionality of future reform to cluster devolved areas to create regional scale governments in the polycentric localities to provide the optimal institutional framework to drive economic growth and complement the conurbations as recommended by Re:State. In that scenario, the north and south of the Invitation Area would have divergent strategic interests – the north would look cross-Humber, the south into the East Midlands and East of England. That optionality will have been prevented by the economically sub optimal northern Lincolnshire integration.	**3**

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6. Local Engagement & Empowerment	The option provides suboptimal conditions for stronger community engagement and genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment throughout the Invitation Area. Scale necessarily comes at the cost of disempowering residents and diluting local voice. The twin MHCLG requirements for scale and enhanced resident empowerment are in tension. The option navigates the tension through the provision of area decentralisation and engagement mechanisms; however the scale and incoherent jurisdictions are not ideal for their successful application. Risk of inequity with residents of northern Lincolnshire is eliminated. Mitigation mechanisms for empowerment would be experimental and with acute pressure placed on them to perform. The mixed record of area decentralisation measures in English local governance does not set a positive precedence in this regard. **Impact on local voice:** Individual local voice will be reduced along with the articulation of local area priorities. Greater opportunity from scale for democratic input from organisational actors – mass media, non-governmental organisations etc. as highlighted by the Council of Europe. **Opportunity for community engagement:** At the proposed scale, area decentralisation will be compensatory not supplementary. The governance form has a mixed record and will be experimental when applied to the Greater Lincolnshire geography with a high risk of failure. Area committees cannot be relied on to maintain or enhance local connection. Success would require a long term commitment to localism. **Multi-Level Governance with the hyper-local:** The scale will create a significant gap with the hyper-local in the Invitation Area. A national initiative to enhance hyperlocal capacity to compensate is not expected.	**3**

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SECTION 4

4

HOW OUR PROPOSAL MEETS THE SIX MHCLG CRITERIA

4.1	**Criterion 1:** Sensible Single Tier of Local Government - A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government
4.2	**Criterion 2:** Right-sized Local Government - Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks
4.3	**Criterion 3:** High Quality, Sustainable Services - Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens
4.4	**Criterion 4:** Informed by local views - Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views
4.5	**Criterion 5:** Devolution - New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements
4.6	**Criterion 6:** Local Engagement & Empowerment - New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

SECTION 4: LGR Criterion 1: Sensible Single Tier of Local Government

A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.

a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.

b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.

c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.

d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.

Our Jurisdictional Design Objective: The proposed jurisdictions are sensible geographies aligned to economic geography, do not provide undue advantage or disadvantage and facilitate the delivery of public policy goals (e.g. housing and economic growth).

Summary of Policy Challenges

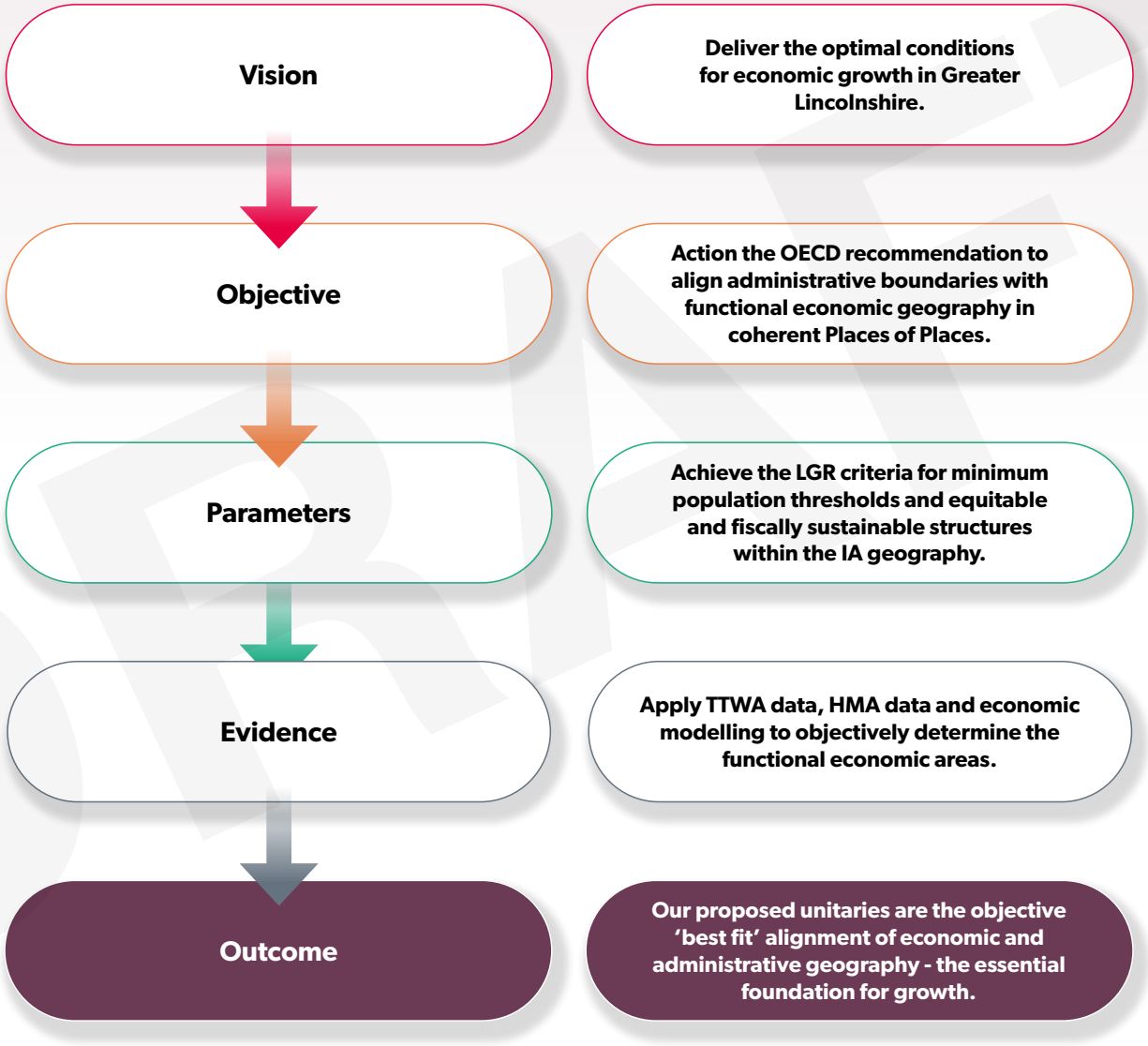
- Jurisdictions must align with functional economic geography as the essential foundation to delivering the Government's economic growth and housing priorities.
- Jurisdictions must be a coherent 'Place of Places' that residents have affinity with to enable successful and meaningfully local governance.
- Jurisdictions must support and complement the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority to provide multi-level economic governance.

Our proposed jurisdictions deliver:

- The objective 'best fit' alignment to the functional economic areas of Greater Lincolnshire as determined by the underlying data.
- Coherent 'Place of Places' within the diverse geography of Greater Lincolnshire as determined by the underlying data.
- The ideal sites for future place-based economic development functions to support the sub-regional leadership role of the strategic authority within a multi-level framework.

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Designing for Economic Growth



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Economic Foundations

Task: Jurisdictions must align with functional economic geography as the essential foundation to delivering the Government's economic growth and housing priorities.

Our proposal jurisdictions deliver the 'best fit' alignment to the functional economic areas of Greater Lincolnshire. Establishing the optimal conditions for kickstarting economic growth.

Driving economic growth is a key objective of the English Devolution White Paper and the LGR programme. Speaking at the party conference, the Secretary of State Steve Reed M.P. stated that the key priority for the LGR programme was boosting economic growth.

> ***"Everything we hope to achieve as a government is only possible if we get Britain building"***

The English Devolution White Paper identifies that fragmentation of governance across local economies causes problems for local economic performance. Aligning economic and administrative geography where possible is essential to delivering the Government's missions for economic growth and housing. In a situation where the two are disconnected, **it is rational for local politicians to block economic activity**. The reward for voters and local politicians from increasing economic activity in that scenario are the dis-amenity costs of increased congestion, land development, and pressure on local services. **Ensuring alignment is the necessary first step to correcting this problem, so maximising the impact of the government's planning reforms and laying the essential foundations for a future exploration of fiscal devolution opportunitie**s.

It is significantly easier to alter public service boundaries to reflect the underlying economic geography than the reverse. Functional economic areas tend to be more durable and thus serve as a better foundation for long-term governance arrangements. This important step must be taken in a highly evidence-led way. At a broader geographic, demographic and economic scale, misaligned boundaries would risk undermining not only local, but also national outcomes.

This is a matter of widespread consensus, advanced by the New Economics Foundation, Re:State and most fully by the Centre for Cities as part of the Resolution Foundation's with the London School of Economics' Economy 2030 Inquiry.[28]

28. A Breach & S Bridgett , Centralisation Nation: Britain's system of local government and its impact on the national economy, Centre for Cities, September 2022 Available at: https://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Final-Centralisation-Nation-02-09-2022.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2025]

The OECD recommend for economic and administrative geography to be aligned to ensure that decentralisation positively impacts economic growth. Decentralisation in of itself or to the wrong geography does not automatically drive growth. **The OECD also advise that in light of the consistent international experience for limited realisation of projected savings or improved performance post amalgamation and the strong evidence for deleterious impacts on local democratic health, achieving economic and administrative alignment should be a prime rationale for states considering local amalgamations and is one of the most realisable benefits from doing so.**[29]

Jurisdictional design needs to be undertaken sensitively and in a differentiated manner nationally. The OECD have found that reducing fragmentation may have a heterogeneous impact within a country. **A place based approach is recommended over one size-fits-all policies. The OECD recommend that the principle guiding amalgamation should not be the average size at the country level. Size should be weighted for the rural/urban characteristics of each region. This is because the costs and benefits of fragmentation to economic performance have a different weight in urban and rural regions.** The negative impact of fragmentation on economic performance decreases with the share of population living in rural areas. In extremely rural regions the effect turns mildly positive.[30]

The reason is the differing characteristics of hub-and-spoke and polycentric economies. In a hub-and-spoke region it is economically optimal to eliminate fragmentation to bring the entirety of a conurbation under a single governance structure to provide system level leadership, especially for spatial and transport planning. This does not prevent a multi-level division of functions within the area. The government has done this with the metro mayors in the Manchester, Liverpool and West Midlands city regions and others.

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In polycentric regions, composed of multiple smaller nodes and functional economic areas, multiple governance units covering each ‘place of places’ is optimal for growth, as varying place attuned policies can be pursued. These would then sit under a governance structure to provide regional level leadership, coordinating and balancing the interests of the various nodes, and representing the region with a single voice on the national and international stage. The government is doing this with the establishment of principal and strategic authorities.[31]

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29. OECD (2019), Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers, OECD Multi-level Governance Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en [Accessed 4 November 2025]

30. Bartolini, D. (2015), “Municipal Fragmentation and Economic Performance of OECD TL2 Regions”, OECD Regional Development Working Papers, No. 2015/02, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/5jrxqs60st5h-en [Accessed 4 November 2025]

31. Re:State (July 2025), Go Big or Go Home: Governing England’s Polycentric Regions. Available at: https://re-state.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Go-big-or-go-home.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025]

System	LGR Invitation Area Example	Features
Hub-and-Spoke	**Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland**	Dominated by a central, economically productive urban core (e.g. London, Manchester, Birmingham).
		Surrounding areas – commuter belts, satellite towns, and smaller cities – are economically and socially linked to the core.
		Functional economic geography radiates out from the core, with infrastructure (transport, housing and services) designed to serve the central hub.
Polycentric	**Greater Lincolnshire**	Lack a single dominant urban centre and consist instead of a network of smaller, dispersed hubs (e.g. Greater Lincolnshire, East Anglia, Cornwall, the North East).
		Lower population density, with economic activity spread across multiple towns and smaller cities.
		Weaker gravitational pull between hubs. Interconnections are less hierarchical and more distributed.
		Functional economic geography is diffused, requiring broader coordination across hubs.

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The policy implications for delivering the optimal conditions for economic growth in Greater Lincolnshire through reorganisation are clear:

Multiple place-based units of sufficient scale aligned to the internal functional economies of Greater Lincolnshire. Each a coherent 'place of places' to provide deep local expertise to complement the strategic authority in the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA).

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Political Economy

Task: Jurisdictions must be a coherent 'Place of Places' that residents have affinity with to enable successful and meaningful local governance.

Our proposed jurisdictions sensitively deliver coherent 'Place of Places' within the diverse geography of Greater Lincolnshire.

> ***"Local authority areas should be related to the areas within which people have a common interest—through living in a recognisable community, through the links of employment, shopping or social activities, or through history and tradition. And, above all else, a genuine local democracy implies that decisions should be taken—and should be seen to be taken—as locally as possible"*** [32]

LGR is a task of local state building. Designing jurisdictions with coherent geographies is critical to political success and functioning governance. In Greater Lincolnshire, we are leaders of Place(s) or a Place of Places. It is essential for that Place to be a coherent combination of interests, so that there is a common identity and for all parties to be invested in its success as a whole.

As has already been witnessed in Scotland and Wales since 1997, what has helped to normalise, stabilise and embed processes of devolution has **not been evidence of effective service delivery, more efficient governance or economic growth. It has been the development of distinct political cultures and public affinity with the devolution project itself**.[33] Success means public affinity with the new unitaries. Failure looks like the premature dissolution of Humberside County Council.

Achieving that is challenging. The specific local needs and aspirations of residents of one part of the Invitation Area will not coincide with those of another. Greater Lincolnshire is a polycentric economy of mid-sized market towns. Each has a distinct local identity, which has been historically tied to governance and is a source of fierce local pride that underpins a lively civic politics that is vocal in articulating, defending and pursuing the interests of their place. Our independent engagement found that residents principally identify with their town and very strongly value the local element of governance.

32. HM Government, Local Government in England: Government Proposals for Reorganisation, [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-in-england-government-proposals-for-reorganisation-1971 [Accessed 4 November 2025].

33. Hickson, J. and Newman, J. (2025), Localism, Levelling Up and Taking Back Control: Tensions in the Ambiguous Justification of English Devolution. The Political Quarterly. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.13570 [Accessed 4 November 2025].

This can result however in a local political dynamic where there is widespread perception amongst all places, that a place, that is not theirs, has disproportionate local power and influence, and receives disproportionate attention and resources. This is not unfounded, the OECD have highlighted reports of service degradation in peripheral areas following amalgamation and subsequent local centralisation in France, Japan and New Zealand.[34]

What matters locally for residents is resources and attention that could or should have gone to their place to solve their problems has not. A poorly designed jurisdiction will exacerbate this leading to dysfunction.

Our public engagement in the towns and markets highlighted that residents are keenly aware of this. **A common question was where will the new councils be based, meaning where will the money and power be located.**

This is a challenge for all Invitation Areas but is particularly intense in Greater Lincolnshire due to our expansive geography. It takes as long to drive from one end of the IA to the other, as it is to drive from South Lincolnshire to Westminster. Within a conurbation like Birmingham all residents have a shared interest in the economic success of the city or the functioning of city wide transport systems. That is not the case in Greater Lincolnshire.



34. OECD, Multi-level Governance Reforms: Overview of OECD Country Experiences, OECD Multi-level Governance Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, [Online]. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264272866-en [Accessed 4 November 2025].

Shared interests are inevitably weaker in more expansive geographies. Indeed the likelihood of jurisdictions composed of areas with divergent economic interests increases. There can be greater acceptance of resources allocated to a neighbouring town if it's 'our friends just over the hill'. A resident may fairly frequently visit and make use of those facilities. If the authority consists of areas separated by vast distances this is no longer the case. If they do not live in, work in or even visit the area, the needs of Town A are of lower importance to residents of Town B.

As far as the residents of Town B are concerned, support for Town A by the Council, may as well be making a benevolent contribution for service provision to an authority in East Anglia or the West Midlands.

Worse if there is a perception that this was done with 'their resources', reserves and assets built from long local prudence and sacrifice that have been 'seized' and 'squandered' by the successor authority. The political result is a strong incentive for zero sum politics. An authority where political activity is geared towards the maximisation of resources for your particular place risks dysfunction. In the most severe scenario of economic misalignment, the rational economic response is for an area to seek to exit the unitary at the earliest opportunity or actively campaign for its dissolution. If that is prevented by central government, then soft exit or decoupling is possible, where the central objective of all local politics is to minimise the outflow of resources from their area. This has been observed in asymmetrical local government partnerships on the continent.[35] The outcome is dysfunction, with limited commitment to the shared success of a jurisdiction for which there is little economic logic for or popular affinity with.

Within the parameters of the LGR criteria, there are two approaches to this challenge:

1. Sensitively design jurisdictions to capture as best as possible how residents live and work to create authorities of shared affinity and interest
2. Retreat to the sub-regional interest and identity of Lincolnshire and govern on a strategic sub-regional basis

Our proposal takes the first approach.

We consider that the second approach solves the challenge by effectively retreating from the local. The meaningful political and administrative articulation of the existing local geographic differentiation will be diluted and flattened, in the name of policy and service consistency. The government's objective to empower residents and local control would not be delivered. We have demonstrated that Greater Lincolnshire lacks the spatial population concentrations that make that model appropriate for North Yorkshire. An implicit conflict would be created with the designated sub-regional governance body in the strategic authority. There would be particular vulnerability in the IA's border zones, including internally with North and North East Lincolnshire, where residents would see neighbours in more compact IA's receiving governance better attuned to the specific needs of local place. All that would have been achieved is the creation of a mini Whitehall in Lincoln. If local government is primarily considered to be central government's lieutenant in the localities that is a satisfactory outcome. If its purpose is to provide community self-governance of place, then this is not satisfactory.

35. Hulst, Rudie & van Montfort, André (Eds.). (2007). Inter-Municipal Cooperation in Europe. Dordrecht: Springer. doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-5379-7 [Accessed on 4 November 2025]

Effective Multi-Level Economic Governance with the Strategic Authority

Jurisdictions must support and complement the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority to provide multi-level economic governance. It is the task of the Mayor to deliver sub-regional level strategic economic leadership and development, with the Local Growth Plan being the centre piece of that. It is the task of the principal authorities to provide complementary place leadership and economic development.

In this context, arguments that benefits of strategic growth can be maximised when delivered at scale across a wider geographical footprint covering areas of low and high growth, with a stronger single voice creating a more attractive proposition for investors are either irrelevant pertaining to amalgamations – that is the role of the mayor, or serve to undermine the division of functions between principal and strategic authorities if accepted and actioned.

Place based economic development and meaningful engagement with business clubs and town councils requires a depth of knowledge and sensitivity to local concerns. The clear value add of principal authorities to the mayoral authority is to provide that deep local expertise. Place leadership can deliver targeted policies and programmes. Each jurisdiction can develop specialisms aligned with economic clusters supporting locally-led delivery, as well as advocate more clearly for place-specific priorities. That can only be achieved if the jurisdictions have a strong local connection and are aligned with the functional economic geography.

Our proposed jurisdictions are aligned with the underlying economic data and the distinctive economic zones identified in GLCCA policy, providing future place-based economic development functions to support the sub-regional leadership role of the strategic authority.



Identifying the Functional Economies of Greater Lincolnshire

Data driven analysis reveals three basic features to the functional economic landscape of Greater Lincolnshire.

- North and North East Lincolnshire display a nationally unusual high degree of labour market containment, with a markedly more industrial and urbanised character to the rest of Lincolnshire and are economically oriented to Humberside and East Yorkshire.
- The area lacks a single dominant metropolitan core of sufficient size for a hub-and-spoke city region à la Leicester. Lincoln is the largest node in a polycentric market town economy, however the built up area is too small to be extricated from the wider Invitation Area, unlike York or Bath.
- South Lincolnshire displays an economic orientation to Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.

This exercise operates under a number of constraints preventing a division from pure economic rationality:

- The LGR population requirements. Economic optimisation would require authorities smaller than the minimum threshold of 350,000. Especially in dealing with the governance of Lincoln.
- Requirement to ensure an equitable split of council taxbases.
- Strong MHCLG steer to use districts as building blocks, avoiding complex boundary changes. This is particularly impactful. The expansive size of the Invitation Area means that existing districts can include self-contained travel to work areas and residents located in the north of a district will have limited to no commuter interaction with a district on the southern border. Commuting between districts is often less movement from district A to B, instead it is often movement from immediate border MSOA of district A into border MSOA of district B. The inability to exchange border MSOA in this exercise means that careful consideration is needed on the extent of the relationship between district A and B.
- Strong MHCLG steer against multi-IA proposals.
- Local identity and opinion. There has been no expressed political appetite for a solution involving a South Lincolnshire/Peterborough/Cambridgeshire merger on both sides of the border.

Within the confines of Greater Lincolnshire, it is our task to identify a best fit to the underlying functional economic geography that is compliant with the LGR criteria.

We have not sought to model impacts on economic growth, job numbers or business demography. We cannot bind the actions of a future unitary, only devise the optimal footprint of that organisation. The theory of change for such modelling would be the learning and replicability of existing place based interventions being incorporated into the new unitary. The impact that could be ascribed to micro-interventions is very uncertain. We do not consider statements that X configuration will deliver Y additional jobs to be robust or meaningful data to inform decision-making in this process.

The Evidence

We have used four evidence strands to objectively determine the functional economic areas. The underlying data is presented in full in Appendix 3.

Current Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Planning

The former Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) built up a significant evidence base to inform strategic economic development in Greater Lincolnshire, including the identification of distinctive places or economic zones for strategic planning purposes. That expertise and capacity has now been transferred to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) and is underpinning the developing strategies and activity of the mayoral authority. It is preferable for new unitaries' geography to be aligned with existing economic policy.

Travel to Work Areas – 'See Appendix 3 for a comprehensive set of travel to work data for the Invitation Area'

Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) are a statistical geography that approximate labour market areas: self-contained areas in which most residents both live and work. The Centre for Cities recommends for TTWA data to be used as the go-to 'hard' indicator to capture residents' revealed behaviour and degree of economic integration for determining functional economic areas which administrative boundaries should be aligned to. For example, if the TTWA shows very little interaction between two places this would suggest low affinity and shared local interests. It would not be a coherent Place of Places, therefore local governance would be best served by separately grouping each place with other places that demonstrate greater TTWA alignment.

The Travel to Work data has limitations. The 2021 commuter flow data captures the situation of March 2021, a period when COVID-19 movement restrictions were in force. The ONS advises against placing too much weight on statistics from that extraordinary period for future planning purposes and with particular caution for geographies below the regional. Therefore the 2021 commuter flow data has been supplemented by and checked against the 2011 data to ensure that the dataset can be confidently used as a firm foundation for policy planning. The 2011 data being the base for the defined Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs). A very high degree of alignment is observed between the two datasets, demonstrating that the pandemic saw a temporary reduction in commuter numbers, but the underlying patterns remained stable.

Housing Market Areas

Housing Market Areas (HMAs) are a statistical geography that approximates functional housing markets. These are identified by commuting patterns, internal migration patterns and local price, neighbourhood and house type. Planning for housing is complicated by the fact that market dynamics and population changes do not respect administrative boundaries. Therefore when designing larger jurisdictions it is sensible to achieve a best fit of HMAs to enable effective spatial planning. This is especially critical considering the government's housing priorities. However, HMAs do not play a prominent role in modern spatial planning, with the current defined geographies dating back to an MHCLG (as DCLG) report from 2010, that for the East Midlands is based on a consultancy report from 2005.[37] Thus the HMAs should be considered in tandem with the TTWAs.

36. Centre for Cities (2022), Devolution Solution: How fixing English local government will improve economic growth. Available at: https://www.centreforcities.org/reader/devolution-solution/principles-for-devolution/ [Accessed 4 November 2025].

37. Baker, M, Housing Market Areas and Regional Spatial Geographies: Geography of Housing Market Areas in England—Paper A, Department for Communities and Local Government, [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6348/1775485.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025].

The Housing Market Areas of Greater Lincolnshire by local authority area are:

Housing Market Area	Local Authority
Central Lincolnshire	City of Lincoln, North Kesteven, West Lindsey, western East Lindsey
Coastal Lincolnshire	Boston, eastern East Lindsey
Grimsby	North East Lincolnshire
Scunthorpe	North Lincolnshire
Peterborough & Welland	South Holland, South Kesteven (plus Melton, Rutland, Peterborough)

Identifiable are three broad groupings. North, Central and South.

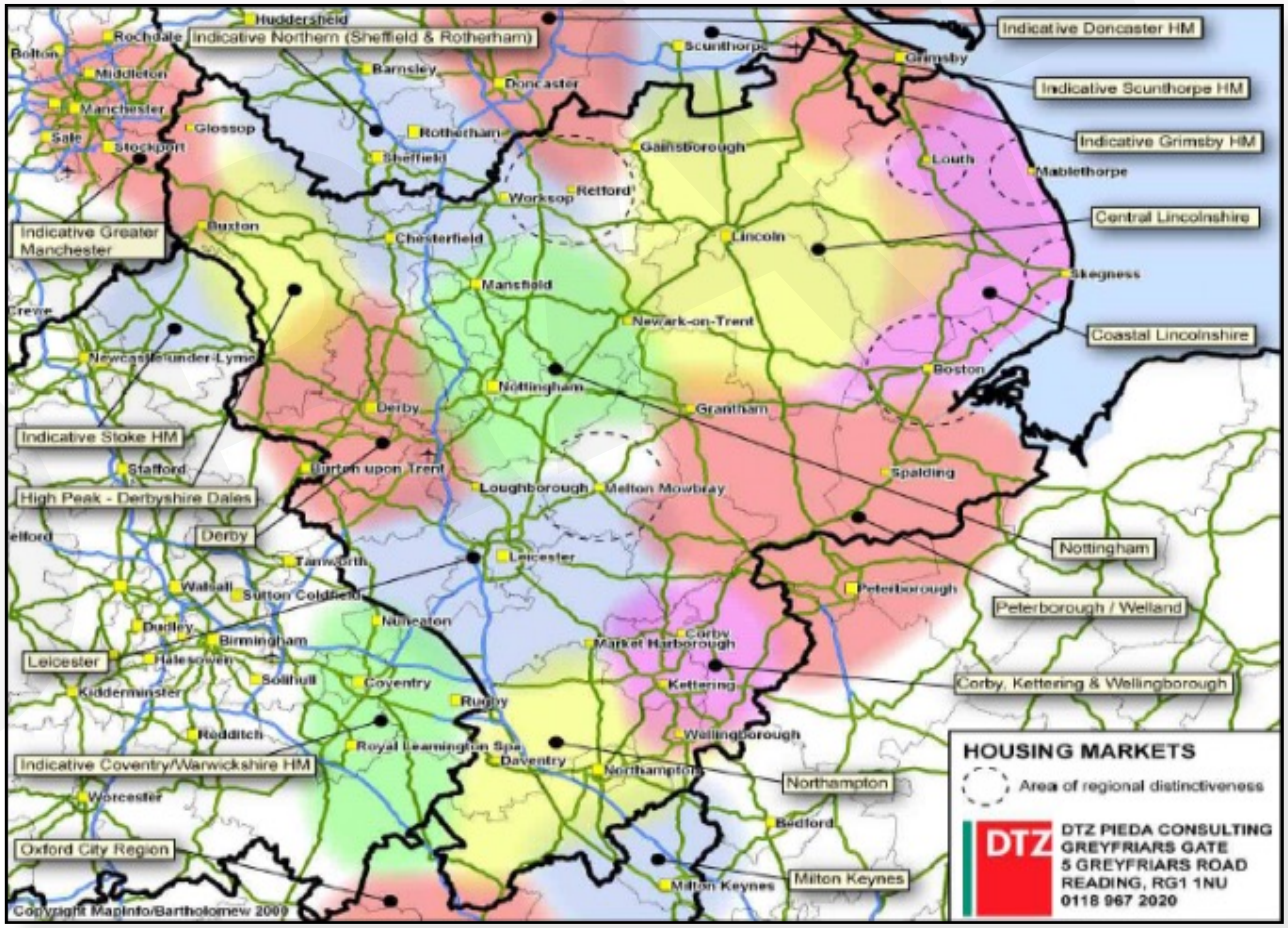


Figure 4 - Proposed East Midlands Sub-Regional Housing Markets, DCLG 2010

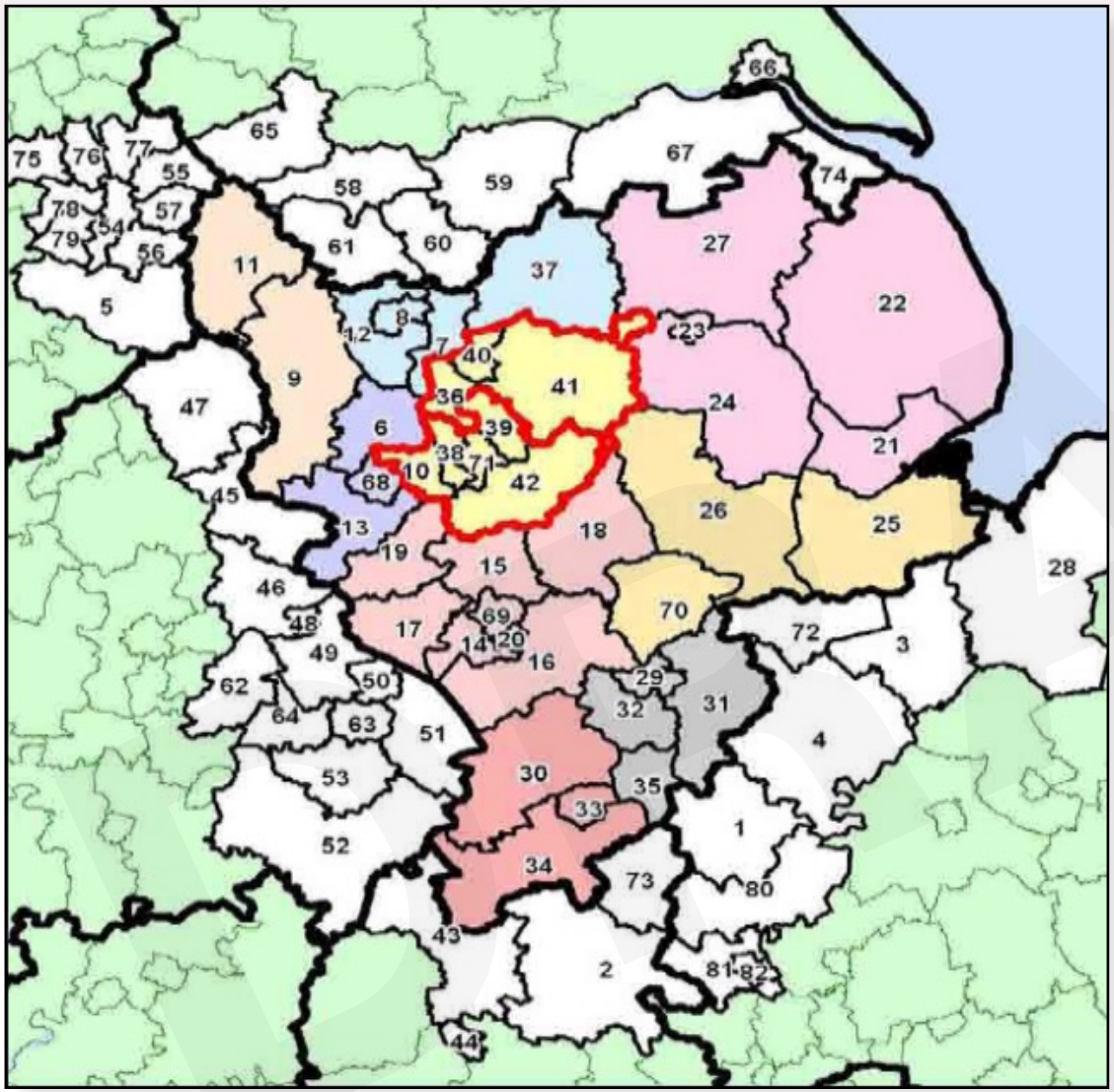


Figure 5 - Proposed East Midlands Sub-Regional Housing Market Groupings, DCLG 2010

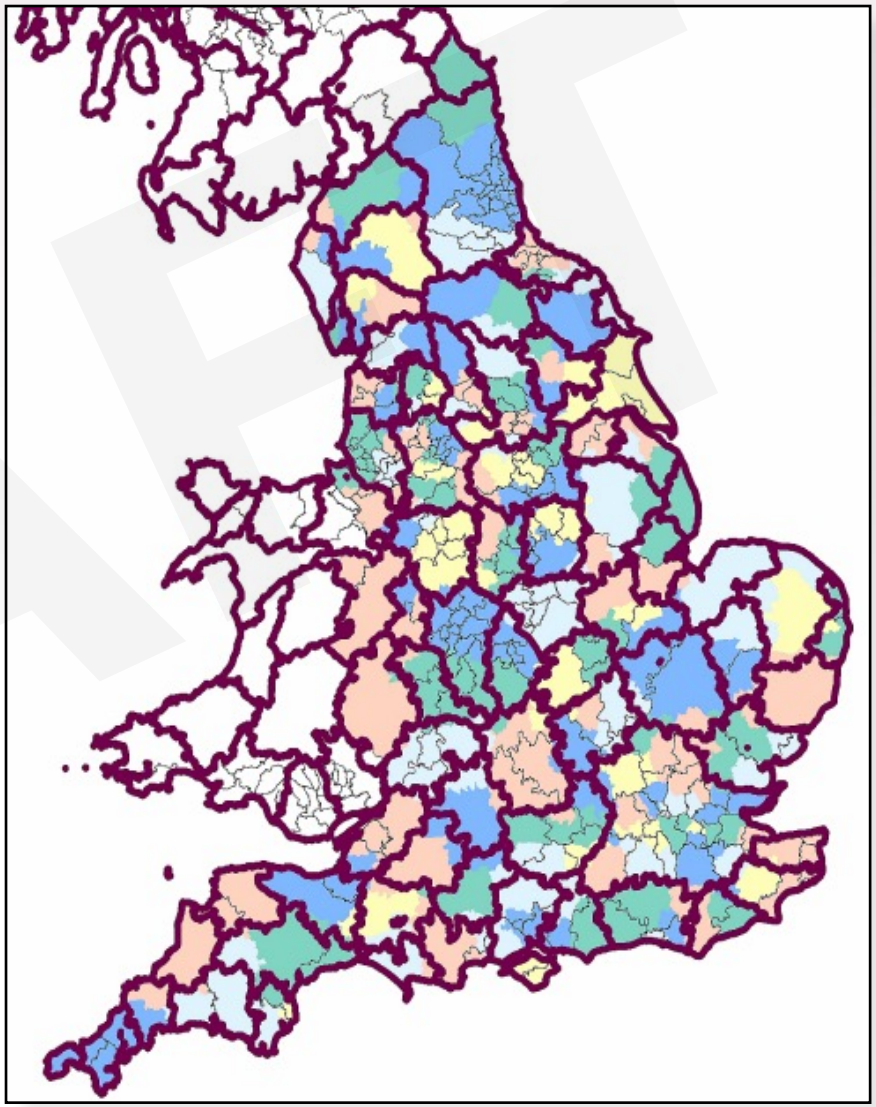


Figure 6 – 'Gold Standard' Sub-regional Housing Markets, DCLG 2010

Structural Analysis of the IA Component Economies

A high level analysis of each component authority's economic sectors and the degree of structural alignment with various LGR partners was undertaken. A local economy that is rural, focused on food production and market town SMEs will have a very different character and local needs and challenges than a local economy based on advanced manufacturing and resource extraction and refinement.

Two steps were used:

1. A Location Quotient (LQ) analysis. LQ is a measure of concentration or specialisation. This will show whether an activity is more or less prevalent in a particular area than a comparator. England was used as the comparator and Gross Value Added (2023 current prices) was used to calculate the LQ values. It is not a measure of productivity, competitiveness or comparative advantage.

2. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was then calculated to determine the statistical relationship between the LQ values for each area. A higher coefficient indicates greater structural alignment between the economies. The calculation was undertaken for weighted (by sector share of total GVA) and unweighted LQ values for core sectors (SIC07 sections or contents of Table 16) and SIC07 two digit codes where possible.

Location Quotient Explanation	
LQ Value	**Conclusion**
LQ = 1	Indicates that the proportion of local activity (GVA/Employment) in a particular industry or occupation is equal to the proportion of national activity in the same industry or occupation. Thus, the industry or occupation is as prevalent in the local area as it is in the reference area.
LQ < 1	Indicates that the proportion of local activity in a specific industry or occupation is lower than the proportion of national activity employment in the same industry or occupation. This suggests that the industry or occupation is less prevalent or less specialised in the local area compared to the reference area. For example, an LQ of 0.5 suggests that the industry or occupation is half as prevalent in the local area compared to the reference area.
LQ > 1	Indicates that the proportion of local activity in a particular industry or occupation is higher than the proportion of national activity employment in the same industry or occupation. This suggests that the industry or occupation is more prevalent or more specialised in the local area compared to the reference area. For example, an LQ of 2 suggests that the industry or occupation is twice as prevalent in the local area compared to the reference area.

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Location Quotient Analysis (Median GVA 2019-2023) – Core Sectors Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area and Rutland										
Core Sectors	**SKDC**	**NKDC**	**SHDC**	**BBC**	**COLC**	**ELDC**	**WLDC**	**NL**	**NEL**	**RUT**
Agriculture, forestry and fishing; mining and quarrying	3.90	4.85	15.77	12.45	0.13	11.94	13.11	2.50	0.54	7.73
Manufacturing	1.42	1.47	1.63	1.63	1.32	1.24	1.37	4.19	2.62	1.12
Electricity, gas, water; sewerage and waste management	0.90	0.47	2.34	0.32	4.58	1.07	0.81	4.38	3.40	1.42
Construction	1.17	1.50	1.18	0.71	0.68	0.76	1.60	1.29	0.79	0.68
Services sector	0.92	0.88	0.74	0.88	0.93	0.87	0.81	0.53	0.77	0.91
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	1.54	1.27	1.41	1.48	1.10	1.00	1.37	0.82	1.13	0.98
Transportation and storage	0.62	0.70	1.65	1.10	0.44	0.49	0.48	1.36	1.88	0.47
Accommodation and food service activities	0.96	0.66	1.15	0.57	1.14	2.56	0.50	0.55	1.01	1.60
Information and communication	0.37	0.57	0.10	0.14	0.60	0.16	0.21	0.07	0.10	0.43
Financial and insurance activities	0.23	0.07	0.13	0.16	0.36	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.12	0.06
Real estate activities	1.26	0.84	0.89	0.93	0.58	1.46	1.40	0.61	0.87	1.21
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.40	0.73	0.22	0.16	0.39	0.29	0.32	0.20	0.32	0.38
Administrative and support service activities	0.48	0.72	1.85	1.24	0.77	0.49	0.55	0.42	0.41	0.41
Public administration and defence	0.50	3.12	0.28	0.70	2.09	1.92	1.29	0.62	0.53	3.15
Education	1.17	0.75	0.75	1.01	1.40	0.93	0.96	0.65	1.02	2.00
Human health and social work activities	1.58	0.73	0.43	2.07	1.83	0.68	0.60	0.71	1.47	0.61
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.44	0.32	0.23	0.45	0.50	1.08	0.84	0.37	0.48	1.07
Other service activities	1.21	1.47	0.58	0.47	0.93	1.70	0.73	0.64	1.14	0.94
Activities of households	0.98	0.76	0.96	0.99	0.79	1.14	1.21	0.70	0.79	0.79

Source: Office for National Statistics

The LQ analysis displays the core features of the Invitation Area: prominence of agriculture, defence and manufacturing, and the lower presence of high skill knowledge work compared to England as a whole.

Correlation analysis of the LQ scores highlights the difference of the City of Lincoln and the more industrialised northern strip versus largely agrarian and rural Lincolnshire.

The key policy takeaway is the difference of northern Lincolnshire versus the remaining Invitation Area.

Correlation Analysis of the Economies (Location Quotient values) of Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area and Rutland										
Correlation Coefficient (r) of LQ values	**South Kesteven**	**North Kesteven**	**South Holland**	**Boston**	**Lincoln**	**East Lindsey**	**West Lindsey**	**North Lincolnshire**	**North East Lincolnshire**	**Rutland**
South Kesteven	N/A	0.75	0.87	0.91	-0.08	0.87	0.89	0.41	0.13	0.81
North Kesteven	0.75	N/A	0.79	0.81	-0.10	0.85	0.85	0.27	-0.10	0.90
South Holland	0.87	0.79	N/A	0.98	-0.14	0.96	0.98	0.39	0.00	0.90
Boston	0.91	0.81	0.98	N/A	-0.22	0.96	0.98	0.31	-0.07	0.90
Lincoln	-0.08	-0.10	-0.14	-0.22	N/A	-0.17	-0.21	0.57	0.72	-0.02
East Lindsey	0.87	0.85	0.96	0.96	-0.17	N/A	0.98	0.30	-0.09	0.95
West Lindsey	0.89	0.85	0.98	0.98	-0.21	0.98	N/A	0.32	-0.10	0.93
North Lincolnshire	0.41	0.27	0.39	0.31	0.57	0.30	0.32	N/A	0.84	0.31
North East Lincolnshire	0.13	-0.10	0.00	-0.07	0.72	-0.09	-0.10	0.84	N/A	-0.06
Rutland	0.81	0.90	0.90	0.90	-0.02	0.95	0.93	0.31	-0.06	N/A

Source: Office for National Statistics

Distinctive Places in Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Planning

Policy Implication: Consideration of the identified Distinctive Places with the TTWAs under the LGR parameters would suggest a tripartite division of the Invitation Area. Anchored by jurisdictions based on the South Humber Bank in the North, the UK Food Valley and A1 Corridor in the South and the Lincolnshire Heartland and Coastal Ribbon centrally.

Place based approaches are well established in Greater Lincolnshire's strategic economic planning.

In July 2023, Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland's Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Framework (SIDF) was produced and published by the Greater Lincolnshire Infrastructure Group with involvement from all authorities in the present Invitation Area and Rutland CC.[38] The group was dissolved in 2024 given emerging changes related to devolution and subsequently the creation of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA). GLCCA is expecting to bring forward the GLCCA Infrastructure Plan by the end of 2025, which will be based on the SIDF.

The SIDF identified five distinctive places or spatial corridors to reflect varying specialisations and strengths of economic and sectoral activity within Greater Lincolnshire. This built on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Economic Strategy.

SIDF Distinctive Place	Key Sector Clusters
Coastal Lincolnshire	Visitor Economy, Health & Social Care
Greater Lincoln	Defence & Security, Higher Education, Visitor Economy, Regional Centre
Rural Heartland	Visitor Economy, Defence, Food Production
South Humber Bank	UK Energy Estuary (Renewable Energy), Advanced Manufacturing (Steel, Chemicals), Ports, Food Processing
South Lincolnshire & Rutland	UK Food Valley (Agri-Food), Logistics, Visitor Economy

38. Greater Lincolnshire Infrastructure Group (all Greater Lincolnshire local authorities with the then Local Enterprise Partnership, Rutland CC and the Environment Agency) (2023), Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland's Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Framework. Available at: https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s67961/Greater%20Lincolnshire%20and%20Rutlands%20Strategic%20Infrastructure%20Delivery%20Framework%202023.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025].

A very similar internal division of Greater Lincolnshire was presented in GLCCA's Greater Lincolnshire Innovation Strategy adopted in October 2025, as a refresh and rebrand of the 2024 Greater Lincolnshire Innovation Routemap – developed in partnership by the then LEP, the private sector and the University of Lincoln.

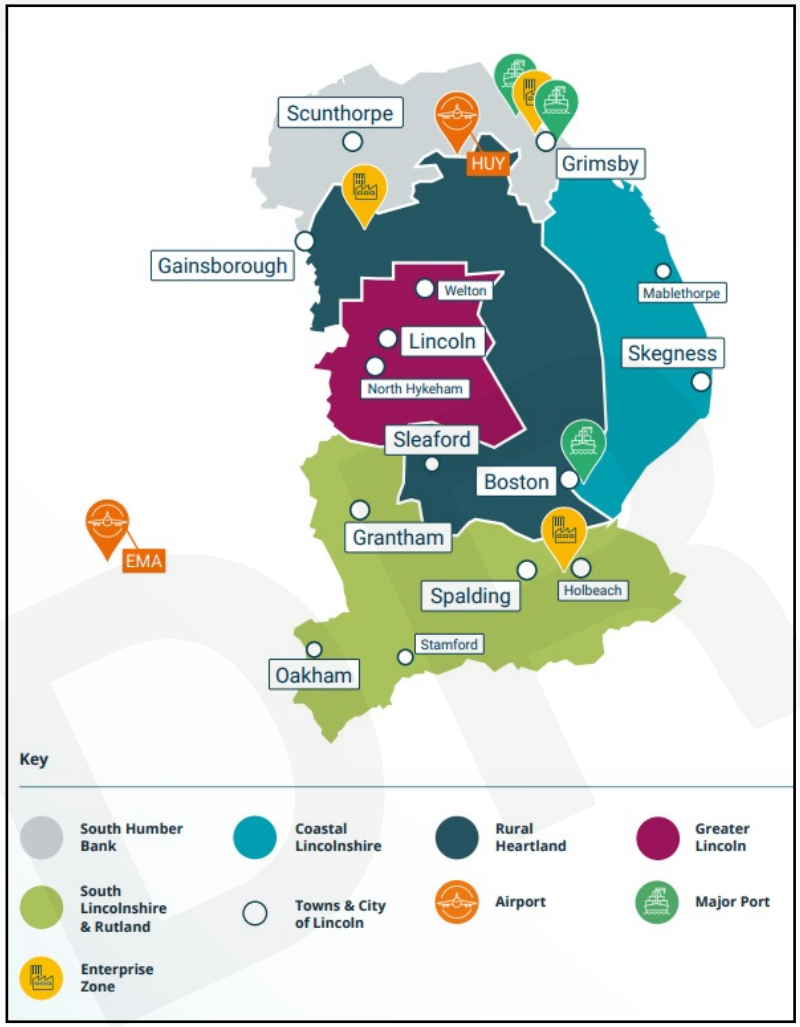


Figure 7 - Greater Lincolnshire & Rutland Distinctive Places - SIDF 2023



Figure 8 - Indicative Innovation Opportunities in Greater Lincolnshire - GLLEP Innovation Routemap 2024

Functional Economic Geography of Northern Lincolnshire

Examining Greater Lincolnshire, it is best to start with North East and North Lincolnshire, the most obviously distinct part of the Invitation Area.

The Northern Lincolnshire labour market exhibits an extraordinary degree of self-containment that is nationally unusual, indicting a very high alignment between current administrative boundaries and functional economic geography. In 2021, 80.46% of North East Lincolnshire residents commute to workplaces within the local authority boundary. In North Lincolnshire it's 75.72%. **This figure is consistent across the 2021 and 2011 TTWA datasets and places both authorities in the top decile for most self-contained English authorities.** The national average for commuter containment is 48.8%. To emphasise, the only local authority areas that have a higher degree of commuter containment than North East Lincolnshire are the Isle of Wight, North Devon, large county unitaries like Cornwall and Herefordshire, and the medium built up areas surrounded by extreme rural sparsity of Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness.

Of the combined 22,300 commuters who did leave their respective home authorities in 2021, 31% were moving between North East and North Lincolnshire. A further 29.63% travelled north into Humberside and East Yorkshire. **18% (3,330) commuted into the Lincolnshire county area. As a proportion of the total 101,000 commuters this is 4%**. Of those 3,300 residents, 81% travelled into East and West Lindsey. Only 3.99% made it as far south as Lincoln, 450 residents or 0.45% of total commuters. **That pattern is reciprocated.** 1% of Lincoln's total commuters travelled into North East and North Lincolnshire. **3% of Lincolnshire's total commuters travelled to North East and North Lincolnshire.** Of that total 70% originated from the East and West Lindsey border MSOA.

The commuting to East and West Lindsey is concentrated in the immediate border zones. For North East Lincolnshire, 83% of commuters to East Lindsey travelled to four of East Lindsey's eighteen MSOA. **The alignment of North East Lincolnshire's southern functional economic geography to administration could be near perfected by moving the border south to incorporate Louth. A very small distance in the context of Greater Lincolnshire.** For North Lincolnshire, the boundary with West Lindsey is comparatively more porous. 86% of commuters travelled into six of West Lindsey's eleven MSOA. The spillover could be captured by moving the border to Gainsborough.

Overall a best fit of functional economic geography to administrative area has already been achieved in Northern Lincolnshire.

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"Grimsby and South Humberside constitute a major industrial growth point—based on chemicals, ports, steel at Scunthorpe, food processing and fishing. We look seawards, north across the Humber and westwards for our communications. But the one direction in which we in Grimsby and South Humberside do not look is southwards towards the rest of Lincolnshire. Yet we are to become part of the huge county of Lincolnshire with probably eight out of 80 seats on the county council. The result will be that we on South Humberside will be governed by an essentially rural body consisting mainly of farming and land-owning interests who know nothing of our urban problems and are totally ignorant of industrial development problems." Anthony Crosland M.P. for Great Grimsby speaking in the Commons debate on the Local Government in England (White Paper) 1971.[39]

Socially and economically Mr Crosland's assessment holds true now as it did then. The LQ analysis starkly highlights the major structural difference between North Lincolnshire and the rest of the county. In addition to traditional steel, advanced manufacturing and fisheries, the area is a nationally strategic decarbonisation and clean energy cluster. The Energy Estuary is home to 35% of total operating UK offshore wind capacity. The Ørsted East Coast Hub is the world's largest offshore wind operations and maintenance hub. The area has significant challenges with deprivation. The lack of underlying economic synergy and shared interests will create coherence challenges from any merger with parts of Lincolnshire. Whether with Lincoln or the coastal Lincolnshire, focus on local growth or tackling deprivation will be diluted to the detriment of all parties.

Northern Lincolnshire is in a different public service area for police, fire and health – legacies of Humberside County Council. Each service is performing well. The Chief Constable of Humberside Police has written to support proposals by the northern unitaries for retaining the status quo. The Humber Health Partnership has commented on the value and strength of the current cross-Humber partnership. The strategic drift away from the Lincolnshire county area was recently reinforced through the NHS ICB cluster reforms. MHCLG guidance is clear that any proposals which wish to alter current public service boundaries will require a very strong rationale grounded in economic data, in line with the overarching objective to bring administrative boundaries in line with the underlying economic boundaries. To theoretically illustrate, a very strong data driven case can be made for the inclusion of Rutland with South Lincolnshire, based on the underlying travel to work patterns, Housing Market Areas, recent LEP strategies, structural economic alignment, Rutland's unique identity and complex history vis-à-vis Leicestershire, resident views and specific spatial planning challenges on the Lincolnshire/Rutland border. **None of those arguments can be made for altering the service boundaries in the north to amalgamate North East and/or North Lincolnshire with parts of Lincolnshire.**

The strongest rationale is the logic of achieving an authority of 500,000 people. Following the recommended best practice of the OECD, we do not consider that meeting an arbitrary population threshold in defiance of the underlying economic facts, current high performing service configuration and resident wishes is justifiable. There is no need to risk repeating the mistake of Humberside County Council, this time without a coherent economic or service led rationale.

39. UK Parliament, Local Government in England: White Paper, House of Commons Debate, 19 May 1971, [Online]. Available at: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1971/may/19/local-government-in-england-white-paper#S5CV0817P0_19710519_HOC_256 [Accessed 4 November 2025].

This aligns with what is understood to be the prevailing political and public opinion in the north. The consistent position of North East and North Lincolnshire councils from February 2025 onwards is that if the status quo is nonviable, then they should not be merged with parts of Lincolnshire. Resident opinion following public engagement by those councils reaffirmed that position. We understand that North East and North Lincolnshire will make separate submissions to MHCLG proposing that the status quo should be maintained in the north and the Lincolnshire county area consolidated.

The clear economically rational conclusion for policy is North East and North Lincolnshire should be constituted as separate to the Lincolnshire county area.

This decision makes the approach to the county area straightforward.

If Northern Lincolnshire is permitted to have local governments, there is limited justification for Lincolnshire to have a sub-regional one.

Unacceptable inequity in democratic representation, local control and empowerment and potential for place-based policy would result in that scenario. Any argument that this is a worthy trade-off for increased service efficiency is challenged by the expert literature on the contested relationship of size and performance, and risks of incoherence and reduced legitimacy to the public in light of the successful services and local governance that residents in small northern Lincolnshire unitaries would be receiving.

Both within the IA and in relation to its immediate neighbours, LGR would have failed to be a positive reform for Lincolnshire residents.

A division of the county area is necessary to deliver the government's objectives.



Functional Economic Geography of the Lincolnshire County Area

The underlying commuter flow data shows that the north and south of the county council footprint are effectively siloed. East Lindsey, due to its size, has a degree of labour market containment comparable to Northern Lincolnshire. 70% of East Lindsey commuters travel to workplaces within the district. West Lindsey is a transition zone between Lincoln and North Lincolnshire with labour market containment of only 41.75%. Both have limited interaction with Southern Lincolnshire. Of the 10,470 commuters leaving East Lindsey, 3.24% head to South Holland and 1.22% to South Kesteven. 49% (170) of those commuters originated from three of East Lindsey's eighteen MSOA located on the southernmost border with Boston. The figure was 42% for South Kesteven. For total East Lindsey commuters the figures are 0.96% and 0.36% respectively. This is pattern is reciprocated by South Lincolnshire commuters and observed in both the 2021 and 2011 data. The commuter flows are even lower for West Lindsey to South Lincolnshire. **To put this in perspective, more residents of East Lindsey self-reported as commuting to destinations 'Outside the UK' (excluding offshore installations) than to South Kesteven.**

The underlying data is too weak to justify the inclusion of South Lincolnshire and Central Lincolnshire in the same local unit. The fundamental test for the coherence of interest that underpins a successful local authority is would ratepayers of The Deepings potentially benefit from or at least politically accept service provision for Mablethorpe, for example leisure provision, or vice versa? The same scenario can be advanced for any combination of South Kesteven's Bourne, The Deepings, Grantham or Stamford with East Lindsey's Horncastle, Louth, Mablethorpe, Skegness. **Given that the interaction as determined by the TTWA data between those places is nil or nearly, the local test is failed. This is not a coherent Places of Places united by underlying economic geography. The yoking together of areas lacking shared local interests and economic alignment would not be a good deal for residents.**

See Appendix 3 for a comprehensive set of travel to work data for the Invitation Area



% Labour Market Containment – 2011 to 2021 – Intra-Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area										
	% Total commuters within/to Lincolnshire county council footprint		% Total commuters leaving Lincolnshire county council footprint		% Total commuters within/to Central Lincolnshire		% Total commuters within/to Southern Lincolnshire		% Total commuters to/within Northern Lincolnshire	
	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011
North East Lincolnshire	4.41	4.15	N/A	N/A	4.21	3.94	0.2	0.21	88.89	89.54
North Lincolnshire	3.62	3.43	N/A	N/A	3.3	3.11	0.32	0.32	80.97	82
Boston	93.48	94.58	6.52	5.42	68.25	78.66	25.23	15.91	0.1	0.14
Lincoln	87.48	88.24	12.52	11.76	64.84	69.17	22.64	19.07	1.01	1.03
East Lindsey	87.68	86.75	12.32	13.25	83.78	83.23	3.9	3.52	7.7	8.5
West Lindsey	74.76	73.68	16.51	26.32	67.07	66.74	7.69	6.94	13.78	14.06
North Kesteven	87.69	87.78	12.31	12.22	34.86	34.85	52.83	52.92	0.7	0.4
South Holland	77.83	76.61	22.17	23.39	7.44	6.19	70.38	70.41	0.07	0.02
South Kesteven	67.34	64.41	32.66	35.59	3.36	2.58	63.98	61.83	0.08	0.11

125

Commuter Flows Between the Key Nodes of East Lindsey and South Kesteven – 2021 & 2011 TTWA (MSOA Data)								
Total Commuters East Lindsey to South Kesteven								
	Bourne		The Deepings		Grantham		Stamford	
	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011
Horncastle	0	1	0	1	2	7	0	2
Louth	1	0	1	1	3	4	0	1
Mablethorpe	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Skegness	2	2	0	0	3	4	1	5
Total Commuters South Kesteven to East Lindsey								
	Horncastle		Louth		Mablethorpe		Skegness	
	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011
Bourne	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0
The Deepings	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grantham	3	1	4	3	0	1	5	4
Stamford	1	1	4	2	2	0	1	0

Office for National Statistics

Application of best practice jurisdictional design driven by the data concludes that Central and South Lincolnshire should be separate jurisdictions. The common economic interests are lacking to justify a shared local arrangement.

The two fundamental cores of East Lindsey with West Lindsey, and South Holland with South Kesteven are established. Leaving North Kesteven, Boston and the City of Lincoln. The TTWA data places North Kesteven with Southern Lincolnshire. The commuter flow patterns provides strong evidence and arguments for the inclusion of Lincoln and Boston in either the proposed southern or central unitary. Economic rationality would suggest multiple smaller units. **However working within the parameters that MHCLG have set to deliver required populations and balanced tax bases, both must be placed in the central jurisdiction.**

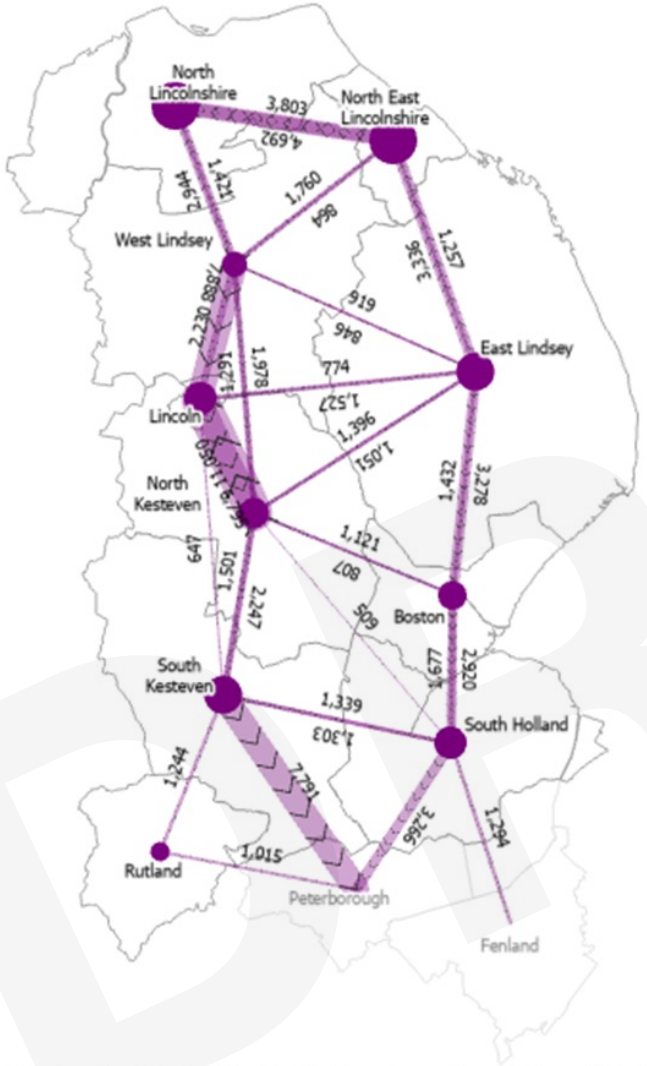
An east/west over north/south division of the county area could be argued. Some might point to the success of the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership as evidence for an economic synergy for an eastern bloc of Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland. That argument is weak, as the precise purpose of inter-municipal cooperation arrangements (shared services etc.) is to provide economies of scale for specific services in geographies where the underlying economic alignment is insufficient to justify amalgamation, such as eastern Lincolnshire. This is why the OECD recommends that states explore IMCs in lieu of amalgamations.[40] The performance of the IMC is irrelevant to economic synergy or local coherence. The same argument can be made with substantially more weight for the Central Lincolnshire Partnership of the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey. The commuter data does suggest a coherent economic unit based on the city. This would be optimal for spatial planning of the Lincoln Strategic Planning Area. However this arrangement lacks the necessary scale under the LGR criteria and does not provide a coherent solution for the rest of Lincolnshire.

Our division is the only economically rational solution that aligns with the underlying data and the LGR criteria.



40. OECD (2019), Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers, OECD Multi-level Governance Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en [Accessed 4 November 2025]

Commuting between local authorities of Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland, and from South Lincolnshire authorities to Peterborough and Fenland, Census 2011, showing commuter flows of more than 500 people only



Commuters travelling to other Greater Lincolnshire LA

Persons

1,000 2,500 5,000 7,500 10,000

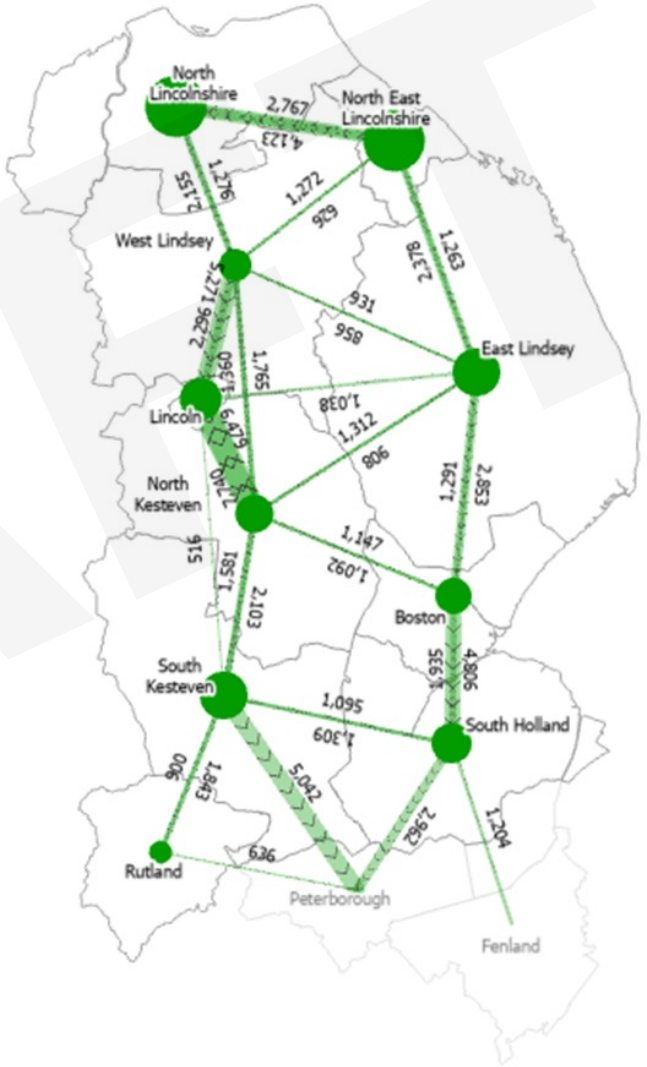
Direction of commuter flow labelling indicates direction of commuter flow.

Commuters staying within LA of residence

Persons

10,000 25,000 50,000 75,000 100,000

Commuting between local authorities of Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland, and from South Lincolnshire authorities to Peterborough and Fenland, Census 2021, showing commuter flows of more than 500 people only



Commuters travelling to other Greater Lincolnshire LA

Persons

1,000 2,500 5,000 7,500 10,000

Direction of commuter flow labelling indicates direction of commuter flow.

Commuters staying within LA of residence

Persons

10,000 25,000 50,000 75,000 100,000

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Previous Reorganisation Proposals for Greater Lincolnshire from Economic Logic

There have been two prominent attempts by external actors who have sought to redraw local government boundaries from first principles into units of the government's approximate preferred scale through pure economic rationality: Redcliffe-Maud (1969) and the Centre for Cities (2024). The approach and recommendations of the Redcliffe-Maud report are well known. A then innovative emphasis was placed on the social changes from widespread car ownership to argue that authorities should be based on modern commuter patterns not preindustrial settlements.

The Centre for Cities took this to its logical conclusion, using High Skill Travel to Work data (HS-TTWA) to proxy functional economic areas. All public service boundaries would be realigned to economic geography. This was explicitly done to maximise the economic impact of potential planning reform, council tax reform and future devolution to England, especially fiscal devolution, chiming with the think tank's core diagnosis for low local economic growth – local authorities have no incentive to pursue it due to the misalignment of economic and administrative geography and limited policy levers if they did.

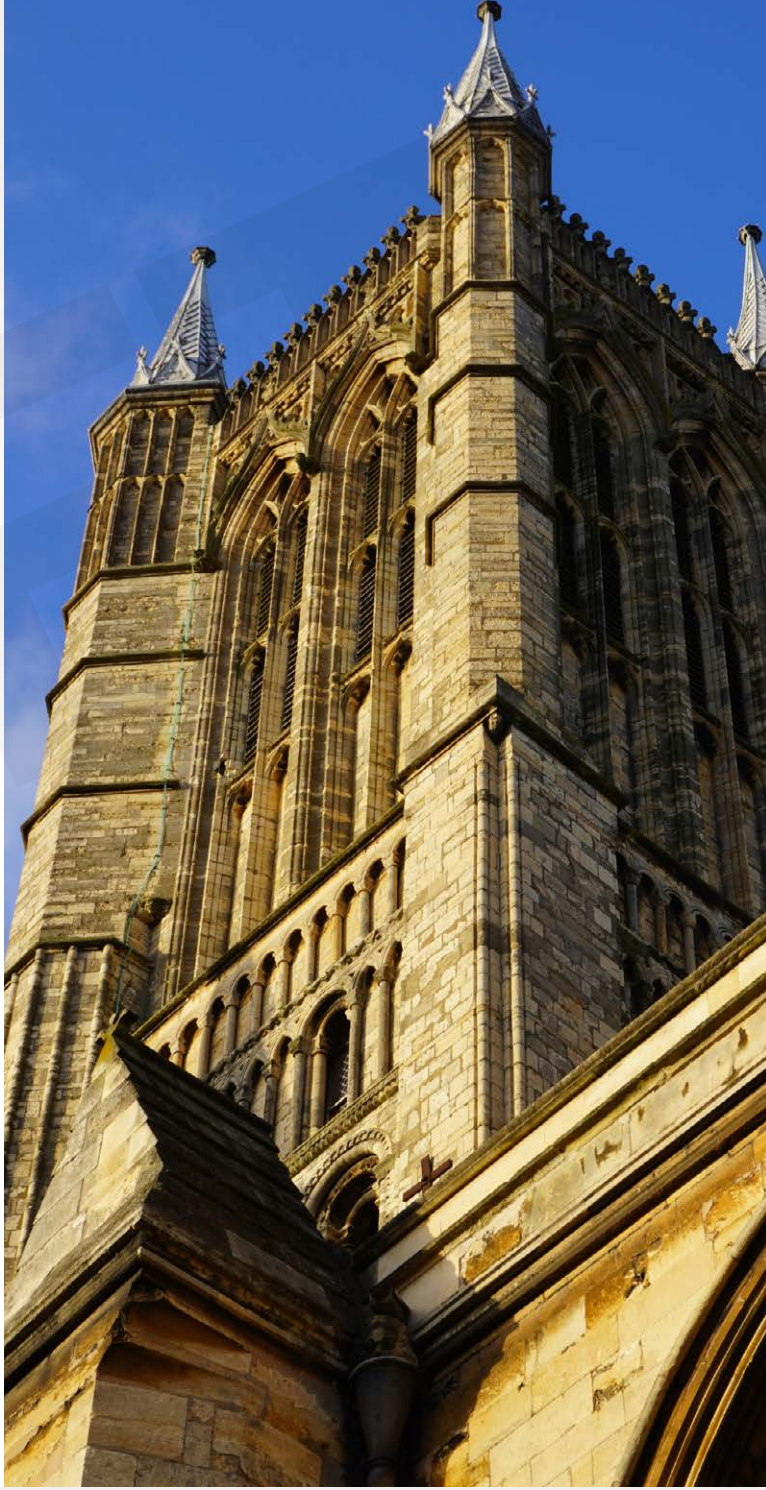
Both proposals arrived at very similar conclusions for Greater Lincolnshire, informed by the enduring fundamental features of the Invitation Area:

- North and North East Lincolnshire need special consideration. Historically the area was part of the cross-Humber Humberside County Council from 1974 to 1996. An unsuccessful authority created by pure functional rationality. The current service boundaries for health, police and fire still reflect that legacy.

- South Lincolnshire (South Kesteven and South Holland) should be merged with Peterborough and Fenland. Centre for Cities also included Rutland and Boston.

- A central Lincolnshire authority of Lincoln and the central Lincolnshire districts. Centre for Cities placed North and North East within this unit.

41. Centre for Cities (2022), Devolution Solution: How fixing English local government will improve economic growth. Available at: https://www.centreforcities.org/reader/devolution-solution/principles-for-devolution/ [Accessed 4 November 2025].



SECTION 4: LGR Criterion 2: Right-sized Local Government

Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.

d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.

MHCLG specifics a) and b) relating to population are addressed in section 2.2. No Greater Lincolnshire councils are subject to MHCLG specifics e) and / or f) relating to Best Value interventions and excessive debt.

Our Jurisdictional Design Objective: The proposed jurisdictions are footprints for unitaries that are financially viable, sustainable and will deliver efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

Summary of Policy Challenges:

- Supports efficiencies and value for money for council taxpayers
- Improves capacity and supports the council to withstand financial shocks
- Manageable transition costs

Our proposed jurisdictions deliver:

- A prudent approach grounded in reality
- Deliverable aggregation savings and scope for a significant range of future transformation savings
- Ongoing financial sustainability

Approach

Although only a sixth of the equally weighted criteria, the future financial viability of the proposed jurisdictions is a critical and essential condition for success.

Our financial assessment has taken a circumspect and thorough approach, working closely with PwC to develop a financial position that offers **realistic delivery**; whilst also demonstrating the more ambitious potential that wider systemic reform could yield. Too many past LGR submissions both in England and globally have failed to deliver on their eye-catching headlines, promising over-optimistic future savings that did not materialise. Rhetorically driven sales pitches carry significant potential to entrench fiscal illusion, whereby residents struggle to understand their local government's fiscal condition, as well as the true cost of the services they consume, so increasing service demand, corroding public trust and potentially misleading central government policy makers. That is not responsible or prudent local policy making.

We strongly believe it is critical for the integrity of both our LGR submission, and that of the wider national LGR programme that local authorities do not take a 'marking their own homework' approach when preparing assessments of current financial positions within their LGR invitation area, and the financial implications and projections within their proposals. This is not to doubt the expertise and professionalism of local authority finance officers. Structural change of this scale and impact requires external and specialist input and challenge to ensure robustness and public confidence.

Therefore, we took the decision to utilise the expertise, experience and independence of PwC to support the development of our financial baselining, the modelling of the potential future financial position for our proposed unitary structure and to provide critical challenge. This approach was also taken by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). We have further worked in collaboration with both City of Lincoln and the South-East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP) to commission PeopleToo to undertake additional independent financial baselining. Combined with our inhouse expertise and analysis of prior reorganisations, this dual approach has given us a robust and sophisticated understanding of the financial landscape of Greater Lincolnshire, the strategic opportunity and trade-offs of LGR, the potential benefits and the pitfalls, and complexity in realisation.

Reviews of LGR proposals from the Devolution Priority Programme and previous rounds have highlighted wildly divergent positions within and across Invitation Areas on the aggregation benefits, transformation potential, transition costs, and initial and ongoing disaggregation costs. This is despite many submissions being essentially very similar variations in the number and jurisdiction of the proposed unitaries. We have taken confidence and assurance, that even with differing methodologies and perspectives, the PwC and PeopleToo work has significant common ground and figures in a consistent ballpark. PwC being more conservative on disaggregation and PeopleToo likewise on the transition costs. Against our conservative and prudent base position we have with the support of PwC undertaken a further sensitivity analysis to both identify the potential for stretch targets and a further level of more significant transformation savings; and to highlight the ease at which changing levels of input assumptions can create enticingly high figures for future savings.

LGR in the National Policy Context

Reorganisation proposals have developed in the context of uncertainty and financial challenge for the sector and significant confirmed and mooted reform packages for local government finance, devolution, planning, social care, SEND and health, among others. Although amalgamation will increase resilience, it is not a silver bullet to ensure the sector's future financial sustainability.

The national economic situation is challenging with inflation remaining well above the Bank of England's target. All local authorities will continue to experience financial and service inflation through rising prices, higher wage demands and higher interest rates on both borrowing and investments for the foreseeable.

Development of our proposal is defined by the 28 November 2025 submission deadline. To navigate the full, and more pertinently fully transparent, local democratic governance processes, our proposal must be finalised by no later than mid-November. **Therefore the proposal does not and cannot reflect the policy decisions and directions of the Autumn Budget scheduled for 26 November, which may have significant future implications.**





This is equally true of the Fair Funding Review and the Business Rate Reset. The financial modelling – despite being developed with the expert external support of PwC, has by necessity been completed ahead of any detail of the Fair Funding Review and the Business Rate Reset being known, which will have significant future implications.

The policy ambition of the Fair Funding Review is to make funding allocations more reflective of local needs and is forecast to result in a heterogeneous impact to local funding levels nationally. Greater Lincolnshire may experience a reduction to current funding levels. In addition, there is a review of the Business Rates Retention scheme, which will include a reset of baselines (removing previous growth, full revaluations for 2026 and additional multipliers for more tailored rate setting). At this stage, there is no certainty as to how the new funding system will operate and, as already highlighted, the date of the Autumn Budget means that the provisional local government financial settlement is not expected until late December 2025. However, through the modelling work of external financial consultants, NKDC forecasts that its government support will fall by £3.0million in cash terms over the first three years of this MTFS, although it is expected that transitional arrangements will be employed to protect services over this period. SKDC also forecast a decrease, though theirs is in the region of £700k. Figures for other Lincolnshire authorities were not available at time of report release. Although like-like comparisons can be difficult, it is estimated that currently local government in Lincolnshire receives over £300 less per household, compared to the national average. If the county were to be given its fair share that would mean an extra £120m each year for Lincolnshire. However, it remains to be seen whether the Fair Funding Review will go any way towards addressing this gap.

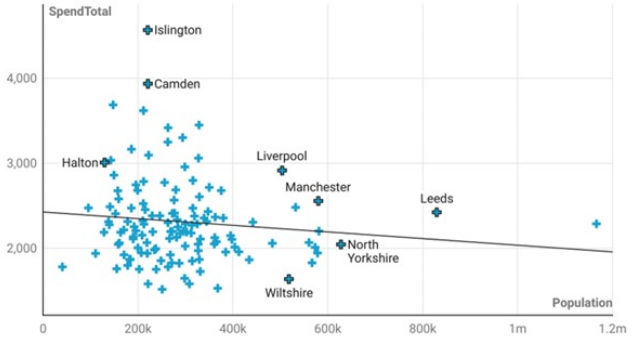
Further uncertainty in costs for local government arise from new and changing legislation. Implications from the Environment Act, Biodiversity and Housing to name a few, see significant duties and therefore costs, being placed on local government, and of course Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is scheduled to be in place for April 2028.

Whilst specific reforms to SEND are still evolving county and unitary councils face increasing demand with this being the fastest-growing budget pressure for councils, and with rising demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Policy reform is expected to introduce changes to streamline EHCP processes and improve accountability but delays in legislation have left councils in limbo.

Council population size, as per the MHCLG criteria, is covered elsewhere in this document and our Literature Review appendix. Nevertheless from a financial perspective the following two sets of graphics provide further context for this section, covering both expenditure per head and requests for exceptional financial support.

There is an apparent correlation between population and lower expenditure per head - but it's incredibly weak

It predicts just 1.5% of the variation between councils and does not pass the test of statistical robustness necessary to be published in most academic journals

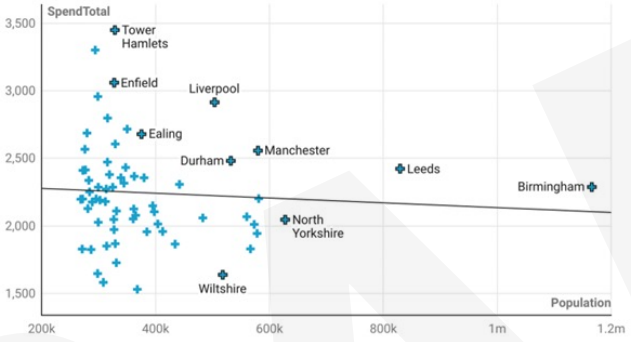


City of London and Isles of Scilly excluded as outliers

Chart: Mark Mills • Source: LG Inform • Created with Datawrapper

Amongst councils with a population larger than the median, the effect becomes so weak it is essentially non-existent

The trendline on this chart is less predictive than just guessing the median spend regardless of population



Technical definition: Adjusted R^2 < 0

Chart: Mark Mills • Source: LG Inform • Created with Datawrapper

There is a tipping point around a population of 350,000 where the direction of the correlation flips

Beyond this point, a larger population is associated with a higher expenditure per person

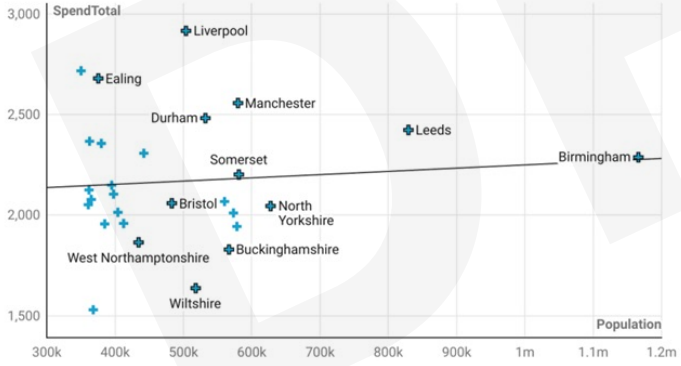
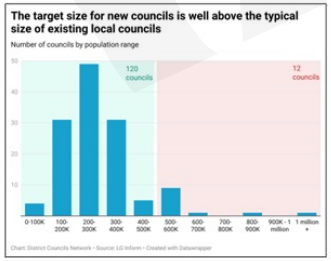


Chart: Mark Mills • Source: LG Inform • Created with Datawrapper

A note of caution:

Narrowing the population range reduces the sample size



Therefore, it is hard to say with any confidence what the correlation will look like if and when more councils are in this population range.

Nonetheless, the evidence we do have shows costs rising not falling above a 500,000 population threshold

	Council population	Expenditure per head of population
Birmingham	1,166.05	2,287.45
Leeds	829.41	2,423.35
North Yorkshire	627.63	2,045.12
Somerset	581.15	2,201.65
Manchester	579.92	2,557.19
Cornwall	578.32	1,943.64
Sheffield	573.25	2,010.64
Buckinghamshire	566.69	1,829.09
Bradford	560.19	2,067.58
Durham	532.18	2,482.03
Wiltshire	517.98	1,636.95
Liverpool	503.74	2,916.05
Bristol	483	2,059
Kirklees	442.03	2,307.34
West Northamptonshire	434.35	1,864.58
Cheshire East	412.46	1,958.36
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	404.05	2,013.79
Croydon	397.74	2,104.24
Barnet	395.01	2,148.63
Dorset	384.81	1,956.14
Leicester	379.78	2,356.2
Ealing	375.34	2,679.72
North Northamptonshire	367.99	1,529.49
Cheshire West and Chester	365.06	2,077.93

Average expenditure per head = £2,200

Average expenditure per head = £2,088

Chart: District Councils Network • Source: LG Inform • Created with Datawrapper

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Larger councils were more likely to need EFS

% of councils within a population range with Exceptional Financial Support agreed for 2025-26

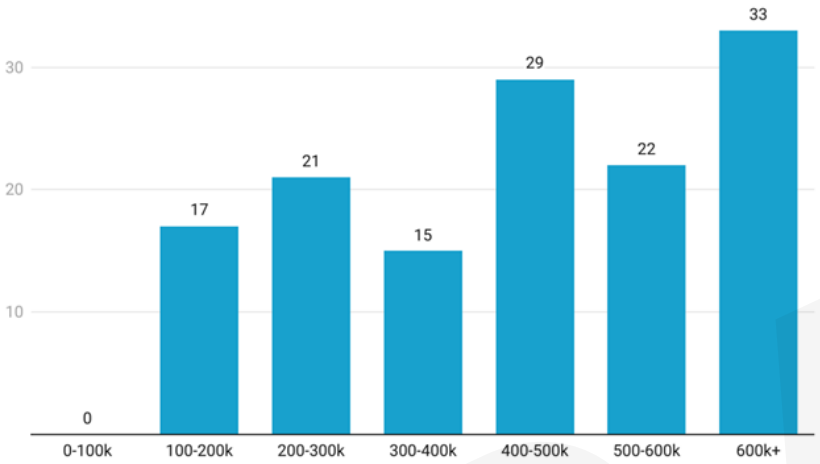


Chart: Districts Council Network • Source: MHCLG • Created with Datawrapper

And required more EFS relative to the size of their budgets

Value of Exceptional Financial Support agreed for 2025-26 as a % of core spending power for councils within a population range

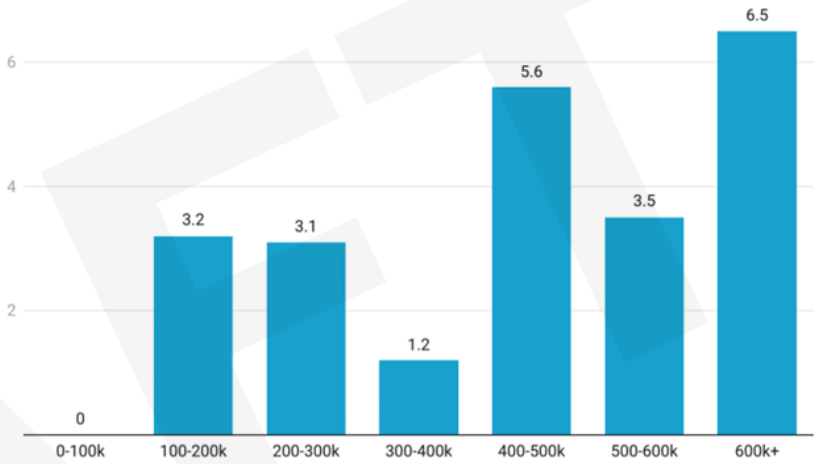
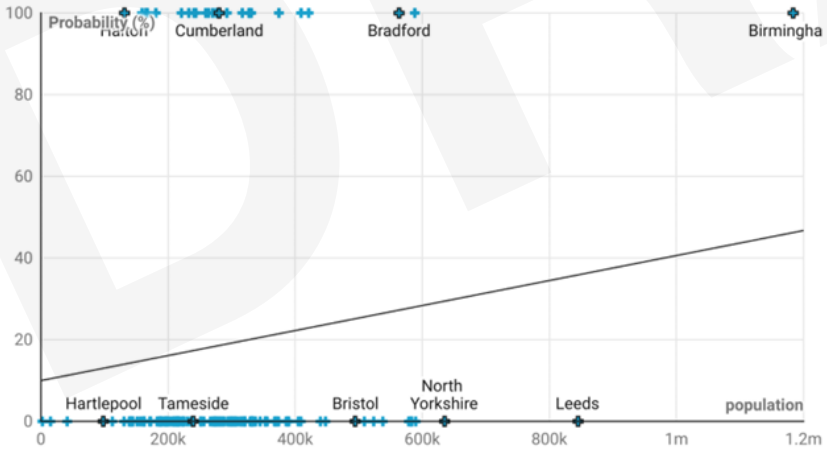


Chart: Districts Council Network • Source: MHCLG • Created with Datawrapper

This finding is supported by a more formal statistical approach

The % probability that councils required EFS in 2025-26 by population

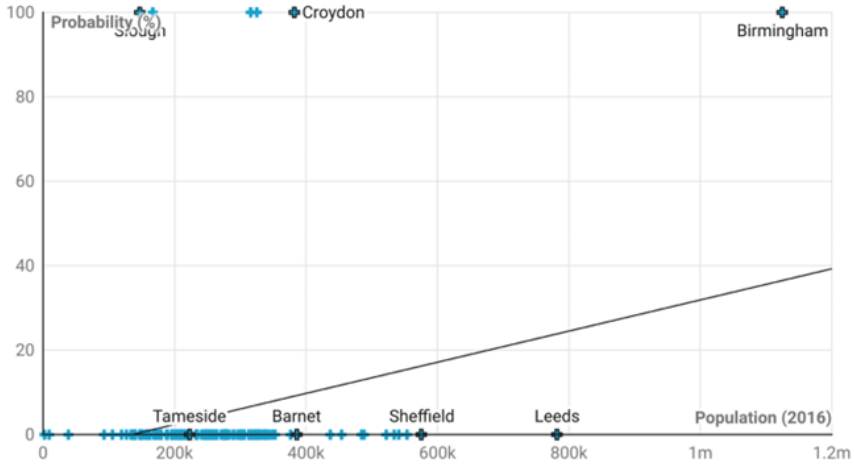


Technical note: Probabilities estimated using a logistic regression model

Chart: Mark Mills • Source: MHCLG • Created with Datawrapper

The same is also true of whether a council has issued a s.114 notice

The % probability that councils have issued a s.114 notice since 2016



Technical note: Probabilities estimated using a logistic regression model

Chart: District Councils Network • Source: Institute for Government • Created with Datawrapper

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Financial Baselining and Modelling Summary

Taking the independent and expert lead from PwC this summary brings together the modules' analysis to estimate the likely Year 1 position for the proposed new authorities. It shows both the costs and benefits of LGR and longer-term transformation. The aim is **not to forecast the future**, but to give a transparent financial view of creating new authorities. This shows not just the benefits LGR could drive but also the likely cost of implementation. It also provides an estimate of the initial financial position for the new council(s) in order to help inform strategic and operational decisions that the shadow authorities would need to consider. All the tables shown in this section are provided by PwC and may be found with further detail added within Appendix 4A.

Overview of the Financial Analysis

Purpose:

- Uses local medium term financial plans (produced by councils in Q4 2024/25), and is consistent with the data sets collated for other financial modelling.
- Provides a "Year 1" directional estimate of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities.
- Tests assumptions through a series of modules aligned to major areas of income and expenditure.
- Includes indicative transformation benefits based on an assumption of future ambitions to drive change.
- Based on General Fund, all Housing Revenue Account related aspects are excluded from this analysis.

1. An estimated year 1 Position

From local, published 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Strategies (MTFS) (***pre-spending review announcements***) and 2024/25 Unaudited Statement of Accounts, a baseline view of the potential new authorities is developed that includes: Income; Expenditure; Assets; Liabilities.

A view of potential Year 1 impact of Council Tax, Workforce and Democratic arrangements is included.

2. Analysis of structural change

Applies cost and benefit assumptions to outline the estimated impact of reorganisation: Staffing reductions and redundancy costs; asset rationalisation; contract and procurement savings; reduced democratic costs.

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3. **Profiles estimated costs and savings for reorganisation and transformation over a five-year period which includes:** Aggregation benefits; One-off transition costs; Recurring financial disbenefit from disaggregating LCC; Payback period; Long-term transformation benefits and implementation costs

The analysis undertaken and assumptions applied provides an estimate of forecast “Year 1” budgets and financial balance for the new unitary authorities.

Forecast Budgets for new unitary authorities cover: Income including Council Tax; Expenditure; Recurring LGR Aggregation benefits; Recurring LGR financial disbenefits from disaggregating LCC; One-off transition costs; Transformation

Forecast Balance Sheet for new unitary authorities: Assets (Non-HRA); Liabilities (borrowing only) (Non-HRA)

Together, these outputs form the basis of the initial financial position (e.g. FY 2028/29) for the new unitary authorities following their establishment. This will also highlight areas of financial risk that should be the focus of mitigation efforts during the transition period.

Set out below is the methodology and logic for assumptions applied. The complexity involved in creating multiple unitary authorities has been taken into account in the form of increased transition and disaggregation costs and reductions in economies of scale. To note, transformation costs and benefits are applied after reorganisation based on an assumed level of ambition and further change to realise the full benefit of unitarisation.



Reorganisation Benefits

Recurring Aggregation Benefits: Savings achieved through consolidation e.g. management, systems and support functions. These are ongoing efficiencies generated through removing duplication and streamlining processes.

Economies of Scale: Larger single structures – as compared to individual districts – can offer the potential to operate more efficiently by sharing systems and resources (including staff and assets), centralising procurement, and pooling specialist capacity. In the current model, these savings are recognised but subsequently dampened to reflect the fact that breaking up the County into multiple unitaries reduces the achievable economies of scale. It is also recognised that there is a tipping point at which point scale becomes a dis-benefit. The optimal scale varies by function. For neighbourhood services the optimal scale has already been achieved and amalgamation will introduce diseconomies of scale.

Reorganisation Costs

One-off Transition Costs: Upfront investment needed to create new authorities. These are time-limited and occur during implementation.

Ongoing Disaggregation Costs or reduction in potential benefits: Reduction in economies of scale or where there is greater fragmentation which arises when services or teams are split across multiple new organisations. Each additional unitary authority introduces new overheads and reduces the advantage of economies of scale.

Transformation (Post Vesting Day)

Transformation Benefits: Efficiency and productivity improvements realised once new authorities are established and operating effectively. Reflect long-term service redesign, innovation, and better outcomes for residents.

Transformation Costs: Investment required to modernise and redesign services (e.g. digitalisation, workforce reform, asset rationalisation). Incurred after reorganisation and are distinct from transition costs. These are short-term costs intended to unlock longer-term service and financial improvements.

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Inputs – Modules – Updates – Outputs

Inputs: County and District Council data; analysis and assumptions

Modules:

1. Income
2. Expenditure
3. Council tax
4. Assets
5. Liabilities
6. Members and Elections
7. Third Party Spend
8. Workforce Salary Alignment

Updates: Transition costs (one off), recurring financial disbenefit cost (from disaggregating LCC), transformation costs (one-off), benefit profiling

Outputs: Cost / Benefit; Estimated year 1 position

Throughout the remainder of this section, as with the full submission document:

- **UA1:** Unitary 1 comprises North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland
- **UA2:** Unitary 2 comprises Boston, East Lindsey, City of Lincoln, West Lindsey
- **UA3**: Unitary 3 is North East Lincolnshire
- **UA4:** Unitary 4 is North Lincolnshire

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Estimated Year 1 Position

2025/26 MTFS figures have been used to estimate forward-looking income and net expenditure for the purposes of developing the Year 1 position. The baseline position was agreed with S151 input from both SK and NK district councils on the 18 September 2025. The Year 1 position is not intended to predict the outcome of national funding reforms or new grant schemes. A significant number of elements could impact the Year 1 position, including the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates reset, future settlements from government, inflation, political change nationally and locally. HMG is expected to provide more detail on the Fair Funding Review outcome in Autumn 25.

Appendix 4A sets out the full list of assumptions applied in developing the Year 1 position**.**

Modelling indicates that the proposed new councils will begin operations in the following financial position.

- **Opening deficits:** The combined opening position across the new UAs shows significant core funding pressures. All will start with an operating deficit, which is not unexpected as local government is operating in a challenging financial context.
- **Efficiency requirements:** To achieve a balanced budget, savings are required most significantly from the existing top-tier councils – districts largely show balanced budgets, whereas LCC shows a significant deficit.
- **Strategic trade-offs:** Councils will face early policy choices: draw on reserves, amend Council Tax, or accelerate service transformation. Longer-term gains from LGR aggregation and longer-term transformation integration are a potential offset.
- **Caveat:** Figures reflect MTFS positions from Q4 2024/25, ahead of the start of the 2025/26 financial year. All Councils with a forecast medium term deficit fully acknowledged this and had and will continue to have plans in place to reduce / eliminate completely the gaps identified ahead of the start of the current financial year.

Fire Authority: Assumes a standalone FA will be created and a portion of LCC Business Rates and Council Tax disaggregated. Governance will be transferred to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

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Criterion 2 Table 1	UA 1	UA 2	UA 3	UA 4		Standalone Fire Authority
Core Funding	-371.35M	-466.59M	-225.99M	-218.19M		-29.69M
Net Cost Operating Expenditure	380.2M	503.5M	238.4M	224.2M		31.1M
Budget Gap	**8.8M**	**36.9M**	**12.4M**	**6.0M**		**1.4M**

It is important to note that the opening budget gap is based on the position leading into the 2025/26 financial year. The baseline position does not attempt to estimate the impact of the mitigating actions that each Council will undertake over the 2025/26 to 2027/28 financial years to narrow or eliminate these gaps. Equally close to the entirety of these budget gaps sit within the three upper tier authorities within the invitation area.

Balance Sheet

The Year 1 Balance Sheet reflects General Fund (GF) assets and liabilities only. It includes:

- The Net Book Value (NBV) listed on the balance sheet within the Statement of Accounts. This includes: Surplus Assets, Assets under Construction, Other Land and Buildings and Community Assets. Infrastructure Assets and Investments assets are also included. **It does not include Council Dwellings and other HRA owned Assets.**

- Long-term and current liabilities (borrowing only) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit.

Both assets and liabilities reflect the estimated value in Year 1 informed by Capital Finance Requirements and Planned Capital Expenditure.

Appendix 4A sets out the full list of assumptions applied to develop the Balance Sheet**.**

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Modelling indicates that the proposed new councils will begin operations in the following financial position.

- **Assets:** Set out below is an evidence-based estimate of what each new authority would be accountable for on Year 1, drawn from existing Statement of Account asset values, taking planned and additional disposals of surplus assets into account. Assumption that asset value follows geography i.e. allocated by physical location.

- **Liabilities:** Also below are the financial obligations that would transfer into any new unitary councils. It brings together debt, borrowing, and the DSG deficit to provide a clear Year 1 picture of the liabilities position. Allocated following the same distribution profile as assets. In reality, the apportionment of debt will be worked through in detail as part of the implementation of any new authority.

Criterion 2 Table 2	UA 1	UA 2	UA 3	UA 4
Assets				
Fixed Assets	1210.4m	1883.3m	667.4m	423.1m
Liabilities				
Long Term Borrowing (GF only)	232.7M	352.5M	135.2M	158.0M
Short term Borrowing (GF only)	4.6M	17.1M	50.0M	76.7M
Dedicated Schools Grant	-16.0M	-17.1M	-8.7M	-15.9M

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Aggregation Benefits

The estimated aggregation benefits as a whole are set out in the table below. All are recurring benefits

- **Staffing:** Benefits from reduction in duplicated roles across leadership, front office, service delivery, internal and enabling services and strategic services.
- **Third Party Spend:** Benefits from reduction in addressable spend across all in-scope service areas.
- **Democracy:** Benefits from changing the number of councillors and streamlining elections.
- **Property:** Benefits from reduced operational expenditure spent on rationalised assets (i.e. surplus assets).

Appendix 4A sets out the full list of assumptions applied to develop the aggregation benefits

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Criterion 2 Table 3	TOTAL (£)	UA 1	UA 2	UA 3	UA 4
Estimated Staffing Benefits					
Senior Leadership Structures savings	2.71M	0.72M	1.99M	0.00M	0.00M
Front Office Reorganisation savings	0.71M	0.38M	0.33M	0.00M	0.00M
Service Delivery Reorganisation savings	0.42M	0.23M	0.20M	0.00M	0.00M
Internal and Enabling Services Reorganisation savings	1.14M	0.61M	0.53M	0.00M	0.00M
Strategic Services Reorganisation savings	0.42M	0.23M	0.19M	0.00M	0.00M
TOTAL FTE BENEFITS	5.40M	2.17M	3.24M	0.00M	0.00M
Estimated Third Party Spend Benefits					
TPS Aggregation savings	10.62M	4.15M	6.47M	0.00M	0.00M
Estimated Members' Allowances Benefits					
Allowances + SRA savings	0.50M	0.29M	0.21M	0.00M	0.00M
Estimated Election Benefits					
Election Costs savings	1.40M	0.70M	0.70M	0.00M	0.00M
Estimated Property Benefits					
Property OpEx savings	0.12M	0.03M	0.10M	0.00M	0.00M
Total Aggregation Benefits	18.05M	7.33M	10.72M	0.00M	0.00M
Benefit as a % of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA1 and UA2		**1.93%**	**2.13%**	**0%**	**0%**

Criterion 2 Tables 4 and 5

Aggregation benefits phasing					
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Aggregation benefits profile	60%	80%	90%	100%	100%

Aggregation benefits over a 5 year period					
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	10.83M	14.44M	16.25M	18.05M	18.05M

Transition Costs

The estimated transition costs as a whole are set out below.

Criterion 2 table 6

Cost Element	Total (£)	Notes
New unitaries setup & closedown costs	2.65M	**Creating the new council:** Activities needed to stand the new organisations up such as drafting constitutions, aligning organisational policies, setting up new democratic structures, and setting up localities for four large UAs. **Organisation Closedown:** It will be more complex in UA1 and UA2 to settle accounts, change financial codes, and close multiple councils with different legacy systems. **Internal Programme Management:** Extra capacity is needed to run all the planning, operating model design, data work, and mobilisation in a short timescale.
IT & Systems Costs	2.25M	**Councils will run many different core systems.** Higher costs will come from migrating and cleaning data, harmonising infrastructure, setting up shared identity and integration platforms.
External transition, design and implementation costs	8.75M	**More work needed in UA1 and UA2 because of the wider scope of change** across governance, HR, finance, ICT, and service design, and the need to involve partners like the NHS and emergency services (i.e. transferring governance of Fire Authority to the PCC).
Redundancy costs	3.67M	**Estimated reduction in FTE (Leadership and Core Roles) x Average Median Salary Point for Councils.** Note: Redundancy costs within local government are highly specific and dependent on personal circumstances, making it difficult to calculate exact outcomes at this stage.
Contingency	5.20M	**All options include a contingency amount which is 30% of the total costs.** This extra provision is sensible in all options because of risks like supplier delays, poor data quality, and the need to protect statutory services during transition.
Total	22.52M	

Cost as a % of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA1 and UA2	**2.55%**

Criterion 2 Tables 7 and 8

Transition costs over a five year period					
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M

Transition costs phasing					
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Aggregation cost profile	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Disaggregation of Top Tier Services

Disaggregating top tier services into two authorities will mean increased costs or a reduction in benefit which arises primarily from the loss of economies of scale. These disbenefits represent additional costs which are recognised within the financial case.

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Criterion 2 table 9

Potential increased cost of reduction in benefit incurred as a result of creating multiple unitary authorities	
	Cost (£)
Impact of disaggregating top tier services	12.94M
Cost as a % of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA1 and UA2	1.46%

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The proposals under consideration would require top tier services to be disaggregated across two unitary authorities. We recognise that although in the medium to long term future, there may be opportunity to explore inter-municipal cooperation arrangements where a function is optimally served by a particular scale, **by default a viable local authority must be able to deliver the full range of functions to a high standard**. A proposal that relies on shared services, innovative alternative delivery models or reallocation of functions to another layer of government is not viable.

By creating multiple unitary authorities, these economies of scale are potentially reduced. Each new authority will need to enter into its own contracts, maintain its own systems and licenses, and manage its own corporate infrastructure. This results in higher unit costs and reduced purchasing power.

Importantly, this represents an ongoing impact. That is, the potential loss of benefit through a reduction in economies of scale will continue beyond the transition to the new Unitarity Authorities. It is therefore treated separately and in addition to the one-off implementation costs associated with the reorganisation itself.

Examples of where these ongoing disbenefits may arise include: Reduced purchasing power and higher prices on third-party spend and contracts; Stranded overheads and duplication of roles; Increased ICT costs due to duplicate licenses and systems; Fragmentation of shared services, leading to inefficiencies and higher overheads; Loss of opportunities to achieve further efficiencies that could have been realised under a single, larger authority.

Disaggregation costs are a particular area where clearer differences between PwC and PeopleToo appear. The impact of this is investigated further in the sensitivity analysis.

Transformation Benefits

These are additional benefits which the new UAs could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models. These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above. The scope of transformation savings would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

Criterion 2 Table 10	Baseline				Savings Assumption		Benefit			
Benefit Area	**UA 1**	**UA 2**	**UA 3**	**UA 4**	**UA1 & UA2**	**UA3 & UA4**	**UA 1**	**UA 2**	**UA 3**	**UA 4**
Front Office FTE	13.71M	16.01M	10.54M	7.24M	2.00%	0.00%	0.27M	0.32M	0.00M	0.00M
Service Delivery FTE	24.41M	28.52M	18.78M	12.90M	1.00%	0.00%	0.24M	0.29M	0.00M	0.00M
Internal and Enabling Services FTE	23.00M	26.87M	17.69M	12.16M	2.00%	0.00%	0.46M	0.54M	0.00M	0.00M
Strategic Services FTE	8.09M	9.45M	6.22M	4.28M	2.00%	0.00%	0.16M	0.19M	0.00M	0.00M
Addressable Third Party Expenditure	340.54M	492.60M	181.56M	208.83M	2.00%	0.00%	6.81M	9.85M	0.00M	0.00M
Sales, Fees and Charges	25.74M	42.72M	32.32M	40.06M	1.00%	0.00%	0.26M	0.43M	0.00M	0.00M
Benefits as a% of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA1 and UA2					2.24%		8.21M	11.61M	0.00M	0.00M
							19.82M			

Criterion 2 table 11

Benefit Area	Rationale on long-term transformation benefit areas and key inputs used for the baseline
Post Aggregation Staffing	Long-term staffing benefits will result from continued service transformation, process automation, and organisational redesign that enables a leaner workforce beyond initial aggregation savings. These reflect a shift from one-off structural integrations to long-term workforce optimisation through digital, standard processes and new operating models. • Baseline data is from Module 8: Workforce Salary Alignment. Year 1 new salary structures multiplied by the proportion of in-scope staffing within each discipline area as identified in the Staffing & Pay Module. • Proportion of roles deemed 'out of scope' for calculating aggregation benefits are also deemed out of scope for calculating transformation benefits. This equates to approximately 42% of all roles. Saving assumptions have been applied to the remaining approximate 58% of roles and the estimated FTE within each area.
Post Aggregation Addressable Third Party Expenditure	Long-term TPS benefits will arise from embedding strategic procurement practices, data-driven spend management, and redesigned service delivery models that reduce external costs beyond initial aggregation savings. These reflect a shift from short-term contract consolidation to a mature, category-led approach that delivers long-term commercial leverage. • Baseline data is from Module 7: Third Party Expenditure. Running Expenses from RO Data. • Spending deemed 'out of scope' for calculating aggregation benefits also deemed out of scope for calculating transformation benefits. This includes fire. • Forecasted TPS figures from Districts and the County MTFS have been used to project future growth. Year-on-year growth of 2.5% has been applied to baseline figures to project the expected TPS through to vesting day. This is the average growth projection outlined within MTFS.
Sales, Fees and Charges	After reorganisation, the new UAs will be able to review and harmonise the inherited fee structure from former districts. Districts typically have inconsistent pricing policies for similar discretionary services (e.g. garden waste, licensing, planning). Aligning to a single charging framework creates an opportunity to raise underpriced areas to market rates. • Baseline data has not been required within modules. It is drawn from MTFS, Budget Setting Report or Statement of Accounts. • Figures project expected income in Year 1. Year-on-year growth of between 0.4% to 5.0% has been applied to the baseline figures to project the expected fees and charges through to vesting day. • All LCC fees and charges have been removed. This is because upper tier authorities have low to moderate discretion to increase their fees are often constrained by statutory frameworks and national policy.

Criterion 2 Table 12

Transformation benefits phasing					
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Transformation benefits profile	0%	20%	50%	100%	100%

Transformation Costs

These are the costs associated with the additional benefits which the new authority(ies) could achieve post-vesting day. The scope of transformation savings and therefore costs would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

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Transformation Benefit	UA 1	UA 2	UA 3	UA 4
	8.21M	11.61M	0.00M	0.00M
	19.82M			
Transformation Cost	**UA 1**	**UA 2**	**UA 3**	**UA 4**
	2.71M	3.83M	0.00M	0.00M
	6.54M			
	Cost as a % of net operating cost for UA1 & 2			**0.74%**

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Criterion 2 Table 14

Cost area	Notes on transformation costs
Transformation Cost	Case studies of transformational change delivery across local authorities suggest that typical RoI ratios for transformation can be between 1:2 to 1:10. It is assumed that transformation investment returns a modest 1:3 return per £1 invested. Transformation costs are calculated as one third of the total transformation benefits estimated. These one-off costs will cover activities such as service redesign, change management, systems integration, programme delivery resources, and enabling technologies.

Criterion 2 Tables 15 and 16

Transformation cost phasing					
	Y1	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Transformation costs profile	10%	25%	35%	20%	10%

Transformation costs over a 5 year period					
	Y1	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65M	-1.64M	-2.29M	-1.31M	-0.65M

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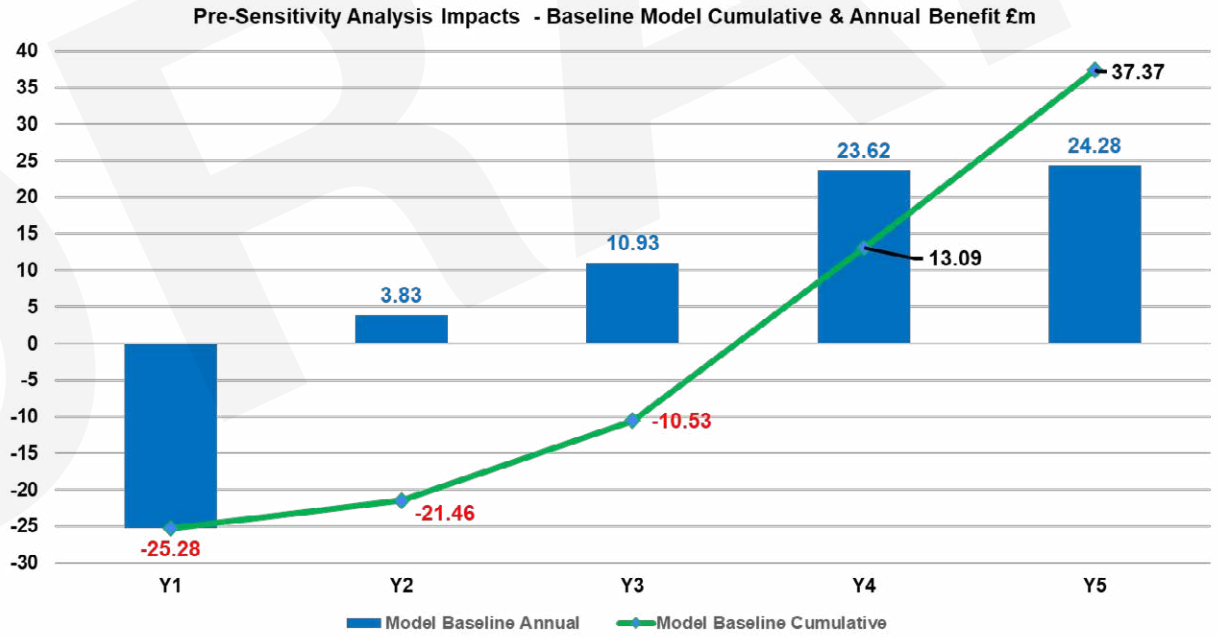
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Summary – Before Sensitivity Analysis

The estimated full costs and benefits over a five-year period are set out below. Key figures include:

- Net in year benefit/cost: This is the financial impact (either a benefit or a cost) realised in a specific year of the financial case.
- Cumulative benefit/cost: This is the running total of all benefits and costs from the start of the financial case up to that year.
- Net benefit period: Length of time it takes for the cumulative benefits of the financial case to equal (or exceed) its initial costs.

This takes into account: Aggregation benefits and transition costs; One-off transformation benefits and costs; Recurring financial disbenefit costs. Negative figures reflect a cost. Figures reflect the combined total for both new unitary councils. PwC have included the breakdown to UA1 and UA2 level for both aggregation and transformation.



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Criterion 2 Table 18	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Total 5 year Benefit / Costs
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	10.83M	14.44M	16.25M	18.05M	18.05M	77.62M
UA1	4.40M	5.86M	6.60M	7.33M	7.33M	31.52M
UA2	6.43M	8.58M	9.65M	10.72M	10.72M	46.10M
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	-64.70M
UA1	-6.05M	-6.05M	-6.05M	-6.05M	-6.05M	-30.25M
UA2	-6.89M	-6.89M	-6.89M	-6.89M	-6.89M	-34.45M
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	-22.52M
UA1	-10.52M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	-10.52M
UA2	-12.00M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	-12.00M
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00M	3.96M	9.91M	19.82M	19.82M	53.51M
UA1	0.00M	1.64M	4.11M	8.21M	8.21M	22.17M
UA2	0.00M	2.32M	5.80M	11.61M	11.61M	31.34M
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65M	-1.64M	-2.29M	-1.31M	-0.65M	-6.54M
UA1	-0.27M	-0.68M	-0.95M	-0.54M	-0.27M	-2.71M
UA2	-0.38M	-0.96M	-1.34M	-0.77M	-0.38M	-3.83M
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	-25.28M	3.83M	10.93M	23.62M	24.28M	37.38M
UA1	-12.44M	0.77M	3.71M	8.95M	9.22M	10.21M
UA2	-12.84M	3.05M	7.22M	14.67M	15.06M	27.16M

Criterion Table 18	Net in year benefit/(cost) after 5 Years (Yearly Result) (£M)	Cumulative benefit/(cost) after 5 Years (Total Running Balance) (£M)	Net benefit period (Years)
TOTAL	24.28M	37.38M	3.5 Years
UA1	9.22m	10.21m	3.9 Years
UA2	15.06m	27.16m	3.2 years

Transition costs are expected to be met by the councils within the LGR area. The apportionment between LCC and the seven Lincolnshire District Councils would be subject to future discussion and agreement as the area moves into the government decision and final implementation phase.

Sensitivity Analysis

Working closely with PwC we have assessed the potential variation on costs and levers within the financial analysis set out above. The sensitivity analysis testing applies percentage (±%) adjustments to each module's base position, not to top-line total for cost or benefit. This allows for the % impact to apply across underlying assumptions which provides the full modelled effect on total costs or benefits.

The sensitivity analysis has been prepared for each core element of the financial analysis and therefore covers:

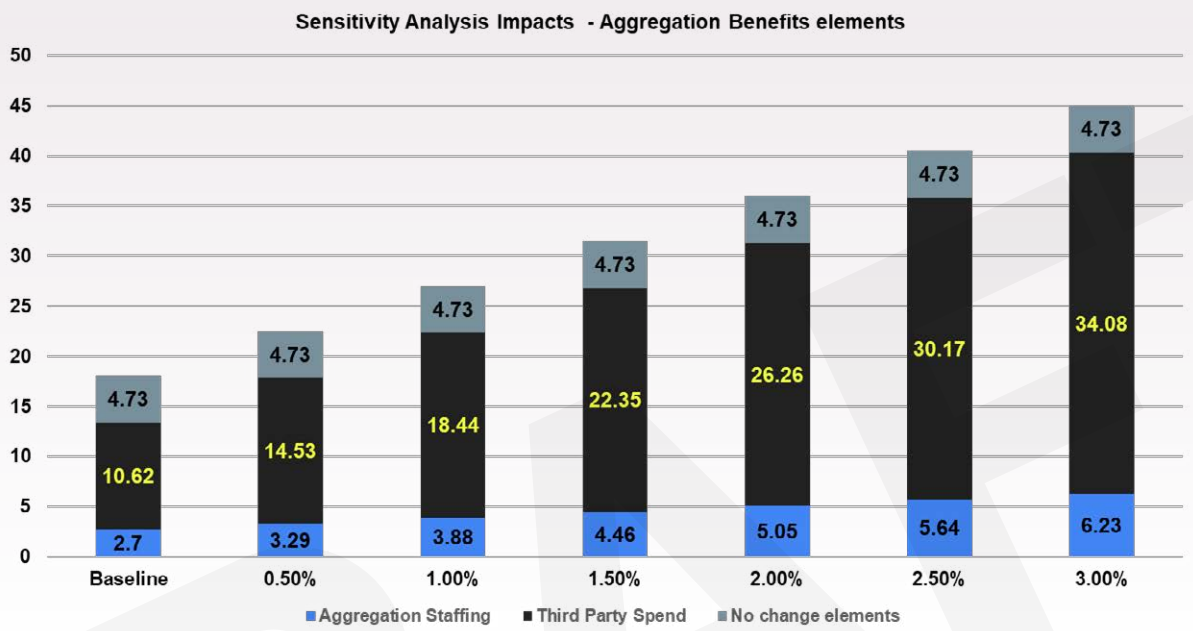
- Aggregation Benefits (Staffing) (Increase)
- Aggregation Benefits (TPS) (Increase)
- Aggregation Benefits (Senior Leadership savings, Members, Election Expenses, Property) (unchanged)
- Transition Costs (Increase)
- Disaggregation Disbenefit (Decrease)
- Disaggregation Disbenefit (Increase)
- Transformation Benefit (Increase)

Aggregation Benefit – Staffing

Taking all four staffing elements, our conservative starting point delivers a benefit of £2.7m in addition to the £2.71m identified from aggregating senior staffing structures. Our sensitivity analysis shows a more ambitious mid-point position which increases the saving from £2.7m to around the £5.0m mark; whilst the upper end, which remains within the bounds of reason, reaches £6.3m. The sensitivity analysis therefore shows a potential to move from a combined £5.41m to a combined figure of just under £9m.

Sensitivity analysis on Third Party Spend shows far more significant opportunity. A 0.5% percentage first step yields an additional £3.91m – a bigger figure than our upper end for staffing savings. Moving through to the full 3% delivers a £23m improvement, moving our baseline position from £18m to £45m by year 4 based on our aggregation saving profile already shown above.

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Transition Costs

Applying the sensitivity analysis to our baselines position shows the potential of adding a further £5m in cost, though the upper end of this resonates strongly with the PeopleToo estimates. Transition costs are one-off not ongoing costs.

Disaggregation costs

Disaggregation costs are, in contrast to Transition Costs, an ongoing cost. Our starting position, £12.94m representing 1.46% of net operating expenditure, is likely already at the upper end. Our sensitivity analysis is at the lower end, and more in line with the overall disaggregation percentage experienced by PeopleToo, taking this to around the £7m mark. Given the ongoing nature of these costs, the extent of cost that can be avoided has a significant impact – c£30m over the five year view taken. The approximate range c£13m to c£7m has been applied in our sensitivity analysis. The PeopleToo estimates on disaggregation are shown in table 19.

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Criterion 2 table 19

Service	23/24 Outturn	%Cost	Explanation	Disaggregation Cost
Education services	£424,561,000	0.50%	Limited duplication expected; core statutory duties and school place planning functions will need to be replicated, but most delivery is DSG-funded and unaffected.	£2,122,805.00
Highways and transport services	£52,917,000	0.50%	Client and policy leadership duplicated, but large elements are already outsourced contracts which can be scaled, limiting overhead.	£264,585.00
Children Social Care	£129,442,000	1%	Statutory leadership roles (DCS, safeguarding boards, QA) must be duplicated, though some specialist functions could still be shared.	£1,294,420.00
Adult Social Care	£265,565,000	1.25%	High statutory burden and market oversight responsibilities make duplication unavoidable; full sets of leadership and safeguarding functions needed in both UAs.	£3,319,562.50
Public Health	£35,984,000	0.25%	Very low uplift as joint DPH appointments and shared commissioning support can contain costs; duplication limited to minimum governance.	£89,960.00
Housing services (GF only)	£5,526,000	0.25%	County-level enabling and strategy duplicated, but main housing responsibilities remain with districts; impact is modest	£13,815.00
Cultural and related services	£10,875,000	0.50%	Service leadership and support functions need replicating unless trusts/ partnership models are extended, hence a small uplift applied.	£54,375.00
Environmental and regulatory services	£28,990,000	0.50%	Trading Standards and regulatory oversight require two leadership teams, though some specialist back-office functions can be shared.	£144,950.00
Planning and development services	£8,527,000	0.50%	Strategic planning and minerals/waste policy duplicated; opportunity exists to mitigate if joint plans or policy teams are agreed.	£42,635.00
Fire and rescue services	£32,752,000	0%	Assumes a single combined FRA across both UAs, avoiding recurring duplication costs.	£0
Central services	£9,098,000	2%	Full duplication of statutory officers, democratic core, and corporate services (finance, HR, ICT, legal) required; this is the largest driver of overhead.	£181,960.00
Total	**£1,004,237,000**			£7,529,067.50

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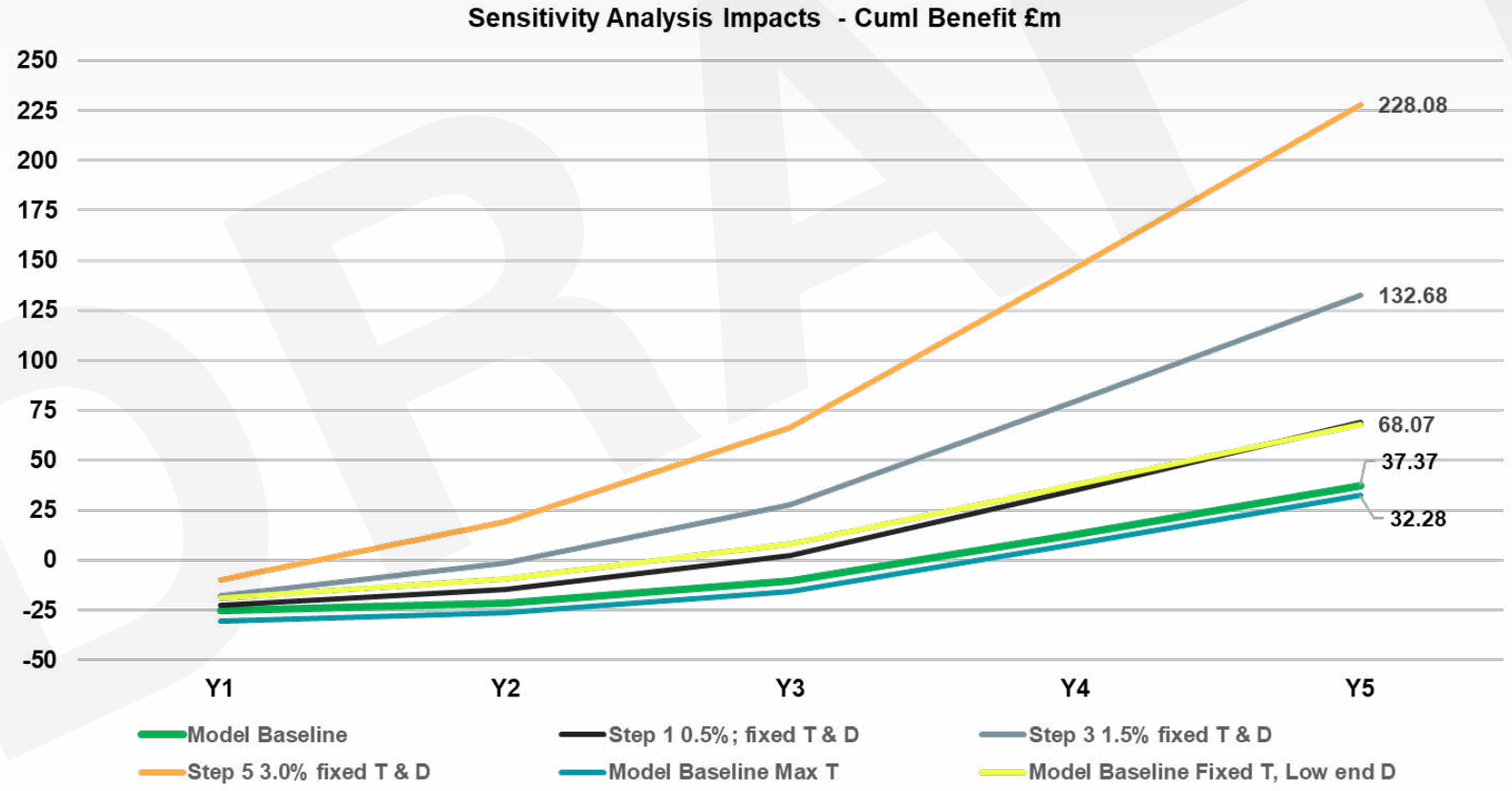
Transformation

Future Transformation relates to both level of ambition, but also to practical capacity and capability, and to the wider public sector operating far more systemically. The PwC sensitivity analysis shows a significant scale of opportunity to deliver over £50m of savings by year 5. The sensitivity analysis has maintained the same cost to saving relationship for Transformation, a realistic but again relatively conservative approach. Once Transformation costs are factored in, the net benefit by year 5 stands at £34m as compared with the baseline position of £13m.

Overall impact

As with any sensitivity analysis there is the danger of cherry-picking the up-sides and ignoring the downsides – leading, as seen elsewhere, in over-promising and under-delivering, the latter often substantially. It is likely unrealistic that all upper end savings projections would all be delivered, whilst at the same time all costs being incurred at the minimum.

Our sensitivity does, therefore, reveal the scale of the potential full opportunity; however our baseline case keeps our proposal firmly rooted in the reality of what can be delivered as opposed to what might be delivered.



Appendix 4C sets out the full sensitivity ranges and analysis that have been summarised above.

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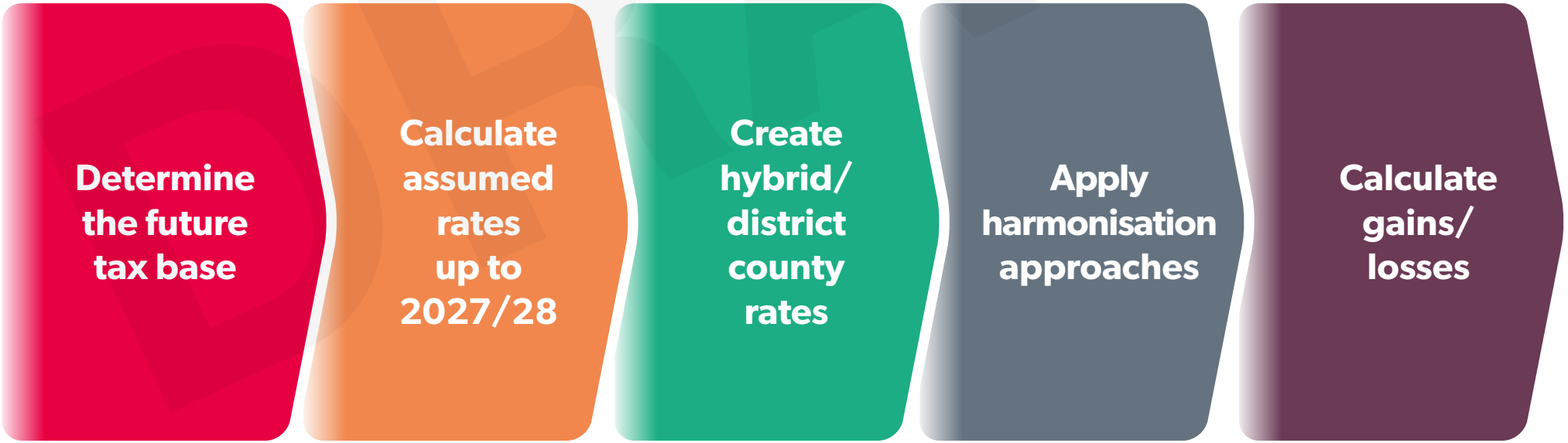
Council Tax Harmonisation

Whilst decisions on Council Tax Harmonisation will remain the responsibility of each new Shadow Authority is it incumbent upon each LGR proposal to present the initial implications and a range of options. Providing a projected council tax requirement for future years in the outputs of our financial modelling provides a degree of credibility to other projections. It remains an additional tool in determining whether a proposal's new geography is viable from the outset, and an early steer for members in their duties when LGR implementation is underway.

As part of LGR a uniform rate of council tax must be in payment across the whole area (of each new unitary) by the seventh year. Regulations are set out in statute and referendum principles apply, albeit with some flexibilities within a new unitary area.

The approach to council tax harmonisation can be used to preserve low rates; generate additional income, or to distribute current requirements more equitably - but not all three at the same time. Ultimately that will be a decision for the members of each new Shadow Authority.

The approach taken with PwC has therefore been to 1) project the baseline; 2) create the new geographies; 3) create the harmonisation outputs.



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Working with PwC we took the following baseline position (Tax Base per CTB1)

Council	2025 Taxbase (Band D equivalents)	2025/26 Band D Rate (ex PP)	Type of Council
Lincolnshire	249,550	£1,625.85	County Council
Boston	20,704	£261.55	District Council
Lincoln	26,141	£316.98	District Council
East Lindsey	48,602	£171.54	District Council
North Kesteven	40,293	£194.40	District Council
South Kesteven	50,141	£189.37	District Council
South Holland	30,912	£215.76	District Council
West Lindsey	32,757	£248.76	District Council
North Lincolnshire	52,687	£1,800.36	Unitary Council
North East Lincolnshire	47,584	£1,952.04	Unitary Council
Rutland	16,130	£2,218.95	Unitary Council



The Levers

1

Method of Increasing the Taxbase

By default the model uses change in working age population to uprate the proposed taxbase each year. Other LAs have applied either a flat rate (eg. 0.5%/yr) or have used a calculation based on historic changes

2

Pace of Harmonisation

The law requires that the harmonisation process is complete, with all parts of the area paying the same rate of council tax by the seventh year. A longer period may provide less dramatic changes in rates, but effectively prolongs the process and can result in significant foregone income over time.

3

Direction of Harmonisation

The harmonisation model can target the lowest, highest or a new mean/median rate in the target year. This will then provide an annual change in rate each year which includes the standard increase applied, along with a factor which brings the rate closer to the harmonisation target.

4

Exceptional Rates

The harmonisation model can apply an exceptional rate (e.g., 7.49%) in one or more years prior to vesting day. This accounts for areas (such as Somerset) where the council has requested additional flexibility to set a higher rate due to financial pressures.

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Modelled outputs

Based on our proposed configuration of new unitaries, we have modelled council tax harmonisation based on four approaches:

1) Harmonising to the lowest rate in each new unitary area;
2) Harmonising to the highest rate in each new unitary area;
3) Harmonising to the median rate in each new unitary area;
4) Harmonising to the weighted average in each new unitary area.

In terms of recent LGRs, North Yorkshire, as an example, chose the weighted average approach. A fifth approach would be to harmonise to a specific figure and is something a new shadow authority may wish to consider however, this approach is not included within our modelling as we feel it not appropriate to second guess the directions that the members elected to each new shadow authority may wish to take. The effect of each of the four core options was then modelled on harmonising in year 1, through to harmonising by year 7. Thus providing 28 options for each of the new unitary areas proposed. Given the range of figures, and for simplicity of presentation, harmonising over 1, 2, or 3 years has been included in the detailed Appendix 4D.

The table below provides an example output based on the weighted average approach and harmonising within a single year. Again, for simplicity, the weighted average approach has been applied to both new unitary council areas and shows both with a year one harmonisation. **This is shown for illustrative purposes only, and is not a recommendation, nor an inference that both new unitaries must adopt the same approach.**

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The table below provides an example output based on the weighted average approach and harmonising within a single year. Again for simplicity the weighted average approach has been applied to both new unitary council areas and shows both with a year one harmonisation. **This is shown for illustrative purposes only, and is not a recommendation, nor an inference that both new unitaries must adopt the same approach**.

Weighted Average

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,198

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.97%	2,094	2,198	2,308	2,423	2,544	2,671	2,804	2,944
South Kesteven	5.24%	2,088	2,198	2,308	2,423	2,544	2,671	2,804	2,944
South Holland	3.81%	2,117	2,198	2,308	2,423	2,544	2,671	2,804	2,944
Annual increase in rate			4.67%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirement			272,089,989	287,095,616	302,928,796	319,635,167	337,262,887	355,862,767	375,488,420
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			272,089,989	286,541,997	301,771,622	317,821,070	334,734,848	352,559,895	371,345,715
Overallin-year impact on Council Tax Requirement				553,619	1,157,173	1,814,098	2,528,039	3,302,871	4,142,706

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,240

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	3.37%	2,167	2,240	2,352	2,470	2,593	2,722	2,858	3,001
Lincoln	0.56%	2,228	2,240	2,352	2,470	2,593	2,722	2,858	3,001
East Lindsey	8.28%	2,069	2,240	2,352	2,470	2,593	2,722	2,858	3,001
West Lindsey	4.04%	2,153	2,240	2,352	2,470	2,593	2,722	2,858	3,001
Annual increase in rate			3.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	309,174,251	326,225,056	344,216,205	363,199,557	383,229,831	404,364,764
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overallin-year impact on Council Tax Requirement				696,406	1,455,626	2,281,982	3,180,060	4,154,733	5,211,174

PeopleToo

The full set of financial baseline analysis undertaken by PeopleToo is set out in Appendix 4E.

Housing Revenue Accounts

Four of the seven Lincolnshire districts – all three within our proposed new Unitary 1 (North Kesteven, South Holland and South Kesteven) and one, City of Lincoln, within our proposed new Unitary 2, have Housing Revenue Accounts.

The financial modelling of the amalgamation of the Councils' respective HRAs is outside this proposal and therefore has not been undertaken.

It is reasonable to assume that each HRA is under the financial strains of maintaining sustainable financial business plans within the context of investment in the housing stock, incurring costs of new builds to respond to increased social housing demands and responding to ongoing maintenance in the HRA housing stock.

The combined housing stock of the 3 authorities in the proposed UA1 (NKDC, SKDC, SHDC) provides a total of 13,680 social housing dwellings.

The combined rental income, in respect of combined accounts, is £68m per annum. This will provide financial resilience to continue to invest in the social housing stock.



There is a combined annual capital investment programme of £18m per annum which demonstrates an ongoing commitment to invest in the quality of the social housing offer for our residents that is most in need.

There is also the opportunity to consolidate the reserve balances of each of the UA1 councils which will provide an overall reserve balance of £47m. This not only provides financial resilience, but also a platform for further investment in the housing stock over the medium term.

Equally, consolidation of the three HRAs within proposed unitary one will offer operational scale efficiencies and mitigate some of the pressures faced, whilst also ensuring best practice from each of the three original HRA operations is integrated across the whole new unitary HRA operation.

HRA amalgamation is an area of significant technical uncertainty. The relevant legislative and regulatory framework, and official MHCLG guidance on opening, operating and closing HRAs, does not include information pertaining to the merging or amalgamation of multiple HRAs. Multiple HRAs have been amalgamated in previous reorganisations, most recently in Somerset. However the exact procedural mechanics are unknown. MHCLG have yet to issue specific guidance on this matter.

Clearly, there are financial benefits to be gained from the consolidation of three HRA accounts in Unitary 1, however given the uncertainty around the mechanics of HRA consolidation as set out above a full analysis has not been undertaken at this stage.



SECTION 4: LGR Criterion 3: High Quality, Sustainable Services

Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens

a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.

b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.

c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.

Our Jurisdictional Design Objective: The proposed jurisdictions are appropriate and conducive footprints to sustainably deliver the full range of high quality local government services and facilitate public service reform.

Summary of Policy Challenges:

- Jurisdictions must be of a size and coherence to meaningfully focus on and create neighbourhoods rather than establishing ‘mini-Whitehalls’ in the localities.
- Jurisdictions must be connected to place and the local to successfully the shift to a preventative local state.
- Jurisdictions which may require the disruption of the current service configuration must present a clear and robust solution.

Our proposed jurisdictions deliver:

- Coherent Places of Places as determined by the underlying economic data to provide the best foundations for public service reform that centres neighbourhoods.
- Locality and outcome focused services.
- Considered, pragmatic and safe disaggregation on upper-tier services, particularly those referenced in point C above.

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Seizing the Public Service Reform Opportunity

Task: Jurisdictions must be of a size and coherence to meaningfully centre neighbourhoods rather than establishing 'mini-Whitehalls' in the localities.

Our proposed jurisdictions are coherent Places of Places to provide the best foundations for public service reform.

The government's Spending Review outlined a series of high-level principles for Public Service Reform that guide the government's approach:

- To integrate services, so that they are organised around people's lives.
- To improve long-term outcomes for people through a focus on prevention, relying less on expensive crisis management.
- To devolve power to local areas that understand the needs of their communities best, with services that are designed with and for people, in partnership with civil society.

Uniting the strands is a return of the neighbourhood to the heart of public policy.[42] To 'think neighbourhoods' is central to the government's Plan for Change. This can be seen in the proposals for a neighbourhood health service in the DHSC policy paper *10 Year Health Plan for England: Fit for the Future (2025)*, the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, the Community Wealth Fund, the Plan for Neighbourhoods, the Pride in Place programme, the Cabinet Office's flagship 'Test, Learn and Grow' public reform innovation programme and so on. Underpinning each initiative is the recognition that there is great vitality and intelligence in the systems edge.

The centralised Whitehall model was set up to run industrial scale uniform provision. Policy is set at the centre, which is then for local areas to implement directly rather than augment with their own understanding of their particular circumstances. Divorcing decisions from context in this way prevents the creation of more responsive feedback loops operating locally, which would be essential for developing new approaches to overcome challenges that manifest differently in different areas. This singular technocratic approach is increasingly not able to respond to the complex, interconnected phenomena which occur in communities and are fundamental for individual outcomes, such as relationships, support networks and social bonds. Wicked societal problems demand bespoke, place based and relational solutions, not the optimisation of mass service production.

The solutions to the wicked problems of 21st century: an ageing society, complex health needs, economic inactivity, social cohesion, 'left behind' places etc will not be divined and cascaded by central directives, but in the communities and neighbourhoods where residents make and live their lives, by the people with dirt under their nails, who know their patch best and know what needs to be done. An approach that no longer sees neighbourhoods as the end users of policy, but as the engines of change.

42. The Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON), (May 2025), Neighbourhood Policy Green Paper: Delivering Neighbourhood Renewal -Proposals for Change. Available at: https://www.neighbourhoodscommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Driving-Neighbourhood-Renewal-Proposals-for-Change.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025]

Increased digitalisation and automation provide opportunities, but not silver bullet solutions and create new governance challenges. Technology will augment, not substitute for local and human connection and control.[43]

For years, local authorities have pursued innovative approaches rooted in place and cultivating community capacity. This has been in direct response to rising demand, public service failure and an unmet appetite for people to have more influence over their own lives and the places that matter to them. **By focusing on a scale of place that people identify with, enabling community power, and investing in preventative, relational, and asset-based ways of working, outcomes can be improved, along with a more efficient use of resources and sustainable cost and demand reductions for the long term.**[44] The mission of the 'Test, Learn and Grow' programme is to tap into this local innovation. LGR provides the opportunity to take the most cutting edge practices into the mainstream by embedding it within the operating model, culture, and practice of the new unitary authorities. A renewed and refreshed local state can be joined up with the regional and national state to make them more than the sum of their parts delivering on the need for 21st century public services.

However there is disjunction between the LGR programme and the wider public service reform agenda. The 10 Year Health Plan for England, the Pride in Place Strategy and the Local Government Outcomes Framework (LGOF) do not highlight the forthcoming changes to local government and the imminent scale increase. The term 'principal authority' is not used. The White Paper itself identifies local authorities as local leaders and convenors of place. The policy papers still conceptualises local government as intrinsically local bodies with extensive knowledge of their place. Whilst that will be true in some parts of the country in 2028, primarily the urban unitaries not undergoing reorganisation in this round, it will not be the case in others. There is a risk of misalignment between a wider focus on the neighbourhood across government, principally in a decentralising NHS, and a consolidating local state. Necessarily, authorities of a significantly larger scale will have a higher strategic and operational altitude with a homogenising effect, weakening the link to the specific nature and needs of the patchwork of neighbourhoods that make up local places.

43. Karen Yeung, (2022) 'The New Public Analytics as an Emerging Paradigm in Public Sector Administration' [Online], 27(2) Tilburg Law Review pp. 1–32. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/tilr.303 [Accessed 4 November 2025].
44. Collaborate CIC for Test Valley BC (2025), The bigger you go, the less you know: Why place-based, relational approaches to public services must be core to Local Government Reorganisation [Online]. Available at: https://collaboratecic.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-case-for-place-based-approaches-Test-Valley-280725.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025].

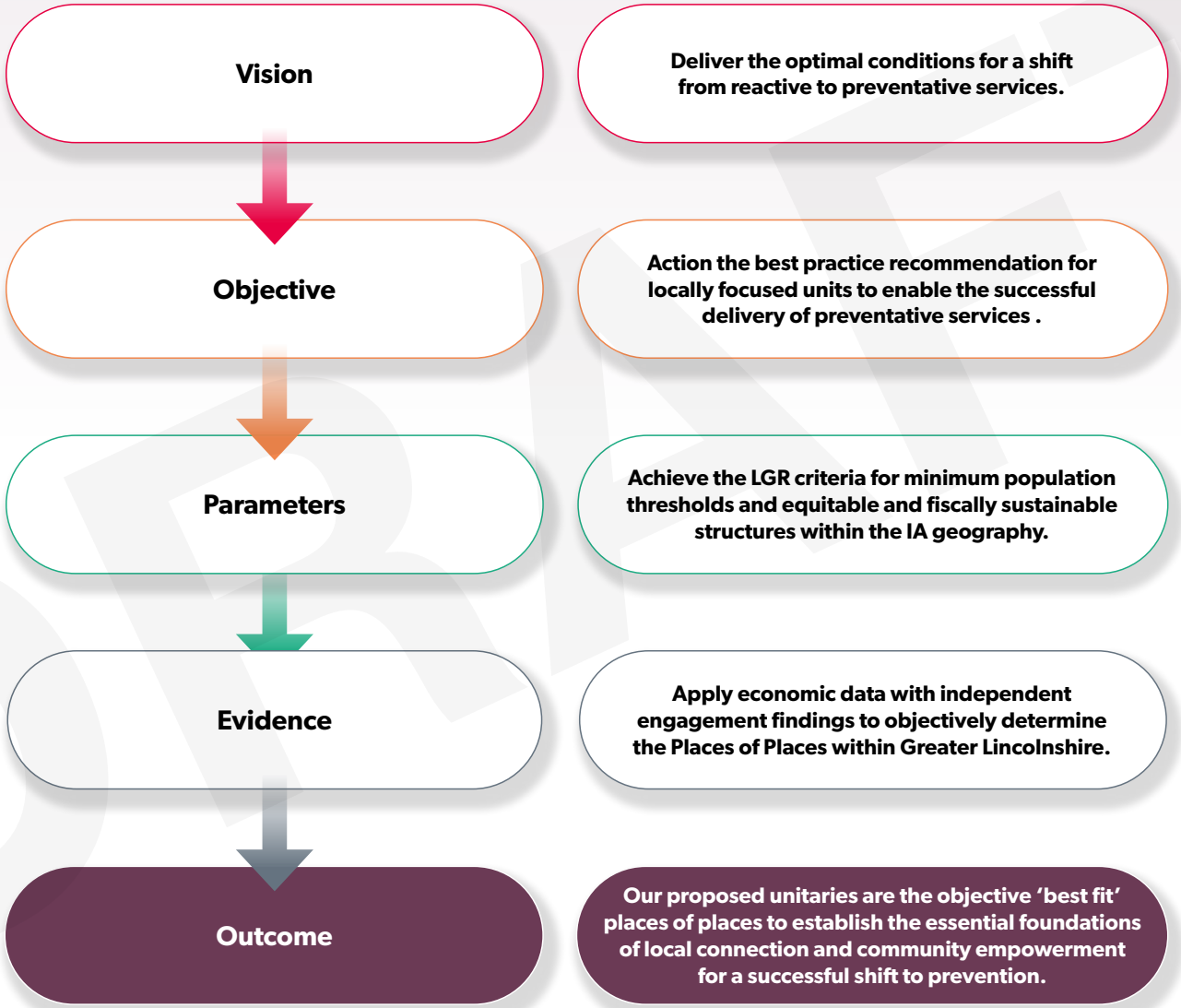


It will not do for LGR to establish mini-Whitehalls across the localities through oversized unitaries, at the precise moment that Whitehall itself is moving away from 'one-size-fits-all' centralisation. A sub-regional unitary will govern on a strategic sub-regional basis. There will be benefits from strategic system unification, however there will also be a strong incentive for service uniformity and consistency with the consequent smothering of the articulation of varying local policy preferences. There have been attempts to bridge the gap between a sub-regional scale unitary and the hyper-local, most notably by Mutual Ventures for Norfolk County Council.[45] The proposed thicket of neighbourhood area committees with attendant integrated neighbourhood teams, partnerships, boards and special purpose vehicles bestows miniature Whitehall with a miniature quango state. Local policymakers would face the same incentives that MHCLG does now with local government, to consolidate the hyperlocal mechanisms to enable greater local capacity and more efficient and effective central coordination and control.

For LGR to successfully shift public service delivery to operate at a neighbourhood scale, the resulting local authorities must frame their purpose around creating the conditions for people and places to flourish and identify their role as an enabler of residents and partners to build and shape the places they care about and address common challenges together. They need to be able to work at the human scale, accommodating human needs and relationships, and at a system scale, connecting, coordinating and stewarding resources. That can only be done if the jurisdictions are coherent places of a sensible scale. This our proposal achieves for Greater Lincolnshire.

45. Mutual Ventures for Norfolk CC (August 2025), Community Engagement Model: Proposal for Norfolk. Available at: https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/72166/The-journey-so-far [Accessed 4 November 2025]

Designing for Prevention



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Delivering a Preventative Local State

There is widespread consensus that a new approach to public services is needed. One that focuses more on providing the conditions for success and less on responding to problems: a preventative state. Prevention will deliver better outcomes and reduce costs. A siloed system is not human centred and will not be efficient. Nevertheless the state has struggled to successfully deliver these ambitions. Considering the problem, Demos argue that prevention is not just about proactive delivery to reduce demand on other reactive services; it is creating the conditions for a strong, connected community to emerge in which residents lead better lives where they are and so are therefore much less likely to need to use those public services.[46] The role of the local state shifts, from plugging the gaps in people's lives and mopping up when things go wrong, to building communities. This is achieved by the enablement of stronger neighbourhoods, through creating the conditions for connections, building social infrastructure, mobilising people and long term community development - rather than turning a blind eye until the consequences become too impossible to ignore. A preventative state would not only get in early to provide the solutions to problems before they get out of hand (such as mental health treatments) but also build social strength and connections that can mitigate against decline at all.

Prevention in practice is not merely the use of predictive data analytics to troubleshoot. It cannot be delivered remotely from a spreadsheet.[47] It is about working with and empowering communities – not one-size-fits all policy solutions. Building relationships of trust and belonging that help people to do the right thing.

This must be fundamentally local, built neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood and depend on strengthening our social, cultural and civic foundations to enable people to develop the habits of participation and active citizenship. Local connection and resident empowerment are the essential building blocks; without those foundations prevention is doomed to failure. Within public services, a concentrated focus on creating a 'liberated' culture and leadership is required. Nothing will change without a different culture across local public services, challenging the view of the passive resident, breaking down siloes between services, and actively encouraging staff and multi-agency collaboration in a place. An oversized sub-regional unitary built on continuity that inherently dislocates from the local and disempowers residents, or unitaries misaligned to functional economic areas and local identity will not be the conducive settings to deliver the government's place based and preventative public service reform agenda.

Greater Lincolnshire has a vast geography of differing needs and priorities. Scunthorpe, Skegness and Stamford for example, or Gainsborough, Grantham and Grimsby, all face different local challenges, which will be best solved through bespoke approaches and solutions. The expert and commonsense policy response is for multiple local units aligned to place within the LGR scale parameters. **So that every place can have the focus it deserves. This our proposal delivers.**

46. Demos (2023), The Preventative State: Rebuilding our Local, Social and Civic Foundations. Available at: https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/the-preventative-state.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025].

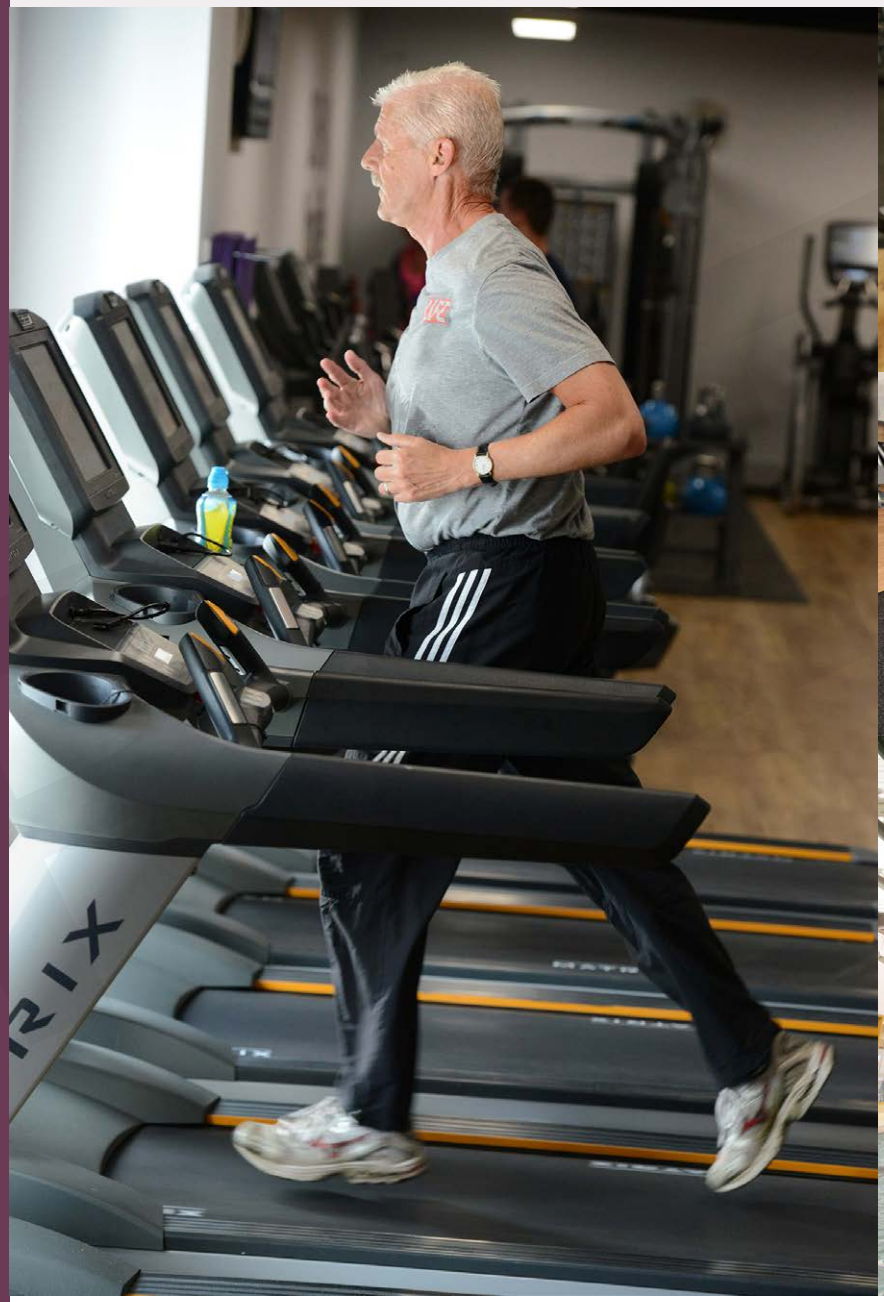
47. Vogl, T.M., Seidelin, C., Ganesh, B. and Bright, J. (2020), Smart Technology and the Emergence of Algorithmic Bureaucracy: Artificial Intelligence in UK Local Authorities. Public Administration Review, 80: 946-961. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13286 [Accessed on 4 November 2025].

Case Study: Leisure and NHS Community Health partnership

After COVID-19, the need for accessible rehabilitation grew as NHS waiting times increased. Leisure centres emerged as ideal health hubs. In 2022, an unused space at One NK was converted into the Health Hub—a fully accessible gym and studio offering consultations and tailored programmes for Healthwise and referral customers. Partnerships with Lincolnshire Community Health Service and cardiac and pulmonary rehab teams soon followed, creating a seamless “one-stop shop” for recovery and preventative care.

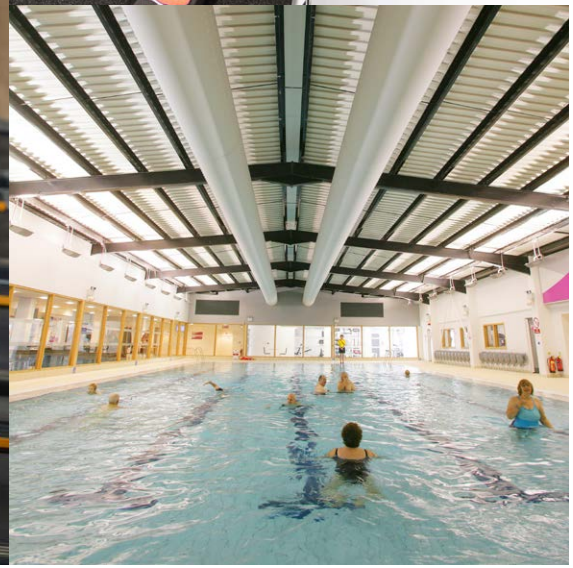
The Hub has reduced patient wait times, generated 7,800 annual visits, and boosted secondary spend through the café. Membership for Healthwise continues to rise, while partnerships with providers like Great Northern Physio expand services such as osteoarthritis classes. This model is reshaping leisure centres into inclusive health spaces.

Future plans: Replicate success at Better Gym Sleaford and grow targeted programmes, reinforcing our commitment to community wellbeing.









Effective Mission Based Multi-Scalar Governance

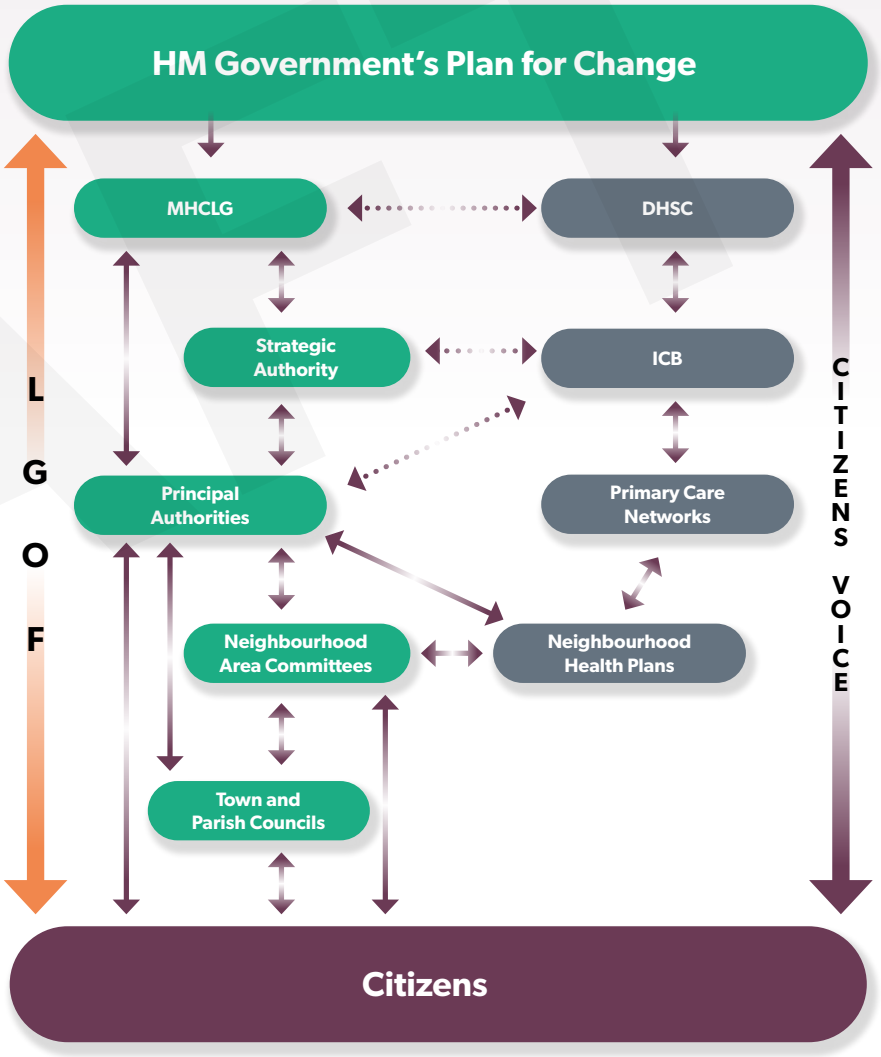
The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has recommended that reforms to local government and the NHS are implemented as part of a whole-system, cross-government approach. The future of the NHS is dependent on closer working with local authorities. In turn, the successful delivery of local priorities for place will require a collective instead of a siloed approach to local public services. The ICB clustering is proceeding ahead of LGR. Northern Lincolnshire is part of the Humber & North Yorkshire ICB cluster. The Lincolnshire ICB (coterminous with the present county council footprint) has been clustered with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Our three unitaries enable for strategic alignment of Northern Lincolnshire cross-Humber, and Lincolnshire to the East Midlands, without undermining the strategic authority.

The DHSC policy paper, *10 Year Health Plan for England: Fit for the Future (2025)*, places neighbourhood working and prevention at the centre of a decentralised operating model.

On a local level we will endeavour to ensure coterminosity between the NHS neighbourhood operating model and the future neighbourhood committee systems, or at minimum ensure that the area committees will be located within PCN boundaries. Statistical geography will be used as the building blocks for area committees, following the recommendation of the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON).

This enables the Local Government Outcomes Framework (LGOF) to steer and monitor activity on a hyper-local level.

The LGOF missions can be used as the organising logic, creating strong relationships across the system, so that people working on an issue in neighbourhoods and at the centre feel like part of one team working towards the same goals.



Service Improvement – Place Based Services

The MHCLG guidance, as set out at the start of section 4.3 is explicit in its requirement. It additionally states:

'For proposals that would involve disaggregation of services, we would welcome further details on how services can be maintained, such as social care, children's services, SEND, homelessness, and for wider public services including public safety. Under criterion 3c you may wish to consider:

- How each option would deliver high-quality and sustainable public services or efficiency saving opportunities.

- What would the different options mean for local services provision, for example:

    - Do different options have a different impact on SEND services and distribution of funding and sufficiency planning to ensure children can access appropriate support, and how will services be maintained?

    - What is the impact on adults and children's care services?

    - Is there a differential impact on the number of care users and infrastructure to support them among the different options?



Children's Services

Our detailed approach is set out in Appendix 5A. This focuses on how to safely disaggregate whilst also seizing the opportunities associated with doing so. We equally recognise that MHCLG are encouraging of innovative partnerships, for example Regional Care Cooperatives. It is expected that these will augment disaggregated services, rather than be a delivery model.

Our opening premise, as with Adult Social Care, is that each new unitary model sets up its own Children's Services structure and workforce, with local leadership and systems with separate services from day one.

Expert external resource has been engaged to support the development of our proposed approach for this critical area. Kath O'Dwyer has 42 years local government service with 8 years' experience as a Local Authority Chief Executive.

As a Chief Executive, Kath successfully led the turnaround and improvement of two failing councils that had been subject to concerns from both the Government and the Local Government Association. Each improvement programme placed a strong emphasis on whole organisation culture change. In one case, this involved addressing a negative organisational culture that had arisen due to a lack of focus on this key issue during a previous Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process.

Kath started her career as a Children's Social Worker and has 34 years' experience at all levels within Children's Services. She was a DCS in 4 different local authorities where she led the effective turnaround of four Children's Services directorates to remove government intervention and deliver improved Ofsted inspection ratings. Kath also has 3 years' experience as part of a government intervention team in relation to Children's services which was commissioned by government and delivered via a contract with Serco. She served as a National Director at Ofsted.



Operating Model Approach - Place-Based Localities

Via this approach, there is strategic alignment and a fit with LGR goals as well as existing governance structures enabling a smoother transition during LGR.

There is a level of operational simplicity which will support an ease of implementation and transition. It builds on familiar district boundaries, which supports continuity, stakeholder engagement, and operational clarity, together with alignment with local identity and cohesion to create community identity.

While it may not fully reflect demand hotspots or deprivation clusters, these limitations can be mitigated through targeted commissioning and performance monitoring within each locality. This approach offers some ability to reflect local demand, demographics, and service pressure and some potential to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes.

The model offers a good governance fit with clarity and feasibility of leadership and accountability arrangements.

Operational modelling has some constraints but does provide sufficient data to propose a staffing and service delivery structure for the County Council footprint. However, even this data presents limits to the ability to assess travel time, caseload distribution, and supervision structures at a granular level.

The future unitary must balance local responsiveness with economies of scale. Locality-based teams may be preferable for many services, with some centralised functions which can drive consistency and efficiency.

However, the locality model offers a compelling framework for:

- Tailored service delivery that reflects local needs, deprivation levels, and population projections.
- Operational resilience, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas, through adjusted workforce deployment and flexible staffing.
- Partnership integration, enabling closer alignment with NHS, VCSE, and safeguarding partners at the place level.
- Strategic commissioning, with the potential to market shaping and outcome-based contracts.

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In each of the 2 Unitary Councils, the vast majority of Children's Services functions (e.g., early help, social care, SEND, education services, including school capacity planning and admissions) would be merged into a single, unified directorate, operating consistently across the new organisational footprint. Within each of the 2 new Unitary footprints it is recommended that delivery is focused into locality-based teams, where possible aligned to former council areas to mitigate and reduce risk, meet the government locality expectations and ensure some continuity.

The significant detail underpinning this approach is set out in the supporting appendix.

Part 1

Part 1 of the appendix establishes the local and wider context, structured around:

- Evaluation of Potential Delivery Models.
- Learning from others.
- Assessment against the DCN / Staff College Children's Services Maturity Matrix.
- Data Analysis (based on 2025 Newton report).
- Risk (based on a model developed by Colin Foster, Chief Executive, Northampton Children's Trust).
- Other Factors, reflecting the nine key enablers identified by the LGA.

Part 2

Part 2 then fully develops the recommended approach.

- Reflection on the evolving LGR position in Greater Lincolnshire (NB. Part 1 was developed ahead of the options appraisal ruling out Rutland inclusion, and before confirmation that the two northern unitaries would need to remain as now).
- Restatement of relevant MHLCG criterion.
- Preferred model outline.
- Modelling of the recommended approach:
  - Existing delivery footprint mix – countywide; North-South split; district / district combination footprints.
  - Transition to future two unitary structure.
- Recommendations for future staffing structure including for each of the two new unitaries.
- Staffing implications.
- Summary of recommended approach (as set out above).
- Other factors:
  - Governance.
  - Partners – including relationships with NHS, Police, and Voluntary Sector.
  - Commissioning arrangements.
  - Ofsted judgements.
  - Regional Care Co-operatives.
  - Response to Newton report key messages.

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Children's Services Approach – Conclusions

Within each of the 2 new Unitary footprints we recommend that delivery is focused into locality-based teams, where possible, aligned to former council areas to mitigate and reduce risk, meet the government locality expectations and ensure some continuity.

The majority of Children's services are recommended for disaggregation other than for those services where there is a compelling case of the continuation of county wide single provision, however there are only a small number of services where this is the case.

- 15 services remain as delivery on a locality basis
- 10 services split to create delivery on a locality basis
- 5 services remain on a county footprint as a shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 of the new Unitary Councils

There are further options in relation to the 10 services that are currently delivered and configured on a county wide footprint:

- Decision to leave as is and operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded.
- Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day

The latter is recommended.



For those services that are currently configured on a North and South split, if these footprints relate to the 2 x new Unitary Authority footprints, we recommend that they should be delivered as a separate council wide service in each of the 2 x new Unitary Authorities with future consideration of disaggregation into localities.

For those services which are currently delivered on a locality basis but with a centralised function across the County Footprint, we recommend that these overarching teams be disaggregated to service each Unitary authority separately.

However, there are further options of:

- Leave as is and operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded.
- Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day.

The latter is recommended.

The services which are currently delivered by the County Council on a Locality Model would potentially, in the most part, allow a 'lift & shift' approach in the proposed 2 New Unitary Authority model. There are, however, some management and leadership arrangements for these services that sit centrally and would therefore require further consideration.

For those services which are delivered on a 2 locality footprint, but are within the same new Unitary footprint, we recommend that these services remain joint and serve each of the 2 locality footprints within each of the new Unitary Authorities with future consideration of disaggregation into localities.

For those services which are delivered on a Boston and South Holland footprint, if these two districts are to be in separate Unitary authorities, these should be separated into each of the 2 new Unitary Councils.

For those services which are delivered on a North & South Kesteven and a Lincoln & West Lindsey footprint, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- Be separated into each of the 2 x locality areas.
- Remain joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation into localities.
- Remain joint and serve the footprint of each new Unitary authority.

We would recommend that they remain joint and serve the footprint of each new Unitary authority, with future consideration of disaggregation into localities.

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There is also an option for transitional planning/ deferred disaggregated arrangements for some aspects of service systems etc. This would be the option of former County Children's Services functions continuing to operate for a defined period (e.g., 1 – 2 years), during which longer-term arrangements are co-designed and implemented. This could include those services that are complex to disaggregate such as:

- Commissioning arrangements – where new contracts would be required and potentially some joining up of contracts.
- IT systems – this would be wider than Children's Services.
- Social Work Recording systems – where a new single system would need to be decided upon and existing records decanted into the new system.

This is not recommended but may be a pragmatic solution where appropriate.

Social Work Practice models across the new 2 Unitary footprints could continue without disruption from the current County practice model.

We recommend a senior management structure in each of the two new unitaries of:

- 1 x Director of Children's Services - (Statutory DCS)
- 1 x Assistant Director - Education
- 1 x Assistant Director - Children's Care & Support
- 1 x Assistant Director - Young People & Partnerships

This would result in 2 senior management posts needing to be recruited to across the 2 new Unitary Councils.

In relation to the wider Children's Services management structures:

- 4 additional Head of Service roles would be needed in the new structures.
- 33 fewer Team Manager/Locality Lead roles would potentially be required.
- 2 x Other Manager/Lead roles would be needed in the new structures.

Therefore, depending on more detailed analysis of role functions and responsibilities, there are potentially a significant number of posts that would no longer be required or could be repositioned as required. The proposals outlined will require further consideration and discussion with those that know these services well, as nuances and issues may not be obvious from a desk top analysis.

We believe that the proposals summarised above meet the government expectations of:

- **The delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.**
- **Demonstrate how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.**
- **Create opportunities to deliver public service reform, including where they will lead to better value for money.**
- **Consider and address the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, and SEND.**

The anticipated effect on costs or the financial sustainability of children's services, notwithstanding the current financial pressures for all councils in relation to the demand and cost of care placements and SEND services, will need to be given further consideration in the planning and financial forecasting as part of the LGR process once final decisions have been made.



Adult Social Care

Working closely with Gate One we similarly propose a locality based model for the delivery of Adult Social Care.

Gate One were commissioned to identify and assess future delivery models under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and provide a comprehensive analysis of the ASC landscape across Lincolnshire supported by a deep-dive focus on what the ASC delivery model would be for the proposed future unitary comprising of South Kesteven, North Kesteven and South Holland. The assessment covered the full range of ASC services:

Assessment Planning	• Care Act & carer assessments • Mental capacity & safeguarding assessments • Transition planning
Care and Support	• Home care, residential & nursing care • Supported living, extra care housing, Shared Lives • Reablement & intermediate care
Specialist Services	• Mental health & substance misuse • Learning disability, autism, sensory impairment • Dementia & end-of-life care • Advocacy
Carer's Support	• Information, respite, peer support • Young carers & emergency plans
Housing and Equipment	• Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) • Home adaptations & assistive tech • Housing-related support
Financial and Legal	• Financial assessments & benefits advice • Direct payments & personal budgets • DoLS, LPS, deputyship support
Community & Prevention	• Day services & community centres • Befriending, social inclusion, practical help • Employment support
Integration & Discharge	• Hospital discharge coordination • NHS & ICB integration • Family Hubs & neighbourhood health



The approach was informed by a range of insights from deprivation indices, population data, ASC performance metrics, and workforce data. The analysis and findings additionally support strategic planning by identifying service pressures, workforce challenges, and opportunities for transformation. Gate One have maintained contact with the parallel development of the approach for Children's Services undertaken by Kath O'Dwyer to ensure alignment.

The key objectives were to:

- Evaluate ASC performance and demand across the new proposed unitary.
- Assess delivery model options.
- Map workforce structures and estimate future costs.
- Identify priority areas for targeted commissioning and service redesign.
- Align ASC transformation with broader LGR milestones and governance reform.

Three delivery models were initially considered:

1. **Hub-and-Spoke – centralised specialist hubs with satellite teams.**
2. **Centralised Unitary – fully unified delivery across the footprint.**
3. **Integrated Locality – multi-disciplinary teams aligned to local geographies.**

Following comparative assessment using criteria such as integration, responsiveness, cost-efficiency, and alignment with LGR, the **Integrated Locality model** emerged as the preferred option. This model was then refined to explore how locality boundaries could be defined, whether by district, shared geography, or need, and how workforce and commissioning structures could be aligned to support it.



The result is a locality-based framework that:

- Enables place-based delivery tailored to geographic and demographic variation.
- Supports targeted resource deployment in high-need LSOAs.
- Aligns with strategic commissioning and pooled budgets.
- Facilitates integration with NHS, VCSE, and other partners.
- Provides a scalable governance model for future unitary operations.

Whilst the deep dive analysis has been undertaken with a focus on one of our proposed unitary's areas, the locality approach and associated benefits are recommended for both new unitaries.

Appendix 5B sets out the detailed evidence base, modelling rationale, and implementation considerations to support the adoption of the Integrated Locality model for ASC delivery in the new unitary, with key elements summarised below.

Assessment of delivery models:

Model	Description	Strengths	Challenges
Integrated Locality	Services delivered through defined localities with integrated teams and budgets	• High responsiveness to local need • Strong community integration • Aligns with LGR	• Requires robust locality governance • Risk of duplication without coordination
Hub-and-Spoke	Central hubs deliver specialist services, supported by satellite local teams	• Economies of scale • Easier central workforce management	• Reduced local responsiveness • Travel/access issues in rural areas
Centralised	Services managed and delivered from a single central structure	• Simplified governance • Easier to standardise systems	• Poor fit for rural areas • Limited tailoring to local needs

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Comparative Scoring Matrix of Delivery Models

Criteria		Integrated Locality	Hub-and-Spoke	Centralised
Responsiveness to Need	Ability to tailor services to local population characteristics and emerging demand.	3	2	1
Cost Efficiency	Potential to deliver services within budget constraints while maintaining quality.	2	3	3
Workforce Alignment	Fit with current and projected workforce availability, recruitment, and retention.	3	2	2
Rural Suitability	Effectiveness in serving dispersed and isolated communities with access challenges.	3	2	1
VCSE Integration	Ability to work in partnership with voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations.	3	2	1
LGR Compatibility	Alignment with the principles and governance structures emerging from Local Government Reorganisation.	3	2	1
Total		17	13	9

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Comparison: Locality Structuring Options

Criteria		Place-Based	Clustered	Need-Based
Strategic Alignment	Fit with LGR goals and existing governance structures.	3	2	3
Operational Simplicity	Ease of implementation and transition.	3	2	1
Responsiveness to Need	Ability to reflect local demand, demographics, and service pressure.	2	3	3
Equity & Outcomes	Potential to reduce inequalities and improve ASC outcomes.	2	2	3
Governance Fit	Clarity and feasibility of leadership and accountability arrangements.	3	2	1
Community Identity	Alignment with local identity and cohesion.	3	2	1
Total Score		16	13	12

Workforce analysis is set out in the appendix however, as with the model for Children's Services, services would largely stand up within each new unitary, with each having their own dedicated Director for Adult Social Care.

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Strategic Considerations

The model presents new opportunities for commissioning, partnerships and digital infrastructure which are all critical to shaping future delivery models and aligning with wider system reform. Appendix 5b again expands on all the summary points below.



Commissioning

- Strategic vs Tactical Commissioning; Pooled Budgets, and Market Development.



Partnerships

- Police and Safeguarding; VSCE Sector Integration; NHS and ICB alignment (though noting plans to expand existing ICB footprints).



Housing Integration

- Aligning housing services and ASC. This is considered in more detail in the next section of the proposal.

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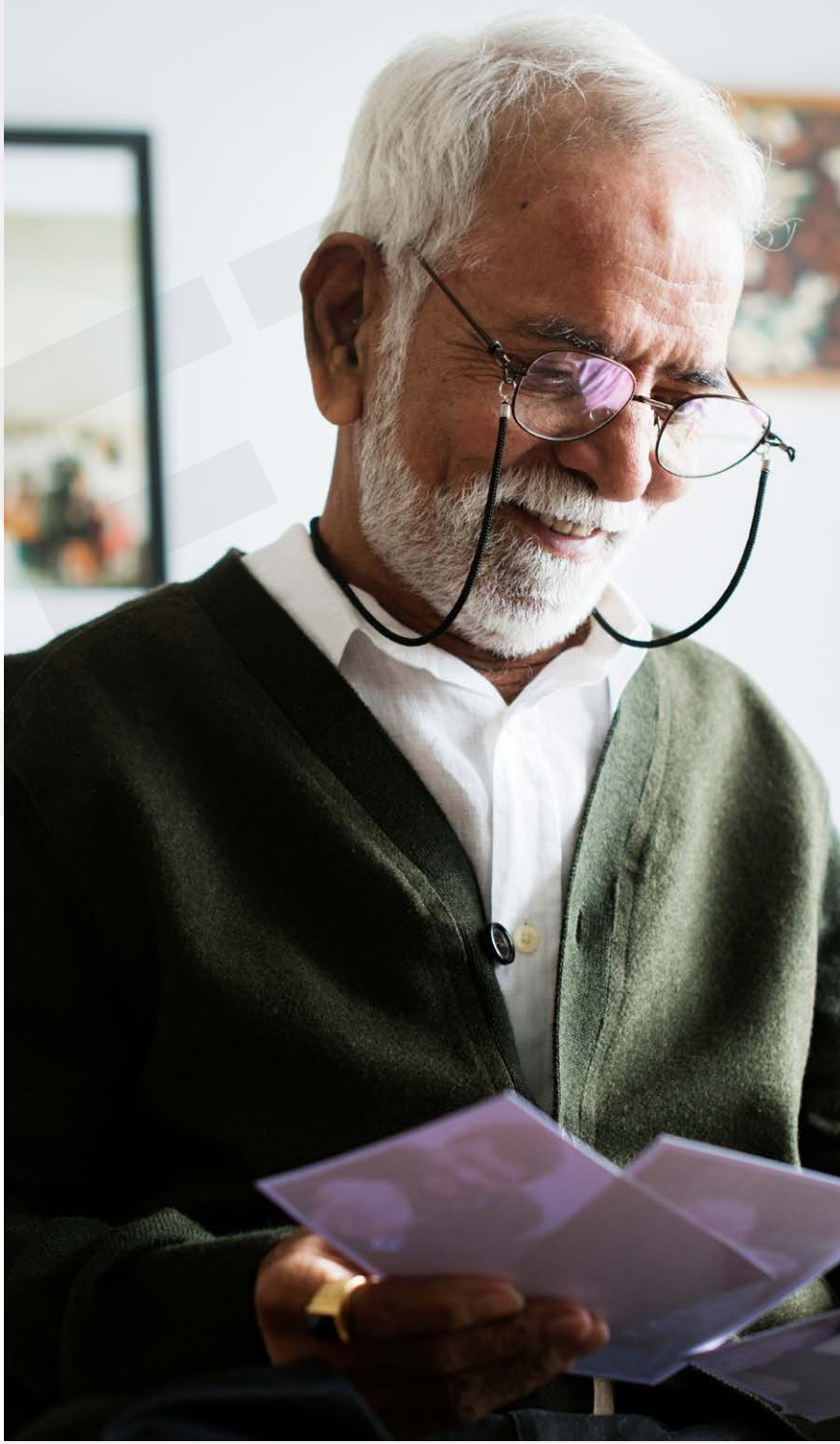
Conclusions

A locality-based model is not only responsive to the distinct demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic profiles of each locality, but also aligns with national policy direction toward integrated, place-based care. It offers a compelling framework for:

- **Tailored service delivery** that reflects local needs, deprivation levels, and population projections.
- **Operational resilience**, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas, through adjusted workforce deployment and flexible staffing.
- **Partnership integration**, enabling closer alignment with NHS, VCSE, and safeguarding partners at the place level.
- **Strategic commissioning**, with the potential to move beyond fragmented, tactical approaches toward pooled budgets, market shaping, and outcome-based contracts.
- **Digital transformation**, t through interoperable systems, mobile working, and performance dashboards that support real-time decision-making and accountability.

The strategic considerations explored, from commissioning reform and partnership alignment to digital enablement, underscore the importance of a whole-system approach. The future unitary must not only consolidate structures, but also reimagine how care is planned, delivered, and experienced across communities.

Our recommended approach sets the stage for a transformation programme that is ambitious, evidence-led, and grounded in the realities of local delivery. It provides a clear rationale for change and a practical framework for moving from discovery to design and implementation.



Housing and Homelessness

As highlighted in the previous section setting out our approach for Adult Social Care, the formation of the future unitary authorities presents a unique opportunity to align housing services and ASC within a single system framework. The merger of three Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) in Unitary Authority 1 will consolidate housing stock, repairs, and tenancy management functions, creating the conditions for joined-up service delivery that supports independence, wellbeing, and prevention. We have the opportunity to create a remodelled housing revenue account supporting increased development of independent and supported living and a holistic approach to homelessness.

Strategic Opportunity

Housing is a key determinant of health and social care outcomes. Poor housing conditions, insecure tenancies, and delayed repairs can exacerbate physical and mental health issues, increase care needs, and hinder hospital discharge. Conversely, well-managed housing services can:

- Enable safe discharge from hospital into suitable accommodation.
- Support reablement and recovery through adaptations and responsive repairs.
- Reduce demand for residential care by enabling independent living.
- Improve carer sustainability through housing-based respite and support.

Locality-Based Integration

As ASC locality teams are established, there is a strategic opportunity to co-locate or align them with housing officers, repairs teams, and voids management functions. This could include:

- Joint case management for individuals with complex needs.
- Shared digital systems for tracking housing and care interventions.
- Coordinated responses to safeguarding, hoarding, or tenancy breakdown.
- Integrated planning for supported housing, extra care, and adaptations.

Case Study: Integrating Housing, Health, and Sustainability

Retrofit CO_2sy Homes Programme is driving sustainability and healthier living environments. With £18.9 million invested from 2025/26 to 2030/31, supported by national funding, the initiative reduces carbon emissions and energy costs, creating warmer homes that help prevent fuel poverty and improve respiratory health. Alongside retrofitting, £13.2 million is allocated for new social and affordable housing by 2027/28, with £41.1 million through 2034/35, addressing housing need and stability. This strategic approach enhances wellbeing and social care outcomes by improving living conditions. As we become a unitary authority, we will scale these efforts, integrating housing, health, and sustainability for stronger communities.

Operational Implications

- Locality alignment of housing and ASC teams will require joint workforce planning, shared training, and clear governance.
- Digital interoperability between housing and ASC systems will be essential to enable real-time coordination.
- Asset planning should consider the role of housing stock in delivering care (e.g. step-down beds, supported living units).

Future Considerations

- Map housing assets and tenancy data against ASC demand hotspots (recommended as an immediate consideration for the post submission period).
- Pilot integrated housing–ASC locality teams in areas with high need.
- Explore joint commissioning of housing-related support services.
- Engage tenants and service users in co-designing holistic support pathways.

Operational Considerations and Opportunities

Notification of new landlord
To ensure legal compliance, all tenants will have to be notified, in accordance with their existing tenancy agreements, that their landlord has changed, details of the new landlord and main address to be used for legal notification of service.

Tenancy Agreement
Whilst a new tenancy agreement will need to be agreed and implemented in accordance with the new landlord, traditional economies of scale are anticipated from the associated legal advice and consultation to be undertaken.

Discretionary assistance to tenants
LGR will result in the delivery of a more comprehensive offer of assistance across the whole tenant base by streamlining delivery to maximise outputs and outcomes for tenants whilst reducing overheads of wider delivery. Discretionary assistance includes, but is not limited to, money advice, financial assistance, support to sustain tenancies, decoration schemes, handy person service. Services that have a wider impact on health and wellbeing contributing to the aims of Adults' and Children's Services.

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Housing Management System (ICT)

Of those social housing landlords included within the proposal, two have the same housing management system. Whilst our preferred housing management system will need to be determined, there will be inevitable cost savings from procurement and operational support contracts.

Maintenance of existing housing stock

Social housing landlords included within the proposal have different arrangements and contracts in place for the maintenance and servicing of their assets. Not withstanding the dispersed geographical nature that will impact operational delivery costs, savings should be made, as already alluded to in the Criteria 2 section, from the procurement and contract management of those arrangements.

Homelessness

As a statutory function currently undertaken by district councils, LGR, as already set out in the section, provides a step-change opportunity for greater integration, given unitary councils, to tackle root causes and not just manage the symptoms of homelessness.

The opportunity to integrate the teams in each unitary footprint will enable economies of scale to be achieved, which should result in more funding being available for developing intervention and prevention measures in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping as opposed to staffing the service. Crucially our proposed scale means that the local connection will be retained to maximise the opportunity for success in preventative measures.

The increased availability of funding for preventative measures will support the development of a bespoke service to meet the needs of anyone experiencing or at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping and provide tailored, increased support to individuals who often have complex needs which need to be addressed in order to enable them to sustain a tenancy in the long-term.

District Councils' currently experience barriers in accessing Adult Social Care services. So, all services being in the same Council will improve collaboration and create a holistic approach to tackling homelessness which is essential in ensuring long-term sustainable solutions can be achieved. Tackling homelessness through early intervention and prevention should reduce the support adults and children require from social care achieving cost savings for these services.

Case Study: Coordinated Care for Housing Stability

Lincolnshire's housing support model brings together safeguarding, health, police, and district councils to tackle homelessness through early intervention and shared responsibility. Jointly funded posts ensure seamless coordination, while multi-agency panels address complex challenges such as rough sleeping, mental health, and safeguarding concerns. This collaborative framework reduces rough sleeping, improves outcomes, and makes best use of resources by providing integrated responses for those most at risk. As we move toward becoming a unitary authority, we will strengthen this approach, scaling partnerships and prevention strategies to deliver even more effective solutions for homelessness and vulnerable residents across the county.

Case Study: Change4Lincs in South Kesteven

Change4Lincs is a partnership between North Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council, South Kesteven District Council and West Lindsey District Council set up to tackle the issue of rough sleeping. Hosted by South Kesteven, the team was created by each district council contributing their Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding. The team is managed by SKDC's Homeless and Rough Sleeper Manager with managers from the other three districts providing support to shape the service to ensure it meets the needs of each area. The team provide an outreach and support service including supporting rough sleepers with accessing private rented accommodation. South Kesteven DC have successfully reduced our temporary accommodation spend from £500,000 in 2023/24 to £327,000 in 2024/25. So far since 1 April 2025, the Council has had 94 successful prevention and relief cases.

Approach to Fire & Rescue

Lincolnshire County Council is the current Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) for the present county footprint. The FRA for North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire is Humberside Fire & Rescue Service (HFRS), a combined fire authority of the successor authorities to Humberside County Council and covering a cross-Humber footprint. The two FRAs in the Invitation Area are not coterminous with the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority complicating a potential future transfer of governance to the mayor as set out in the English Devolution White Paper.

The dissolution of Lincolnshire County Council will mean, that without further legislation and government action, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service will be divided, with each new authority automatically becoming the fire and rescue authority for its area from vesting day.

We recognise that this would carry significant risks to public safety and the financial viability of the successor FRAs. A Lincolnshire county wide footprint is the best scale to deliver fire and rescue services.

Therefore we envision for the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner to make a local case to government to take on responsibility for fire and rescue as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Lincolnshire.

A damaging disaggregation will be prevented and opportunity for innovative reform across both services will be unlocked, along with bringing the same direct accountability to fire as exists for policing.

This is a tried and tested solution to enhance public safety, blue light collaboration, resilience and accountability that has been successfully employed in Cumbria, Northamptonshire, North Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Essex. Our financial analysis has accounted for a standalone fire authority under the PFCC in Lincolnshire. There would be no change to the current arrangements in North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire.

On 13 November 2025, the Home Office announced that Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will be abolished at the end of the current term in 2028. Where possible, police governance will be transferred to the Mayoral Strategic Authorities. If that is not possible police governance will be transferred to a Policing and Crime Board led by the leaders of upper tier authorities in the force area. For former Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner areas, fire functions would be transferred to the Policing and Crime Boards, where a transfer to a Mayor is not possible.

For the Greater Lincolnshire (GLCCA) and Hull & East Yorkshire (HEYCA) mayoral areas, the establishment of two Policing and Crime Boards (Lincolnshire and Humberside) is the likely outcome, unless the government can resolve the complicated police and fire boundaries of Northern Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire Police and Humberside Police are not coterminous with the boundaries of GLCCA and HEYCA. GLCCA has expressed its willingness to take on PCC functions. A particular challenge would be democratic legitimacy, electors of Northern Lincolnshire would vote for a

mayor, who would be responsible for police governance in Lincolnshire, but not in Northern Lincolnshire. The same problem would exist over the Humber, where the HEYCA Mayor would be responsible for police governance in Northern Lincolnshire, but would be elected by the voters of Hull & East Yorkshire. Hence the need for the government to resolve the issue prior to the transfer of police governance to Mayoral Strategic Authorities in our area.

The Home Office recognises the continued significant value in joining up police and fire governance. Our proposal would be for the transfer of fire and rescue to the PCC ahead of the abolition of that office in 2028, and the subsequent forming of a Policing and Crime (and Fire) Board for Lincolnshire. This would be led by the leaders of our proposed southern and central Lincolnshire unitaries. Blue Light governance would be enhanced and cross-Lincolnshire collaboration strengthened. The appropriate ratio of principal authorities to the strategic authority would ensure the consolidation and future success of GLCCA as the sub-regional strategic system leader. It is expected that subsequent to the government resolving the issue of police force area coterminosity with the Mayoral Strategic Authorities in Greater Lincolnshire and Hull & East Yorkshire, then police and fire governance in Lincolnshire would be transferred to the Mayor.

With regard to the Police Lincolnshire Constabulary wrote to councils in mid-November 2025 setting out seven principles linking to the potential impacts of LGR on policing. An additional appendix (9) has been added to our submission to specifically address those seven principles.

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Approach to Community Safety

LGR offers a valuable opportunity to enhance collaboration between district and county services, creating a more coordinated and effective approach to tackling issues within our communities. A strong partnership approach working closely with both other councils and Lincolnshire Police will be further improved with the advent of new unitary councils that bring all related council services together. It will be further strengthened by the locality based approach advocated by our proposal.

Currently, district community safety teams work closely with Neighbourhood Policing Teams and a range of local partners to deal with issues such as antisocial behaviour and environmental crime. However, more complex issues such as county lines activity, rural crime (including fly tipping), and organised crime groups often span across multiple district boundaries. Addressing these challenges requires seamless coordination and removing district boundaries will enhance our ability to investigate and take enforcement action where appropriate. The integration supports better information sharing and enhances our joined-up case management between community safety officers, social workers, youth services, and the police, leading to quicker and more targeted interventions. For example, this could mean earlier identification of individuals at risk of exploitation through county lines or improved support for victims of rural and organised crime. Community safety work is proactive and rooted in the local. Officers need to know their area and be known and trusted by their area. It cannot be delivered via dashboards. For example South Kesteven officers out on the streets, as part of the Home Office funded Safer Streets programme. Our proposed unitaries have the practical scale to combine strategic capacity, with the deep local intelligence, knowledge, and experience of district teams. This unified community safety model offers a more consistent, responsive, and effective service for communities across Greater Lincolnshire.

Case Study: Safer Streets

South Kesteven DC successfully delivered the Home Office funded Safer Streets in 2024/25. Safer Streets was a Grantham focused public safety programme. The initiative included upgrades to the CCTV network, upgraded communications for Pubwatch and Shopwatch schemes and as a visible deterrent, more night-time and weekend patrols of anti-social behaviour hotspots carried out by SKDC's neighbourhoods and licensing officers. The Lincolnshire Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) Sara Munton visited the project in November 2024. The Deputy PCC was impressed by the project and described it as an excellent example of how innovative and effective partnership working can deliver for communities.

SECTION 4: LGR Criterion 4: Informed by Local Views

Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.

a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.

b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.

c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.

Our Jurisdictional Design Objective: The proposed jurisdictions take into account local identity, cultural factors, needs and historic communities to achieve coherent units for effective community self-governance of place.

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Summary of Policy Challenges:

- Scale requirements necessarily mean bigger units, meaning greater distance from the local and the involvement of multiple and perhaps competing community identities.

Our proposed jurisdictions deliver:

- An evidence led best fit alignment with the intra-Greater Lincolnshire identities.
- Sensibly scaled units to maintain the local connection and voice that is a core priority of residents.

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Collaborative Working

Greater Lincolnshire is, to repeat, on a wholly different geographic scale to almost every other LGR IA. Therefore, it is not surprising that across the area there are very different views on what the best structure to deliver high quality services that anticipate and meet local needs and drive wider systemic improvement across the local public sector should look like. Similarly, scale of ambition varies from the no change continuity model through to right-sized new unitaries built on new, positive and dynamic cultures and with delivery models focused on prevention. This pattern has been observed in every Invitation Area during this reorganisation round and in all historic reorganisations.

Political leaders across the IA have regular meetings, and likewise at chief executive level. Existing partnership working has continued with business as usual. From the initial invitation letter in February 2025, LGR policy leads, initially from districts and Lincolnshire County Council, and then subsequently joined by colleagues from the two northern unitary councils, have met on a weekly basis to drive data sharing and ongoing communication. SharePoint has been used as a single source for shared data with Lincolnshire County Council stepping up to host this. Through the policy leads group, a broadly consistent approach to gathering and sharing data has been established, and whilst scope for further improvement is recognised by all involved, the collaborative efforts have largely supported efforts across the IA to develop data driven and evidence based submissions.

Whilst our final proposal does not, for the reasons set out earlier in this document, include Rutland we have also worked with Rutland County Council to share data to aid proposal development and maintained communication with Leicestershire County Council and other Leicestershire districts.

Case Study: Working Together to Shape Central Lincolnshire

The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, adopted in April 2023, sets a bold vision for sustainable growth across Lincoln, North Kesteven, and West Lindsey to 2040. Covering 820 square miles, it identifies where housing and businesses should be located and embeds rigorous standards for energy efficiency, renewable integration, and climate resilience. Nationally recognised and shortlisted for ‘Excellence in Plan Making Practice,’ the Plan demonstrates a collaborative commitment to reducing carbon emissions and protecting natural assets. As we move toward becoming a unitary authority, we will build on this framework to deliver greener infrastructure and housing that meet future community needs.

Local Engagement to Support the North Kesteven and South Kesteven LGR Proposal

Cratus Group were engaged by the Councils to provide an independent approach to resident engagement and to capture the wider local engagement work undertaken by councillors and officers within both councils. We have at all times been mindful that consultation on proposals is the remit of government. Our engagement has focused on explaining from a simple factual perspective what LGR is, and to understand from residents and wider stakeholders what matters to them, and how these insights should shape our submission. We have not asked residents to comment directly on any of the specific LGR proposals being developed across Greater Lincolnshire. This approach has been observed following agreement by all authorities in the Invitation Area although residents have been proactive in sharing their (quite often strong) views on the merits or otherwise of the various proposals being developed across Greater Lincolnshire.

This engagement programme aimed to understand what people value most about their communities, the importance of local identity in council structures, and priorities for future council functions. It complemented face-to-face engagements by both councils at a range of events over the summer and into early autumn, and was designed to be inclusive, accessible and easy to engage with.

A hybrid engagement approach was adopted, combining digital and in-person activity to ensure the survey reached a broad cross-section of residents, businesses, and community stakeholders across North and South Kesteven and the wider Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland area. In line with the principle of “meeting people where they are,” the engagement process was designed to be inclusive, accessible, and transparent, offering both online and face-to-face opportunities for participation.

The engagement ran from 15 September to 15 October 2025, following early outreach activity undertaken by both Councils during the summer and early Autumn. The survey and engagement materials were produced jointly by North Kesteven and South Kesteven District Councils, supported by Cratus Group, and hosted on the Give My View platform.

The Autumn 2025 public engagement exercise on local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire, undertaken on behalf of North and South Kesteven District Councils, generated a total of **5,556** survey responses between 15 September and 15 October 2025.

The survey achieved broad regional participation, with approximately two-thirds of responses coming from residents of North Kesteven (3,012 participants), while South Kesteven contributed 816 responses and Rutland 446. Smaller, but still meaningful numbers were received from Lincoln, South Holland and West Lindsey. This strong overall response demonstrates a significant local interest in how future council arrangements could affect people particularly relating to representation, service delivery, and community identity in Lincolnshire.

The engagement sought to understand residents' and local stakeholders' priorities, values, and perceptions of local identity, accessibility, and service quality, and to provide a robust evidence base to inform future consideration of local government structures. It combined a range of engagement techniques, including a digital survey, focus groups to dive deeper into public sentiment, and a series of in-person engagement events, with key stakeholders within the community also invited to share their views.

Overall, the findings reveal communities that are deeply proud of where they live and place strong emphasis on local connection, responsiveness, and the quality of everyday public services. Across the districts, residents expressed clear expectations that local government should be straightforward, visible, and transparent in how it communicates and delivers. While some participants mentioned that reform could improve coordination and efficiency, others expressed concerns about the potential loss of local voice, representation, and accountability. The responses reveal a balance between openness to improvement and caution about changes that might create distance between councils and the people they serve. The word cloud below is taken from the open text responses to the survey.




Countryside
Community
Local
Village
Quiet
Beautiful
Rural
Safe
Friendly
Town
Peace
Road
Nature
Quiet
History
Sense
Spirit
Green
Bus
City
Proximity
Transport
Location
County
Facilities
Small
Place
Shops
Area
Close
Clean
Good
Nice
Links
Beautiful
Space
Environment
Country
Living
Amenities
Schools
Safe
Clean
Lincoln
Access
Services
Council
Community
Quiet
Road
Bus
Lincoln
Transport
Friendly
Green
City
Local
Area
Amenities
Peace
Spirit
Village
Shops
Rural
Safety
Nice
Proximity
Location
People
Sense
Nature
Space
Road
Small
Schools
Close
Services
Place
Beautiful
Amenities
Schools
Links
Access
Good
Town
Nature
Green
Small
Bus
Sense
Safe
Open
Peace
Village
Spirit
Clean
Road
Friendly
Local
Council
Beautiful
Environment
Small
Living
Nature
Shops
Access
Facilities
Local
Community
Road
Village
Clean
Open
Proximity
Links
Safety
Shops
Council
Area
Rural
Nice
People
Place
Peace
Rural
People
Amenities
Location
Links
County
Open
Safety
Transport
Good
Quiet
Clean
Nice
Schools
Links
Countryside
Lincoln
Safe
Bus
Green
Sense
Close
Safety
Safe
Beautiful
Good
Services
Countryside
Shops
Nice
Close
Town
Spirit
Schools
Open
Beautiful
Good
Services

A. Top Resident Priorities

Reliable frontline services

Residents consistently emphasised the importance of dependable, everyday services that directly affect quality of life. When asked which areas councils should prioritise, the most frequently selected were:

- Roads and pavements (1,644 responses)
- Local economic growth (1,334 responses)
- The environment (1,303 responses)
- Adult and children's social care (874 responses)
- Waste and recycling (778 responses)
- Housing (534 responses)
- Leisure, arts and wellbeing (376 responses)
- Community activities (178 responses)

The immediate and reliable delivery of infrastructure maintenance, particularly roads and pavements, was rated as the highest priority, reflecting residents' focus on tangible improvements that demonstrate effective local management.

At the same time, many participants identified local economic growth as a critical longer-term priority, viewing it as the main driver of employment, prosperity, and community wellbeing. The environment also featured prominently, reflecting widespread interest in green spaces, climate action, and the sustainability of future development.



Local identity and voice
Respondents rated the importance of feeling that their council is local to their area at an average of 83 out of 100, showing a strong sense of attachment to place. Participants often described "local" as meaning accessible, accountable, and visible rather than simply geographical. For many, the idea of "local government" is defined by familiarity, responsiveness, and community presence. Resident identity was focused on individual towns and villages rather than Lincolnshire as a whole.

Residents repeatedly emphasised that:

- **Decision-making should remain close to the communities it affects.**
- **Councils should maintain a visible and approachable presence within their local areas.**
- **Ward-level representation, parish councils and local forums play an important role in ensuring accountability and preserving voice.**

This feedback reflects a strong belief that democratic representation should remain personal, grounded, and connected to the everyday experience of residents. **Maintaining proximity in decision-making is seen as essential to public trust and confidence in local government.**

Clarity and accountability
There was strong support for structures that are simpler and easier to navigate, alongside improved communication about who delivers specific services. Respondents consistently called for:

- Clearer lines of responsibility and service ownership.
- More transparent decision-making and spending.
- Better public information on how to access the right service at the right time.

The desire for greater clarity reflects residents' emphasis on practicality and openness. Many expressed the view that being able to understand how decisions are made is as important as the decisions themselves.

Access and wellbeing
When asked what qualities they most value in councils, respondents most often highlighted **the importance of having a local voice for residents and accountability** and did not see a council's key role as being to support wellbeing.

Case Study: Ensuring a Youth Voice

North Kesteven Student Council, founded in 2010, meets three times a year to give young people a voice in local decision-making. Students from secondary schools and colleges share views, spark debate, and influence community aspirations. Full-day sessions feature guest presentations on diverse topics, from education to wellbeing. The Council has delivered impactful projects, including Rainworks – water-activated messages promoting kindness and resilience across playgrounds and public spaces. Widely praised, these initiatives foster confidence and intergenerational dialogue. The South Kesteven Youth Council was established in 2024, and undertakes an equivalent role, enabling the voices of young people to be heard, including on Local Government Reorganisation. The SKDC Youth Council voted to support our proposal on 05/11/2025, following a session with the youth councillors on the topic earlier in the year. As we move toward becoming a unitary authority, we aim to expand this model, amplifying youth engagement to shape services and strengthen community impact.

B. Broader Themes

Strong local attachment
Residents expressed pride in their communities and appreciation for their local environments, amenities, and social connections, which reflect the rural nature of North & South Kesteven. **People valued the distinctive character of their towns and villages and want those identities to remain visible and protected in any future changes.**

Concerns about scale and centralisation
Many participants voiced apprehension about decision-making becoming more distant under larger structures. Mentions of Lincoln often reflected perceptions that resources and attention could become concentrated in a single area, potentially at the expense of smaller or rural communities.

Mixed views on reorganisation
While some respondents acknowledged that a streamlined structure might reduce duplication and improve efficiency, others were unconvinced that these benefits would be realised in practice. Many wanted to understand how reorganisation would work day-to-day, how services would be delivered, and how local representation would be maintained through councillors and town & parish councils.

Community priorities and daily experience
Across open-text responses, residents repeatedly made very tangible and specific comments around roads, waste and recycling, social care, and council tax. This points towards a need to **ensure the basic services and daily touchpoints local people have with local authorities are maintained and re-assured under any new governance model.**



C. Challenges and Opportunities

The engagement identified a number of issues that would need to be addressed in any future consideration of Local Government Reform:

- **Representation:** Residents want reassurance that local voices will continue to be heard, particularly those from smaller and rural communities.
- **Fairness:** Some participants expressed concern about unequal investment across Lincolnshire, with perceptions that certain areas may receive disproportionate attention or funding.
- **Understanding:** A recurring theme was confusion about how reorganisation might affect taxation, service delivery, or accountability. Clearer information and evidence will be needed to build understanding and trust.
- **Trust:** A degree of scepticism remains about whether structural reform automatically leads to better services or financial savings. Building confidence will require transparency, honest communication, and a realistic discussion of both the benefits and limits of reform in terms local people can understand.

In summary, the engagement presents a consistent picture of residents who value dependable services, open communication, and councils that remain close and responsive to their communities. People are open to the idea of improving coordination and efficiency but want clear reassurance that any future arrangements will protect local character, accessibility, and representation.

The findings provide a comprehensive evidence base to inform future discussions about local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire. They show that **any proposed model must balance the practical need for effective service delivery with the emotional and cultural importance of local identity and trust, ensuring that reform strengthens rather than distances the connection between councils and the people they serve.**

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The complete range of engagement is set out in the full engagement report received from Cratus and attached as Appendix 6. However it is important to emphasise that a wide ranging partner and wider stakeholder engagement was also undertaken to support the development of the submission. This included community, education, business, faith, and voluntary sector partners, along with all local councils plus Rutland and Leicestershire County Council, local MPs, businesses, NHS, policing bodies, and the significant RAF bases including RAF Cranwell, RAF Waddington and RAF Digby.

Extensive internal engagement with staff and the trade unions has taken place at both authorities throughout the process. The UNISON's South Kesteven Branch support our proposal. The Branch notes that South Kesteven DC has delivered a higher level of engagement on LGR than many other local authorities in which UNISON has branches. Two rounds of all staff engagement sessions have been held (total of seven briefing sessions), including during toolbox talks with our Waste Services and Housing Repairs teams.

Equally, at North Kesteven, all staff in person briefings have been held three times since February including three occasions at the depot, meetings have been held with GMB and Unison reps and the Leader has met with staff in person too.

Addressing MHCLG criteria sub points

b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.

The engagement key findings set out above emphasised both the importance of place and maintaining local services and community relationships.

"I love the countryside and the sense of community."

"It's a big county; it's got very different needs."

Our submission recognises this and strikes the balance of larger scale requirements as set by government with the focus on place. The respondents to our survey were clear about their local attachment.

c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.

Evidence of our local engagement is set out above, alongside a summary of the views expressed with further detail set out in Appendix 6. In terms of concerns and how these will be addressed:

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Challenges of Reorganisation

To quote one response:

"There probably would be some short-term disruption, but at the end of the day, it might be less than the problems caused by having one enormous council."

Our proposal recognises the risks and challenges inherent in such change, though we are confident these will be far outweighed by the benefits that a right-sized unitary will deliver. We recognise that disaggregation of key top tier services demands detailed understanding and effective planning, and to this end have sought proven and respected external expertise in developing our proposals for these services. Likewise we have taken a prudent and realistic approach to transition costs and ongoing disaggregation disbenefits rather than seeking to promote fantasy figures simply to make our submission look better on paper.

Communication and Trust

Our implementation plan will include a specific communication workstream, whilst our approach already set out for neighbourhood empowerment sows the seeds for tackling the trust issue. Resident concerns over timelines are outside of our control however we will work constructively with all Greater Lincolnshire local authorities and with MHCLG to ensure that balanced messaging – not spin – is planned and delivered effectively to address resident concerns.

Lincolnshire as Too Big an Area to be Effective

We are wholly in agreement with this sentiment and will best respond to this very real concern – one based in clear evidence as opposed to perception – by ensuring our proposal for two right-sized unitaries within the Lincolnshire county area (along with the two existing unitaries within the wider Greater Lincolnshire) makes the strongest case possible for selection.

Case Study: Keeping Residents in the Know at the Heckington Show

The 157th Heckington Show, held July 26–27, 2025, showcased the local DC's vibrant community spirit. As England's largest village show, it offered the council a prime opportunity to engage residents. The stand, featuring a mini beach, sandcastle crafts, smoothie bikes, and a giant deckchair, attracted crowds and earned runner-up for Best Trade Stand. Visitors learned about food waste collection, climate awareness, recycling, Local Government Reorganisation, and the Community Champion awards, alongside the £310m investment plans for the local area. As we move toward becoming a unitary authority, we look forward to building on this success, strengthening engagement and delivering even greater benefits for residents.

SECTION 4: LGR Criterion 5:

New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor.

b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.

c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.

Our Jurisdictional Design Objective: The proposed jurisdictions are sensible footprints and size ratios for principal authorities to enable effective multi-level governance with the strategic authority and for the consolidation and deepening of devolution in Greater Lincolnshire.

Summary of Policy Challenges:

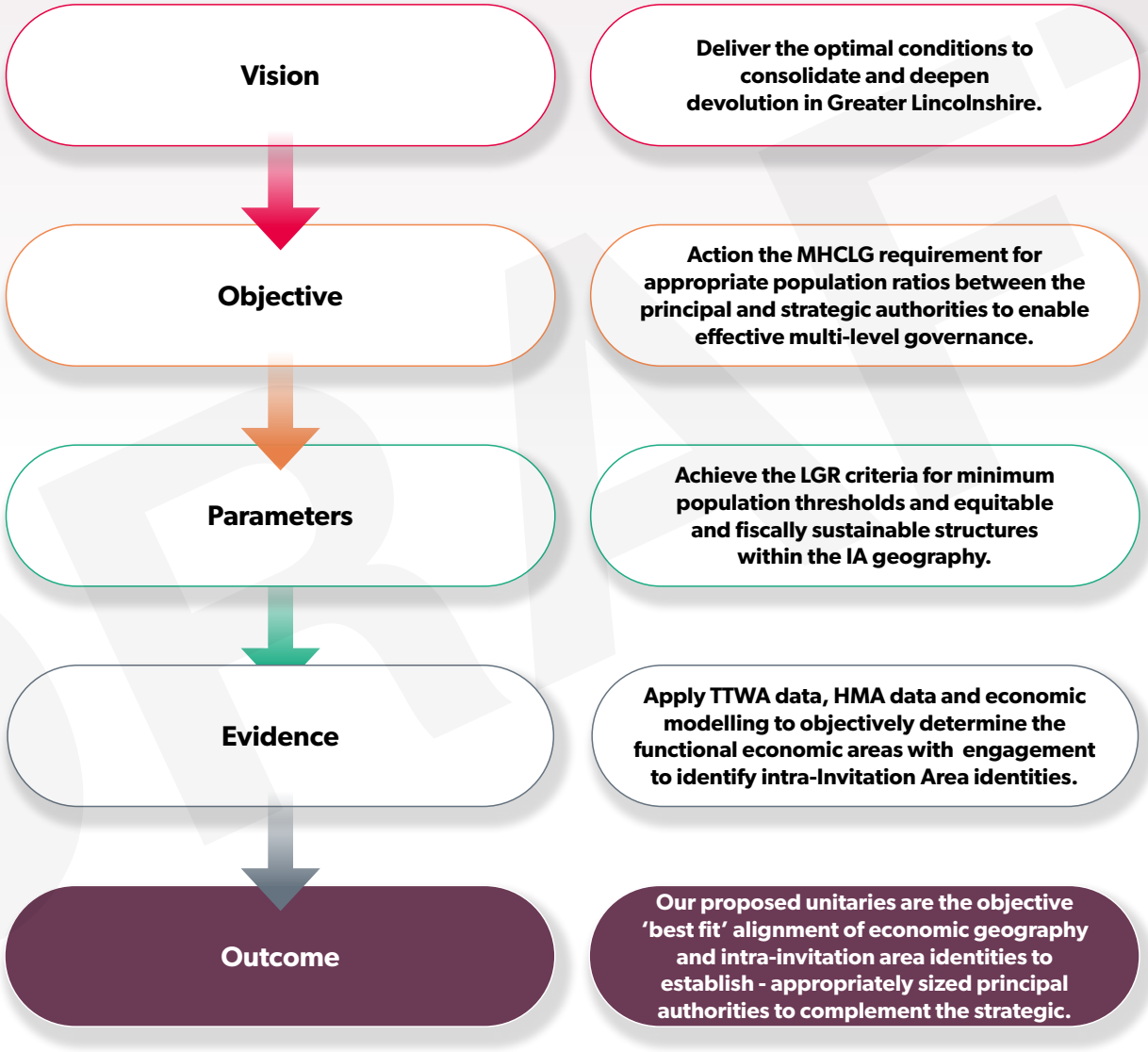
- Ensure that GLCCA is consolidated.
- Adjust GLCCA to the post White Paper world of principal and strategic authorities.
- Provide optionality for future reform recognising that sub-regional strategic authorities are too small to optimally drive growth and unlock the true benefits of devolution.

Our proposed jurisdictions deliver:

- A rebalanced GLCCA that is compliant with MHCLG's required ratios between principal and strategic authorities for effective multi-level governance.
- Future optionality for policy makers to deepen devolution across England.

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Designing for Devolution



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Consolidating Devolution in Greater Lincolnshire

Greater Lincolnshire is one of four invitation areas that already has a devolution deal. **Therefore the key objective for reorganisation is not to unlock devolution, but to provide the optimal foundations for the consolidation and future deepening of devolution.**

In some respects, it is unfortunate that Greater Lincolnshire was one of the last deals to be negotiated under the previous government's voluntary area based devolution framework. In the South East and South West ITL1 statistical regions[48] , reorganisation is largely a blank slate, where MHCLG and the sector have the opportunity to holistically design the optimal principal/strategic authority landscape with consistent principles on a strategic system level. The interactions between individual invitation areas, when creating the embryonic sub-regional government tier that strategic authorities represent, can be fully considered. In the East of England, East Midlands and Yorkshire & The Humber ITL1 regions, accreted devolution deals make reorganisation a process of retrofitting the principal authorities that will sit below extant strategic authorities established to meet the requirements of a fundamentally different approach to devolution.

The opportunity then is to bolster the current arrangements whilst providing optionality for long term future reform. Consolidation is especially critical for Greater Lincolnshire, which had a challenging road to devolution. It will be residents' sense of ownership and connection to devolution in their area that will ultimately help to promote and protect the agenda over the long term. Currently that connection is uncertain, especially in the south.[49]

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Support for Mayoral Governance Model across Greater Lincolnshire (Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal Public Consultation March 2024)			
Authority	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral/Unsure**
North Lincolnshire	43%	45%	12%
North East Lincolnshire	51%	34%	14%
Boston BC	17%	73%	10%
City of Lincoln	45%	46%	10%
East Lindsey	31%	55%	15%
North Kesteven	35%	52%	14%
South Holland	28%	66%	7%
South Kesteven	30%	58%	12%
West Lindsey	40%	45%	15%

48. International Territorial Levels are a hierarchical classification of administrative areas, used by OECD member countries for statistical purposes. There are nine in England: East of England, East Midlands, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire & the Humber. North Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are each ITL1 regions.

49. Alma Economics (March 2024), Consultation analysis on the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Proposal. Available at: https://northlincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s18361/Appendix+A+-+Alma+Economics+-+Consultation+analysis+on+the+Greater+Lincolnshire+Devolution+Proposal+.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2025].

As the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) continues to scale up and mature to Established status, there are three underlying risks to its success:

- **Mixed to low public support** – Devolution was a top down initiative, not a bottom up ask from the public. The public consultation for the devolution deal found majority support for the mayoral model in only one of Greater Lincolnshire's nine council areas. Disapproval rose as high as 73% in Boston. GLCCA will be unable to offer tangible additional value to persuade sceptics until it is sufficiently scaled up.
- **Unbalanced population ratios** – The constituent authorities are the three upper tier authorities of Lincolnshire County Council and the two south Humberside unitaries. Without alteration in a post LGR world this is not compliant with the MHCLG requirement for an appropriate population ratio between principal and strategic authorities. Effective multi-level governance will be undermined. Disproportionate influence is risked for northern Lincolnshire, a political spatial inequality further strengthening scepticism in central and southern Lincolnshire.
- **Strategic misalignment** – Northern Lincolnshire is in a different public service area for health, police and fire to the Lincolnshire county area. Its public service and economic orientation is cross-Humber into HEYCA. This tension was brought to the surface in the recent NHS ICB cluster reforms. Northern Lincolnshire is part of the Humber & North Yorkshire ICB. The Lincolnshire ICB (coterminous with the present county council footprint) has been clustered with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. This complexity in public service boundaries and strategic orientation complicates and constrains the Greater Lincolnshire mayor's ability to perform the expansive system leader role envisioned by the White Paper and truly deliver the benefits of devolution.

Each risk is a direct consequence of the terms and circumstances of the devolution deal. At that time, under the then Conservative government, the imperative was to deliver devolution to Greater Lincolnshire. That was complicated by resident scepticism, politically expressed at the district level, which had caused the collapse of previous deals in 2016 and 2020. The core advantage of the combined county authority (CCA) is the circumvention of local resistance at the district level. With wholesale reorganisation off the table at that time, the deal was agreed between the three upper tier authorities and the government. This is sub-optimal for the post English Devolution White Paper landscape.

The White Paper establishes a new framework of principal authorities (the new unitaries) responsible for core service delivery, sitting under a strategic authority (the mayoral) responsible for sub-regional leadership, primarily economic. The White Paper takes care to specify that the two layers of authority must have appropriate population ratios. The ideal population ratio that the White Paper advances is three principal authorities of 500,000 combining to form a strategic authority of 1,500,000. Applying the ideal ratio to the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area, this would suggest three principal authorities of approximately 400,000. The reason is effective multi-level governance, where the principal authorities need the strategic authority to provide coordination. If the principal authorities are oversized, that role is reduced, or if one is a sub-regional scale they could simply be the strategic authority, as with former non-mayoral models of devolution.



The problem is best illustrated through a counterfactual scenario, imagining the mayor of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is not the first among equals with ten metropolitan boroughs, but heads a combined authority partnership of the former Greater Manchester County Council (GMCC) and Blackburn with Darwen. Plainly the dynamic and mayoral role would be very different. The need for conurbation wide coordination and leadership that the mayor provides would be reduced. That counterfactual is more appropriate to the current situation in Greater Lincolnshire than the GMCA reality. An asymmetric partnership is a significant risk to its functioning, and to multi-level governance, in scenarios where there is a coordinating layer atop the partnership.

As long as relations between mayor and county leader remain positive this risk does not surface. If relations sour, then the sub-regional scale principal authority could seek to act on a sub-regional strategic basis. In the worst case scenario, the leader could claim to be the real sub-regional leader (very likely with a superior democratic mandate), standing up for the majority against a mayor that primarily serves the interests of the minority partners in the asymmetric combined authority. Whether this risk materialises in that specific way is immaterial, the latent risk is not conducive for effective multi-level governance.[50] The very existence of sub-regional scale authority alongside a designated sub-regional body, will maintain and strengthen perceptions that the mayoral authority is a superfluous additional layer of government. In an invitation area with pre-existing scepticism of the mayoral models value this would be unhelpful.

Our proposed unitaries eliminate this risk entirely. Devolution in Greater Lincolnshire would be rebalanced to reflect the new world of the White Paper and provide the optimal foundations for successful multi-level governance with GLCCA. The establishment of principal authorities aligned to the three distinct economic zones of Greater Lincolnshire would ameliorate public scepticism. Each place of places would receive equal representation and voice as the new constituent authorities. **This would entail amendment of the Statutory Instrument.** Each principal authority, aligned to the intra-Invitation Area functional economic areas and identities would be able to focus on local service delivery and place based policy. This would best complement the strategic authority, which would provide the necessary function of sub-regional leadership and coordination. The principal authorities would lack the scale to challenge the strategic authority, ensuring the optimal division of functions and working in the exact terms of the White Paper.

50. Warner, Sam, Jack Newman, Patrick Diamond and Dave Richards, 'The challenge of devolved English governance and the rise of political spatial inequality', Parliamentary Affairs, Volume 77, Issue 4, October 2024, Pages 735–764, [Online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsae024 [Accessed 4 November 2025].

Future Optionality for Deepening Devolution

Taking a big picture strategic view is essential. The future trajectory of devolution under this government is apparent. If done right reorganisation will provide the local units into the second half of the century at least. Those units must not only fit the specific needs of the moment, but be suitable for the territorial strategy of future governments. Whether the policy is continued decentralisation or a reassertion of the centre, the local jurisdictions must fit the need. Ours do.

The government's ambition is to complete the map for England, so that devolution is brought to every area. That is being twin tracked with reorganisation, in the vast majority of Invitation Areas, reorganisation will unlock devolution. Once that is achieved, a new challenge will emerge for central government policymakers.

Plainly said, there is risk that many of the Strategic Authorities which will emerge from the reorganisation process, along with the current non-metropolitan strategic authorities will be too small — in terms of jurisdiction and population — to operate in a genuinely strategic way or ever take on meaningful devolved powers. This means that there will be a ceiling on what can be accomplished because, outside of England's six largest cities, this will be a subregional – rather than a regional – tier of governance. No other SA outside of these six cities possesses the necessary size nor coherence to operate as a genuinely regional tier of government. Polycentric economies require institutions capable of joining the dots across dispersed assets and needs: convening infrastructure, labour markets, innovation ecosystems, and public services at a scale where strategic coherence becomes possible. The lack of alignment with the strategic economic geography will limit the ability of these institutions to implement fully effective economic policies, housing and infrastructure strategies, or transport plans in the way SAs in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield can.

The OECD highlight that decentralisation in itself is not automatically positive for economic growth. If economic performance is the primary policy objective, then the two enabling conditions are alignment with economic geography and fiscal decentralisation.[51] Many current and proposed strategic authorities lack economic alignment with the full polycentric economy and the critical mass to potentially generate a sufficient tax base to make meaningful fiscal devolution viable, limiting their capacity to take on significant new powers, or to ultimately establish localised tax systems which will support their economic objectives. Devolution has been justified on instrumental grounds to the public. There is currently widespread consensus in central and local government on the policy. If it fails to bring tangible benefits, attitudes will change, potentially destabilising the devolution programme. Practically speaking for the government, the Council of Regions and Nations will struggle to operate as a genuinely strategic body, in the likely scenario of upwards of thirty mayors and devolved nation premiers, with significant variation in potential and actual capacity and responsibility, sitting around the table. To drive growth, and increase subnational governing capacity, the devolved institutions will need to be bigger.

51. OECD (2019), Making Decentralisation Work: A Handbook for Policy-Makers, OECD Multi-level Governance Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9faa7-en [Accessed 4 November 2025]

The challenge is being increasingly recognised, most fully by Re:State.[52] Re:State suggest clustering strategic authorities outside the conurbations into regional partnerships to gain the necessary scale for economic growth and to maximise the transformative potential of devolution for England. These would eventually mature into a full regional government tier in England. Already, existing combined authorities are starting to coalesce in embryo. The Great North brings together eight Combined Authorities across the north to collaborate on joint priorities. The Yorkshire Combined Authorities have signed a 'White Rose Agreement'. The two Midlands Combined Authorities have signed a compact formalising their intention to collaborate.

Our Invitation Area has particular challenges in this context. The newly established strategic authority in Hull and East Yorkshire (HEYCA) and Greater Lincolnshire (GLCCA) are small parts of larger polycentric regions which make them ill-suited to the strategic authority model. HEYCA and GLCCA have populations of only 622,000 and 1.1 million respectively. They also cut across cross-Humber economic ties, with plans existing to maintain these ties through a new mayoral joint committee including both the HEYCA and GLCCA mayors. To the south, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is again under million. To the west, Leicestershire and Rutland lacks a devolution deal. The East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) has a population of 2.2 million people but excludes Leicester, one of the largest cities in the area. As highlighted the different public service configurations of northern Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire present further challenges. Rationally, economic growth and public service reform would be best served by northern Lincolnshire in HEYCA. The reason it is not is historic memories of Humberside and because under the old rules, devolution to the Lincolnshire county area would be politically impossible. Our proposal solves that problem. Theoretically if the government wished, northern Lincolnshire could be moved north without collapsing devolution in Lincolnshire. There would be still sufficient units for a combined authority in Lincolnshire, albeit that strategic authority would be undersized. We do not advise or expect this will happen, only note that the optionality is created for the government.

Considering the opportunity for the future clustering of strategic authorities. Re:State very provisionally suggest a clustering of Greater Lincolnshire with North Yorkshire, and Hull & East Yorkshire into a partnership of 'Lincolnshire & Yorkshire Gateway'. Very little rationale is provided, because it is so self-evidently suboptimal for the economic and service orientation of Lincolnshire. Whilst Northern Lincolnshire would indeed look north, the economic orientation of central and southern Lincolnshire is to the East Midlands, and arguably stronger to Cambridgeshire and East of England for the south. Our model provides future policymakers with an ideal set of tools for full optionality, if this or a future government embarks on a future deepening of devolution.



52. Re:State (July 2025), Go Big or Go Home: Governing England's Polycentric Regions. Available at: https://Re:State.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Go-big-or-go-home.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025]

SECTION 4: LGR Criterion 6: Local Engagement & Empowerment

New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.

b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.

Our Jurisdictional Design Objective: The proposed jurisdictions will enable communities to be empowered, improving resident and neighbourhood voice and decision-making in line with the ambitions of the White Paper and the Government's Plan for Change.

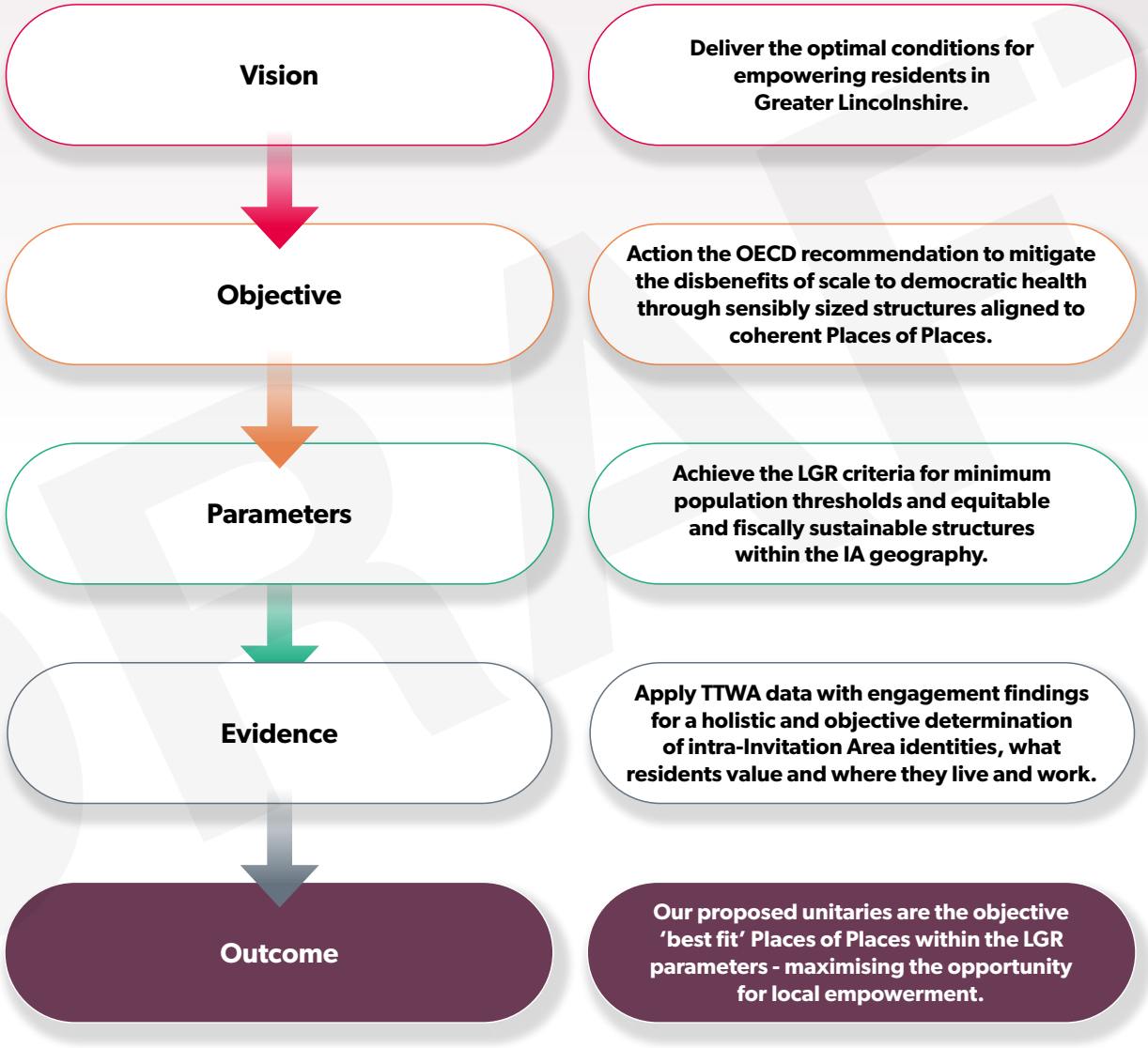
Summary of Policy Challenges

- The weight of evidence suggests that LGR carries significant risk of disempowering communities further.
- Poor jurisdictional design will exacerbate the social challenges that the government's Plan for Change is intended to address.
- Right solution will be the optimal structure for the delivery of the government's ambitions, and hedge against the substantial risk of failure.
- Risk of variability in representation across the IA.

Our proposed jurisdictions deliver:

3. Unitaries of moderate size to minimise the negative impacts from scale on democratic health.
4. New organisations with new cultures to embed a local focused operating models.
5. A failsafe to preserve local connection should area decentralisation measures fail and/or national and local priorities change.

Designing for Community Empowerment



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Local Government at a Scale to Deliver the Plan for Change

The importance of community empowerment cannot be understated. It is core to the design of our proposal and for the government's Plan for Change. **If the government wishes to deliver its ambitions in Greater Lincolnshire, then our proposal presents the best and only viable opportunity to do it.**

The risk of local disconnection is frequently highlighted in LGR proposals.

Equally empowerment can be easily dismissed as meaningless jargon. When we use it we mean residents actively shaping the areas in which they live. **The people who know their patch and know what needs to be done.**

Both can be perhaps best explained by a vision of its absence: a cowed and passive population living in miasma of decline, to which governance is done to, rather than with. Where in the place of lively civic life, inaccessible councillors are a vestige serving to launder accountability for decisions made by individuals, who whether in Whitehall or Townhall are remote from and indifferent in their neglect to local people's needs, priorities, cares and outcomes.

The driving purpose of the government's Plan for Change is national civic renewal to avert that future. Expanding on the rationale for the White Paper and the success conditions of the LGR programme to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, former Minister Jim McMahon MP stressed that a key objective was to 'address the local disconnect where people do not think that the council is working in their interest'.[53] This has been reaffirmed by the new ministerial team. The White Paper cites national polling data:

'local area satisfaction has decreased over the last decade and a growing sense of decline has taken root in our neighbourhoods in recent years. Only 11% of people believe their area has got better to live in over the last two years, and 29% say that it has got worse. This sits alongside a wider feeling of disempowerment and distrust at a local level. Whilst 50% of people say it is important that they feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area, just 23% feel able to do so.' [54]

The government's solution, as pursued through English Devolution, LGR, the Pride in Place Strategy & programme, the Plan for Neighbourhoods amongst others is unleashing community power through localism. For example, to give local areas a stronger voice in the decisions that matter to them, the government will require all local authorities in England to establish effective neighbourhood governance. This is to ensure that neighbourhood working is hardwired into how government works, and that local councillors are empowered to act on the issues that matter to people where they live.

53. As described by Jim McMahon MP, then Minister for Local Government and English Devolution in response to questioning by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on the local political and democratic justification for the LGR programme. (HoC, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral evidence: English Devolution, HC 600, Tuesday 25 February 2025, Q31, page 18)

54. MHCLG, White Paper: English Devolution, 2024, Page 93



We have to state the clear and obvious tension between the government's diagnosis and designed policy prescription. It is not intuitive how amalgamations into units of the mandated population levels will either directly improve matters or create the conducive structures to do so. It is particularly unintuitive to residents.

Our public engagement in the towns and markets, highlighted that many residents believe that the current structures are already too large and not people centred, that Whitehall and Townhall currently struggle to understand their place, thus either fail to capture or deprioritise the needs of their villages, neighbourhoods and towns, in favour of other places. This can lead to disengagement, disenfranchisement and falling trust. A small minority of residents at public engagement events who were keen to share their views, did not wish to complete the Cratus survey, as they felt it was useless - government had already made a decision which would be imposed, irrespective of local views. Precisely the problem that the Plan for Change aims to solve. There is a risk that LGR unhelpfully reinforces that perception.

"Too large, too impersonal, we could lose what little power we have left"

– Resident of Stamford sharing views general on LGR (Stamford Market Engagement 26/09/2025)

Cratus found that residents place a very high importance on their council feeling local to their area. For many residents, the idea of "local government" is defined by familiarity, responsiveness, and community presence. The highest expressed priority for future councils was giving residents a local voice. This feedback reflects a strong belief that democratic representation should remain personal, grounded, and connected to the everyday experience. **Maintaining proximity in decision-making is seen as essential to public trust and confidence in local government.**

All academic research and expert best practice on the topic suggests that indicators of local democratic health and trust scale poorly. **The immediate impact of abolishing district councils and the potential establishment of unitaries on a sub-regional scale due to Greater Lincolnshire's expansive geography will be a further disempowerment of residents and dislocation of decision-making from local communities. This cannot be reasonably disputed**. Fewer local councillors, streamlined decision-making and points of accountability will not enhance local democracy, at least within conventional understandings of the term. Successful delivery of compensatory area decentralisation measures may offer a degree of mitigation, but achieving the core objective of enhancement is questionable even once said mechanisms have matured. For decades, the public have repeatedly heard promises from successive governments for their empowerment and yet to date have felt little increase in their power and sense of control of their community.

The government's agenda intends to rectify this, however the flagship Pride in Place Strategy appears to be weakly linked to the LGR programme – the term principal authority is not used. The basic vision of local government contained in that strategy is the status quo, authorities with intimate knowledge and connection to their places. That local government units will soon become much larger in many areas and in consequence more distant is not explicitly recognised, a key risk for successful delivery. This has more fundamental implications than in other policy areas, because it not only demonstrates political failure, but also sends the signal that central government is deliberately holding back power with corrosive consequences for that most precious currency of public trust, which is already in short supply.[55]



55. Hickson, J. and Newman, J. (2025), Localism, Levelling Up and Taking Back Control: Tensions in the Ambiguous Justification of English Devolution. The Political Quarterly. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.13570 [Accessed 4 November 2025].



This all risks inadvertently accelerating the future that the Plan for Change strives to prevent.

We believe it is essential for any serious proposal to deal fully with this challenge and thread the needle between resident priorities and the government objectives on one side, and the reality and consequences of governing at the scale envisioned by the LGR population requirements.

Given that local authorities are first and foremost mechanisms for community self-government, this is the most critical element of jurisdiction design to get right.

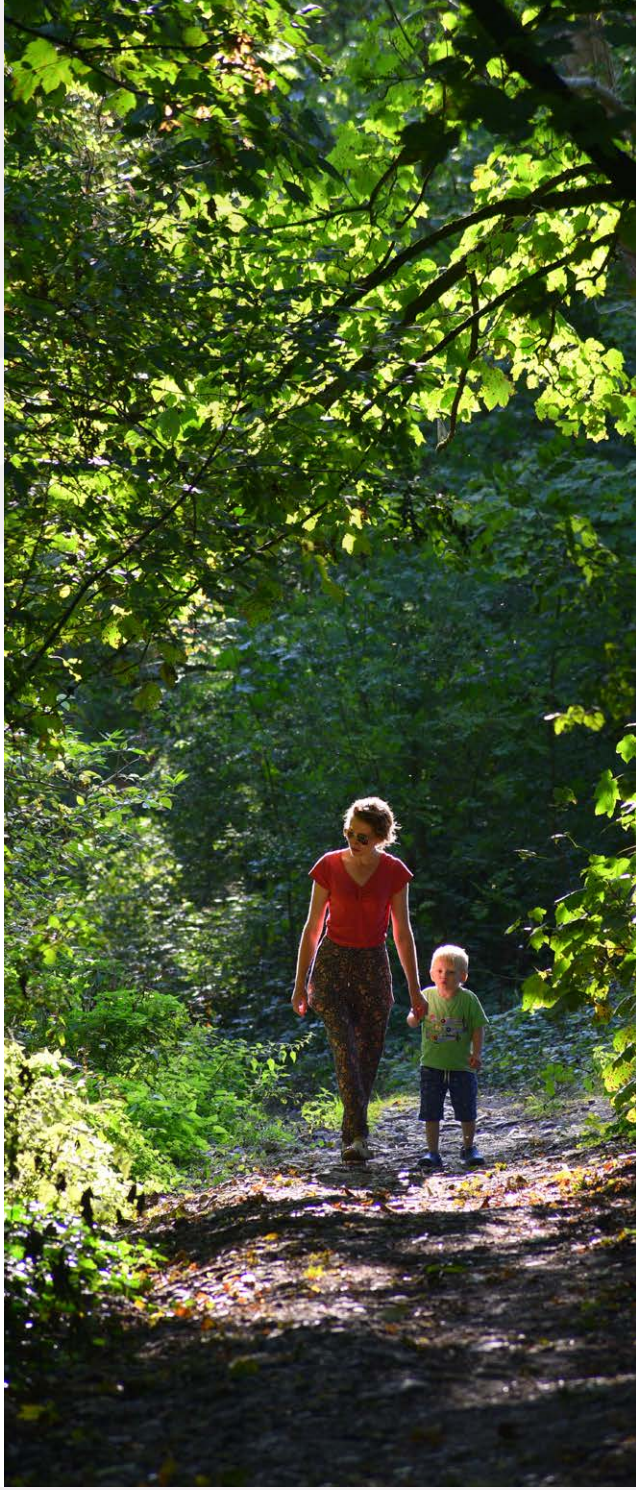
One can attempt to either ignore the challenge, or speciously argue that empowering institutions is tantamount to empowering local people themselves, as if the interests of said institutions and Greater Lincolnshire residents are synonymous. Neither are responsible or compliant approaches. Nor can one blithely assert that this can be solved by neighbourhood governance mechanisms like area committees, or double devolution to the towns and parishes. These mechanisms will form part of the solution, but area decentralisation has a long and mixed history in local government, primarily characterised by failure and extreme fragility outside of some areas of exemplary practice. The parish and town system is underpowered, lacking the consistent capacity to take responsibility as the primary hyperlocal governance unit, unless significant capacity building work is undertaken. This would require an effort of comparable scale to LGR and MHCLG has explicitly warned against doing so.

This is a challenge in all Invitation Areas, but has particular salience in Greater Lincolnshire due to its size. It has been argued in some Invitation Areas that how engagement is done matters more than the size of the authority. Therefore a new Neighbourhood Empowerment model that combines all good practice from across the area can supercharge community empowerment regardless of which option is selected. This is simplistically true to the extent that a moderately sized unitary with engagement mechanisms may be more empowering than a small unitary without auxiliary mechanisms, but the argument is significantly stronger in more compact Invitation Areas. The larger the geography, the more interests need to be integrated with correspondingly greater pressure on compensatory democratic mechanisms to perform in more challenging conditions. **We consider that in Greater Lincolnshire, this pressure is too acute for an oversized unitary to be reasonably proposed, unless one is willing to tolerate the further disempowerment of residents as a necessary trade off.** It is critical to note that in the last round of reorganisations that produced Somerset and North Yorkshire less weight was placed by the then government policy and LGR criteria on local empowerment. The North Yorkshire model of an area committee per former district footprint is insufficient in the context of this government's ambitions.

The potential exceptionalism of the LGR policy in global terms should not be underestimated. A potential single Lincolnshire county unitary, together with the 2023 reorganisations of Somerset and North Yorkshire are basic local government units of a size without obvious contemporary international comparators in developed states. Consider the French departments shorn of arrondissements, cantons and communes for an equivalent. The units can be only be described as local in the technical sense of being a sub-national governing unit. Greater Lincolnshire is larger in area and population than the US state of Delaware. Delaware, although unusually centralised in an American context, maintains multiple layers of government in the belief that this is the optimal configuration in terms of efficiency and effectiveness to capture local preferences for public goods, deliver said goods and be democratically accountable. Conventional global practice suggests that if enhanced local empowerment and voice is the objective, then more and smaller units is the policy response.

It is no exaggeration then that unitary local government of the potential scale on offer to perform this critical task is a step into the unknown. North Yorkshire is too young an organisation to provide a firm guide and would not be viable under this LGR criteria. The fullest responses to the challenge have been provided by Mutual Ventures for Norfolk County Council[56] and Re:State's Reimagining the Local State programme.[57] The combination of clustered area committees and parishes that both present to deliver neighbourhood services and hyperlocal governance is in trajectory an ersatz recreation of the two-tier system. This is an enormously exciting opportunity for experimentation and innovation, but that enthusiasm should be soberly weighted against the risk of failure, the incalculable value of local control and differentiation, and the imperative for success if the government's Plan for Change is to be achieved.

In light of these facts, we consider the only prudent policy response is a sensible division of the Invitation Area into multiple units of sufficient size which align with the distinct Places of Places of Greater Lincolnshire. These units will still be expansive, but have a better chance of being local, fulfilling resident needs and expectations. Being within conventional English local government parameters (Cornwall and Wiltshire) and so benefiting from a long record of applicable best practice. **Negative impacts on local democratic health and trust will be minimised, providing the essential and conducive foundation for the civic renewal that the Plan for Change aims to deliver.**



56. Mutual Ventures for Norfolk CC (August 2025), Community Engagement Model: Proposal for Norfolk. Available at: https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/72166/The-journey-so-far [Accessed 4 November 2025]

57. Re:State (April 2025), Local, Actually: Establishing hyperlocal governance in England. Available at: https://Re:State.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Local-actually-final-document-pdf.pdf. [Accessed 4 November 2025]

Delivering Effective Community Governance

The proposed scale and highly coherent nature of jurisdictions ensure the area decentralisation mechanisms will be supplementary, not compensatory. This provides the optimal conditions to deliver enhanced community engagement and genuine opportunity for neighbourhood scale. The moderate scale offers a democratic failsafe to minimise negative impacts on local voice and articulation of local needs if the mechanisms fail and/or government priorities or funding landscape change long term.

MHCLG hopes that resident voice can be retained and community empowerment enhanced through the establishment of neighbourhood area committees and other innovative engagement structures and mechanisms. These structures are to operate parallel to and augment the town and parish system. **MHCLG are clear that principal authorities cannot delegate neighbourhood governance to the town and parish councils.**[58] The English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill will introduce a duty on all local authorities in England to establish and deliver effective neighbourhood governance:

'The requirement for local authorities to have effective neighbourhood governance will empower ward councillors to take a greater leadership role in driving forward the priorities of their communities. This will help to move decision-making closer to residents, so decisions are made by people who understand local needs. Additionally, developing neighbourhood-based approaches will provide opportunities to organise public services to meet local needs better'.[59]



58. English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill: Guidance - GOV.UK - 'Town and parish councils are independent of local authorities. We want to make sure that all local authorities have a way of working with people in their neighbourhoods, so they are not relying on town and parish councils to do it.'

59. English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill - Explanatory Notes



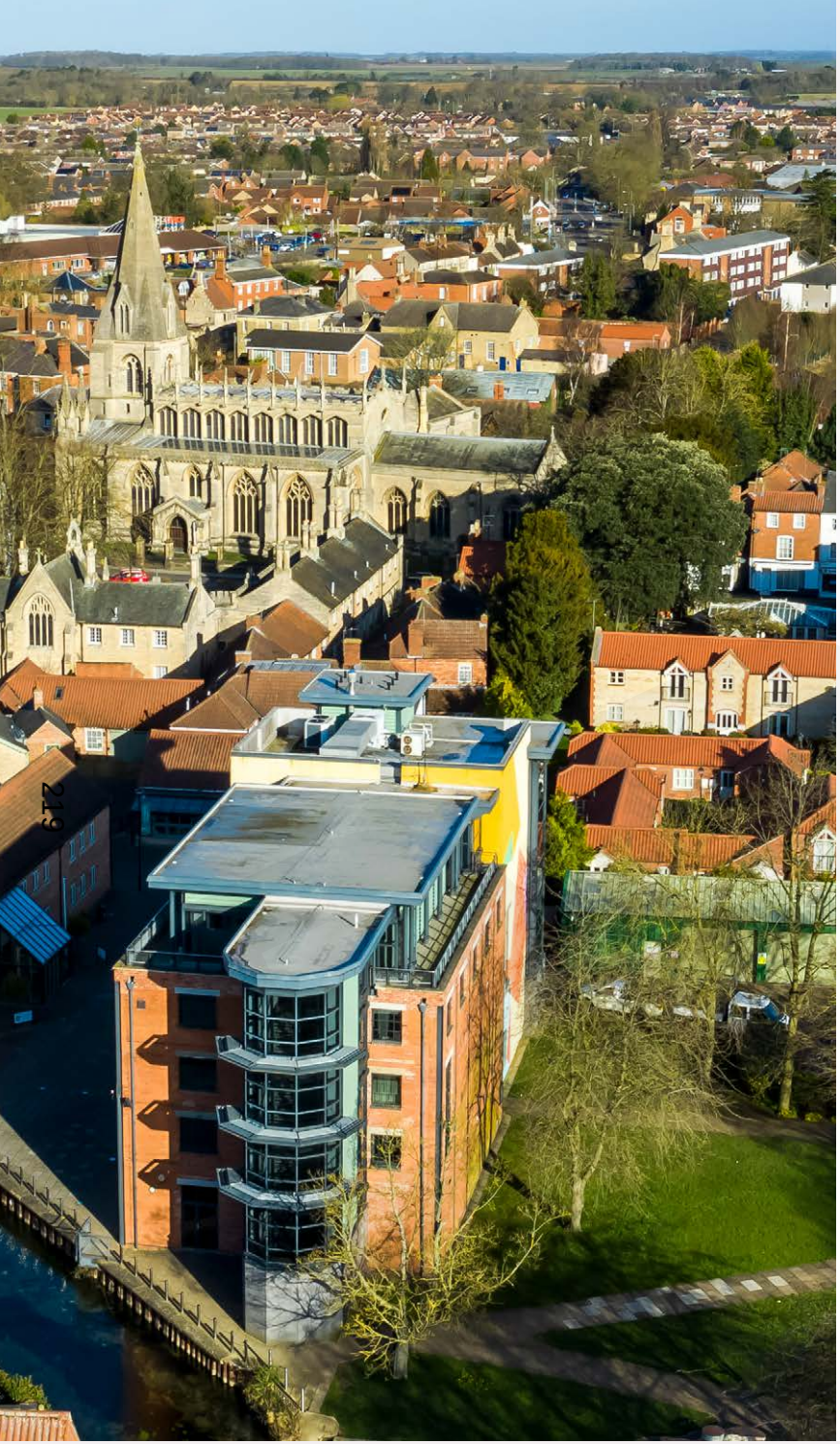
Nottingham City Council have established and decommissioned an area committee system four times in the last twenty years, most recently in 2021 for budgetary savings and because the system was judged as failing to effectively engage with residents.[60] **North Yorkshire cut Member locality budgets by 50% for efficiency savings in the 2025/26 budget**. Westminster City Council's (WCP) Local Area Renewal Partnerships (LARPs) formed in 2002 achieved national recognition as good practice in 2008 and WCP received a green flag for community engagement in the 2010 Comprehensive Area Assessment. **The LARPs were immediately cut in Autumn 2010 following the change in national government and funding priorities**.[61] These examples are emblematic of the long history and generally poor record of area decentralisation schemes in local government which date back to the 1960s.[62]

This is not a policy domain with a tested, universal off-the-shelf solution to be applied. The most successful contemporary example that is applicable to the Greater Lincolnshire geography: Wiltshire, is the product of nearly twenty years of careful practice and political and managerial commitment. This model can be adopted and tailored to Greater Lincolnshire, however we believe that success will maximised by ensuring it is a supplement to fundamentally local jurisdictions. **The wider practice is too experimental and the track record too mixed to be relied on to maintain and enhance resident voice in a scenario where the jurisdiction scale is no longer meaningfully local. The future local government of 2040 cannot be reliant on compensatory area committees for local connection**. It is a governance form, which was principally designed for the society of 2000 and significantly smaller local government units, and was largely unsuccessful then, despite being a flagship local policy of the then governments.

60. Nottingham City Council, City Council Public Reports Pack, 26 April 2021, [Online]. Available at: https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/documents/g8988/Public%20reports%20pack%2026th-Apr-2021%2014.00%20City%20Council.pdf?T=10 [Accessed 4 November 2025].

61. Madeleine Pill & Nick Bailey (2012) Community Empowerment or a Strategy of Containment? Evaluating Neighbourhood Governance in the City of Westminster, Local Government Studies, 38:6, 731-751, DOI: 10.1080/03003930.2012.679934

62. Johnston, L. (2012) Double devolution at the crossroads? Lessons in delivering sustainable area decentralization. In Diamond, J. and Liddle, J. (eds.) Emerging and potential trends in public management: an age of austerity. Bingley: Emerald, pp. 129-159



The proposed duty in the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill will provide welcome stability, but cannot account for local commitment and investment above the minimum. The solution is to depoliticise the system to the extent that area committees are so embedded and fundamental to the authority's constitution and operating model that cuts are as unthinkable to Members and officers as cutting the Audit Committee. As demonstrated in Wiltshire that will require extraordinary political and managerial leadership and commitment to achieve. **A senior officer and elected member culture that prioritises perceived efficiency over localism is fundamentally incompatible with and corrosive to the effective delivery of an area committee system**. Mutual Ventures have identified that a total cultural reset is required to establish a new social contract with residents that underpins the shift from the council as a provider of services to residents, to a partner in delivering services with residents.[63]

Even if area decentralisation mechanisms are successfully implemented, there would be constant risk from changing local or central government priorities and commitments. That is true for all service areas, but not all service areas have such a critical task of tangibly connecting local people and voice to the organisation that exists to serve and represent that voice. There is not a small risk that in the medium to long term Greater Lincolnshire could end up without either successful or meaningful compensatory area decentralisation mechanisms.

Our proposed jurisdictions control this risk providing:

- Sensible and coherent geographies of a conventional scale to maximise the success of area decentralisation.
- Multiple unitaries of more moderate scale for a local connection failsafe should area decentralisation measures fail, or central government and local priorities change.

Combined, this offers the best opportunity to deliver the government's ambitions to empower residents and drive civic renewal in Greater Lincolnshire.

63. Mutual Ventures for Norfolk CC (August 2025), Community Engagement Model: Proposal for Norfolk. Available at: https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/72166/The-journey-so-far [Accessed 4 November 2025]

Mutual Ventures Local Engagement Model

Mutual Ventures was commissioned by Norfolk County Council (NCC) to develop a scalable, neighbourhood-based model for community engagement.[64] **This is critically discussed here, because it provides the strongest and most developed argument and policy prescription for how a single county/ sub regional scale unitary could try and reconcile size and enhanced local connection. The attempt is unsuccessful. Every element could be applied with superior results in a comparatively smaller and more coherent jurisdictions, like ours, if desired by future policy makers**. The model recognises that LGR more than just a structural change, it is an opportunity for cultural reset and broader public service reform, and so is designed to be adaptable to any future unitary structure and is built on the principles of co-design, local accountability, and a shift from service provision to partnership. This potentially enables both greater resident empowerment and a reorientation of public services to prevention.

The model combines the Wiltshire Area Committee system with Greater Manchester's multi-agency integrated neighbourhood services teams, establishing a dual structure at the neighbourhood level, linking democratic governance with integrated service delivery.

- Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs) are envisioned to be 'democratic steering wheels', composed of elected members and community representatives tasked with setting local priorities and holding services to account - acting as a bridge between residents and the strategic council.
- Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) are a multi-agency engine of service delivery, which will include professionals focused on on-the-ground problem solving for local issues.

The NAC would act as a primary source of community intelligence and insight for the INT, helping to shape the team's local priorities and co-design local initiatives. To establish a meaningful and impactful approach to community engagement, each NAC would receive a devolved budget. The INT leadership would report on its performance and local neighbourhood outcomes to public NAC meetings.

Each would cover approximately 30,000 to 50,000 residents meaning thirty separate NACs and INTs in Norfolk. The objective is for a more distributed mix of intelligence, policy and delivery akin to an octopus, rather than a centralised policy brain that gives directives to delivery teams. Mutual Ventures recognise the experimental nature and enormity of what is proposed. A pathfinding 'test & learn' approach in four pilot localities is proposed.

64. Mutual Ventures for Norfolk CC (August 2025), Community Engagement Model: Proposal for Norfolk. Available at: https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/72166/The-journey-so-far [Accessed 4 November 2025]

Mutual Ventures consider that this creates an effective system that is democratically accountable to the community it serves, **a local tier of governance that responds to the concerns around the potential remoteness of a new unitaries.** There are critical questions of the democratic accountability. These are not directly elected bodies, but partnerships of local stakeholders and community leaders chaired by elected members. Further questions lie in the establishment, operation and coordination of thirty separate INTs. Especially as a significant increase in the capacity and sophistication of these units is envisioned, up to local commissioning as the system matures. Already local service leads are advising that clustering into units of 100,000 will be optimal for service efficiency.

The logical evolution of this system to most effectively combine real capacity with some local voice is to cluster the Norfolk NACs & INTs into seven local bodies of approximately 135,000 residents delivering community governance and neighbourhood services, each tied to a discrete place and identity with a degree of financial autonomy and democratic representation. These would sit below the unitary which would provide strategic system leadership and deliverance of functions optimally delivered on a sub-regional basis. The two-tier system would not be fully recreated, because the clusters are not sovereign partners, but limbs of the unitary to be ultimately directed and reconfigured as needed. More effective neighbourhood management and superior central control would be delivered, enhanced resident empowerment is more uncertain. Democratically this is substantially weaker than the obverse of multiple sovereign authorities pooling resources to create economies of scale for some functions, or the existing multi-tier government.

Norfolk CC may consider that this engagement model, if applied in Norfolk, successfully dispels ‘false perceptions that a large council cannot be local’. However Norfolk CC also consider that the system will need up to 168 councillors to operate effectively. A total far in excess of clear LGBCE guidance and unprecedented in English local government. That such extraordinary deviation is required for basic functionality and to retain democratic norms on ratios of electors to representatives suggests that their proposed unitary is oversized. **We therefore consider that the Mutual Ventures model could be utilised for superior results in a comparatively smaller and more coherent jurisdiction with lower risk of failure and with full compliance with LGBCE and MHCLG guidance.**



Opportunities for the Future Hyper-Local State

Crucially the moderate scale and coherent nature of our proposed unitaries means that neighbourhood governance mechanisms will be ultimately supplementary not compensatory. Therefore there will be less pressure on the decentralisation mechanisms to immediately perform to prevent the dislocation from the local – an outcome that the historic practice has a poor track record in achieving. Rather than a sprint to ensure the network is fully operational on vesting day, which as past reorganisations have shown, will inevitably suffer under competing demands for resources, as initial ambition transitions to 'safe & legal', a pathfinding 'test & grow' approach can be adopted.

We have not set out a prescription for how the future unitaries should deliver community governance, for example the detailed scope and boundaries of the area committees. A successful system must be codesigned and produced with local communities – sensitive and bespoke to the local social geography and need. Neighbourhood and community work spreads and grows like a fire, rather than scaling via replication. The formal units will be the jumping off points for continuous engagement. Simply having the structures in place is not success.

Our task is to design the coherent jurisdictions, so that the future unitaries will have the optimal conditions and footprints to take and apply any combination of the Wiltshire model, the Mutual Ventures model, Camden's citizens' assemblies or embark on further innovative experimentation to develop the solutions that best serve Greater Lincolnshire's diverse communities. **This we have delivered, ensuring that the unitaries maintain their primacy as a meaningfully local institution for democratic self-community government, augmented by supplementary mechanisms.**

Double Devolution Practices and Proposed Division of Functions post-LGR		
Practice	**Definition**	**Post LGR Delivery Mechanism**
Neighbourhood Empowerment	Mechanisms that institutionalise opportunities for direct citizen participation in decision-making processes.	• Multiple unitaries of a practical size covering coherent geographies • Neighbourhood Area Committees Digital Engagement
Neighbourhood Partnerships	Mechanisms that bring together a range of local service providers and decision-makers within a particular area, to pool resources and align activities more strategically.	Neighbourhood Area Committees
Neighbourhood Government	Mechanisms that create local representative bodies (such as neighbourhood councils, area committees, and mini town halls), elected by residents.	Town & Parish Councils
Neighbourhood Management	Mechanisms that empower front-line managers to respond more effectively to residents' needs, for example by 'joining up' separate services, developing new services, and abolishing outdated modes of delivery	• Unitary Directorates • Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

Typology of Double Devolution Practices (adapted from Hickson 2024)

Elements of the Hyperlocal State – Neighbourhood Area Committees

Design

The model must be bespoke by design in each place. A one-size-fits-all approach that simply invites participation will potentially reinforce existing inequalities. The new unitaries must take on an active community development role, providing training, support, and seed funding to help build the capacity of less organised communities and ensure that all residents, regardless of their starting point, have a fair opportunity to participate effectively.

Size and Number

There is not a universal standard in theory or practice for the size or number of area decentralisation mechanisms. MHCLG have not provided a definition of neighbourhood as a governance unit. MHCLG guidance on area decentralisation is expected in due course. A 2012 academic survey of practices found wide variation in the size of neighbourhood governance units across the UK, ranging from 1,000 to 72,000 people.[65] It is critical to ensure the footprints align with resident views of local place. Mutual Ventures recommend between 30,000 and 50,000 residents. That population range is also used by the NHS Confederation.[66] We would endeavour to ensure coterminosity between the NHS neighbourhood operating model and the local government neighbourhood committee systems. In line with the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON), we would use statistical geography as the building blocks.[67]

One of the most advanced existing area committee system is in Wiltshire.[68] Wiltshire provides a model of eighteen committees with an average population of 28,000 residents and covering 180 sq.km. Applied to the Lincolnshire county area that would result in a total of thirty committees across the two unitaries.

Again a balance will need to be struck in jurisdictional design between the scale required for service delivery and community empowerment. Most residents would naturally associate this scale with a medium sized town, not a neighbourhood. However, given the required size for the Principal authorities to be in compliance with the LGR Criteria, practical governance will require the neighbourhood area committees to be of approximately this scale, otherwise the total number of committees will multiply into system unmanageability.

65. Steven Griggs & Mark Roberts (2012) From Neighbourhood Governance to Neighbourhood Management: A 'Roll-Out' Neo-Liberal Design for Devolved Governance in the United Kingdom?, Local Government Studies, 38:2, 183-210, DOI: 10.1080/03003930.2011.630460.

66. NHS Confederation, A New Operating Model for Health and Care 2025, [Online]. Available at: https://www.nhsconfed.org/system/files/2025-05/A-new-operating-model-for-health-and-care-2025.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025].

67. The Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON), (May 2025), Neighbourhood Policy Green Paper: Delivering Neighbourhood Renewal -Proposals for Change. Available at: https://www.neighbourhoodscommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Driving-Neighbourhood-Renewal-Proposals-for-Change.pdf [Accessed 4 November 2025].

68. Local Government Association, Local Area Boards: Wiltshire Council, [Online]. Available at: https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/local-area-boards-wiltshire-council [Accessed 4 November 2025].

Elements of the Hyperlocal State – Towns & Parishes

Greater Lincolnshire is fortunate in having a very extensive and vital network of town and parish councils. The English Devolution White Paper gives very limited consideration for towns and parishes. Necessarily amalgamation results in a degree of dislocation from the local. Our option minimises that dislocation, however it is present. Logically, the consolidation of local government and the resulting raised altitude in strategic and operational outlook, would provide an opportunity for hyper-local government to step up and partially fill the void. There are many services and community assets that are optimally delivered at a neighbourhood level. Empowered hyper-local government would complement the more strategic unitary authorities. That is the theory, however the reality of the parish system is very different. The consistent capacity is simply lacking for towns and parishes to be considered a full tier of government that significant weight can be placed on.[69]

Summary of Town & Parish Capacity in Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area

Local Authority	Total Parishes	Median Population (MY 2022)	Parishes with populations less than 499	Parishes with populations between 1000-5000	Parishes with populations greater than 10,000	Median Amount precepted on billing authority (£) 2025-26	Median Tax base for precept purposes 2025-26
Boston	18	1314	3	7	1	32,222	383
City of Lincoln	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
East Lindsey	188	331	84	20	3	3,268	99
North Kesteven	75	680	26	14	2	1,9081	240
South Holland	22	2309	1	15	1	30,400	754
South Kesteven	84	425	42	16	3	6,500	147
West Lindsey	128	425	57	21	1	3,864	91
North East Lincolnshire	21	500	9	4	0	4,845	204
North Lincolnshire	56	740	19	20	2	16,458	258

69. Society of Local Council Clerks (2022), The Future of Local Councils: A Survey of Parish, Town and Community Councils in England and Wales. Available at: https://oro.open.ac.uk/87187/1/SLCC-Future-Report-2022%20%281%29.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2025]

We have undertaken extensive engagement with the towns and parishes in our areas and received the consistent message that LGR presents as much a risk as an opportunity. The vital hyper-local role that they perform will be more important than ever post LGR. There is concern that local assets, which are beneath the strategic notice of new unitaries, are lost. Equally there is recognition that many towns and parishes cannot handle additional responsibility, unless there is a significant effort to build hyperlocal capacity. Proposals of that type have been sketched by Re:State, in the creation of clustered Neighbourhood Combined Authorities of approximately 30,000 people.[70] Such an undertaking would be an effective recreation of the pre-1974 system and regardless of its merits, it would require an effort on a bigger scale than LGR. MHCLG have expressed no appetite for this and have warned about increases in parish precepts as a consequence of LGR. **It is not government policy for towns and parishes to play a larger role going forward. Unitary authorities must still think and act local; hence we have scaled our jurisdictions appropriately.**

We recognise that double devolution to towns and parishes does not represent a magic bullet. If mishandled, double devolution could risk exacerbating the disadvantage and marginalisation faced by 'left behind' communities even further.[71] Therefore, although recognising that we cannot bind the actions of the future unitaries, we would strongly advise that a cautious and sensitive hyperlocal policy is pursued. Where there is local appetite to take on additional responsibility and community assets, that should be carefully explored with due regard that the capacity and income streams are in place. The classic cautionary tale is Cornwall enthusiastically transferring beach toilets, whilst forgetting the adjacent car park income that paid for the maintenance. For the unique Lincoln situation, we anticipate that either the town or charter trustee route is taken to maintain ceremonial governance. This is sub-optimal for economic governance, but there is no compliant alternative under the LGR criteria.

We have designed our unitaries to minimise the need for towns and parishes to feel they need to step up, whilst welcoming and supporting those that wish to take on more responsibility. So providing effective multi-level governance with the local. This will prevent the nightmare scenario of oversized unitaries becoming unmoored from the hyperlocal and a fire sale of valued community assets in the name of double devolution to compensate.

70. Re:State (April 2025), Local, Actually: Establishing hyperlocal governance in England. Available at: https://Re:State.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Local-actually-final-document-pdf.pdf. [Accessed 4 November 2025].
71. Hickson J., (January 2024), Double Devolution: Towards a Local Perspective. Available at: https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3177811/1/Double%20Devolution%20Report%20WEB.pdf [Accessed on 4 November 2025].

Elements of the Hyperlocal State – Elected Members

Elected Members play an indispensable role. They lead, scrutinise, represent and champion their residents and communities. Their presence and role is what distinguishes a local authority from a government agency.

As part of our proposal we have made an initial consideration for the number of councillors required to deliver effective governance and neighbourhood empowerment with the two new unitary councils proposed. As within our proposal, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire remain as separate unitary authorities, we have not considered any changes in councillor numbers for those two authorities. However for completeness we have included their councillor numbers in overall context for this section.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has very clear guidelines for future member numbers:

- The minimum number is thirty
- The maximum number is ninety-nine

There is theoretically scope for exception. However, given that the most geographically expansive unitary in the country, North Yorkshire, is within these bounds, the most populous authority, Birmingham, is only just over and the LGBCE have worked to bring Buckinghamshire back within bounds, the only persuasive rationale for an exemption that we have identified to ensure equality in representation within the Invitation Area in the scenario of reducing councillor numbers below the minimum in an asymmetric proposal. Unless the LGBCE were open to a significant liberalisation of their guidance, of which there is no indication, we can identify no other rationale or precedent to justify an exception. The only proposals in this process to breach the guidance so far (as of the Devolution Priority Programme) are Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Suffolk County Council (SCC). These offered no rationale beyond risk of a democratic deficit, which is an inherent trade-off for their jurisdiction choice, so is invalid outside of a very major change to the LGBCE guidance.

The LGBCE specifies that there is no universal formula to determine councillor numbers. The total must be primarily arrived at through consideration of the needs of a particular area, rather than selecting a number because that is the total of statistically similar area. Nevertheless, general consideration does need to be given of the proposed authorities' place in the system of local government as a whole. Overall, there is a tight distribution of electoral ratios for existing unitaries. The two anomalous exceptions are Rutland and Birmingham. There is no good answer to the question of why should residents in one part of the country enjoy significantly greater influence over their local area than residents in another. Reorganisation risks creating that inequity. The only answer is necessary differentiation in governance due to the nature of the area, however that argument and the resulting inequity would not be accepted in any other democratic context. Therefore, it is prudent for proposals to remain within the conventional distribution for unitary authorities and attempt to minimise deviance.

This significantly sharpens the trade-off between scale and democratic representation. As the size is increased, so is individual resident voice diluted, as the ratio of electors to councillors widens. The democratic trade off cannot be obscured. It would be very concerning if a resident in one part of the IA, or on the border with another IA has significantly lower representation than another resident elsewhere. Unlike with Birmingham and its immediate neighbours, this could not be justified as the differentiated governance of a major conurbation. **For example, a theoretical unitary on the Lincolnshire county footprint that maintained the current total of seventy councillors would have 8,158 electors per councillor. A ratio unprecedented in English local government and far beyond conventional norms.** By comparison Birmingham has a ratio of 7,319 electors per Member. Even then, a conurbation has a confluence of interests, which an area the size of Lincolnshire does not. Plainly this would be a step change in the practice of local democracy in Lincolnshire, posing significant challenges. The tension would be exacerbated by the continuation of the two northern unitaries, whose residents would enjoy significantly superior democratic representation, than their Lincolnshire neighbours.

It is the task of proposals that advance disaggregating upper tier services to clearly and robustly justify that choice, their risk toleration and how the disruption will be mitigated. **Conversely it is task of proposals that advance very large and/or asymmetric jurisdictions to clearly and robustly justify that choice in terms of the impact on democratic representation and voice both within the Invitation Area and compared to neighbouring areas. We would expect any proposal on the lines sketched above to do just that.**

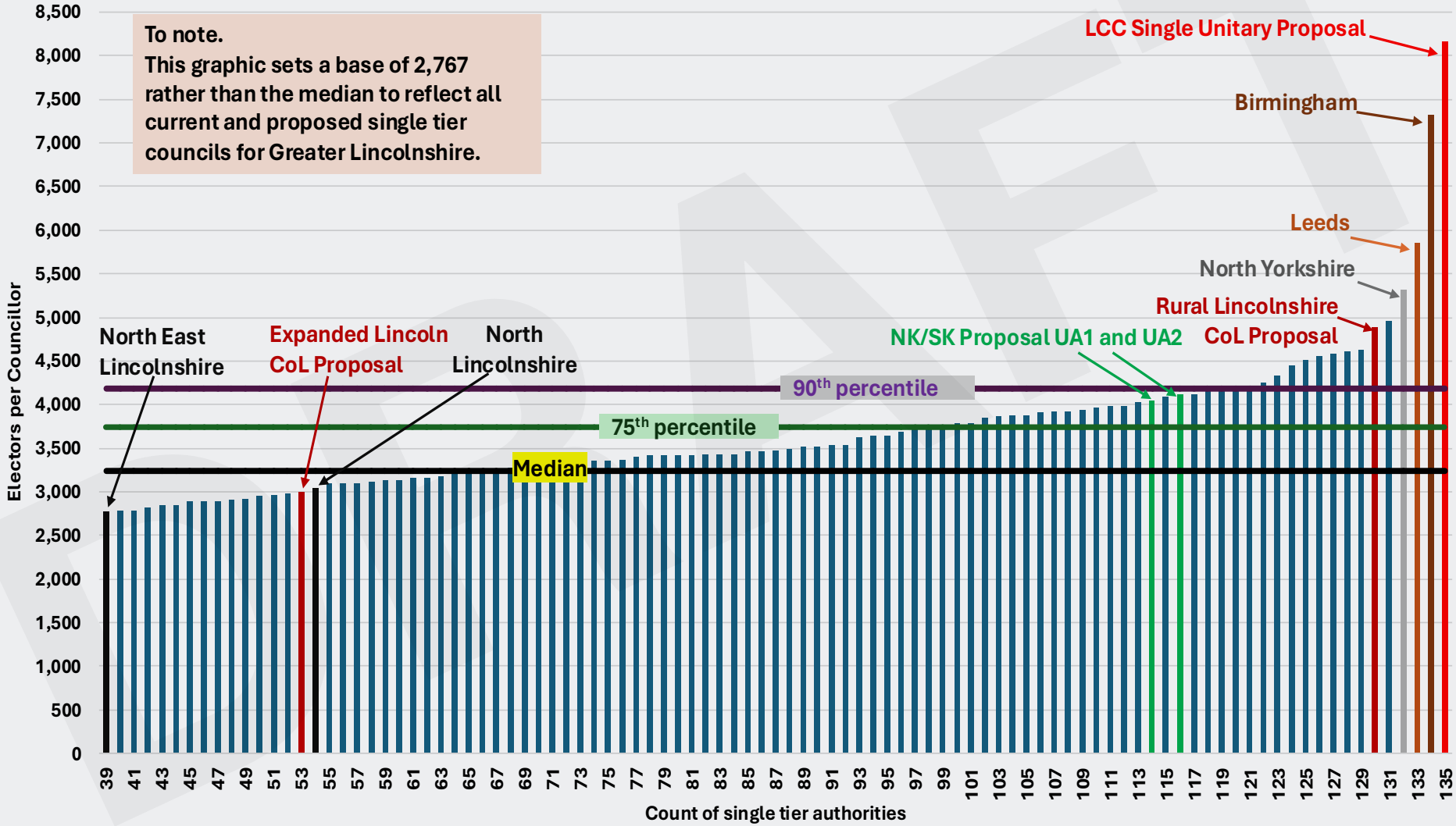
Our proposal prudently avoids any experimentation in novel forms of local democracy. Our proposed unitaries have councillor numbers within conventional norms. Ensuring manageable workloads for members, and equitable local representation and governance for residents throughout the Invitation Area.

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Electors Per Councillor - All Single Tier Councils Above the Median



Current Position

The county of Lincolnshire is currently served by 70 county council seats, all single member divisions following the last Local Government Boundary Commission for England review in 2016.

The seven Lincolnshire districts have 290 councillor seats spread over 155 wards, giving an overall total for Lincolnshire of 360 council seats. The actual number of individual councillors is a little lower once those elected to both Lincolnshire County Council and to their District council are accounted for.

North-East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire have 42 and 43 councillors respectively, giving a total of 445 councillors across the Greater Lincolnshire invitation area.

The most recent data from the LGBCE gives an electorate figure of 571,072 for the county of Lincolnshire, and 246,838 for the two existing unitary areas.

The 360 council seats within Lincolnshire provide an overall councillor to electorate ratio of 1:1586.

Approach for Future Design

When considering initial proposals for councillor numbers, we have noted that whilst the last LGBCE review was undertaken almost a decade ago, the current single member division approach at the county level, set on largely logical geography and populations, provides a sound starting point. Whilst the LGBCE data does highlight some outlier divisions overall the structure remains sound and does not merit reinvention just for the sake of reinvention at this early stage.

We have considered the current councillor ratios in existing single tier councils, noting also the ratios for areas that have more recently undergone reorganisation.

As an area, City of Lincoln excepted, with one of the lowest population densities in England we have also considered the potential scale of area that unitary level councillors would need to represent.

We have sought to take a balanced approach taking both of the above aspects to limit the democratic deficit.

We have noted and ensured we keep within the upper councillor number limits suggested by LGBCE.

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Future Councillor Numbers

Ahead of a future LGBCE review once Government decisions on final structure for the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation is undertaken our initial thoughts on future councillor numbers are:

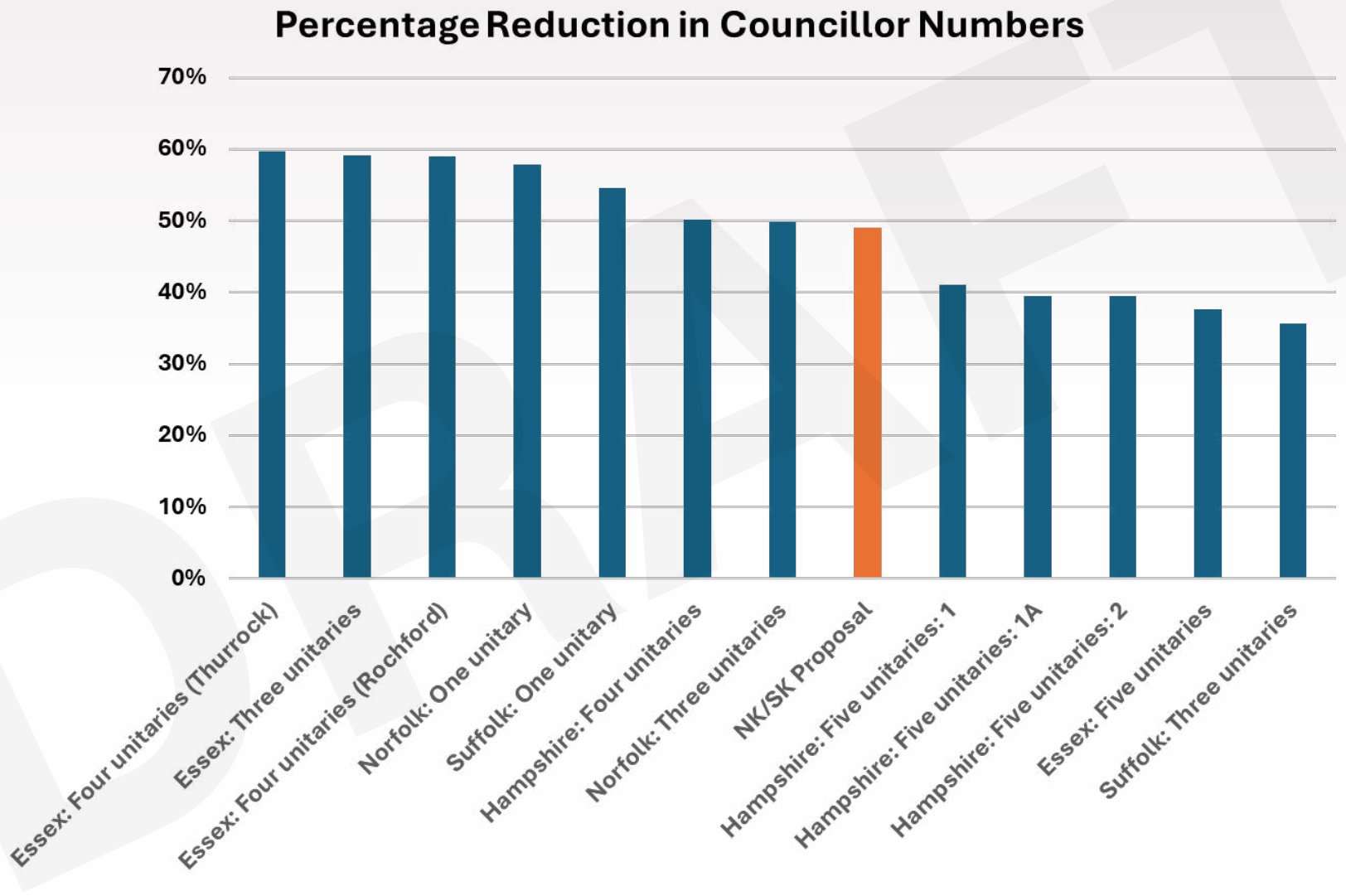
- To retain the current councillor numbers and wards for both North-East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
- To retain the existing geographies of the 70 current county divisions within Lincolnshire
- To move all 70 current divisions to be 2 rather than single member wards

The result of this approach would be:

Council	Electorate	Cllrs	Electorate Ratio	Cllr Change abs	Cllr Change %
Unitary 1 NK, SK, SH	275,140	68	4,046	(102)	(60%)
Unitary 2 BBC, CoL, ELDC, WLDC	295,932	72	4,110	(118)	(62%)
"Lincolnshire"	571,072	140	4,079	(220)	(61%)
Unitary 3 NEL	116,205	42	2,767	0	-
Unitary 4 NL	130,633	43	3,038	0	-
Greater Lincolnshire	817,910	225	3,635	(220)	(49%)

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The graphic below compares the percentage reduction in councillors for Greater Lincolnshire based on our submission as compared to the recent Fast Track area proposals



A further breakdown of our approach to potential numbers of councillors for the two new unitaries is set out in Appendix 7.

SECTION 5

Implementation

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SECTION 5: Implementation

Approach

Our implementation plan builds on our evidence led approach, setting out how these new councils would be delivered, including a programme timeline, governance arrangements, shared principles and robust mitigation measures for risks.

Our proposal reflects the best options in terms of maximising positive and sustainable local outcomes for our residents. We recognise that the transition process will be complex, time consuming and present challenges to all involved. Given the scale of the opportunity this is a challenge that we gladly accept.

We will ensure a safe and legal transition setting the foundations for an ambitious programme of reform.

Collaboration

Change of this nature will require councils across Greater Lincolnshire to commit to working even more closely together. Whilst the two northern unitaries remain unchanged, based on all bar one of the proposals being submitted from our IA, they can still play an important critical friend role. This commitment extends to continuity of services through this time, ensuring we can continue to serve all our residents and stakeholder communities and minimise any disruption. We are ambitious in the change we can make as part of this proposal and will be focusing on delivering maximum benefits through this period.

We will extend this approach beyond our borders ensuring that we both learn from the lessons of past LGRs, take heed of real-time learning from the Surrey implementation – two new unitaries within an existing county footprint – and work with the wider sector acknowledging that 20 other IAs will be taking the same journey with largely the same intermediate timelines.

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People and Culture

“Culture isn’t a phase of the project, it’s the foundation”

Culture will form one of our core implementation workstreams set out within this section. Why mention it now? Time and time again, particularly in the plethora of sector led webinars a key learning has been that people and culture is the most critical element. At the end of the day the transitional and transformation changes will be delivered by people, not by AI and not by worthy statements.

We therefore place this front and centre and would urge all IAs to do likewise. Given the criticality of this element we commissioned Kath O'Dwyer to prepare a critical assessment – a summation of this follows whilst her full report is attached as Appendix 8.

LGR reforms aim to streamline local government structures, enhance accountability and improve service delivery. However, the success of these reforms hinges not just on strategic planning but on cultivating and maintaining a positive organisational culture — a critical but often overlooked element in any successful LGR programme.

The success of these reforms hinges not just on strategic planning but on cultivating and maintaining a positive organisational culture. When LGR is done with people at the centre:

- Leaders feel resourced, not burdened.
- Culture becomes a foundation, not a friction point.
- Teams stay engaged and hopeful.
- The new organisation feels coherent, not just combined.

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Core values are the foundation of an organisation's identity, guiding employee behaviour and decision-making. Organisational culture shapes how the organisation lives its purpose and delivers on its promises. By focusing on organisational culture with intention, the organisation will be well-positioned to thrive in an increasingly complex environment. Councils that invested in cultural clarity, leadership capability, and robust programme governance emerged stronger and more cohesive; those that did not, often found that 'safe and legal on day one' was not enough to deliver real transformation. Organisations that invest in resilient, adaptable cultures will be the ones best equipped to navigate change.

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A positive organisational culture:

- Unites members of the organisation by instilling a sense of identity and belonging,
- Gives employees a sense of direction,
- Increases employee satisfaction and engagement levels,
- Guides decision-making processes and reduces disagreements and animosity between team members,
- Helps attract the right employees who are committed and productive,
- Influences organisational effectiveness and success,
- Facilitates open communication, mutual trust, and shared understanding,
- Differentiates one organisation from another,
- Instructs the organisation on how things are done.

The challenge of changing an organisational culture cannot be overstated. This process can often be simplified to communication campaigns, relaunched values or training. But it is about changing the emotional relationship between the employee and employer, for example how staff feel when they enter the office, their relationship with their manager, and their wider psychological contract.

This emotional relationship does not change easily or quickly.

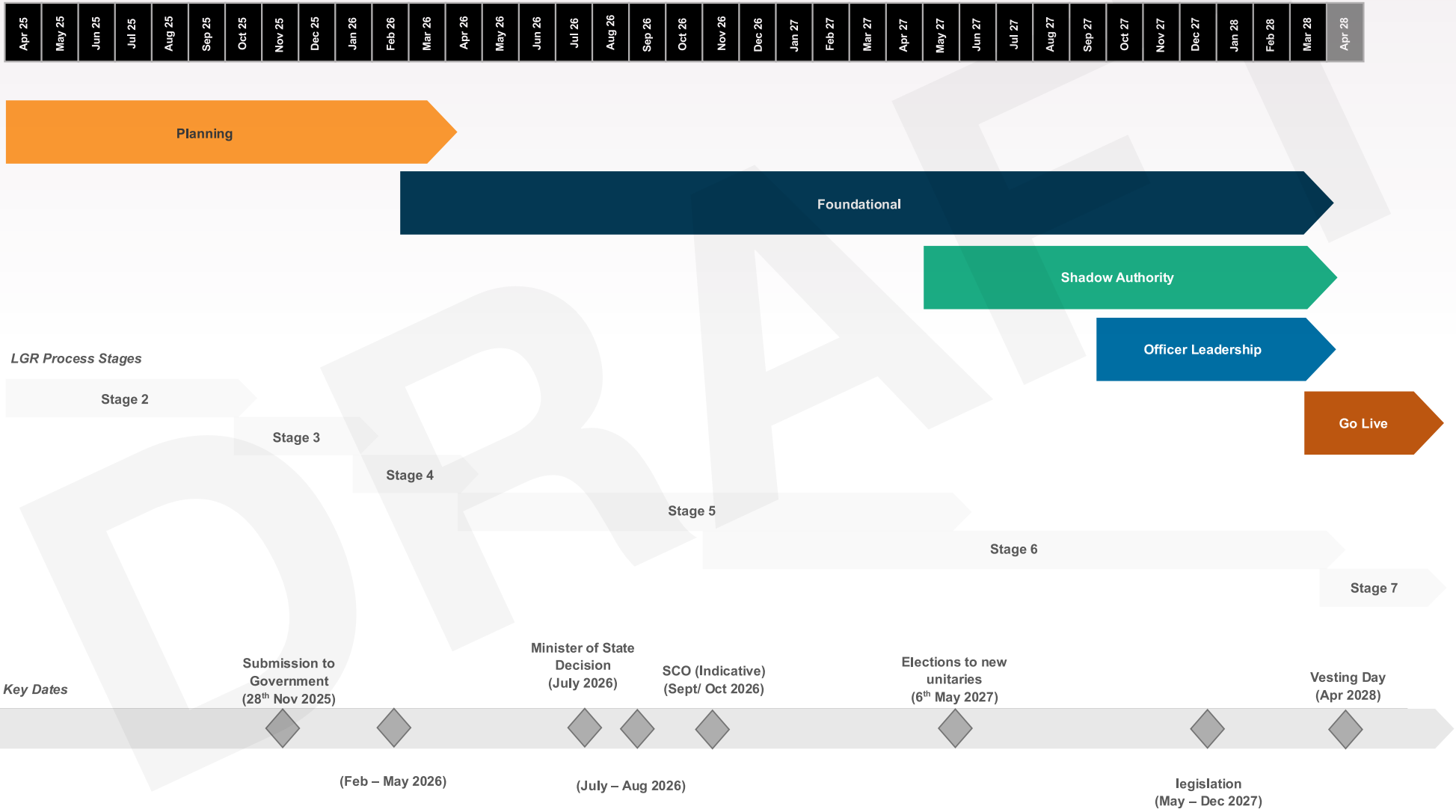
A strong organisational culture is the glue that holds the local authority transformation journey together and culture must be intentionally shaped to support the new organisation and communicated using vision and values.

It is culture, quietly and invisibly, that will determine whether the new council lands smoothly or flounders under the weight of confusion, resistance, and competing priorities.

This is why new, not continuing authorities are best suited to realising the full transformative potential of LGR. New organisations that will be co-designed by members and officers, who will knowingly and consciously, own and embody the values that the new unitaries choose as their guiding principles.

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Timelines



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We have identified the top-level priorities and activities required under each of the five phases, aligning with the government's overall LGR timetable. Fundamentals that will remain in place throughout the process rather than being phase specific are referenced here rather than in the table below.

- Staff communication, engagement and support,
- Existing member engagement and support,
- Arrangements for and delivery of engagement with our communities and partners,
- Access to the right skills and capacity,
- Clarity on day 1 requirements and target state,
- Management of programme creep and over-optimism.

Phase	Priorities
Preparation: prior to government decision	• Set up programme (governance, workstreams and finance) • Set up the plan, timeline and critical path; including any requirement for and procurement of Strategic Partner(s) • Staff communication and engagement • Establish arrangements to continue to engage widely with our communities and partners • Advanced data sharing and deep dive analysis – be as prepared as possible for post decision activity, creating roadmaps for transition for (as a minimum) core and critical services • Define and agree scope of LGR-related decisions with sovereign councils
Foundational / Collaboration & Detailed Design: prior to the election of shadow members or appointment of officer leadership	• Continue to engage widely with communities and partners; and focus on staff communication and engagement • Appoint Strategic Partner(s) • Progress what is in appropriate scope of the programme (e.g. people, ICT, contracts, assets) • Service alignment and transformation • Preparing for key decisions • Shadow elections
Shadow Authorities: members elected but only with programme management or unofficial groupings of officers for capacity	• Appointing Chief Executives and statutory and leadership roles • Member inductions • Key decision timetable • Approving the Council Plans, MTFS, budgets, council tax harmonisation approach and operating models for each of the new councils
Officer leadership: Tier 1-3 officers have been appointed and can prepare the new councils	• Tier 2 and leadership recruitment • Service planning • Development of council plans, MTFS, and budgets including council tax harmonisation • Key policies and strategies • Operating models and staffing allocations • Preparing for Day 1
Go Live: post vesting day when the new councils become operational	• Focus on seamless experience for residents and partners and stability for staff • Continued transformation and improvement

Governance and Workstreams

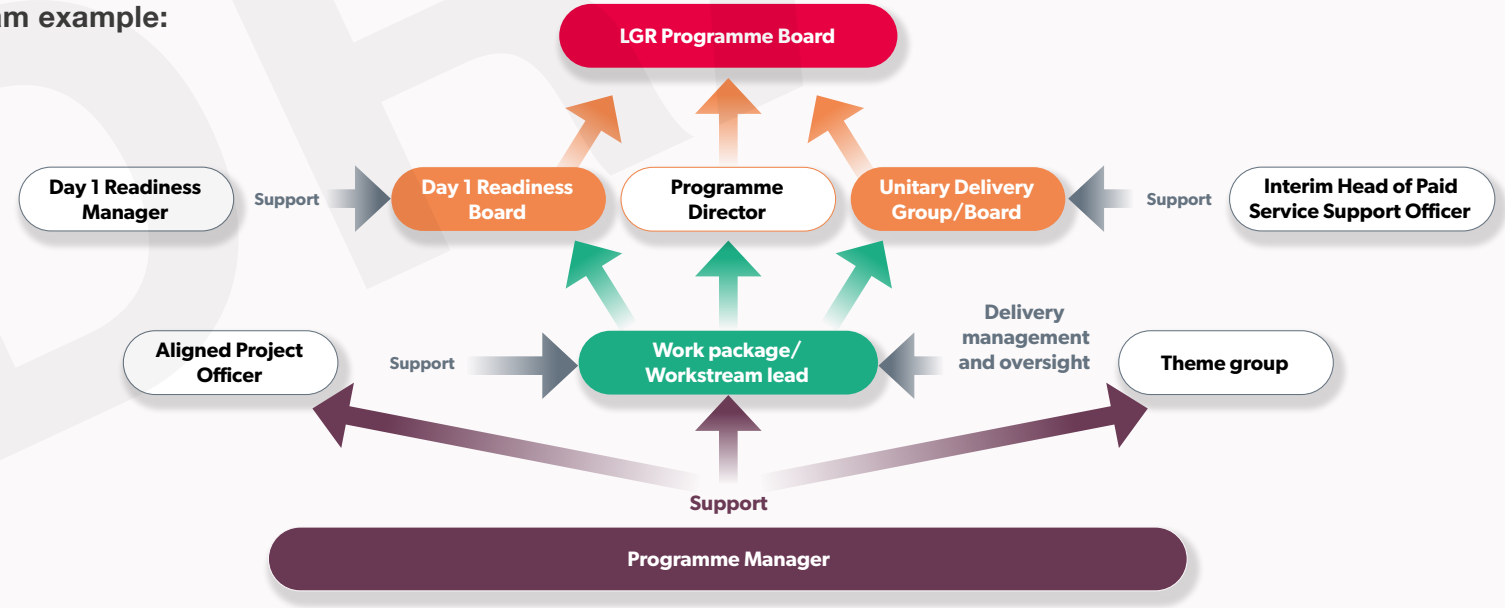
We will establish a Local Government Reorganisation Programme Board reporting to the Greater Lincolnshire Leaders Group and ultimately the shadow authorities. This board will comprise of Chief Executives and the Programme Director, providing strategic oversight of the programme and addressing key risks and issues.

To ensure effective delivery we will also set up a Day 1 Board focused on implementing the programme plan. This Board will monitor progress against key milestones and ensure all Day 1 requirements are met.

Beneath the overarching LGR programme, we will create unitary delivery groups dedicated to the specific needs of each new council. These groups will focus on critical areas such as elections, council plans, member induction, policies and organisational culture and service planning relating to the new unitaries,

These delivery groups will be become increasingly important as we transition to Shadow Authorities and appoint Heads of Paid Service.
By establishing them early, we are laying strong foundations for the success of the new unitary councils.

Framework diagram example:



Unitary Delivery Groups will focus on preparing for the new councils. These groups will operate collaboratively by design and remain agile, enabling them to respond to opportunities that may arise within individual unitary areas. As the programme progresses, these governance structures will evolve to support the Shadow Authorities and play a key role in establishing the new councils once permanent officers are in place.

We have proposed a number of workstreams and high level activities to support delivery at pace:

	Preparation	Foundational	Shadow Authorities	Officer Leadership	Go Live
Comms and Engagement	• Stakeholder mapping and strategy • Identify or setup partner and providers forums • Identify communication channels • Identify branding requirements	• Engagement of staff and communities • Engagement with partners and suppliers • Development of the new unitary councils branding	• Delivery of agreed milestones	• Delivery of agreed milestones	• Delivery of agreed milestones
People	• Communication with staff regarding timeline and plan • Develop a support hub • Gather and categorise single view of all staff and other delivery bodies • Skills and capability assessment	• Develop visions • Initial workforce modelling, including roles, accountabilities and ways of working • Understand skills and capability gaps and develop plan to address	• Delivery of agreed • milestones • Staff and partner • communication and support • Priority appointments (Interim Head of Paid Service, S151 and MO) • Other senior appointments	• Delivery of agreed milestones • Staff and partner communication and support	• Staff and partner communication and support
Data	• Data cleansing and management • Ensure pre-submission data hub remains fit for purpose • Establish single taxonomy for service, budget and HR data • Gather / update data regarding staffing, infrastructure and systems, contracts, policies and strategies, property, estates and assets	• Support and model key decisions • Track progress • Maintain or update data	• Support and model key decisions • Track progress • Maintain or update data	• Delivery of agreed milestones	• Delivery of agreed milestones

	Preparation	Foundational	Shadow Authorities	Officer Leadership	Go Live
Technology	• Form technology working group • Review infrastructure (including security assessment and certification) and scenario planning • Gather and categorise single view of all systems • Identify core system contracts	• Identify treatment of systems and contracts • Delivery of agreed milestones • Infrastructure connectivity and security • Workplace (e-mail) collaboration including elections and Shadow authorities ICT • Contact centres • Digital presence and branding • Physical access • System integration and disaggregation	• Delivery of agreed milestones • Shadow authorities ICT support including councillors' web presence	• Delivery of agreed milestones	• Post reorganisation transformation delivery
Finance	• Form working group of S151 Officers • Review of savings required prior to vesting day • Gathering data on companies, traded services, asset, policies and treasury including PFI • Identify key reporting requirements • Agree baseline budget • Identify pensions costs, risks and opportunities	• Develop service delivery models • Aligned charts of accounts • Baseline MTFPs align savings and scenario planning • Build reporting workstream • Define processes (MTFPs, Treasury management, capital, procurement) • Agree approach to pension scheme, council tax and business rates	• Delivery of agreed milestones • Independent oversight and assessing pension implications of decisions	• Delivery of agreed milestones • S151 initiation	• Delivery of agreed milestones
Contracts and Legal	• Data gathering and scenario planning	• Identify treatment of contracts • Legal support to key contracts and systems • Delivery of agreed milestones	• Delivery of agreed milestones	• Delivery of agreed milestones • MO initiation	• Delivery of agreed milestones
Property and Estates	• Data gathering and scenario planning	• Capital plan optimisation • Establishment of an integrated major projects pipeline • Develop headquarters and estates strategy • Assess rationalisation opportunities	• Delivery of agreed milestones	• Delivery of agreed milestones	• Delivery of agreed milestones
Service Delivery incl. Aggregation and Disaggregation	• Identify key services, contracts, and assets requiring disaggregation/ aggregation. • Map dependencies and risks. • Develop challenge log for complex cases	• Develop protocols for data, systems, and process separation/ integration • Engage stakeholders on impacts	• Monitor progress and resolve emerging issues.	• Oversee resolution of outstanding challenges.	• Confirm completion and lessons learned

Risks and Mitigations

We recognise and understand the risks associated with reorganisation and are proactively addressing them through our programme structure and approach. Transitioning to new structures in Lincolnshire involves disaggregating and reorganising county and district council services. To navigate this complexity we will apply learning from previous local government reorganisation programmes and start Day 1 planning early to ensure readiness.

ICT underpins every aspect of the programme and is vital to the legal and operational integrity of the new councils. We will bring together ICT managers from across Lincolnshire to share system data, licences and infrastructure insights, helping us streamline preparations and reduce pressure on capacity. This will build on our existing data sharing agreement across the 10 councils.

Reorganisation requires strong cooperation across councils, government tiers and political lines. We are building on existing partnerships, identifying shared initiatives that can be delivered now and establishing clear protocols for how we work together. Our approach will ensure that current services remain strong while we build the foundations for successful new authorities.

We have incorporated learning from previous local government programmes into our approach, such as Cumbria who reflected on having good collaboration, a dedicated PMO team and allocated Programme Managers, regular monitoring of delivery plans through Day 1 Board, early set up of Shadow Unitary Boards to support service development and engagement with elected members to understand their priorities. We will consider strategic partner(s) with previous proven, and successful, LGR delivery who will bring further expertise and learning to our approach.



We also recognise the importance and risks around service continuity in key areas such as social care through the transitional period and welcomed the letter from MHCLG on the 24th July 2025 with key considerations:

Service continuity: We will enhance collaboration between councils to maintain service delivery and improve outcomes for residents.

Partnership working: We will build on existing collaborative structures and engage with local residents, care providers, and the voluntary sector to enhance service delivery and innovation.

Leadership and workforce: We will plan effectively for leadership transition, building our talent pipeline, and build shared recruitment and retention strategies for social care staff.

Service planning and delivery: We will integrate service delivery with existing infrastructure and coordinate frontline services to minimise disruption.

Collaborative commissioning: We will focus on joint commissioning efforts to improve value for money and resilience against market shocks, including market shaping, capacity building, and using data to understand population needs and drive care quality improvements.

Strategic collaboration: We will build on our existing strong partnership working between our new unitary authorities, statutory and local partners.



Disaggregation Risk and Experience

We recognise that within the sector some have chosen to make misleading statements that you have to base a new unitary on an existing upper-tier council and pursuing any other than a continuing authority would create unmanageable levels of risk. Of course, establishing any new unitary authority carries potential risks. However, new unitaries will build on lessons learned from previous reorganisations, and from activity and shared learning across the 21 Invitations Areas.

The primary risks associated with new unitary authorities typically relate to financial sustainability and the continuity of key services, particularly adults' and children's services. These risks are often driven by the disaggregation of large county councils, such as Lincolnshire. We have fully addressed these concerns through a robust financial case, including detailed modelling of disaggregation and implementation costs, benefits and payback periods, which incorporates transformation opportunities.

Evidence from the new Cumbrian authorities demonstrates that when county functions are disaggregated with a clear focus on transformation and the creation of right-sized authorities with distinct characteristics, it can lead to positive cultural change. This transformation is enabled by having the right resources, ambition, and local focus to improve outcomes for residents.

A notable example is the improvement in children's services. Prior to local government reorganisation, Ofsted rated Cumbria County Council's children's services as 'Requires Improvement' in their 2022 inspection. Since the establishment of the two new unitary authorities, both councils have been rated 'Good' by Ofsted in their 2024 inspections. This improvement reflects the benefits of creating new unitaries with a strong emphasis on transformation based on local needs. Similar progress has also been observed in adult services (as noted by the CQC), as well as in areas such as net zero initiatives, diversity and inclusion, housing and customer engagement.

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SECTION 6

MHCLG Criteria Cross-Reference

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SECTION 6: MHCLG Criteria Cross-Reference

	CRITERIA	Confirmed	CRITERIA SPECIFICS	Confirmed
1	A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.	✓	a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.	✓
			b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.	✓
			c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.	✓
			d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.	✓
2	Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.	✓	a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.	✓
			b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.	✓
			c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.	✓
			d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.	✓
			e) For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.	N/A
			f) In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.	N/A

SECTION 6: MHCLG Criteria Cross-Reference

	CRITERIA	Confirmed	CRITERIA SPECIFICS	Confirmed
3	Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.	✓	a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.	✓
			b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.	✓
			c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.	✓
4	Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.	✓	a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.	✓
			b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.	✓
			c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.	✓
5	New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.	✓	a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor.	✓
			b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.	N/A
			c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.	✓
6	New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.	✓	a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.	✓
			b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.	✓

SECTION 6: MHCLG Criteria Cross-Reference

	CRITERIA	Confirmed	Further matters that should be taken into account	Confirmed
7	Boundary Changes	✓	a) Existing district areas should be considered the building blocks for your proposals, but where there is a strong justification more complex boundary changes will be considered.•	✓
			b) There will need to be a strong public services and financial sustainability related justification for any proposals that involve boundary changes, or that affect wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, due to the likely additional costs and complexities of implementation.	N/A
8	Engagement and Consultation on reorganisation	✓	a) We expect local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area to which this invitation is issued, rather than developing competing proposals.	✓
			b) For those areas where Commissioners have been appointed by the Secretary of State as part of the Best Value Intervention, their input will be important in the development of robust unitary proposals.	N/A
			c)We also expect local leaders to engage their Members of Parliament, and to ensure there is wide engagement with local partners and stakeholders, residents, workforce and their representatives, and businesses on a proposal.	✓
			d) The engagement that is undertaken should both inform the development of robust proposals and should also build a shared understanding of the improvements you expect to deliver through reorganisation.	✓
			e) The views of other public sector providers will be crucial to understanding the best way to structure local government in your area. This will include the relevant Mayor (if you already have one), Integrated Care Board, Police (Fire) and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority, local Higher Education and Further Education providers, National Park Authorities, and the voluntary and third sector.	✓
			f) Once a proposal has been submitted it will be for the Government to decide on taking a proposal forward and to consult as required by statute. This will be a completely separate process to any consultation undertaken on mayoral devolution in an area, which will be undertaken in some areas early this year, in parallel with this invitation.	✓

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BBC	Boston Borough Council	BC	Borough Council
COLC	City of Lincoln Council	CA	Combined Authority
ELDC	East Lindsey District Council	CC	County Council
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council	CCA	Combined County Authority
NEL	North East Lincolnshire Council	CEX	Chief Executive
NKDC	North Kesteven District Council	CPCA	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
NL	North Lincolnshire Council	CQC	Care Quality Commission
SELCP	South-East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership	DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
SHDC	South Holland District Council	DCN	District Councils' Network
SKDC	South Kesteven District Council	DCS	Director of Children's Services
WLDC	West Lindsey District Council	DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
GLCCA	Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority	DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
GLLEP	Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership	DoLS	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
LLR	Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland	DPH	Director of Public Health
IA	Invitation Area	DPP	Devolution Priority Programme
LGR	Local Government Reorganisation	DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
UA	Unitary Authority	EMCCA	East Midlands Combined County Authority
ADM	Alternate Delivery Model	FRA	Fire & Rescue Authority
AI	Artificial Intelligence	FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
ASC	Adult Social Care	GF	General Fund
DASC	Director of Adult Social Care	GMCA	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
		GMCC	Greater Manchester County Council
		GVA	Gross Value Added

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

HEYCA	Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority	NAC	Neighbourhood Area Committee
HFRS	Humberside Fire and Rescue Service	NBV	Net Book Value
HMA	Housing Market Area	NCC	Norfolk County Council
HMG	His Majesty's Government	NHS	National Health Service
HRA	Housing Revenue Account	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
HS-TTWA	High Skill Travel to Work Area	ONS	Office for National Statistics
ICB	Integrated Care Board	PAC	Public Accounts Committee
ICON	Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods	PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
IMC	Inter-municipal cooperation (shared services etc.)	PCN	Primary Care Network
INT	Integrated Neighbourhood Team	PFCC	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
ITL 1	International Territorial Level 1	PFI	Private Finance Initiative
LA	Local Authority	PMO	Project Management Office
LARP	Local Area Renewal Partnership	PUA	Primary Urban Area
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership	PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
LGBCE	Local Government Boundary Commission for England	RAF	Royal Air Force
LGOF	Local Government Outcomes Framework	RO	Revenue Output
LIS	Local Industrial Strategy	SA	Strategic Authority
LPS	Liberty Protection Safeguards	SCC	Suffolk County Council
LQ	Location Quotient	SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science	SIDF	Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Framework
LSOA	Lower-layer Super Output Area	SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
MO	Monitoring Officer	TPS	Third Party Spending
MSOA	Middle-layer Super Output Area	TTWA	Travel to Work Area
MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan	VCSE	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises
MTFS	Medium Term Financial Strategy		

NOVEMBER 2025

BEST4GreaterLincolnshire

PREPARED BY:

North Kesteven DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire

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Best4GreaterLincolnshire

APPENDIX 1

Greater Lincolnshire Facts and Figures Summary

Scale, Population, Demographics, Deprivation (new release)

November 2025

CONTENT

Figure 1, right, shows all 21 LGR invitation areas both in terms of the foundation county – for example Lincolnshire; and the overall invitation area. Extending the example Lincolnshire, plus the two existing unitary authorities of North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire complete the full invitation area.

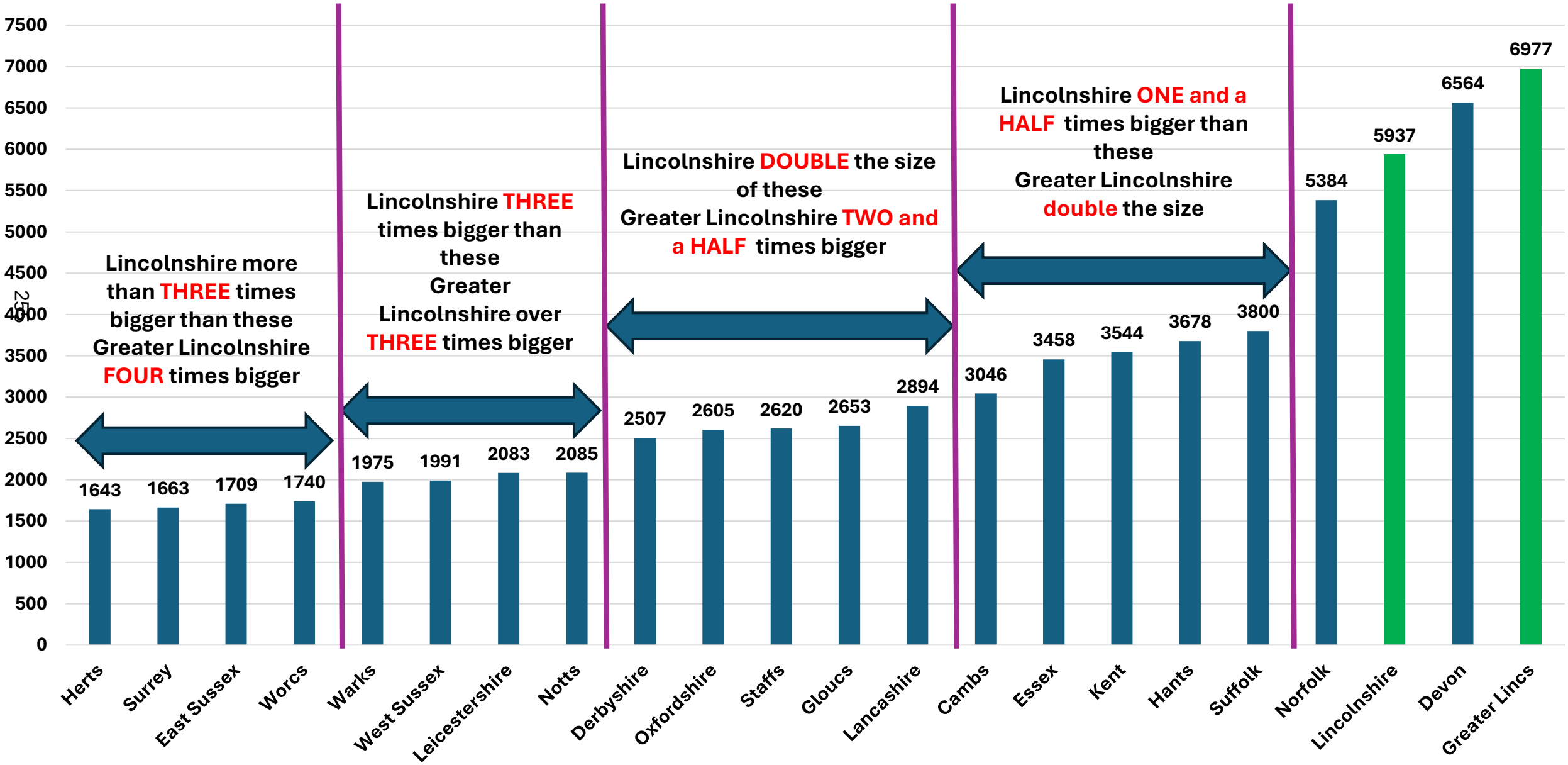
This summary appendix sets out a high level summary covering

- **Scale**
  - Pages 2-9
- **Population**
  - Pages 10-19
- **Demographics**
  - Pages 20-24
- **Deprivation**
  - Pages 25-49

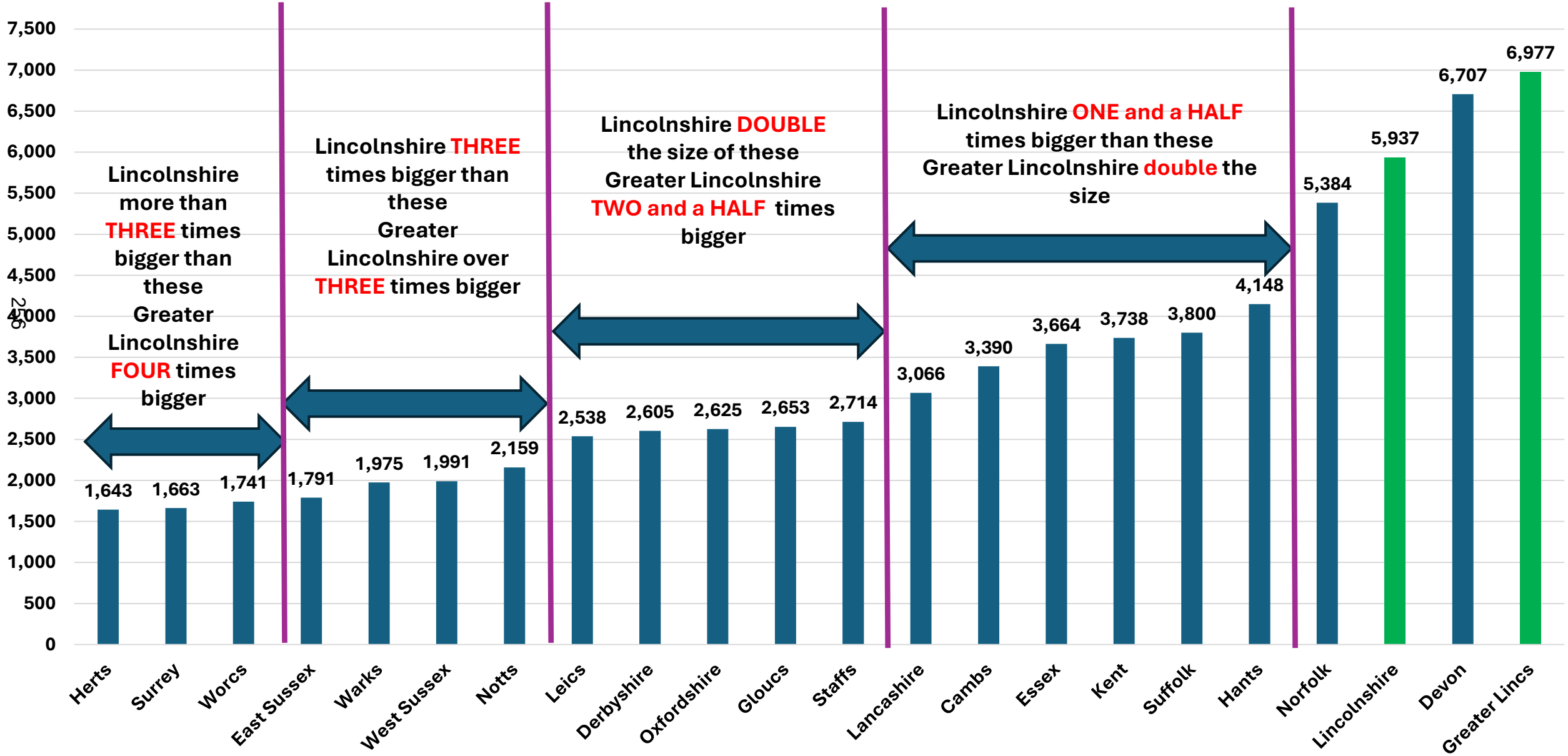
Figure 1

County	Full Invitation Area
Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire
Surrey	Surrey
Worcestershire	Worcestershire
East Sussex	East Sussex and Brighton
Warwickshire	Warwickshire
West Sussex	West Sussex
Nottinghamshire	Nottinghamshire and Nottingham
Leicestershire	Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire
Derbyshire	Derbyshire and Derby
Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire
Staffordshire	Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
Lancashire	Lancashire, Blackburn and Blackpool
Cambridgeshire	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Essex	Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock
Kent	Kent and Medway
Suffolk	Suffolk
Hampshire	Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton
Norfolk	Norfolk
Devon	Devon, Plymouth and Torbay
Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire

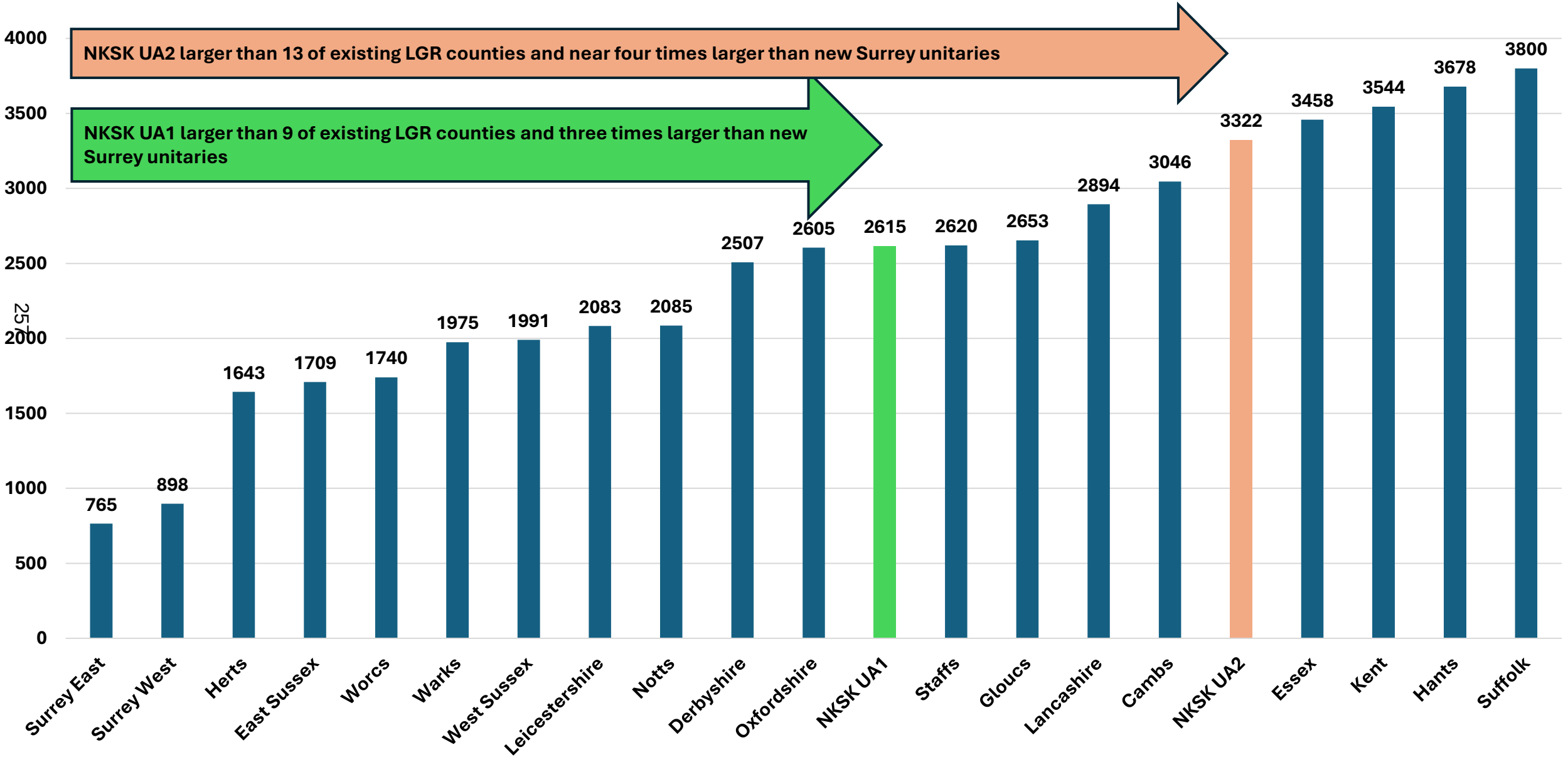
SCALE: Relative Size (sq km) of Lincolnshire, Greater Lincolnshire vs other LGR areas – County comparison



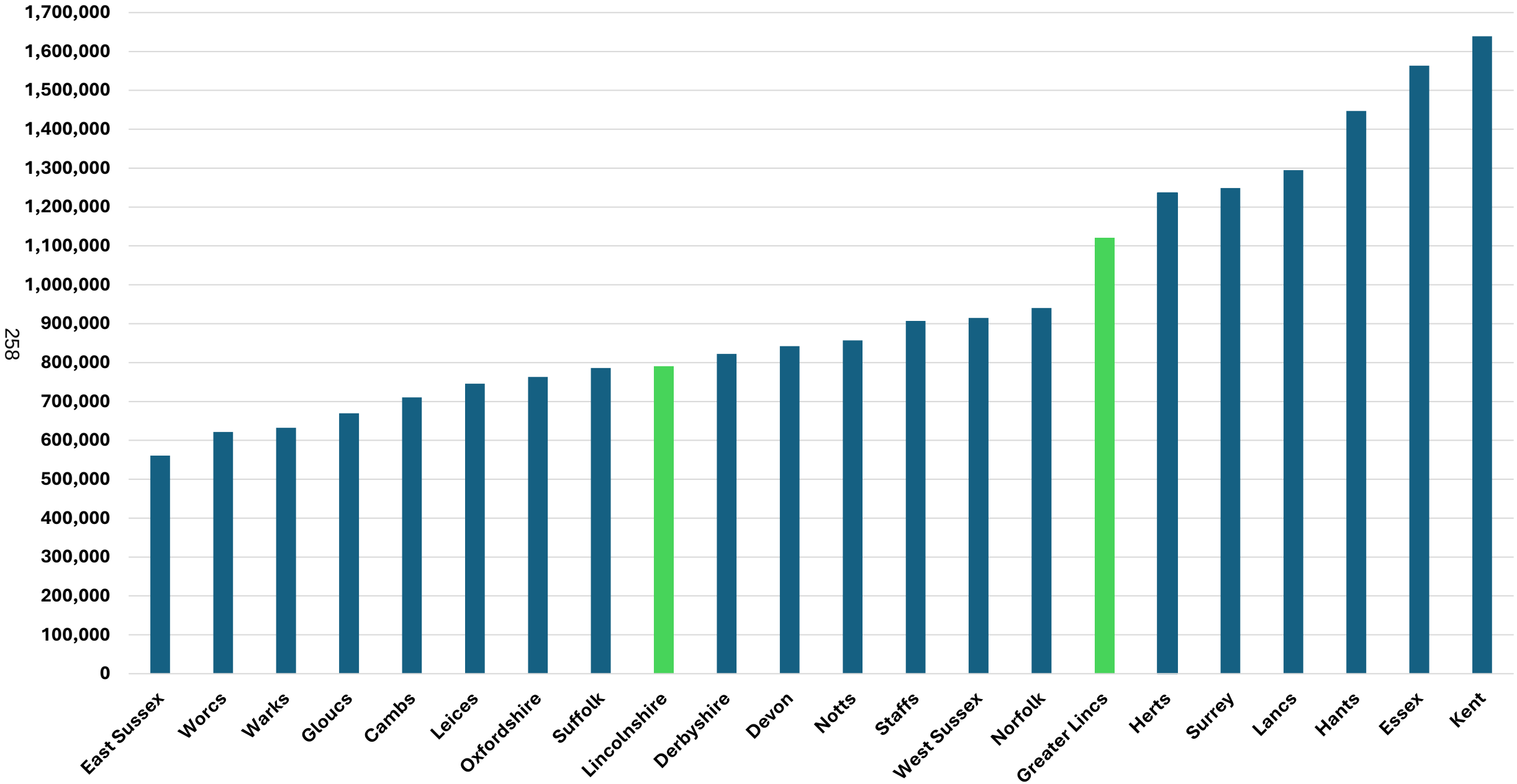
SCALE: Relative Size (sq km) of Lincolnshire, Greater Lincolnshire vs other LGR areas – Full Invitation Areas



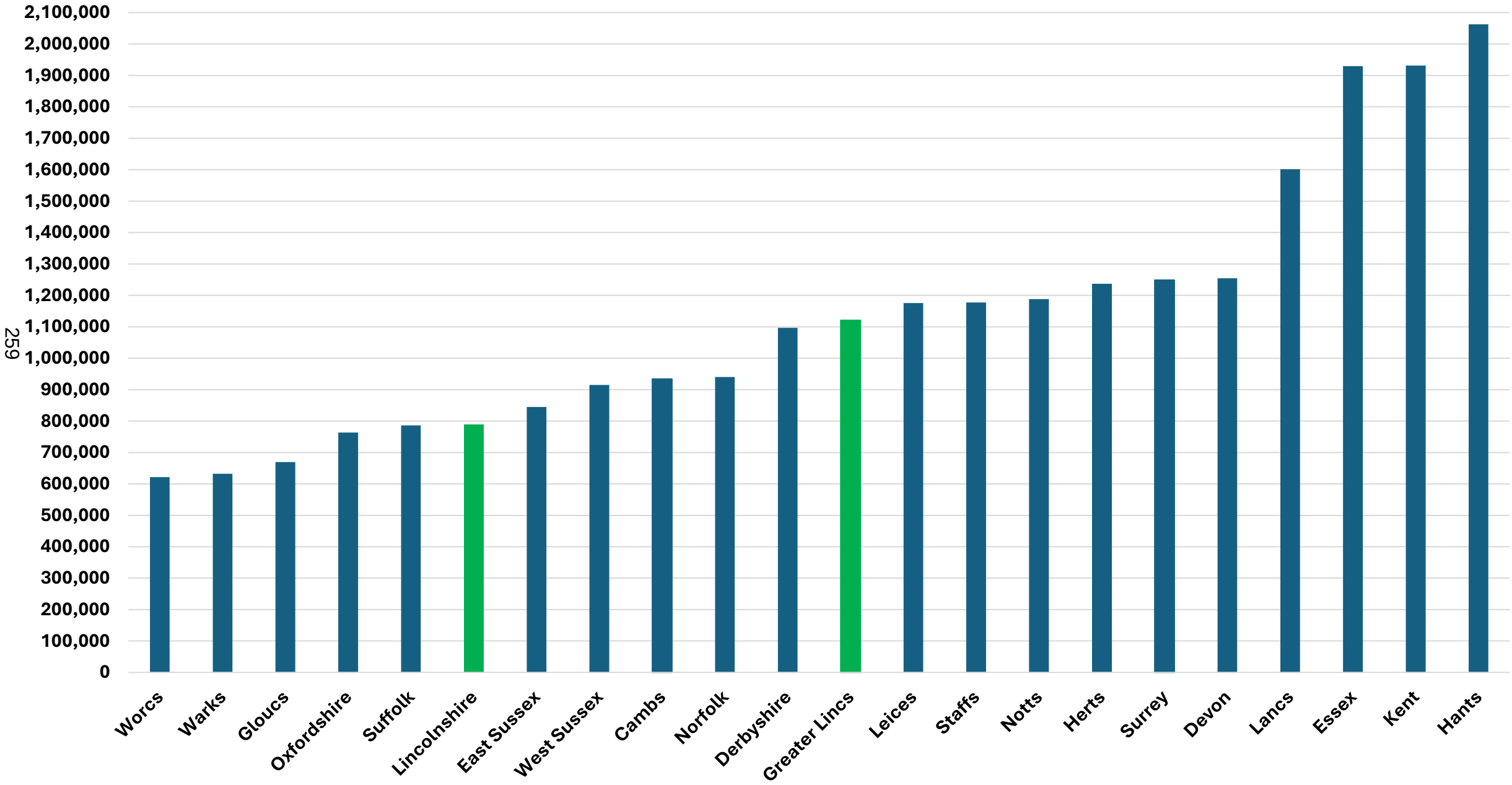
SCALE: Relative Size (sq km) of NLSK Proposed new unitaries vs other existing LGR areas – County comparison



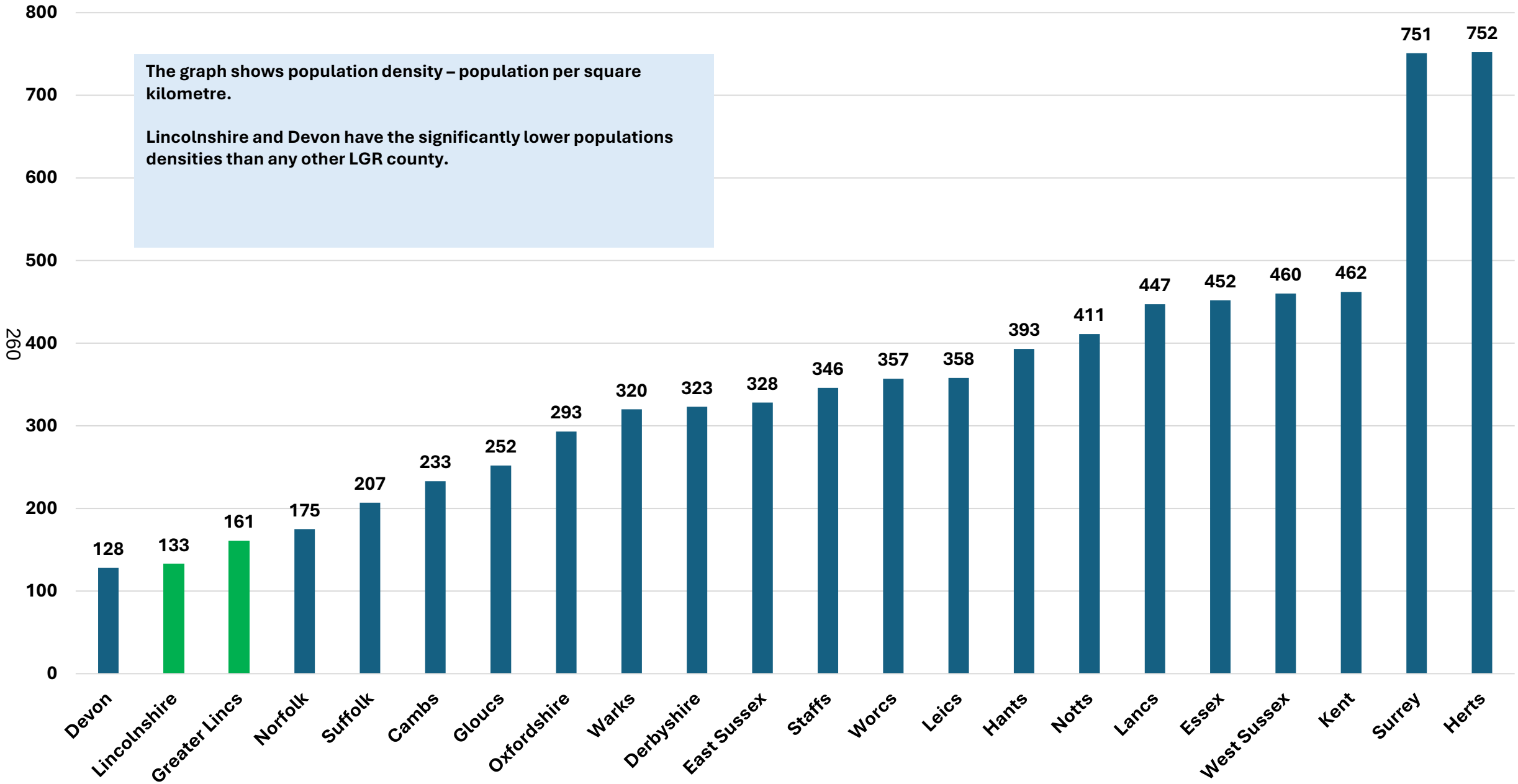
SCALE: Relative Size (Population) of Lincolnshire, Greater Lincolnshire vs other LGR areas – County Comparison



SCALE: Relative Size (Population) of Lincolnshire, Greater Lincolnshire vs other LGR areas – Full Invitation Area



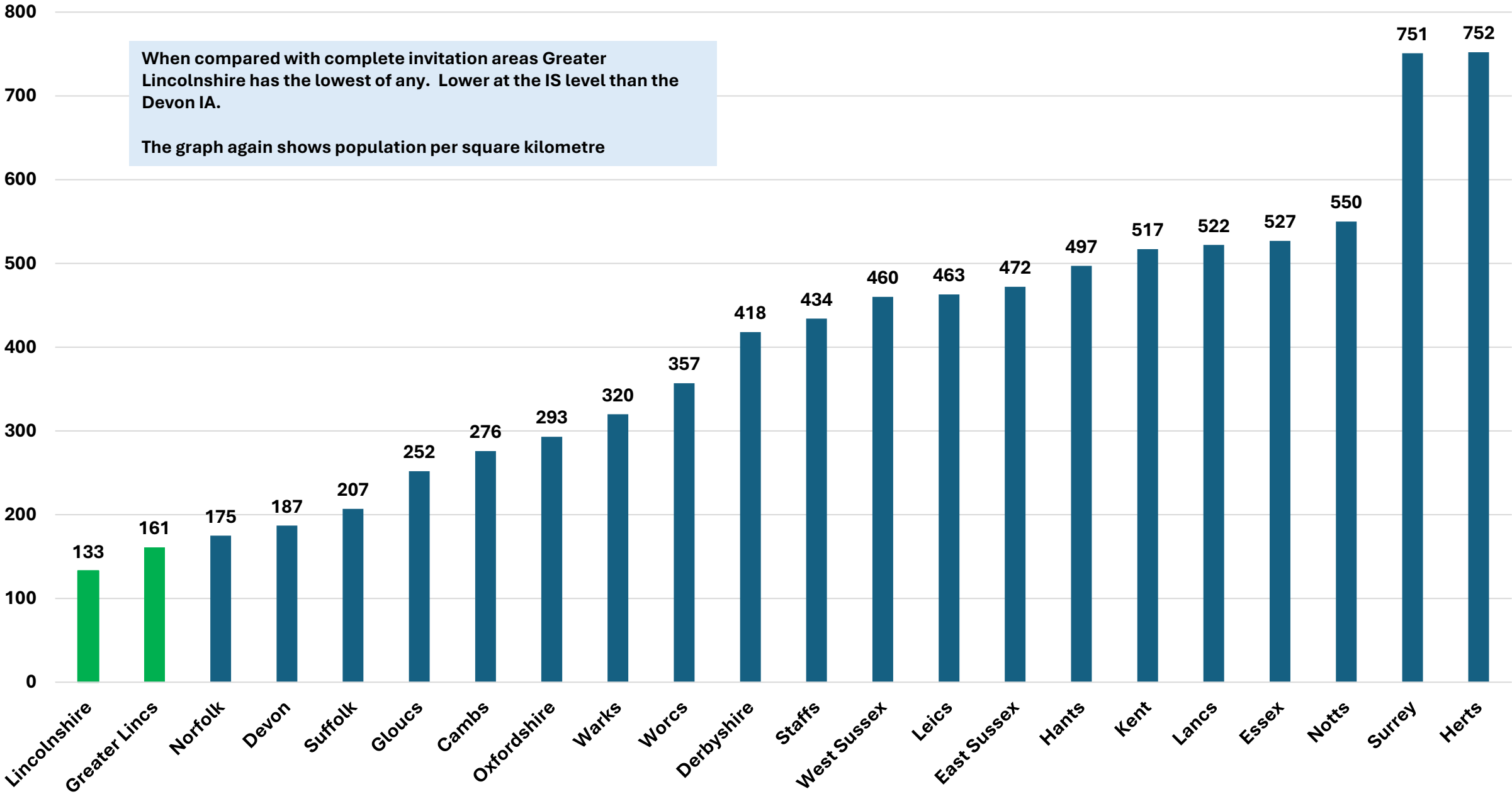
SCALE: Relative Size (Density) of Lincolnshire, Greater Lincolnshire vs other LGR areas – County Comparison



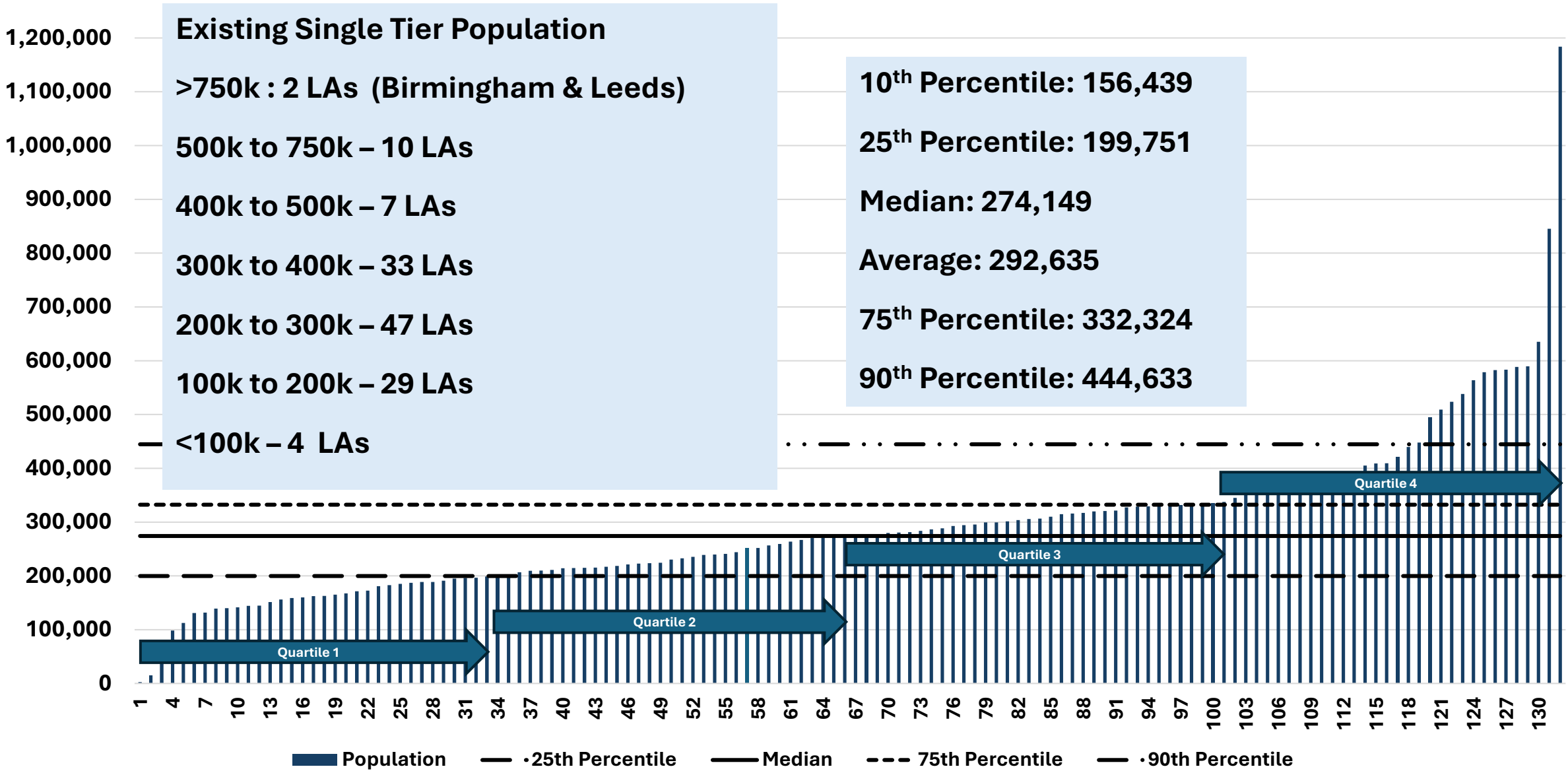
SCALE: Relative Size (Density) of Lincolnshire, Greater Lincolnshire vs other LGR areas – Full Invitation Area

When compared with complete invitation areas Greater Lincolnshire has the lowest of any. Lower at the IS level than the Devon IA.

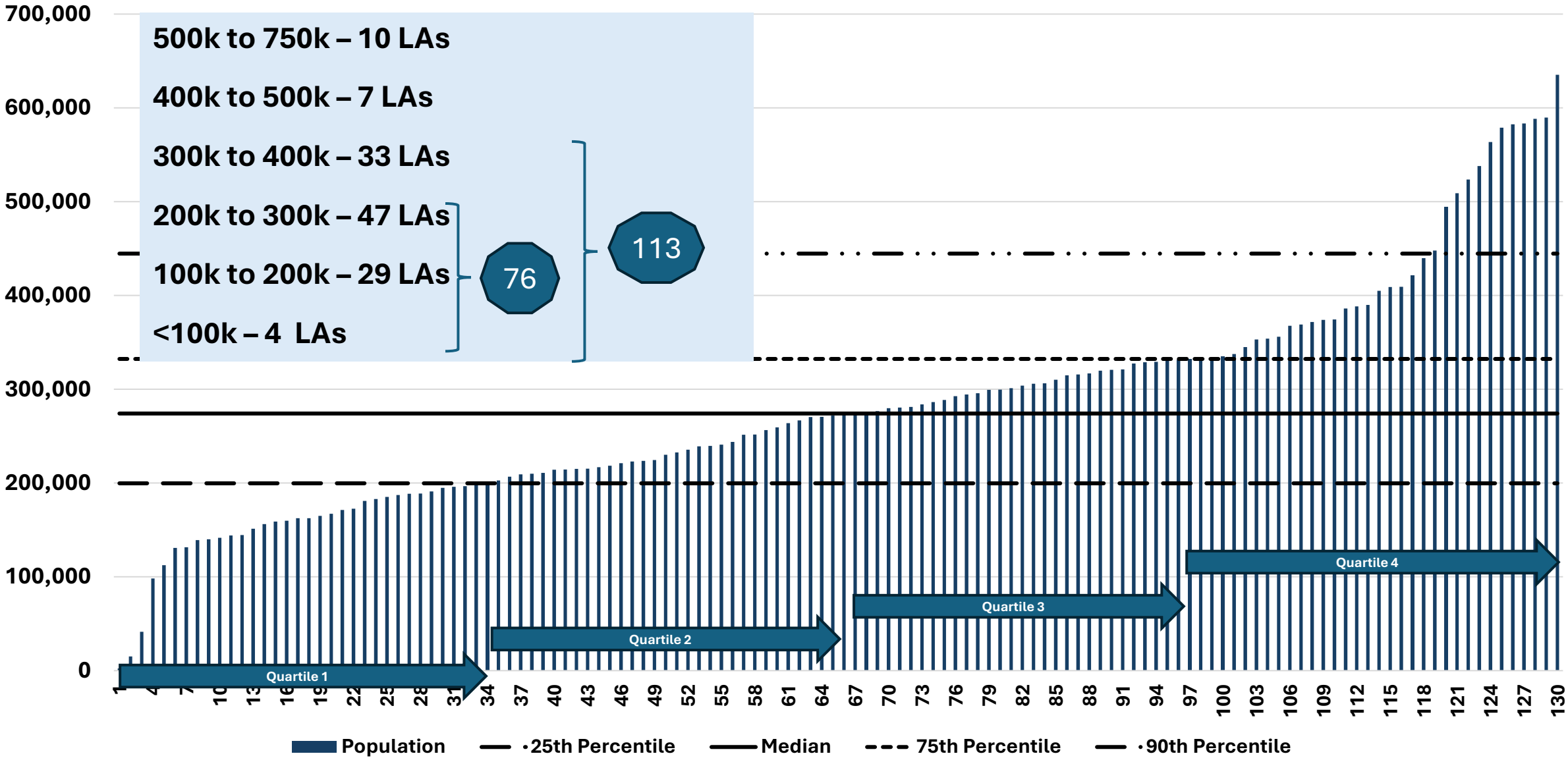
The graph again shows population per square kilometre



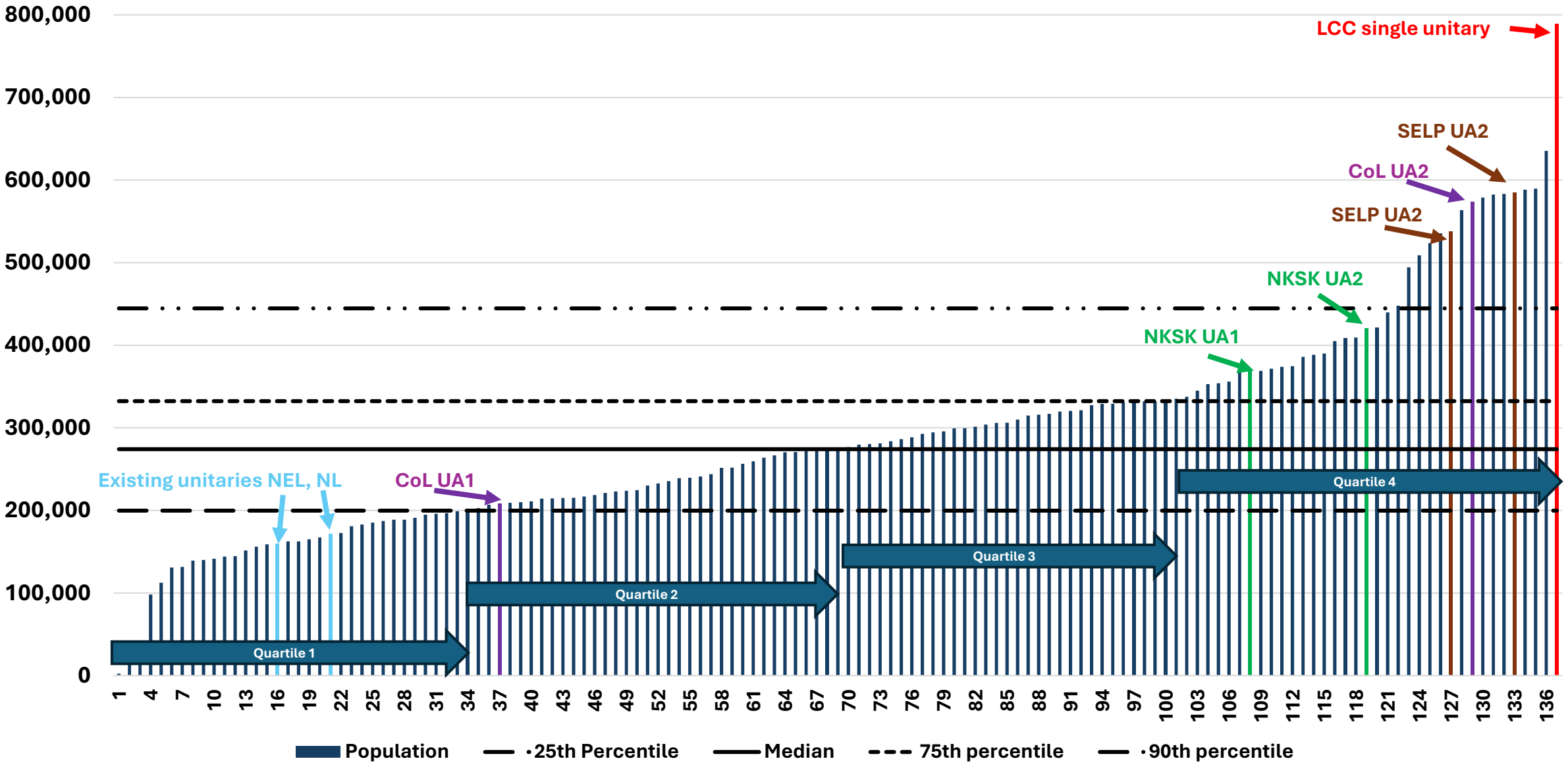
POPULATION: Existing Single Tier Populations



Existing Single Tier Populations – excluding Birmingham and Leeds



POPULATION: Existing Single Tier Populations excluding Birmingham and Leeds with Greater Lincolnshire options shown



POPULATION: Current Single Tier Councils in England – Population Tables (1 of 4) – ONS mid year 2024 estimate published July 2025

Councils with a population > 400,000

Rank	Name	Area (sq km)	Population	Density
1	Birmingham	268	1,183,618	4,420
2	Leeds	552	845,189	1,532
3	North Yorkshire	8,037	635,270	79
4	Manchester	116	589,670	5,099
5	Somerset	3,450	588,328	171
6	Cornwall	3,545	583,289	165
7	Sheffield	368	582,493	1,583
8	Buckinghamshire	1,565	578,772	370
9	Bradford	366	563,605	1,538
10	County Durham	2,226	538,011	242
11	Wiltshire	3,255	523,700	161
12	Liverpool	112	508,961	4,551
13	Bristol, City of	110	494,399	4,508
14	Kirklees	409	447,847	1,096
15	West Northamptonshire	1,377	439,811	319
16	Cheshire East	1,166	421,298	361
17	Croydon	86	409,342	4,734
18	BCP	162	408,967	2,523
19	Barnet	87	405,050	4,668

Councils with a population between 350,000 and 400,000

Rank	Name	Area (sq km)	Population	Density
20	Dorset	2,491	389,947	157
21	Leicester	73	388,348	5,295
22	Ealing	56	385,985	6,949
23	Newham	36	374,523	10,347
24	North Northamptonshire	987	373,871	379
25	Cheshire West and Chester	920	371,652	404
26	Coventry	99	369,026	3,741
27	Wakefield	339	367,666	1,086
28	East Riding of Yorkshire	2,404	355,884	148
29	Sandwell	86	353,860	4,135
30	Brent	43	352,976	8,164

POPULATION: Current Single Tier Councils in England – Population Tables (2 of 4) – ONS mid year 2024 estimate published July 2025

Councils with a population between 300,000 and 350,000

Rank	Name	Area (sq km)	Population	Density
31	Wigan	188	344,922	1,833
32	Wandsworth	34	337,655	9,855
33	Bromley	150	335,319	2,234
34	Shropshire	3,197	332,455	104
35	Dudley	98	331,930	3,388
36	Tower Hamlets	20	331,886	16,787
37	Northumberland	5,020	331,420	66
38	Nottingham	75	331,077	4,437
39	Hillingdon	116	329,185	2,845
40	Wirral	161	328,873	2,044
41	Enfield	81	327,434	4,052
42	Redbridge	56	321,231	5,696
43	Newcastle upon Tyne	113	320,605	2,826
44	Doncaster	568	319,765	563
45	Lambeth	27	316,920	11,822
46	Central Bedfordshire	716	315,877	441
47	Southwark	29	314,786	10,901
48	Bolton	140	310,085	2,218
49	South Gloucestershire	497	306,332	616
50	Milton Keynes	309	305,884	991
51	Stockport	126	303,929	2,411
52	Lewisham	35	301,255	8,572

Councils with a population between 250,000 and 300,000

Rank	Name	Area (sq km)	Population	Density
53	Greenwich	47	299,528	6,331
54	Hounslow	56	299,424	5,350
55	Walsall	104	295,678	2,843
56	Salford	97	294,348	3,028
57	Medway	194	292,655	1,511
58	Sunderland	137	288,606	2,100
59	Sefton	157	286,281	1,828
60	Brighton and Hove	83	283,870	3,427
61	Wolverhampton	69	281,251	4,050
62	Cumberland	3,012	280,495	93
63	Waltham Forest	39	279,737	7,208
64	Rotherham	287	276,595	965
65	Havering	112	276,274	2,459
66	Hull	72	275,401	3,848
67	Derby	78	274,149	3,514
68	Plymouth	80	272,067	3,407
69	Harrow	50	270,724	5,365
70	Stoke-on-Trent	93	270,425	2,894
71	Hackney	19	266,758	14,007
72	Haringey	30	263,850	8,912
73	Southampton	50	259,424	5,201
74	Bexley	61	256,434	4,234
75	Barnsley	329	251,770	765
76	Oldham	142	251,560	1,767

POPULATION: Current Single Tier Councils in England – Population Tables (3 of 4) – ONS mid year 2024 estimate published July 2025

Councils with a population between 200,000 and 250,000

Rank	Name	Area (sq km)	Population	Density
77	Swindon	230	243,875	1,060
78	Trafford	106	241,025	2,273
79	Tameside	103	239,643	2,323
80	Luton	43	239,090	5,515
81	Rochdale	158	235,561	1,490
82	Barking and Dagenham	36	232,747	6,447
83	Westmorland and Furness	3,756	230,185	61
84	North Somerset	374	224,578	601
85	Peterborough	343	223,655	651
86	Islington	15	223,024	15,010
87	Solihull	178	221,242	1,241
88	Merton	38	218,539	5,808
89	Camden	22	216,943	9,961
90	Warrington	181	215,391	1,192
91	North Tyneside	82	215,025	2,613
92	Sutton	44	214,525	4,893
93	Portsmouth	40	214,321	5,307
94	Calderdale	364	210,929	580
95	Westminster	21	209,996	9,775
96	York	272	209,301	770
97	Stockton-on-Tees	205	206,800	1,009
98	Gateshead	142	202,760	1,424
99	Bath and NE Somerset	346	200,028	578

+ 2 District Councils (East Suffolk and Colchester)

Councils with a population between 150,000 and 200,000

Rank	Name	Area (sq km)	Population	Density
100	Bury	99	198,921	2,000
101	Richmond upon Thames	57	196,678	3,427
102	Telford and Wrekin	290	195,952	675
103	Bedford	476	194,976	409
104	Herefordshire, County of	2,180	191,047	88
105	St. Helens	136	188,861	1,385
106	Hammersmith and Fulham	16	188,687	11,504
107	Wokingham	179	187,200	1,046
108	Southend-on-Sea	42	185,256	4,445
109	Reading	40	182,907	4,528
110	Thurrock	164	180,989	1,105
111	Kingston upon Thames	37	172,692	4,635
112	North Lincolnshire	847	171,336	202
113	Slough	33	167,359	5,143
114	West Berkshire	704	165,112	234
115	Knowsley	87	162,565	1,879
116	Blackburn with Darwen	137	162,540	1,186
117	North East Lincolnshire	193	159,911	830
118	Windsor and Maidenhead	196	158,943	809
119	Middlesbrough	54	156,161	2,898
120	South Tyneside	64	151,393	2,350

+ 29 District Councils

POPULATION: Current Single Tier Councils in England – Population Tables (4 of 4) – ONS mid year 2024 estimate published July 2025

Councils with a population between 100,000 and 150,000

Rank	Name	Area (sq km)	Population	Density
121	Kensington and Chelsea	12	144,518	11,918
122	Blackpool	35	144,191	4,135
123	Isle of Wight	380	141,660	373
124	Torbay	63	140,126	2,228
125	Redcar and Cleveland	245	139,228	568
126	Halton	79	131,543	1,663
127	Bracknell Forest	109	130,806	1,196
128	Darlington	197	112,489	570

+ 89 District Councils

140,000 to 150,000 : 16 including South Kesteven and East Lindsey

130,000 to 140,000 : 12

120,000 to 130,000 : 21 including North Kesteven

110,000 to 120,000 : 18

100,000 to 110,000 : 22 including Lincoln

Councils with a population < 100,000

Rank	Name	Area (sq km)	Population	Density
129	Hartlepool	94	98,180	1,048
130	Rutland	382	41,443	109
131	City of London	3	15,111	5,229
132	Isles of Scilly	16	2,366	145

+ 44 District Councils

90,000 to 100,000 : 20 including South Holland and West Lindsey

80,000 to 90,000 : 12

70,000 to 80,000 : 3 including Boston

60,000 to 70,000 : 6

50,000 to 60,000 : 2 including the Melton with the smallest District Council population 54,052

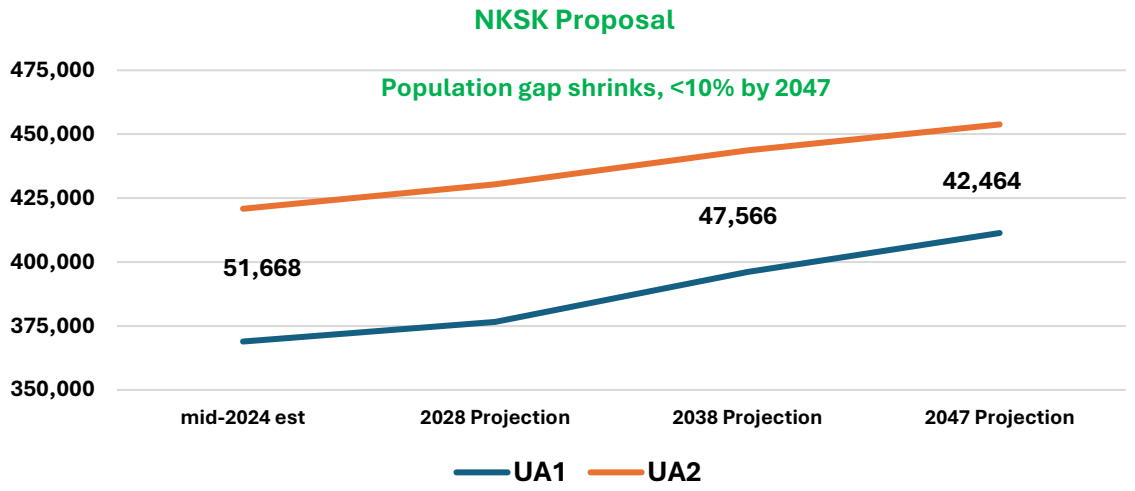
POPULATION: Greater Lincolnshire Populations

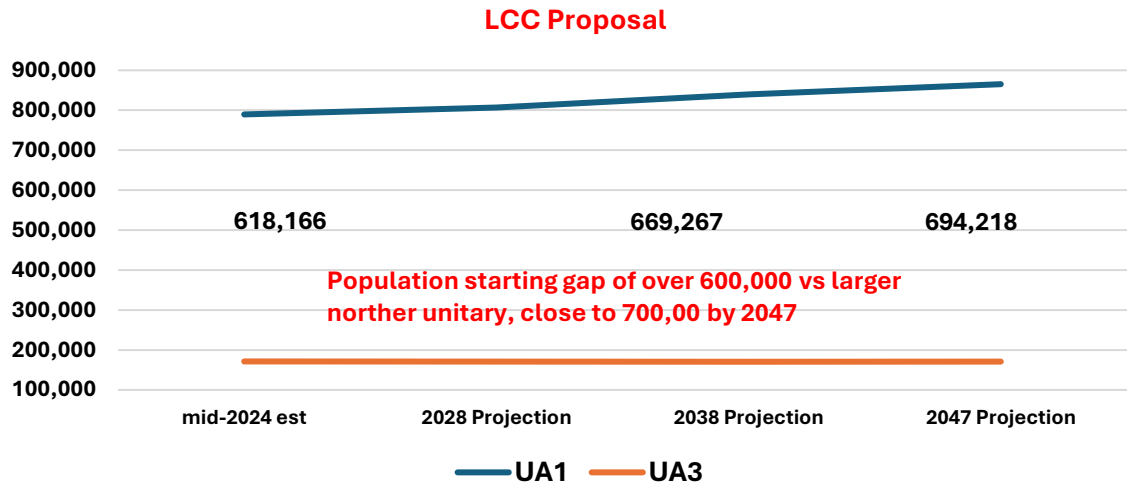
		ONS	ONS Latest Growth estimates June 2025					Projected % Population Growth	
Councils	Area (sq km)	Estimated Population mid-2024	2023 Projection	2028 Projection	2038 Projection	2047 Projection		to 2028	to 2038	to 2048
North East Lincolnshire	193	159,911	158,021	157,534	156,093	155,449		-1.5%	-2.4%	-2.8%
North Lincolnshire	847	171,336	170,612	170,751	170,495	170,972		-0.3%	-0.5%	-0.2%
Boston	364	71,080	72,212	73,690	76,056	78,002		3.7%	7.0%	9.7%
East Lindsey	1,767	145,183	145,359	149,812	157,085	162,876		3.2%	8.2%	12.2%
Lincoln	36	105,114	104,224	105,474	104,140	103,122		0.3%	-0.9%	-1.9%
North Kesteven	922	122,468	120,610	124,644	130,223	134,599		1.8%	6.3%	9.9%
South Holland	750	99,298	98,401	103,327	111,027	116,361		4.1%	11.8%	17.2%
South Kesteven	943	147,151	145,040	148,629	154,848	160,403		1.0%	5.2%	9.0%
West Lindsey	1,156	99,208	97,639	101,462	106,383	109,827		2.3%	7.2%	10.7%
Lincolnshire	5,937	789,502	783,485	807,038	839,762	865,190		2.2%	6.4%	9.6%
Greater Lincolnshire	6,977	1,120,749	1,112,118	1,135,323	1,166,350	1,191,611		1.3%	4.1%	6.3%

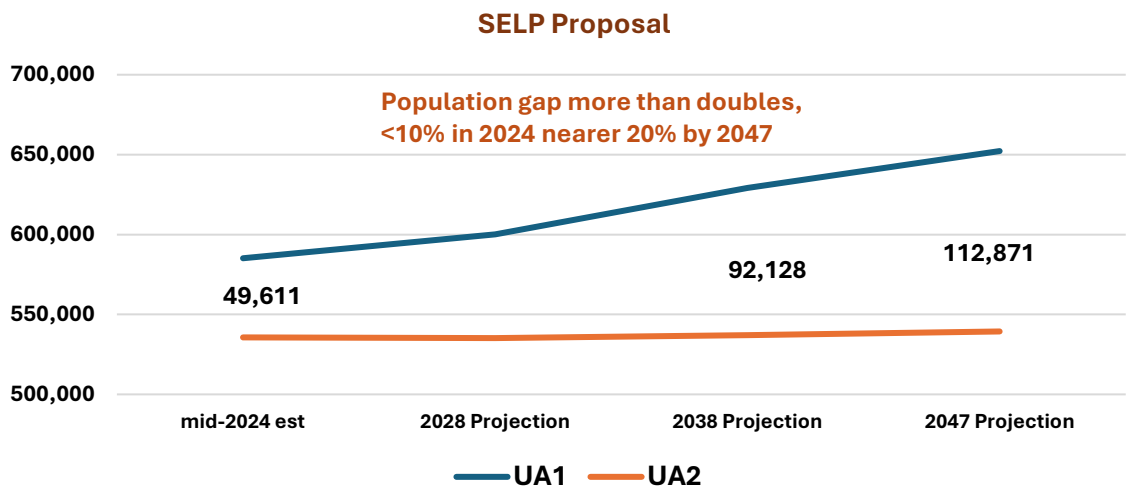
POPULATION: Greater Lincolnshire Populations and Projected Growth by LGR Proposals

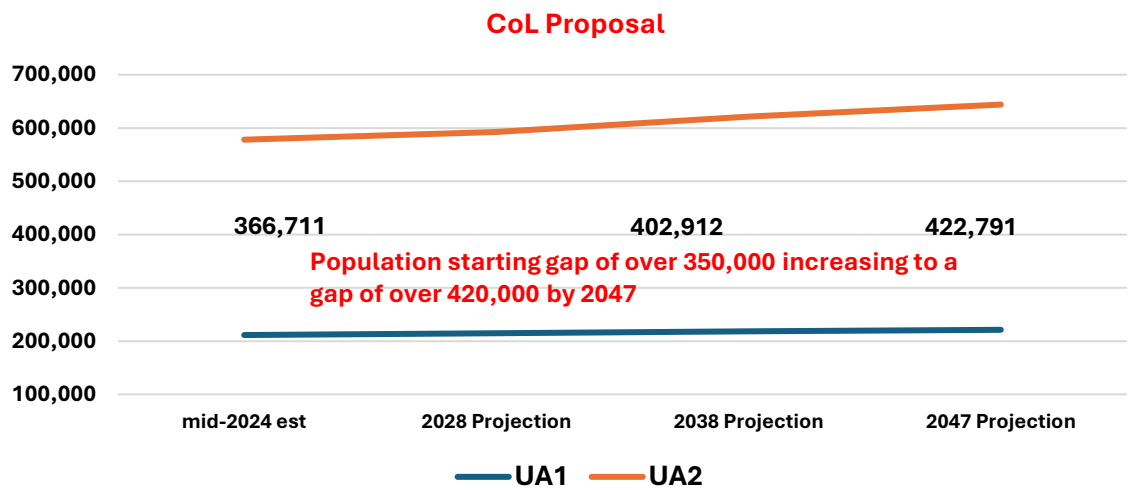
			ONS	ONS Latest Growth estimates June 2025				Projected % Population Growth		
Proposal	Current Councils	Area (sq km)	Estimated Population mid-2024	2023 Projection	2028 Projection	2038 Projection	2047 Projection	to 2028	to 2038	to 2048
NKSK	UA1 NK+SK+SH	2,615	368,917	364,051	376,600	396,098	411,363	2.1%	7.4%	11.5%
	UA 2 EL+WL+CoL+BOS	3,322	420,585	419,434	430,438	443,664	453,827	2.3%	5.5%	7.9%
	UA3 NEL	193	159,911	158,021	157,534	156,093	155,449	-1.5%	-2.4%	-2.8%
	UA4 NL	847	171,336	170,612	170,751	170,495	170,972	-0.3%	-0.5%	-0.2%
LCC	UA 1 All Lincs Districts	5,937	789,502	783,485	807,038	839,762	865,190	2.2%	6.4%	9.6%
	UA2 NEL	193	159,911	158,021	157,534	156,093	155,449	-1.5%	-2.4%	-2.8%
	UA3 NL	847	171,336	170,612	170,751	170,495	170,972	-0.3%	-0.5%	-0.2%
SELP	SK+NK+BOS+SH+EL	4,746	585,180	581,622	600,102	629,239	652,241	2.5%	7.5%	11.5%
	WL+CoL+NEL+NL	2,231	535,569	530,496	535,221	537,111	539,370	-0.1%	0.3%	0.7%
CoL	UA1 Lincoln Expansion	816.00	211,394	209,744	214,729	218,425	221,199	1.6%	3.3%	4.6%
	UA2 Rest of Lincolnshire	5,121.00	578,105	573,741	592,309	621,337	643,991	2.5%	7.5%	11.4%
	UA3 NEL	193	159,911	158,021	157,534	156,093	155,449	-1.5%	-2.4%	-2.8%
	UA3 NL	847	171,336	170,612	170,751	170,495	170,972	-0.3%	-0.5%	-0.2%

POPULATION: Greater Lincolnshire Proposals Projected Growth – LGR Proposals Population balance









Demographics

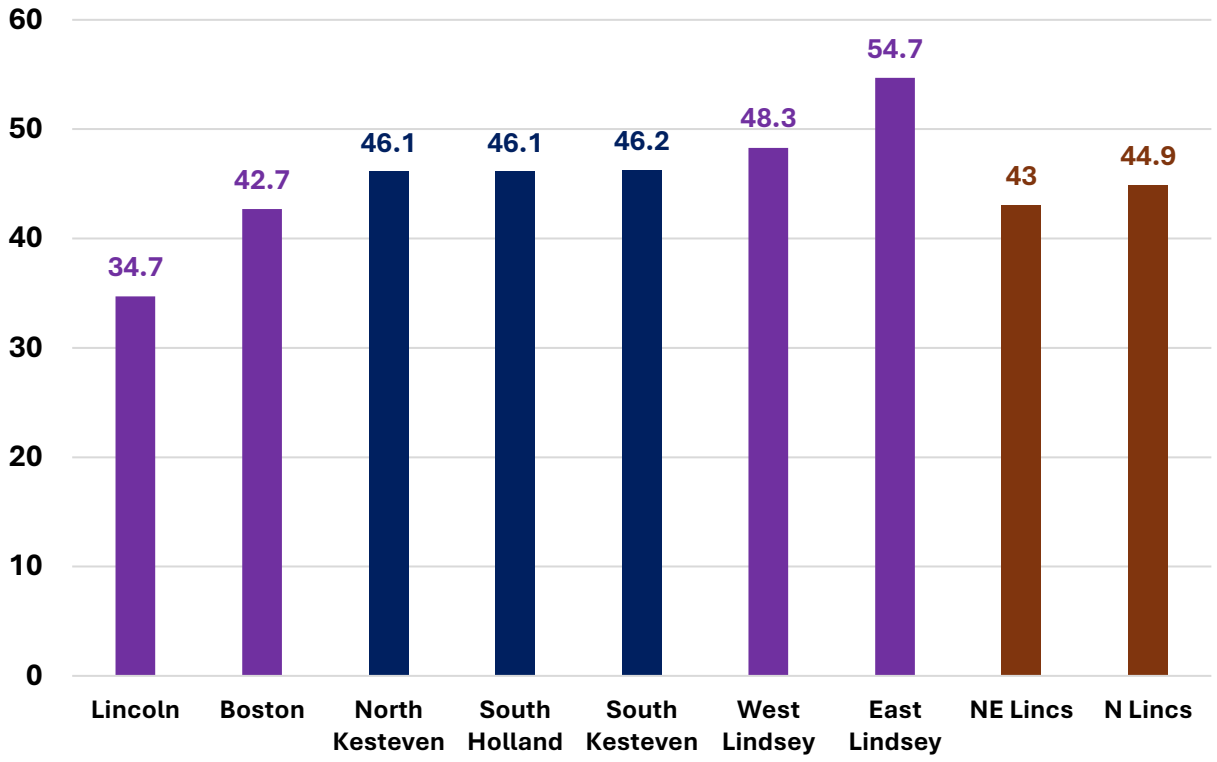
The chart right shows the latest ONS estimates of the median age in each Council area. This is shown in ascending order for the Lincolnshire districts. Then for the two northern unitaries. Dark blue denotes UA1 councils in the NKSK proposal, and purple the UA2 councils.

The table below shows the median age for each year back to 2011, with the England figure included for reference.

Lincoln, impacted by the presence on the university has a significantly lower median age as compared with the rest of the Invitation Area, is 5.7 years lower than the England figure.

The three areas in UA1 have near identical medians, all well above the England figure.

UA2 has a greater range with East Lindsey having by some way the highest median age of any of the seven Lincolnshire districts.



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	change v 2011
Boston	42.4	42.4	42.0	42.0	41.9	41.6	41.4	41.6	41.9	42.1	42.4	42.6	42.5	42.7	0.3
East Lindsey	49.3	49.7	50.0	50.3	50.7	51.1	51.5	51.9	52.2	52.6	52.9	53.3	53.7	54.1	4.8
Lincoln	34.5	34.0	33.9	33.8	33.7	33.6	33.4	33.4	33.5	33.7	34.3	34.4	34.6	34.7	0.2
West Lindsey	45.8	46.2	46.5	46.8	47.0	47.2	47.6	47.9	48.2	48.5	48.5	48.5	48.4	48.3	2.5
North Kesteven	44.4	44.8	45.1	45.3	45.5	45.7	45.9	46.1	46.4	46.3	46.3	46.4	46.3	46.1	1.7
South Holland	45.1	45.4	45.6	45.5	45.5	45.5	45.6	45.8	46.1	46.3	46.4	46.4	46.2	46.1	1.0
South Kesteven	43.7	44.1	44.3	44.5	44.9	45.1	45.5	45.8	46.1	46.3	46.4	46.4	46.1	46.2	2.5
North East Lincs	41.1	41.4	41.7	42.0	42.2	42.4	42.5	42.7	42.9	43.0	43.1	43.1	43.0	43.0	1.9
North Lincs	42.4	42.8	43.1	43.4	43.6	43.8	44.0	44.3	44.5	44.7	44.8	44.9	44.9	44.9	2.5
England	39.4	39.5	39.7	39.8	39.8	39.8	39.9	40.0	40.1	40.3	40.5	40.4	40.3	40.2	0.8

DEMOGRAPHICS

This page provides an initial breakdown by broad age group.

The table shows the population by under 16, 16-64 (“working age”) , 65 and over, plus the overall total. Plus the percentage of the total population that each of those three groupings represents.

The overall total for each age group is shown followed by the age group total for each of our proposed new unitary authorities.

Unitary 1 – North Kesteven, South Holland, South Kesteven,

Unitary 2 – Boston, Lincoln, East Lindsey, West Lindsey

The existing northern unitaries are shown in the main body of the table

Unitary 3 – North East Lincolnshire,

Unitary4 - North Lincolnshire

	Under 16	16-64	65 & Over	Total	Under 16	16-64	65 & Over
Boston	13,742	42,271	15,067	71,080	19.3%	59.5%	21.2%
East Lindsey	20,355	79,092	45,736	145,183	14.0%	54.5%	31.5%
Lincoln	16,987	72,252	15,875	105,114	16.2%	68.7%	15.1%
West Lindsey	16,329	57,360	25,519	99,208	16.5%	57.8%	25.7%
North Kesteven	20,414	72,777	29,277	122,468	16.7%	59.4%	23.9%
South Holland	17,156	58,113	24,029	99,298	17.3%	58.5%	24.2%
South Kesteven	25,438	86,608	35,105	147,151	17.3%	58.9%	23.9%
North East Lincs	29,713	95,608	34,590	159,911	18.6%	59.8%	21.6%
North Lincs	30,501	101,569	39,266	171,336	17.8%	59.3%	22.9%
TOTAL	**190,635**	**665,650**	**264,464**	**1,120,749**	**17.0%**	**59.4%**	**23.6%**
NKSK UA1	67,413	250,975	102,197	420,585	**16.0%**	**59.7%**	**24.3%**
NKSK UA2	63,008	217,498	88,411	368,917	**17.1%**	**59.0%**	**24.0%**

As the table above shows the working age percentage in both the proposed new unitaries has less than a percentage point difference between Unitary 1 with 59.7% Unitary 2 with 59.0%.

A more detailed breakdown by age band is shown on the next page.

DEMOGRAPHICS

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DEMOGRAPHICS

This page provides expands the 2024 MYE breakdown – top table.

The centre table then shows the 2047 projections for the same groupings

The bottom table then shows the movement for each age band. This table identifies the significant growth in the older age groups reinforcing the need for new unitaries to work with partners to focus on ageing well support and strategies.

2024 MYE	Under 19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
Boston	16,954	6,851	9,244	8,622	9,654	8,727	6,895	3,379	754
East Lindsey	25,643	12,186	13,758	13,237	21,484	25,337	21,720	10,048	1,770
Lincoln	24,739	19,912	16,093	11,765	11,190	9,825	7,160	3,594	836
West Lindsey	20,316	8,945	11,204	10,968	14,502	14,550	11,953	5,826	944
North Kesteven	25,253	12,240	14,871	13,961	17,836	16,289	13,680	7,061	1,277
South Holland	20,998	9,350	12,139	11,452	14,114	13,271	11,048	5,739	1,187
South Kesteven	31,732	13,427	17,325	17,634	21,448	19,405	16,539	8,005	1,636
North East Lincs	36,890	16,243	21,069	17,899	21,794	20,900	15,682	7,807	1,627
North Lincs	38,181	16,344	21,150	19,601	24,202	23,202	18,184	8,711	1,761
Total	**240,706**	**115,498**	**136,853**	**125,139**	**156,224**	**151,506**	**122,861**	**60,170**	**11,792**

2047 Projection	Under 19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
Boston	14,423	7,482	9,577	9,797	10,865	10,208	8,617	5,626	1,405
East Lindsey	21,789	11,498	14,517	16,163	23,018	28,122	26,890	17,185	3,693
Lincoln	19,453	20,321	14,088	12,303	11,786	9,462	7,759	6,114	1,836
West Lindsey	17,265	8,260	11,868	13,616	16,092	15,687	14,481	10,397	2,161
North Kesteven	21,178	11,754	16,171	17,015	18,770	17,683	16,932	12,406	2,690
South Holland	19,612	9,306	12,697	14,113	16,911	16,520	14,819	9,974	2,410
South Kesteven	26,878	12,297	18,187	20,816	22,959	21,198	19,645	14,563	3,861
North East Lincs	27,105	14,921	19,307	19,198	21,281	19,516	17,661	13,353	3,109
North Lincs	29,137	14,960	20,172	21,150	24,191	22,428	20,045	14,998	3,892
Total	**196,841**	**110,799**	**136,584**	**144,172**	**165,872**	**160,823**	**146,849**	**104,614**	**25,056**

Change	Under 19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
Boston	-2,531	631	333	1,175	1,211	1,481	1,722	2,247	651
East Lindsey	-3,854	-688	759	2,926	1,534	2,785	5,170	7,137	1,923
Lincoln	-5,286	409	-2,005	538	596	-363	599	2,520	1,000
West Lindsey	-3,051	-685	664	2,648	1,590	1,137	2,528	4,571	1,217
North Kesteven	-4,075	-486	1,300	3,054	934	1,394	3,252	5,345	1,413
South Holland	-1,386	-44	558	2,661	2,797	3,249	3,771	4,235	1,223
South Kesteven	-4,854	-1,130	862	3,182	1,511	1,793	3,106	6,558	2,225
North East Lincs	-9,785	-1,322	-1,762	1,299	-514	-1,384	1,979	5,546	1,482
North Lincs	-9,044	-1,384	-978	1,549	-11	-774	1,861	6,287	2,131
Total	**-43,865**	**-4,699**	**-269**	**19,033**	**9,648**	**9,317**	**23,988**	**44,444**	**13,264**

DEMOGRAPHICS

This page takes the figures from the previous page and shows them for the proposed new unitary councils.

2024 MYE	Under 19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
NKSK UA1	77,983	35,017	44,335	43,047	53,398	48,965	41,267	20,805	4,100
NKSK UA2	87,652	47,894	50,299	44,592	56,830	58,439	47,728	22,847	4,304

NKSK UA1	21.1%	9.5%	12.0%	11.7%	14.5%	13.3%	11.2%	5.6%	1.1%
NKSK UA2	20.8%	11.4%	12.0%	10.6%	13.5%	13.9%	11.3%	5.4%	1.0%
North East Lincs	23.1%	10.2%	13.2%	11.2%	13.6%	13.1%	9.8%	4.9%	1.0%
North Lincs	22.3%	9.5%	12.3%	11.4%	14.1%	13.5%	10.6%	5.1%	1.0%
Total	21.5%	10.3%	12.2%	11.2%	13.9%	13.5%	11.0%	5.4%	1.1%

2047 Projection	Under 19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
NKSK UA1	67,668	33,357	47,055	51,944	58,639	55,401	51,396	36,942	8,961
NKSK UA2	72,931	47,561	50,051	51,880	61,761	63,479	57,747	39,322	9,095

NKSK UA1	16.4%	8.1%	11.4%	12.6%	14.3%	13.5%	12.5%	9.0%	2.2%
NKSK UA2	16.1%	10.5%	11.0%	11.4%	13.6%	14.0%	12.7%	8.7%	2.0%
North East Lincs	17.4%	9.6%	12.4%	12.4%	13.7%	12.6%	11.4%	8.6%	2.0%
North Lincs	17.0%	8.7%	11.8%	12.4%	14.1%	13.1%	11.7%	8.8%	2.3%
Total	16.5%	9.3%	11.5%	12.1%	13.9%	13.5%	12.3%	8.8%	2.1%

Index of Deprivation

October 2025 Release

Index of Multiple Deprivation (2025) in Greater Lincolnshire – LAs

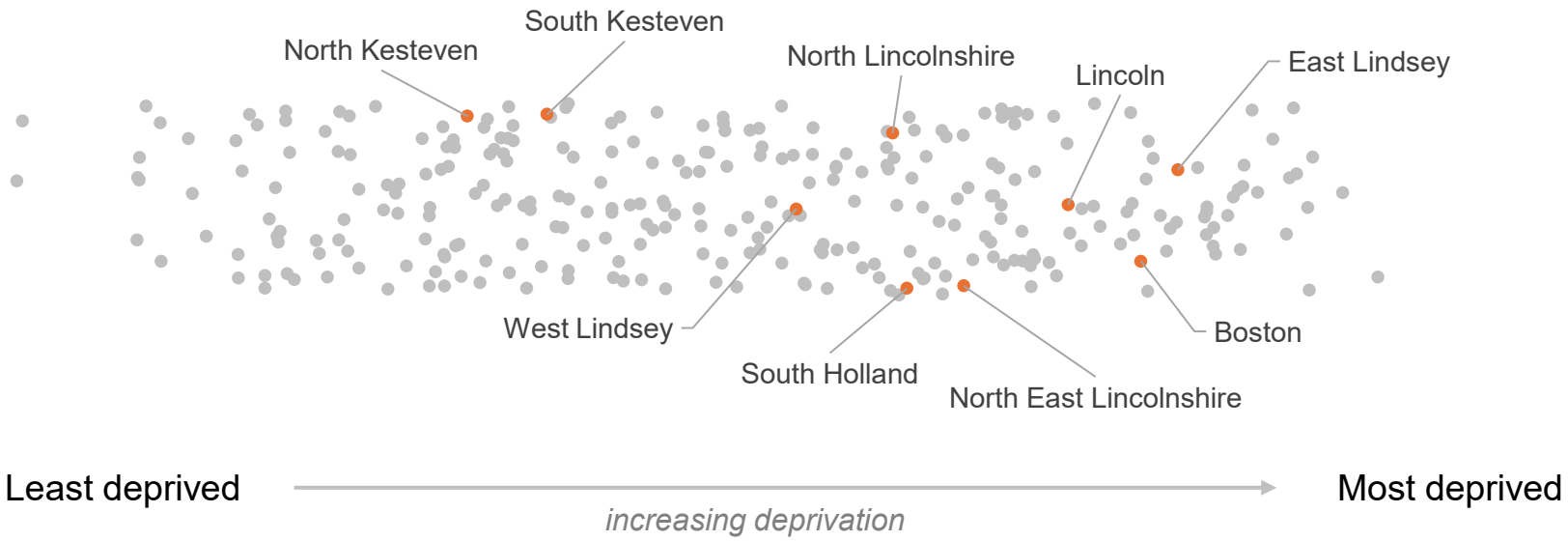
The table below shows the two different IMD ranks for each local authority, based on ranking the average ranks or the average scores of their constituent lower super output areas.

Please note the change in the number of local authorities from 317 in 2019 to 296 in 2025. A rank of 1 indicates the most deprived in England.

Local authorities are listed in order of the 'rank of average rank' for 2025, starting with the most deprived in Greater Lincolnshire.
Please note that the 2025 index is not directly comparable to previous deprivation indices due to multiple methodological changes.

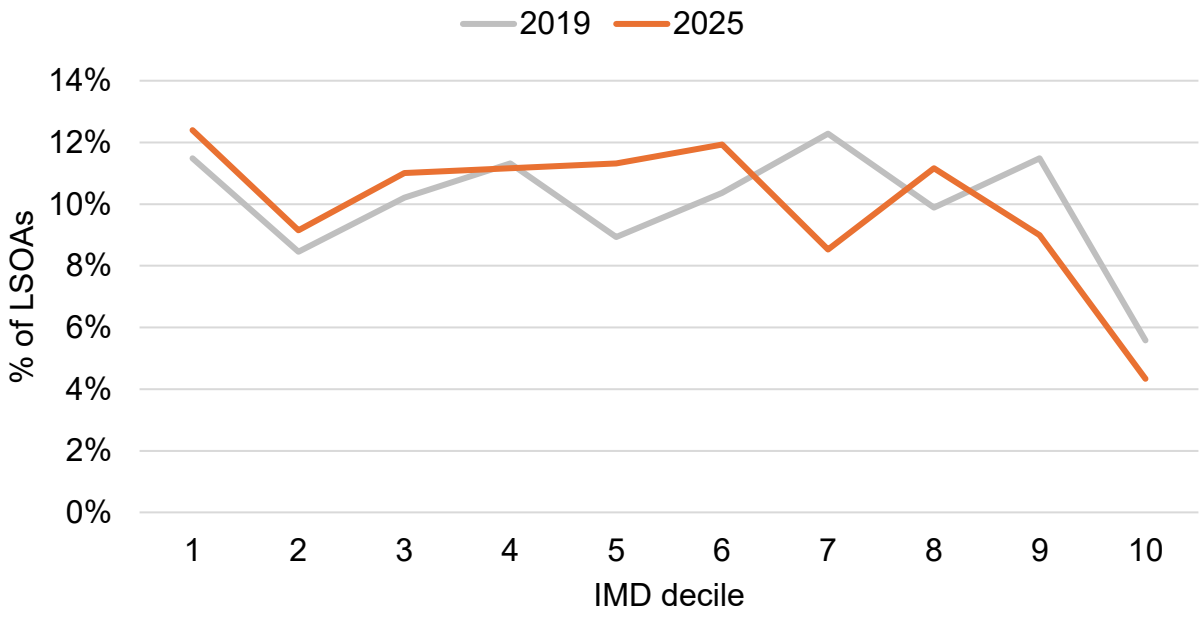
Local authority	2019 Rank (out of 317)		2025 Rank (out of 296)	
	Rank of average rank	Rank of average score	**Rank of average rank**	Rank of average score
East Lindsey	30	39	**27**	36
Boston	85	102	**36**	51
Lincoln	68	60	**48**	47
North East Lincolnshire	66	29	**81**	39
South Holland	144	168	**100**	123
North Lincolnshire	120	115	**104**	99
West Lindsey	146	136	**131**	118
South Kesteven	234	231	**201**	196
North Kesteven	268	271	**226**	229

Local Authorities by IMD Average rank, showing relative deprivation of Greater Lincolnshire authority areas



Index of Multiple Deprivation (2025) in Greater Lincolnshire – LSOAs

Percentage of Greater Lincolnshire lower super output areas (LSOAs) in each Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile, where 1 = most deprived



The graph above shows the change in the Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles for lower super output areas in Greater Lincolnshire.

- 12.4% of LSOAs in Greater Lincolnshire are in the most deprived 10% nationally (England, IMD decile 1).
- 21.6% of LSOAs in Greater Lincolnshire are in the most deprived 20% nationally (England, IMD deciles 1 and 2).

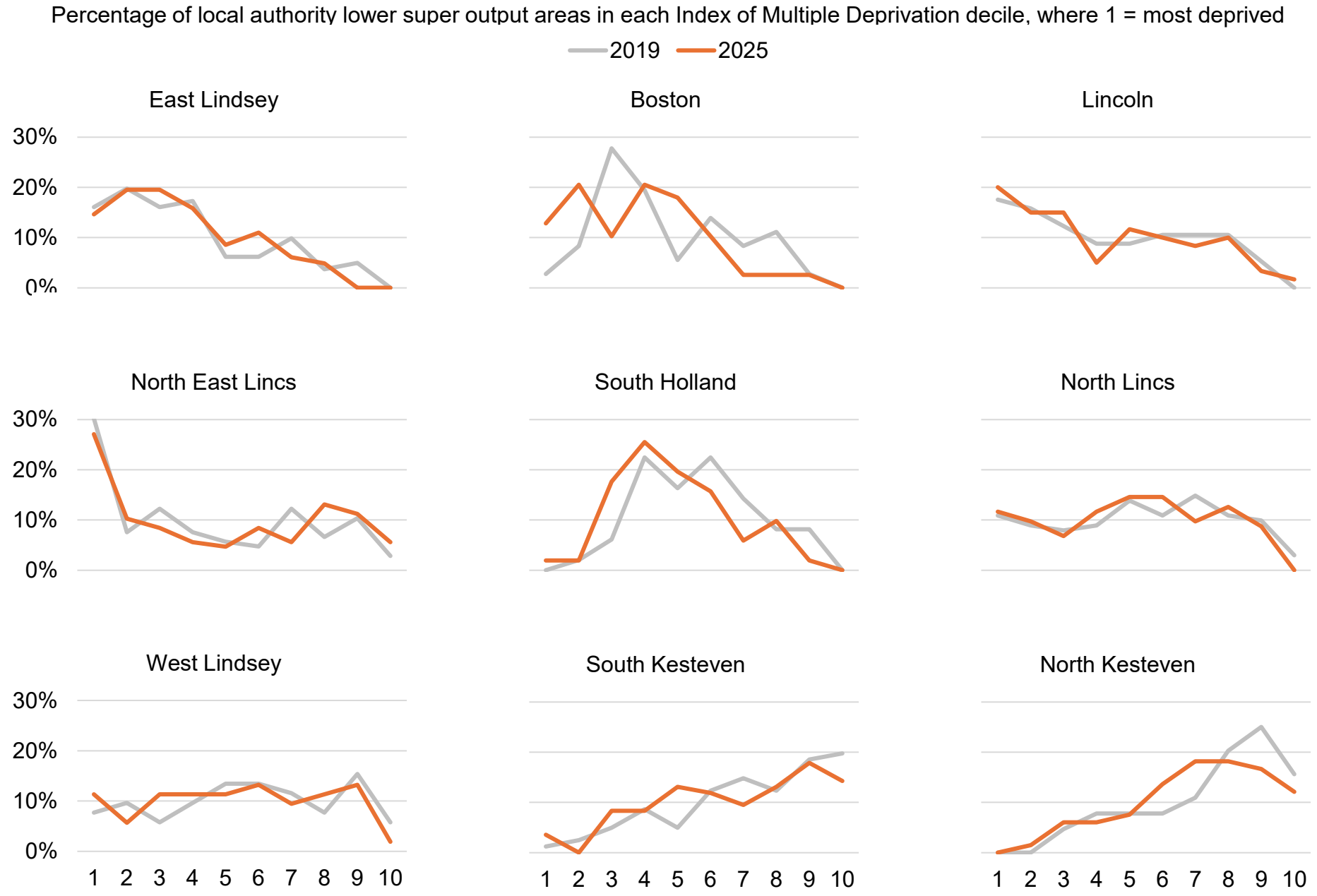
An LSOA is a small area or neighbourhood of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households.

It is important to note that the 2025 index is not directly comparable to previous deprivation indices:

- The overall number of Lower Super Output Areas have increased.
- There have been changes to the underlying metrics and methodology, including increasing the number of indicators used from 39 to 55.

The deprivation of an area is measured relative to other areas. The deprivation rank or decile for an area may have increased, or decreased, but not changed in real terms, only relative to other areas.

An area may also have changed rank or decile from 2019 to 2025 due to the methodological changes for the 2025 index.


Percentage of local authority lower super output areas in each Index of Multiple Deprivation decile, where 1 = most deprived
2019
2025
East Lindsey
Boston
Lincoln
North East Lincs
South Holland
North Lincs
West Lindsey
South Kesteven
North Kesteven
30%
20%
10%
0%
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Number of lower super output areas (LSOAs) in each Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 decile by local authority

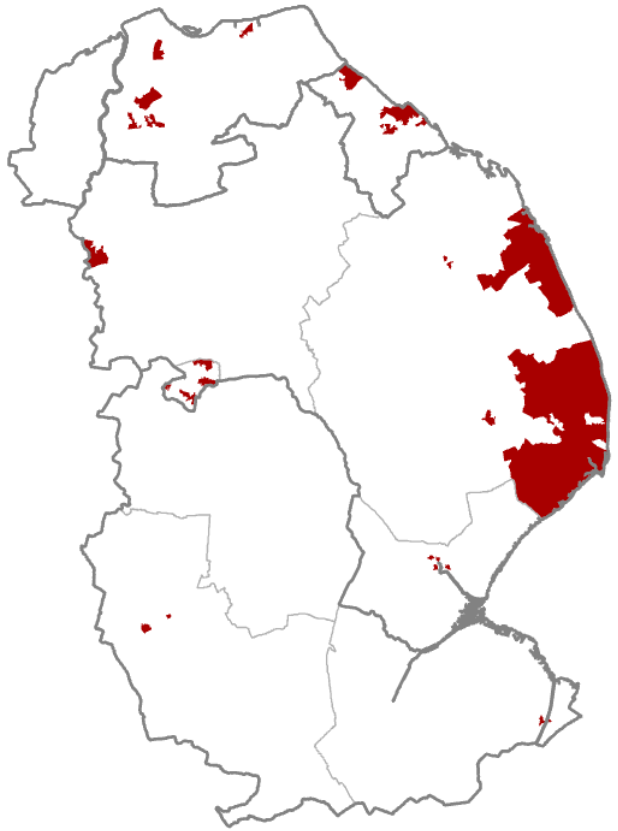
LA	IMD Decile										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
North Kesteven	0	1	4	4	5	9	12	12	11	8	**66**
South Kesteven	3	0	7	7	11	10	8	11	15	12	**84**
South Holland	1	1	9	13	10	8	3	5	1	0	**51**
Total	4	2	20	24	26	27	23	28	27	20	**201**
Boston	5	8	4	8	7	4	1	1	1	0	**39**
East Lindsey	12	16	16	13	7	9	5	4	0	0	**82**
Lincoln	12	9	9	3	7	6	5	6	2	1	**60**
West Lindsey	6	3	6	6	6	7	5	6	7	1	**53**
Total	35	36	35	30	27	26	16	17	10	2	**234**
North East Lincolnshire	29	11	9	6	5	9	6	14	12	6	**107**
North Lincolnshire	12	10	7	12	15	15	10	13	9	0	**103**

The table below provides the proportion of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% and most deprived 20% nationally (England, IMD decile 1 and IMD deciles 1 and 2).

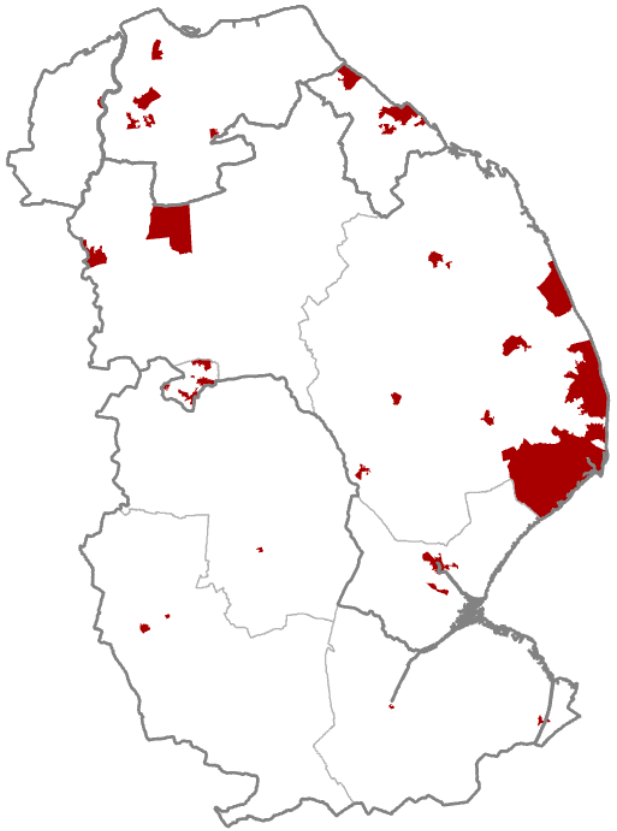
Local Authority	Proportion of LSOAs in nationally most deprived			
	2019		2025	
	10% (decile 1)	20% (decile 1 or 2)	10% (decile 1)	20% (decile 1 or 2)
North East Lincolnshire	30%	38%	27%	37%
Lincoln	18%	33%	20%	35%
East Lindsey	16%	36%	15%	34%
Boston	3%	11%	13%	33%
North Lincolnshire	11%	20%	12%	21%
West Lindsey	8%	17%	11%	17%
South Holland	0%	2%	2%	4%
South Kesteven	1%	4%	4%	4%
North Kesteven	0%	0%	0%	2%

Greater Lincolnshire LSOAs in most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally, 2019 and 2025

2019



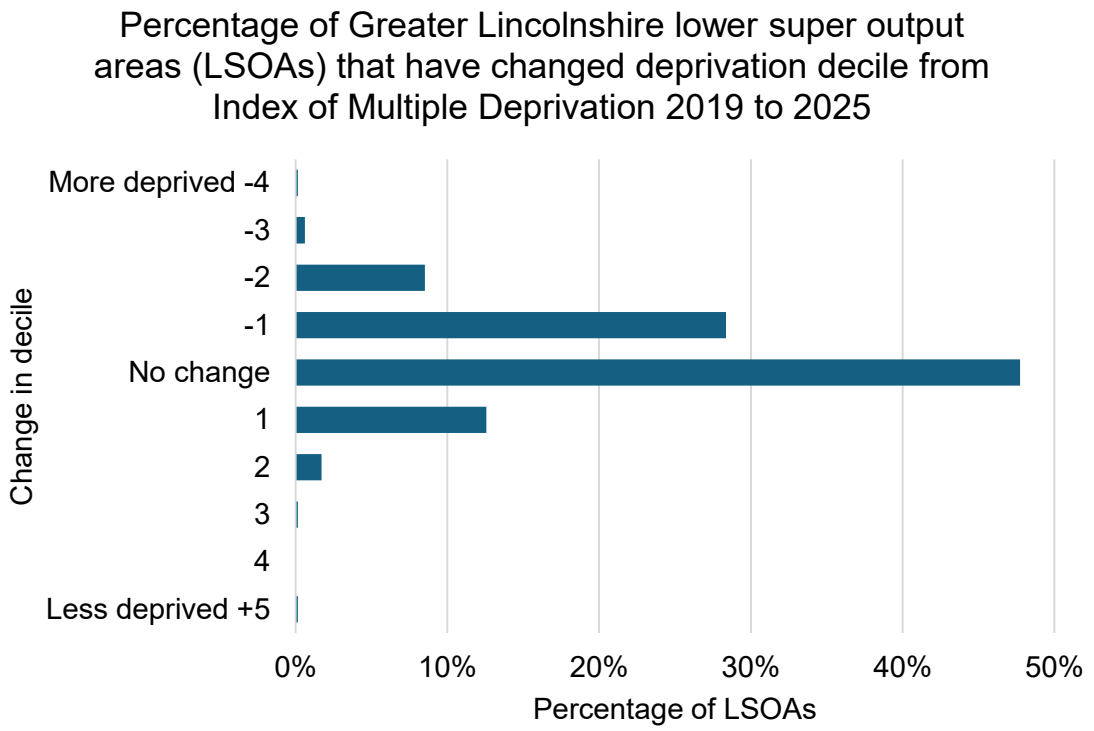
2025



There are 645 lower super output areas in Greater Lincolnshire and from 2019 to 2025:

- 48% have stayed in the same deprivation decile
- 38% have moved into a more deprived decile
- 15% have moved into a less deprived decile

Please note that number of LSOAs increased from the 2019 index (627 LSOAs) to the 2025 index (645 LSOAs). This is due to some areas being divided into 2 or 3 smaller areas because of their increasing populations. These smaller areas have been assigned the 2019 decile of the larger area that they were previously a part of.



Approximately 9 in 10 LSOAs either move up or down one decile, or stayed in the same decile.

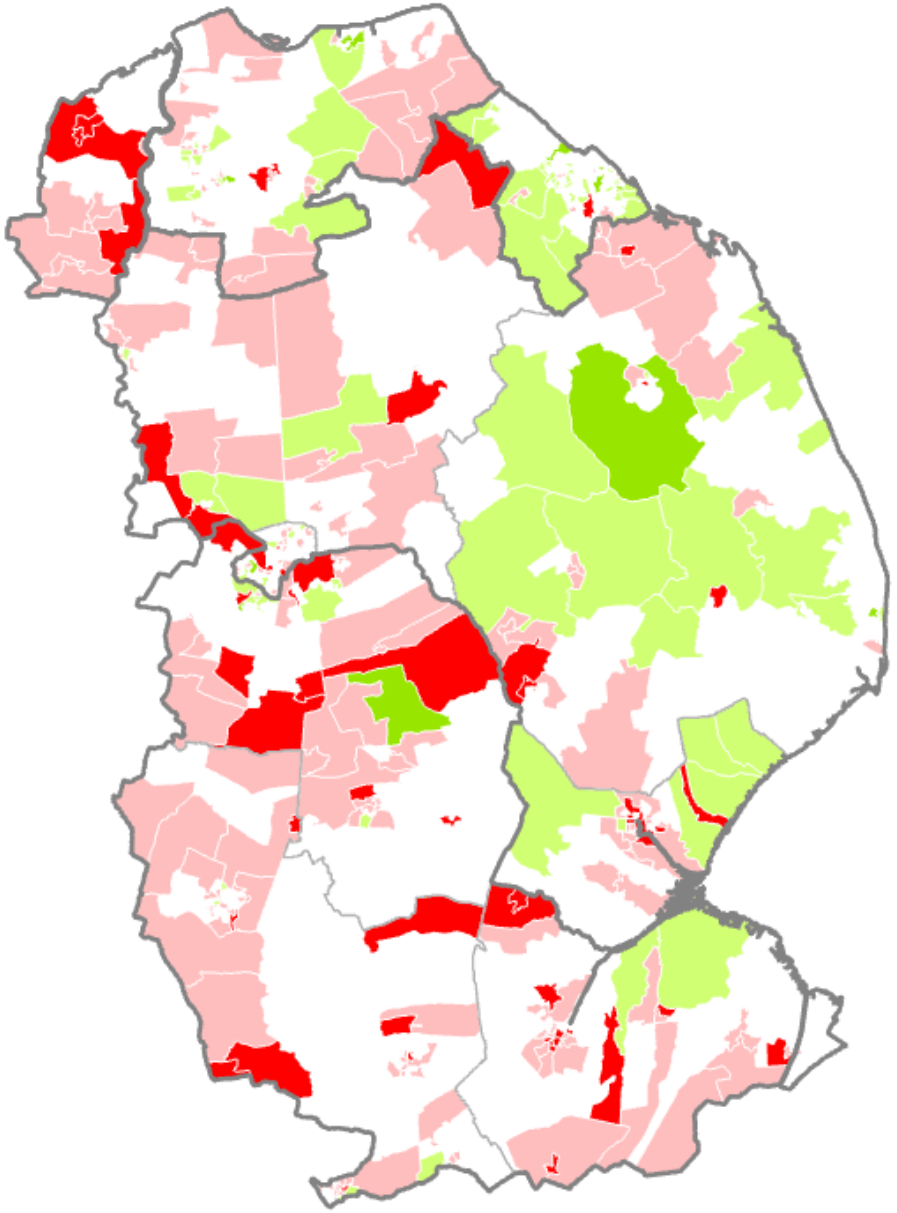
The largest changes were:

- One LSOA in Boston that fell from decile 8 in 2019 to ‘more deprived’ decile 4 in 2025.
- 4 areas fell by 3 deciles and 55 areas by 2 deciles.
- One new LSOA in North Lincolnshire that was part of an LSOA in decile 2 in 2019 but is in ‘less deprived’ decile 7 for 2025.
- One area increased by 3 deciles and 11 areas by 2 deciles.

Lower super output area change in Index of Multiple Deprivation decile from 2019 to 2025 in Greater Lincolnshire

Change in IMD decile, 2019 to 2025

- -2 or more
- -1
- No change
- +1
- +2 or more



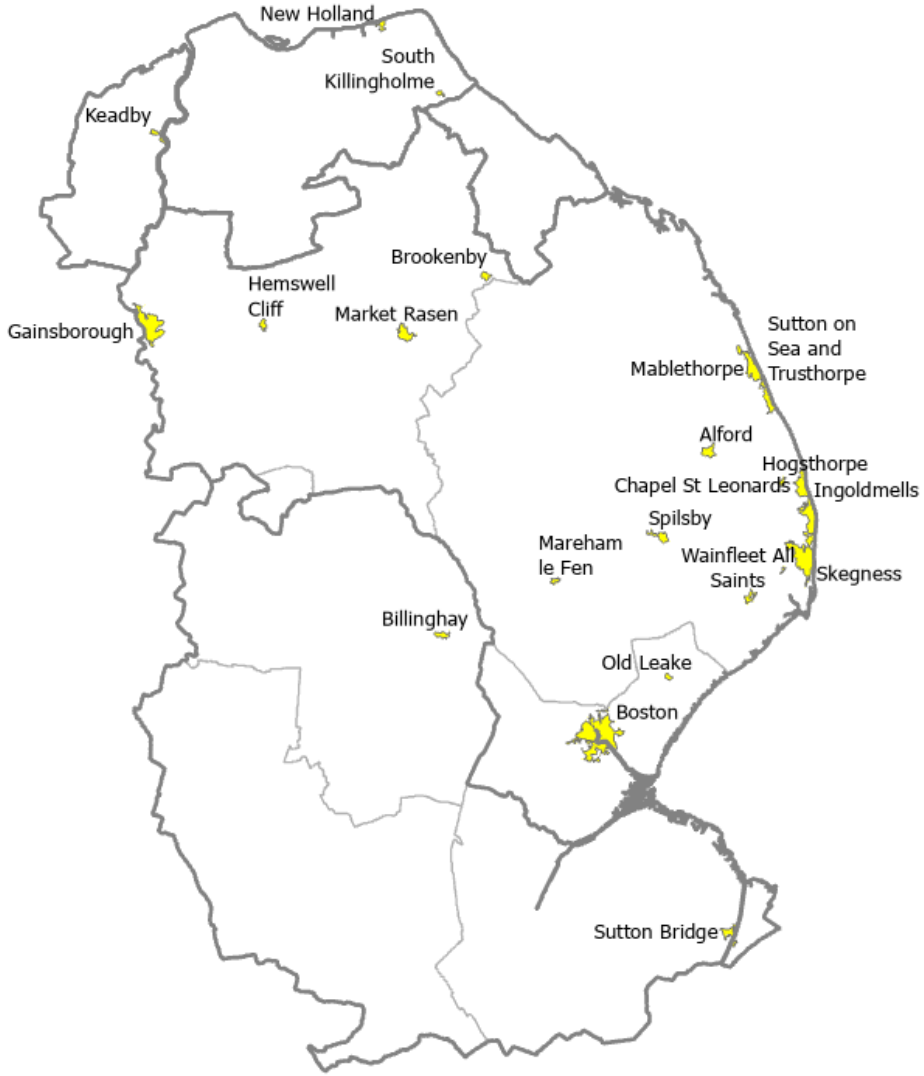
Please note that number of LSOAs increased from the 2019 index to the 2025 index, due to some areas being divided into 2 or 3 small areas. These smaller areas have been assigned the 2019 decile of the larger area that they were previously a part of.

The 2025 index is not directly comparable to previous deprivation indices. Changes may be caused by changes to methodology rather than actual changes to deprivation in an area.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (2025) in Greater Lincolnshire – Built up areas

In addition to LSOAs and local authorities, built up areas, such as cities, towns and villages are also ranked in terms of deprivation. The following built up areas are ranked in the most deprived 10% in England (using IMD rank of average rank measure).

Local Authority	Built up areas
Boston	Boston, Old Leake
East Lindsey	Alford, Chapel St Leonards, Hogsthorpe, Ingoldmells, Mablethorpe, Mareham le Fen, Skegness, Spilsby, Sutton on Sea and Trusthorpe, Wainfleet All Saints
North Kesteven	Billinghay
North Lincolnshire	Keadby, New Holland, South Killingholme
South Holland	Sutton Bridge
West Lindsey	Brookenby, Gainsborough, Hemswell Cliff, Market Rasen



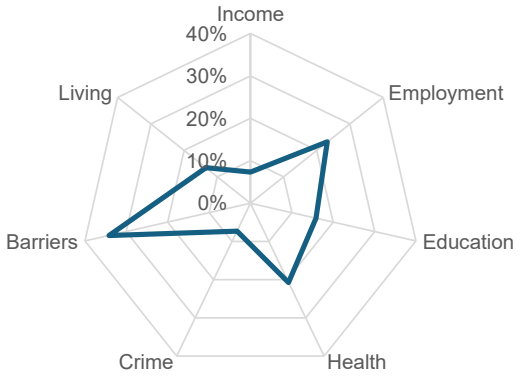
Proportion of LSOAs in most deprived 10% nationally for the 7 IMD domains

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is comprised of 7 domains:

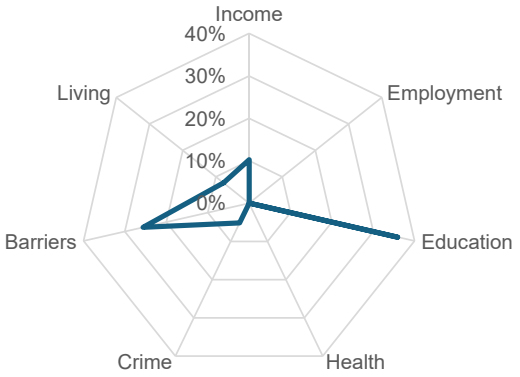
1. Income
2. Employment
3. Education, Skills and Training
4. Health Deprivation and Disability
5. Crime
6. Barriers to Housing and Services
7. Living Environment

The following charts show the proportion of each local authorities lower super output areas that fall into the most deprived 10% nationally for each of the domains. This helps indicate some of the differing forms of deprivation that are faced in different areas across Greater Lincolnshire.

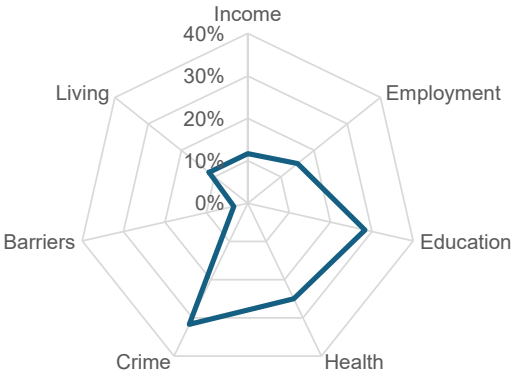
East Lindsey



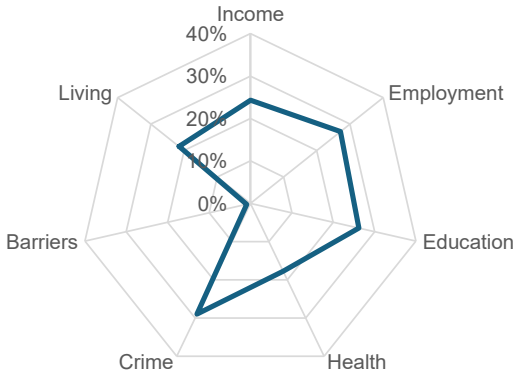
Boston



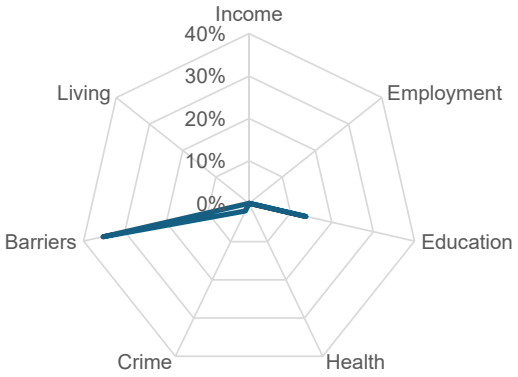
Lincoln



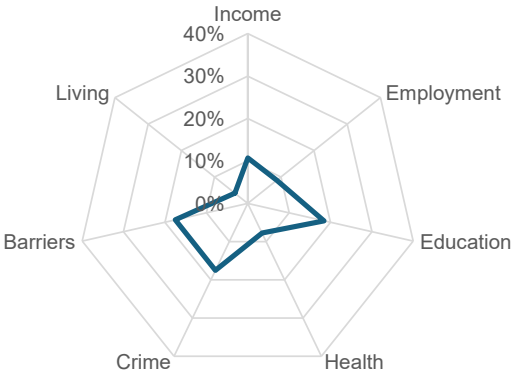
North East Lincolnshire



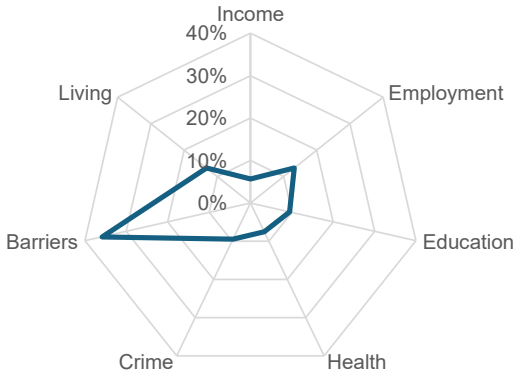
South Holland



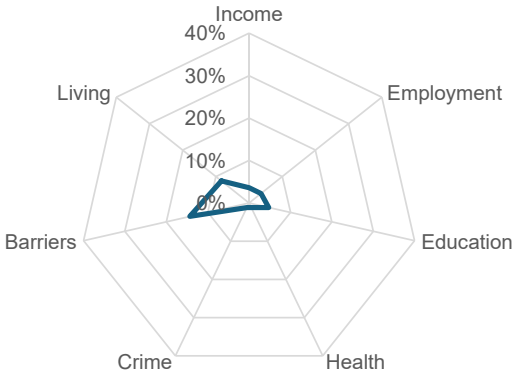
North Lincolnshire



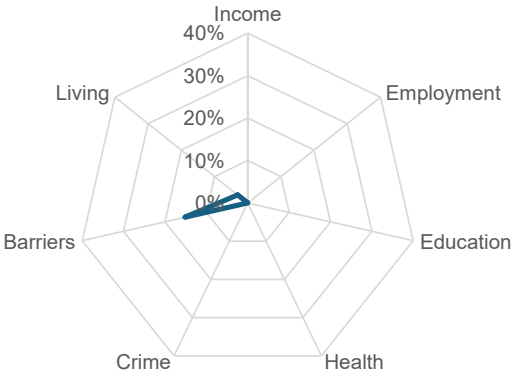
West Lindsey



South Kesteven



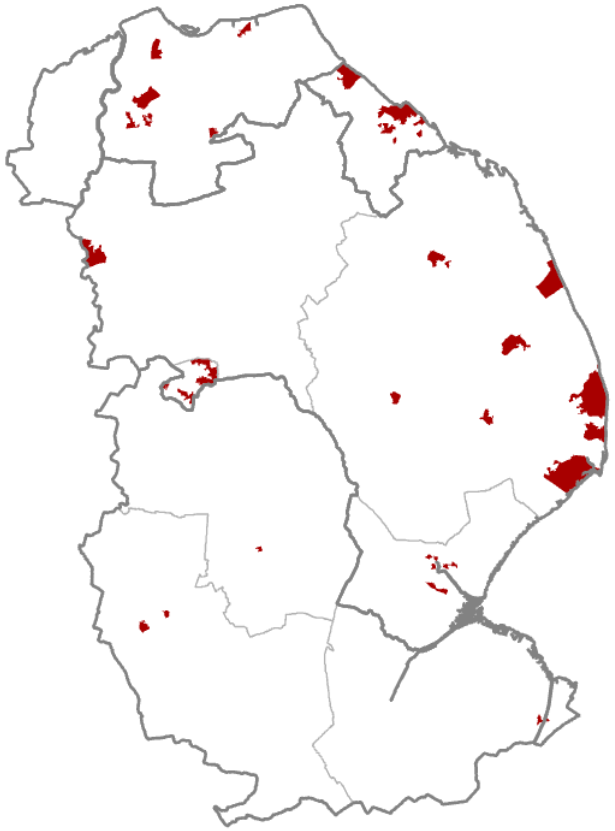
North Kesteven



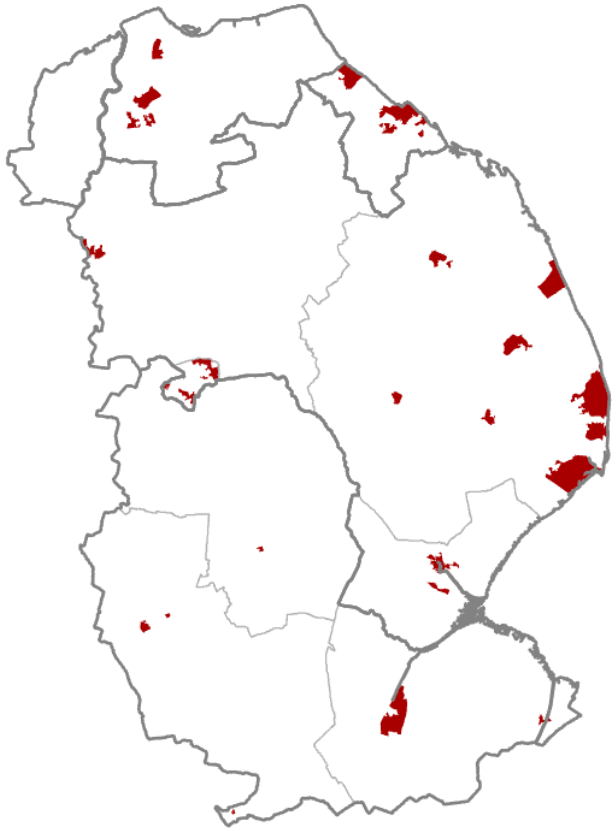
Income

Greater Lincolnshire LSOAs in most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally, 2019 and 2025

2019



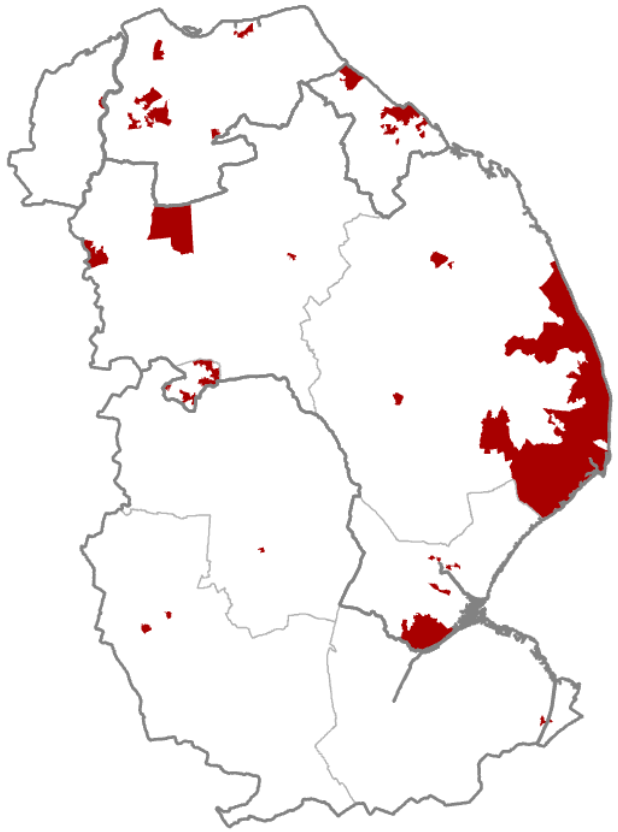
2025



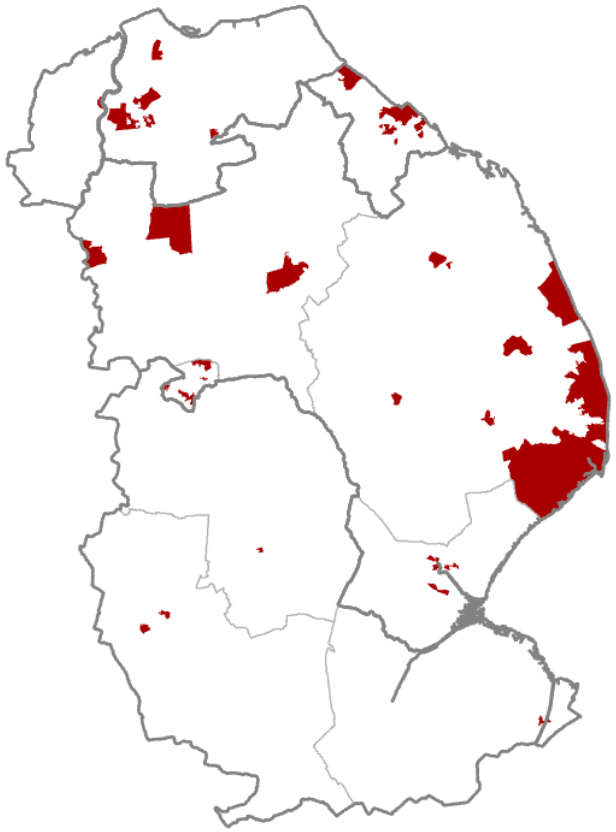
Employment

Greater Lincolnshire LSOAs in most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally, 2019 and 2025

2019



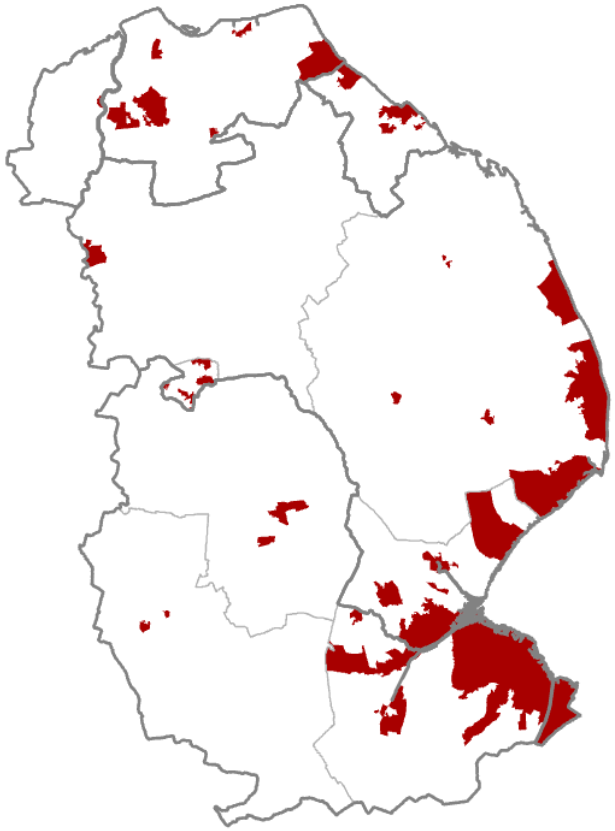
2025



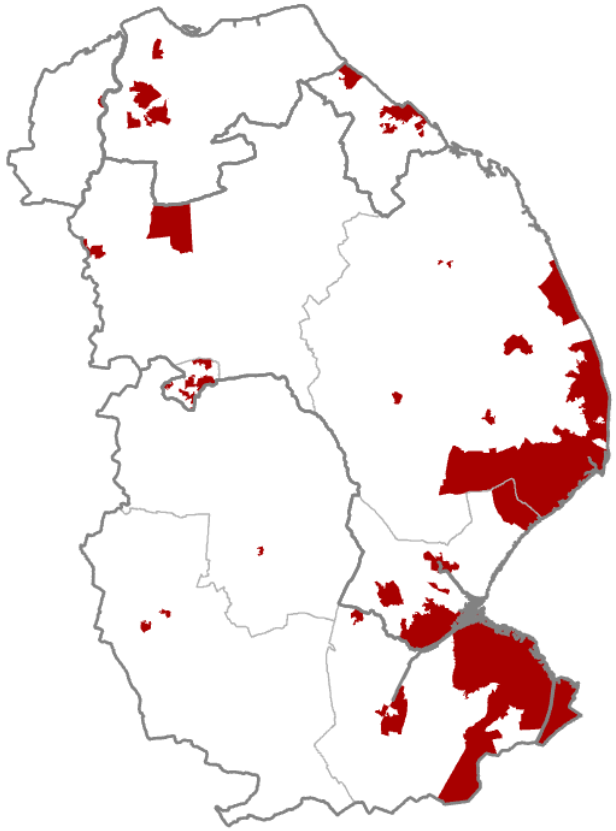
Education, Skills and Training

Greater Lincolnshire LSOAs in most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally, 2019 and 2025

2019



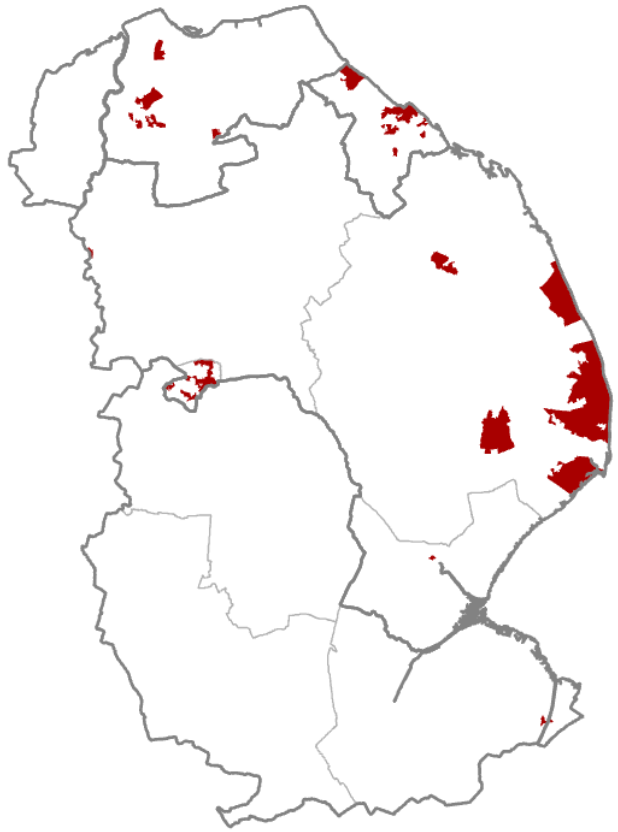
2025



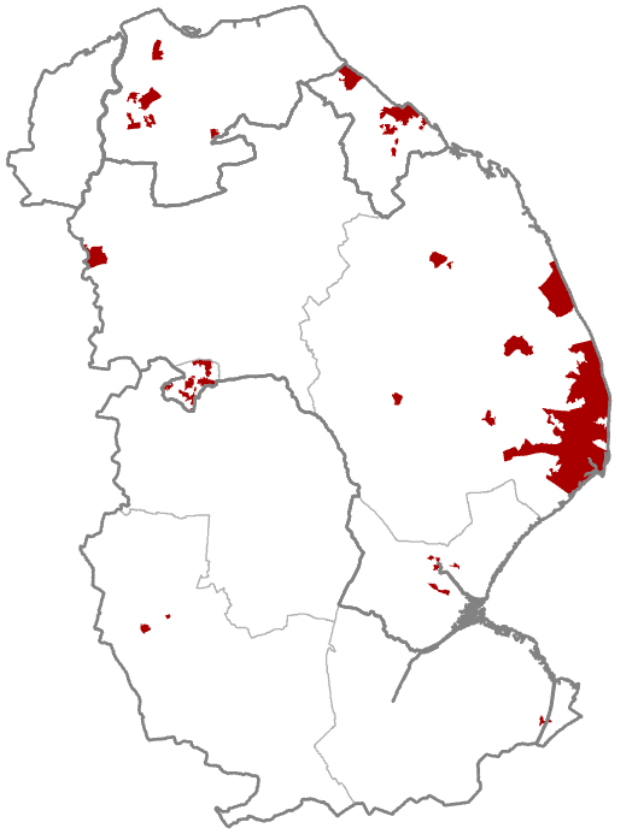
Health Deprivation and Disability

Greater Lincolnshire LSOAs in most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally, 2019 and 2025

2019



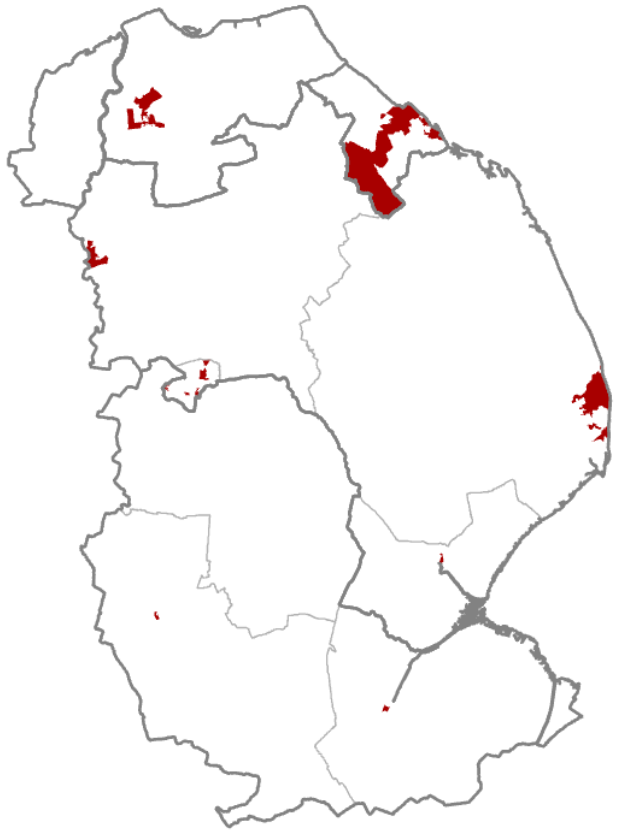
2025



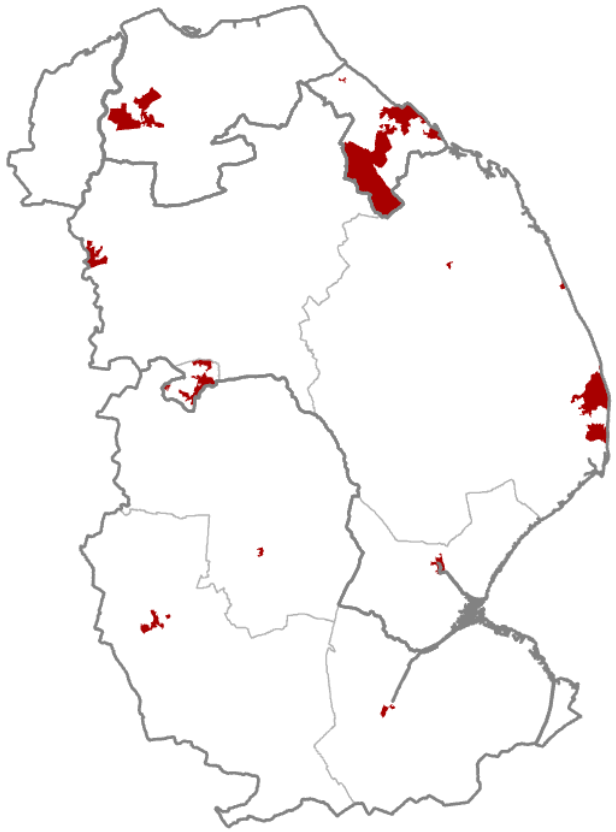
Crime

Greater Lincolnshire LSOAs in most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally, 2019 and 2025

2019



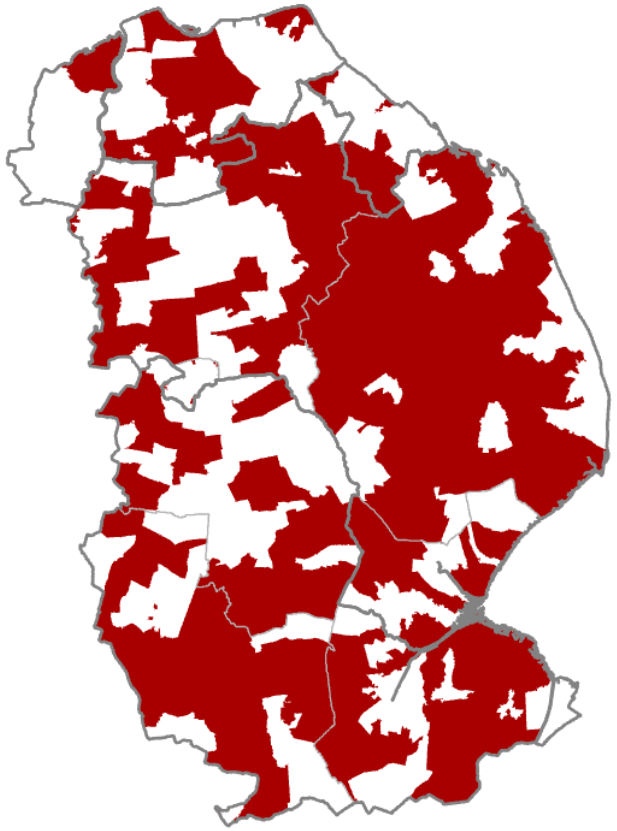
2025



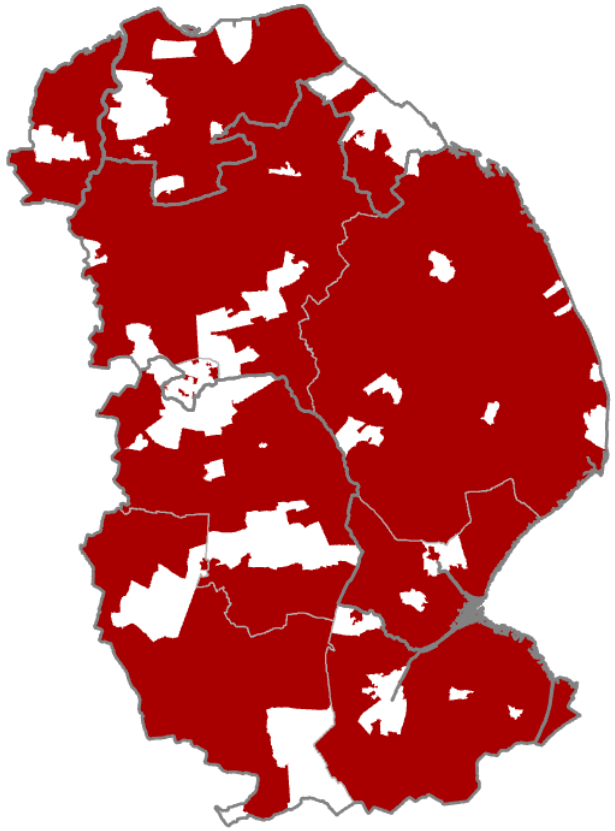
Barriers to Housing and Services

Greater Lincolnshire LSOAs in most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally, 2019 and 2025

2019



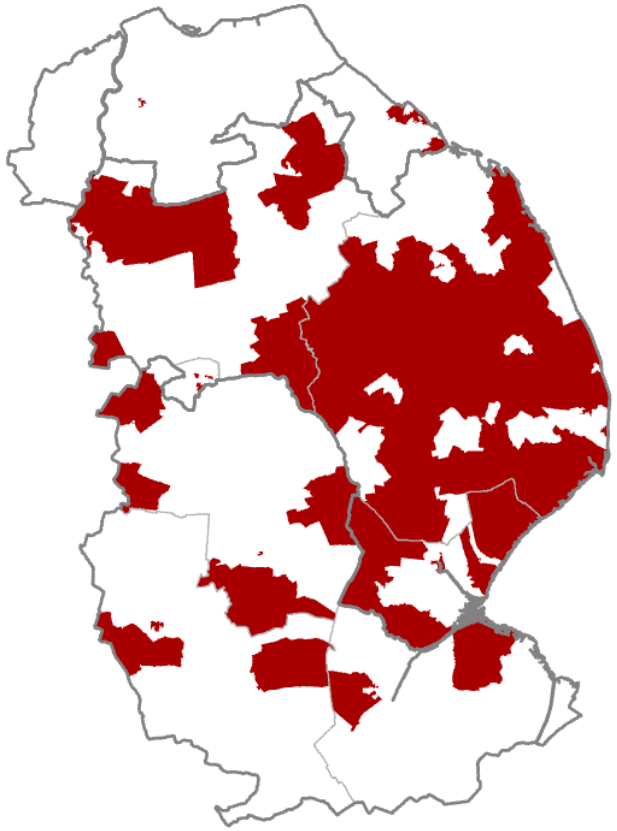
2025



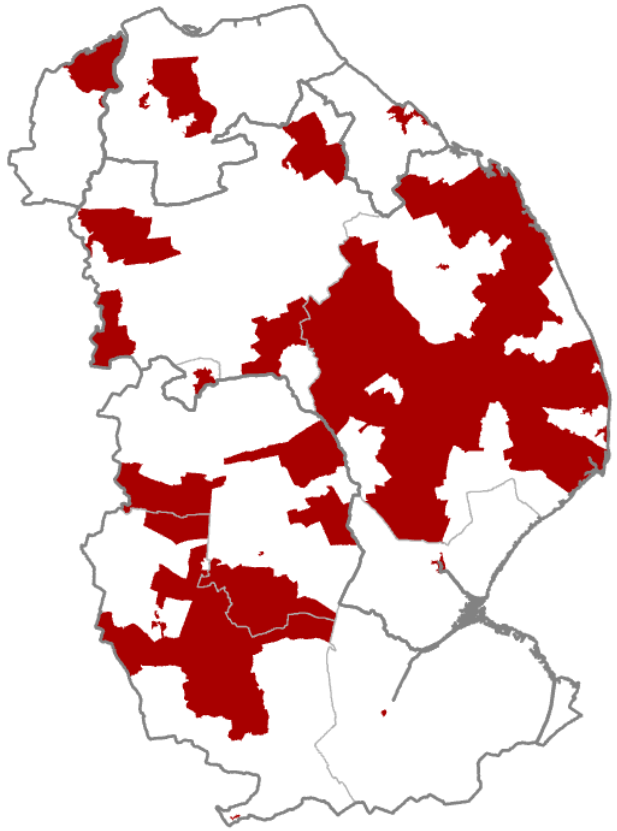
Living Environment

Greater Lincolnshire LSOAs in most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally, 2019 and 2025

2019



2025



What is behind the downward trend in relative deprivation in Lincolnshire?

The release of the English Indices of Deprivation 2025 was accompanied by a number of reports, including a supplementary report on Deprivation in Rural Areas.

The report includes the following graph showing how the rural LSOAs were distributed across the national LSOA decile distribution according to the IMD 2015 and IMD 2019, and the IMD 2019 and IMD 2025. As with the LA graphs on the previous slide, rural areas tend to rank as somewhat more deprived on the IMD 2025 compared with the IMD 2019.

Chart 3.2. Rural areas by decile of deprivation, IMD 2015 and IMD 2019

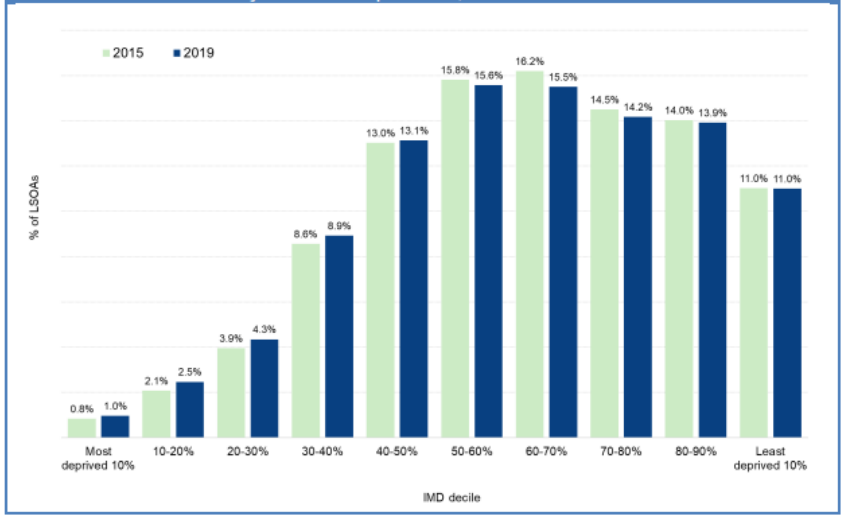
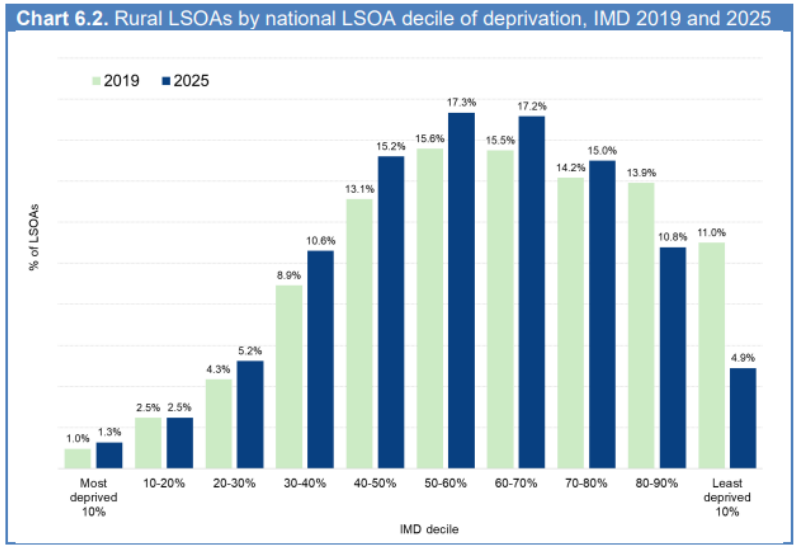


Chart 6.2. Rural LSOAs by national LSOA decile of deprivation, IMD 2019 and 2025



Reasons for this change are not clear. Section 6.2.8 of the report (page 59) reads:

Overall, therefore, rural LSOAs as a whole can be seen to rank somewhat higher (i.e. more deprived) on the IMD 2025 than was the case on the IMD 2019. However, as noted earlier in this report, and in the accompanying IoD 2025 Technical and Research Reports, these changes in deprivation rankings between the two indices may be due to a combination of 'real change' in deprivation levels and 'measurement change' due to enhancements to indicators and constituent data and methodologies.

It is interesting to note that from IMD 2015 to IMD 2019 rural areas appear only marginally more deprived. These were composed of very similar indicators on the same LSOA geography so relatively comparable over time in terms of data and methods.

From IMD 2019 to IMD 2025 there have been a number of methodological changes that may have contributed to the shift in rural LSOAs as a whole being somewhat more deprived.

- **Barriers to Housing and Services**
  - Rural areas show higher levels of deprivation in this domain, particularly the sub-domain Geographical Barriers which measure travel time to key services. For 2025 this has been enhanced, from road distance alone, to take into consideration the availability and frequency of public transport and the additional time costs associated with poorer provision. Travel by car is excluded as a potential means of accessing these services, in order to ensure that the lived experience of life in less accessible areas (particularly rural areas) is fully acknowledged.
  - A broadband speed indicator and patient-to-GP ratio have been also been added to this domain.

- **Living Environment**
  - Living Environment includes sub-domains for both Indoors and Outdoors, with IMD 2025 placing a greater weight on 'Indoors' than IMD 2019 as people spend more time indoors. This may result in rural LSOAs losing some of the benefit of having a 'less deprived' outdoor environment than urban areas.
  - The indoor sub-domain now includes a new housing quality indicator based on EPC data

- **Income**
  - This domain now uses an 'After Housing Costs' approach which should help to capture low income people living in rural areas where housing costs are relatively high.
  - Measure has also been extended to better capture people in low paid and insecure work, such as seasonal employment.

- **Employment**
  Data collection on benefit claims covers 12 consecutive monthly time points rather than 4 quarterly time points which is better to capture the seasonal cycles in rural labour markets.

- **Health**
  Mental health indicator has been strengthened, which may help capture the effects of 'rural isolation' on wellbeing.

- **Crime**
  To reduce the risk of urban bias, this domain now includes additional crime types and broader forms of disorder.

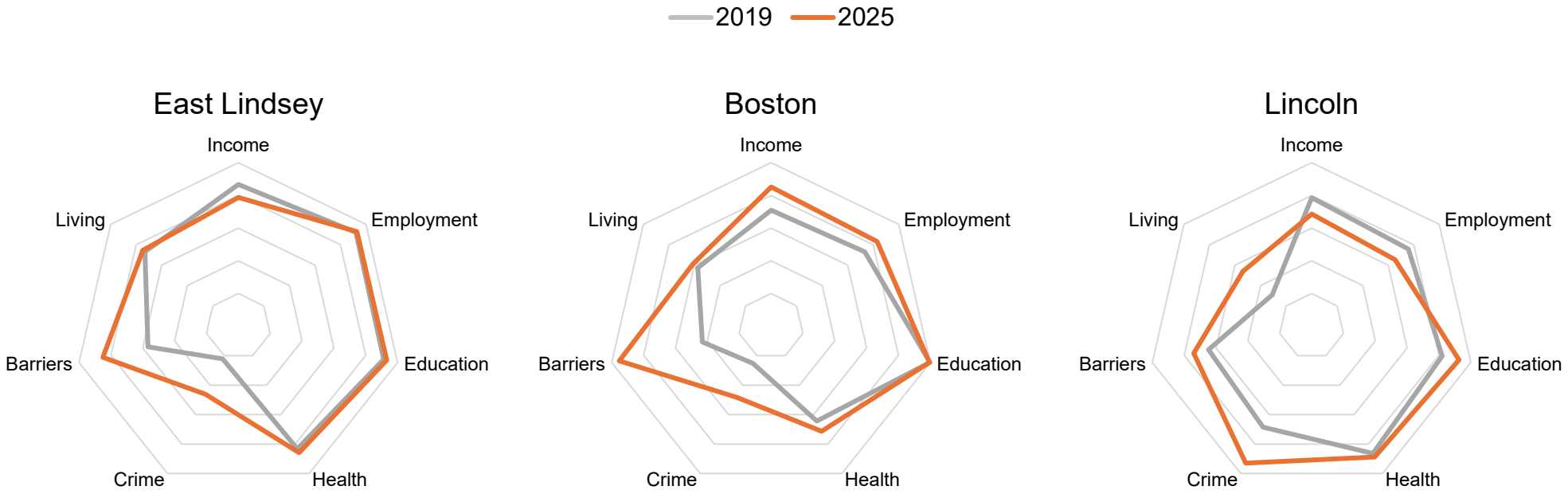
Looking at the ‘rank of average rank’ for the IMD domains in 2019 and 2025 for each LA, we can see if the relative change in deprivation is due to any particular area.

The most noticeable change in most LAs is the increase in relative deprivation from the ‘Barriers to Housing and Services’ domain, which will be due, at least in part, to the updated measures that better acknowledge the less assessable nature of rural areas.

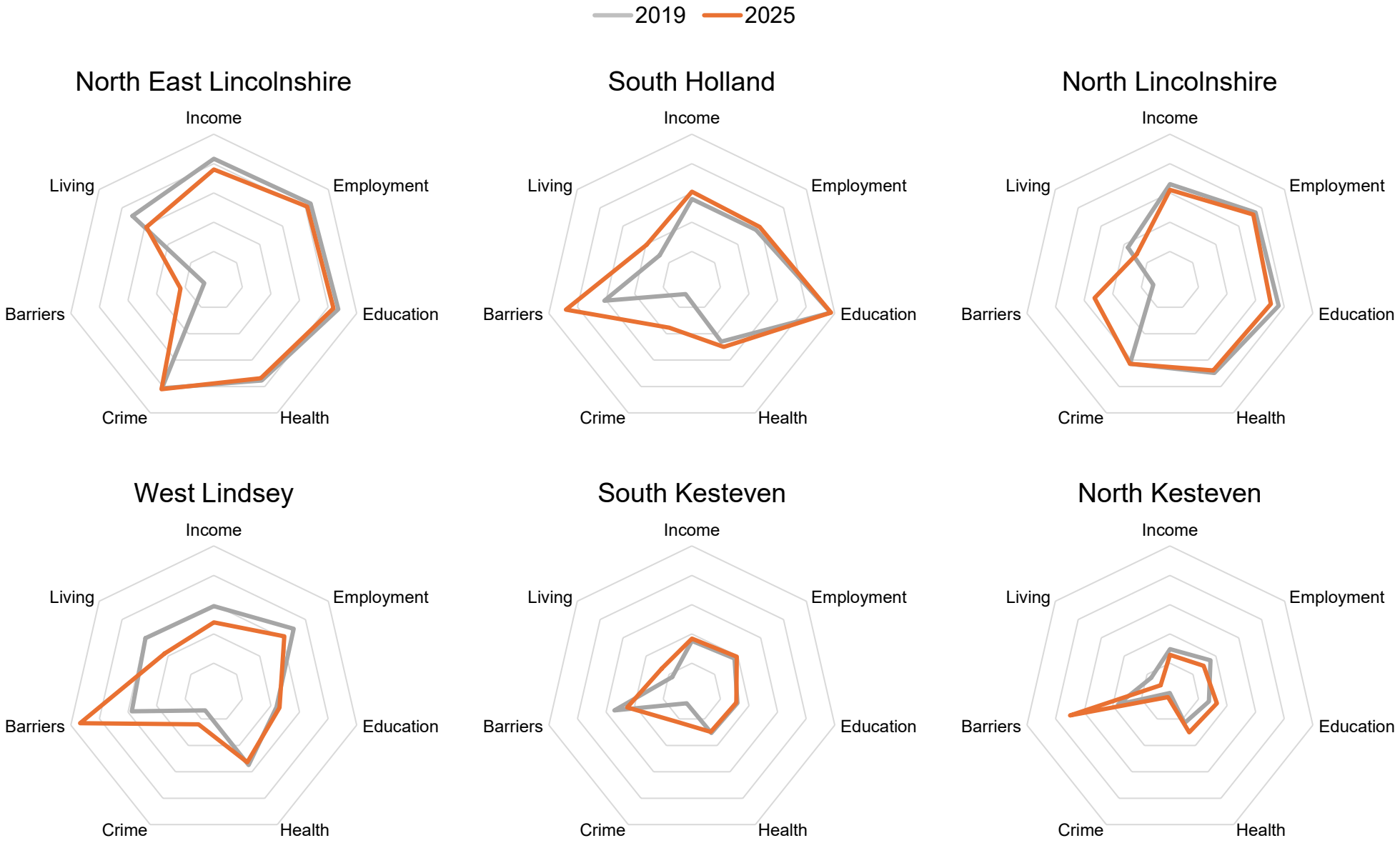
All LAs have also become relatively more deprived in the ‘Crime’ domain which has been updated for 2025 to reduce the risk of urban bias.

The charts below compare the relative deprivation of each LA based on the ‘rank of average rank’ for each domain, adjusted to account for the change in the number of LAs from 2019 to 2025. **The further from the centre a vertex (or corner) is, the more deprived the LA is compared to all other English LAs.**

Relative deprivation across the seven IMD domains from 2019 to 2025



Relative deprivation across the seven IMD domains from 2019 to 2025



The further from the centre a vertex (or corner) is, the more deprived the LA is compared to all other English LAs.

Deprivation

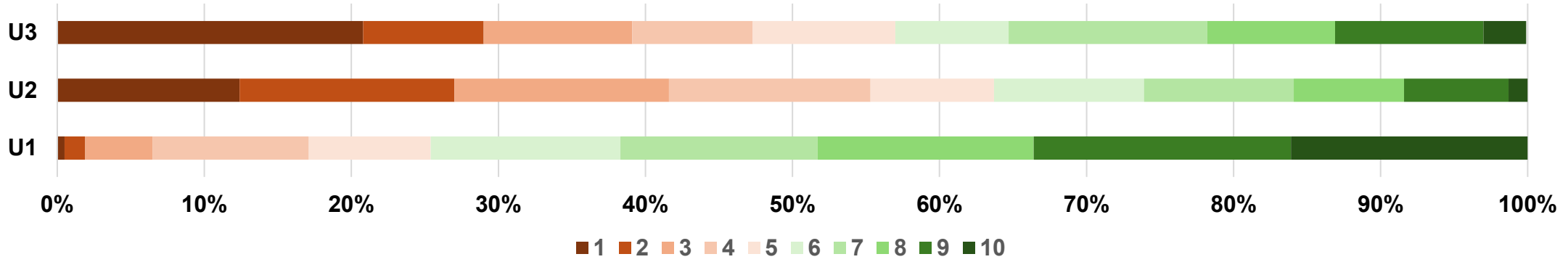
The table, right, shows for each local authority the number of LSOAs in each deprivation decile, where decile 1 is the most deprived and decile 10 the least deprived. A blank cell indicates no LSOAs in that decile. Thus North Kesteven has no LSOA is the most 20% deprived LSOAs and Rutland none in the most 40%.

Both South Holland and Boston have few LSOAs (4 and 1, and 1 and 4 respectively) in either the most deprived or least deprived quintiles

Totals in both numeric and percentage terms are then shown for each of the three unitary groupings considered within this analysis.

The bar chart below provides a visual representation of the percentage totals in each decile.

	Most Deprived								Least		
Deprivation Decile	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**TOTAL**
Boston	1	3	10	7	2	5	3	4	1		**36**
East Lindsey	13	16	13	14	5	5	8	3	4		**81**
Lincoln	10	9	7	5	5	6	6	6	3		**57**
North Kesteven			3	5	5	5	7	13	16	10	**64**
South Holland		1	3	11	8	11	7	4	4		**49**
South Kesteven	1	2	4	7	4	10	12	10	15	16	**81**
West Lindsey	4	5	3	5	7	7	6	4	8	3	**52**
Rutland					1	2	3	5	3	9	**23**
North East Lincolnshire	32	8	13	8	6	5	13	7	11	3	**106**
North Lincolnshire	11	9	8	9	14	11	15	11	10	3	**101**
U1	1	3	10	23	18	28	29	32	38	35	**217**
U2	28	33	33	31	19	23	23	17	16	3	**226**
U3	43	17	21	17	20	16	28	18	21	6	**207**
Total	**72**	**53**	**64**	**71**	**57**	**67**	**80**	**67**	**75**	**44**	**650**
U1	**0.5%**	**1.4%**	**4.6%**	**10.6%**	**8.3%**	**12.9%**	**13.4%**	**14.7%**	**17.5%**	**16.1%**	
U2	**12.4%**	**14.6%**	**14.6%**	**13.7%**	**8.4%**	**10.2%**	**10.2%**	**7.5%**	**7.1%**	**1.3%**	
U3	**20.8%**	**8.2%**	**10.1%**	**8.2%**	**9.7%**	**7.7%**	**13.5%**	**8.7%**	**10.1%**	**2.9%**	
Total	**11.1%**	**8.2%**	**9.8%**	**10.9%**	**8.8%**	**10.3%**	**12.3%**	**10.3%**	**11.5%**	**6.8%**	



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APPENDIX 2 Literature Review

In accordance with the best practice of evidence based policy, we conducted a comprehensive literature review on local government amalgamations. The review considered evidence from England and from the global experience. The review focused on:

- The nature of economies of scale in public services
- The impacts on public service economy, efficiency and efficacy from local government amalgamations
- The relationship between size and local democratic health
- The practice and democratic potential of participatory and area decentralisation mechanisms

The review found:

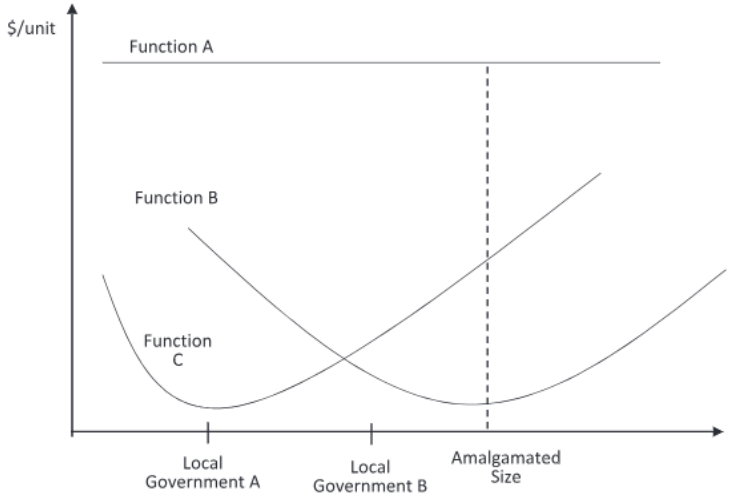
- As multi-functional organisations there is no optimal scale for local authorities. Services are best delivered at different scales.
- Amalgamation rarely delivers the projected benefits. The common experience is null net savings or service improvements. This is due to the multi-functional nature of local authorities. The OECD recommends that states treat amalgamation programmes with caution and advises that aligning administrative boundaries with economic geography is the most realisable benefit.
- The key indicators of democratic health scale poorly.
- The record of area decentralisation in English local government since the 1960s is at best mixed. Area committees are not an effective compensatory mechanism for an oversized authority. These mechanism must be treated as supplementary to an authority with a meaningful connection to the local.

We recognise that MHCLG officials will have reviewed the same literature when developing the territorial strategy of the English Devolution White Paper and subsequently designing the LGR programme and criteria. The purpose of the review is not to challenge MHCLG's judgement on the need for the LGR programme. Rather it is to identify the potential complexities, risks and trade-offs in large scale units, so that in applying the LGR criteria to develop our proposal, we can prudently navigate through the trade-offs and design out or at minimum seek to mitigate said risks.

Relationship of Municipal Size to Service Efficiency and Savings in the context of Local Government Amalgamations

Policy Response: Jurisdictional design should not seek to maximise scale in pursuit of projected savings with uncertain realisation to the known detriment of local democratic health and the connection to place that will unlock the real opportunities for public service reform.

The relationship between local government size and performance is deeply contested. A large body of literature has investigated the democratic and economic potential of increasing local jurisdiction size. A recent systematic review of seventy-nine empirical studies on the topic covering nineteen different countries published over the period 1990–2021 (Galizzi et al. 2023) found that despite widely held assumptions by policymakers of economies of scale, four decades of studies have yet to find the conclusive link between size and efficiency in local public administration to justify scale maximising amalgamations in all governance contexts. The empirical and theoretical evidence demonstrates that the track record of amalgamations in achieving the desired outcomes of reformers is poor. Principally because local governments are often so large as to have already exhausted the available economies of scale or because they are multi-purpose organisations that provide a different range of services, each with a different optimal scale. The literature is remarkably consistent on this point (Elston 2024). The same conclusion was reached by earlier reviews: Callanan et al (2012) and Dowding et al (1994).



There is academic consensus that there is no optimal size for local government for same reason there is no optimal size for the firm. The optimal size and internal organisation of a private firm depend on the particular demand conditions, production and transport technologies and contracting environment of a given industry (Treisman 2007). This is further complicated in local government as authorities are multi-functional bodies providing a highly diverse range of different services. This is important insofar as economies of scale usually relate to the nature of production processes. Thus, the optimal size of delivery organisations varies depending on the service area, each of which have their own production characteristics (Dollery and Fleming, 2006). In this simplified illustration, Function A is typical in having no scale economies, Function B yields maximum savings at size contrived by the amalgamations and Function C has large diseconomies at the amalgamated output size (Drew et al. 2022). To fully capture savings in one function will either mean that savings in other functions are not fully realized or that additional expense will be added to the costs of fulfilling other functions. The aggregate result may be no local government level economies of scale at all, muted economies of scale or even diseconomies of scale.

Therefore, the theoretically most efficient solution is multiple local units of different sizes. In a multi-tier structure, functions can be assigned to the most efficient level. Each organisation, rather than trying to perform all the functions, does what it can do best. Smaller organisations can be aligned to local place, capturing heterogeneity in need and preferences for public goods, and delivering local democratic accountability and meaningful resident control and empowerment. The advantages of multi-level local governance are accepted by all schools of public management thought. An advocate for New Public Management (NPM), who desires lean and business like organisations focused on their core mission with waste minimised would recognise the superior allocative efficiency of a patchwork of smaller organisations, with the opportunity for continuous improvement through inter-municipal competition or a Tieboutian self-sorting of residents. Post NPM approaches that emphasise place and relational working to co-produce public value with communities, with the neighbourhood as a particular focus of intervention, would also embrace multiple smaller units to achieve the essential local connection for effective preventative policy (Torfing et al. 2020). In England, this is complicated by the absence of a regional tier (combined authorities are potentially this in embryo) and an underpowered hyperlocal tier.

The challenge and the case for unitary government is difficulty for service users in navigating between the organisations, where the division of functions can be opaque to even the most informed, loss of synergies with complementary functions in different organisations, and agency costs and coordination for central government. Hence the rationale for amalgamations.

Intermunicipal cooperation (IMC) arrangements (e.g. shared services) have been advanced as a solution to capture service specific economies of scale (OECD 2017 and Copus et al. 2020). Nevertheless IMC arrangements present their challenges and risks in additional bureaucratic layers, political control and transaction costs. So are best undertaken by mature not new organisations. Elston et al (2023) in an examination of IMC arrangements in English council tax collection found economies of scale would be exhausted with a service volume of around 40,100 dwellings, there were in fact no opportunity costs in failing to further up-scale tax operations across council jurisdictions, and in cases where the IMC is above the optimal scale for the service, then the costs of establishing and operating the IMC may outweigh the benefits. A similar effect was observed with Dutch municipal tax services (Niaounakis and Blank 2017).

Amalgamation programmes are principally justified by potential savings. A commonly observed result is expenditure reductions only in specific service areas post-amalgamation. There is broad consensus that scale leads to a reduction in administrative overheads, observed in Estonia (Reiljan, Jaansoo, and Ülper 2013), Australia (Aulich, Sansom, and Mckinlay 2014), the Netherlands (Allers and Geertsema 2016), Germany (Blesse and Baskaran 2016), Canada (Cobban 2019), Denmark (Blom-Hansen et al. 2016), Finland (Moisio and Uusitalo 2013) and Thailand (Lowatcharin et al. 2021). However, these reductions do not always result in net gains overall, as savings are offset by investment in other services or increased labour costs (excluding transition costs). This was observed in Australia and New Zealand (Aulich, Sansom, and Mckinlay 2014 and McQuestin, Drew & Miyazaki 2020), Finland (Moisio and Uusitalo 2013) and Denmark (Blom-Hansen et al. 2016). Following analysis of the impact of Danish

amalgamations Blom-Hansen concluded *'Re-examining the theoretical arguments invoked to justify these reforms, we find that, in fact, there is no compelling reason to expect them to yield net gains. Potential savings in, for example, administrative costs are likely to be offset by opposite effects for other domains. The result turns out to be null: cost savings in some areas were offset by deterioration in others, while for most public services jurisdiction size did not matter at all.'* However, a general decrease in expenditures was observed in Israel (Reingewertz 2012). Andrews (2015) notes that the Israeli experience is based on horizontal consolidations, rather than vertical as is common in the English context and in this LGR programme. Analysing the 'sales pitches' for reorganisation versus realisation in Australia (Drew et al. 2023) found that residents and central policy makers may be promised lower taxes, improved services, savings and better infrastructure in rhetorical exercises designed to incentivise the embrace of the proposed jurisdiction. The underlying complexity of scale economies in trade-offs and realisation, and the wider global experiences of amalgamations were disregarded. Sales pitches of this kind carry significant potential to entrench local fiscal illusion whereby residents struggle to understand their local government's fiscal condition, as well as the true cost of the services they consume, so increasing service demand. Drew et al. concluded that local and central policy makers must be far more circumspect and thorough with respect to their projections of expected benefits and costs in reorganisation proposals.

The impact of size post amalgamation on efficiency, defined as the ability of a municipality to provide either a fixed level of services using minimal inputs or the greatest level of services with fixed resources (McQuestin, Drew & Dollery 2018), was the only area with convergence in the results of studies in the 2023 Galizzi et al review. The empirical evidence from Canada (Mckay 2004), Japan (Haneda, Hashimoto & Tsuneyoshi 2012), Denmark (Blom-Hansen et al. 2016, and Blom-Hansen, Houlberg, and Serritzlew 2021) and Australia (McQuestin, Drew, and Dollery 2018) was no effects or improvement post amalgamation.

The Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Local & Regional Democracy (CDLR) (2001 and 2017), the World Bank (2006) and the Organization for Economic Co-Operation & Development (OECD) (2017 and 2019) have separately considered the issue and each concluded that the theoretical and empirical evidence on economies of scale in local public services is inconclusive, that there is no optimal scale for local government and that there are inherent trade-offs, therefore amalgamation should be cautiously and carefully considered within each governing context and the territorial strategy of the central state. The World Bank noted that countries should not presume that amalgamation will solve common challenges in local public services (service delivery costs and quality, accountability and participation) because benefits and costs are situation specific. The OECD highlighted that the expected benefits of mergers do not always materialise or are overshadowed by shortcomings and warned of diseconomies of scale in some service areas and the negative impacts on local democracy. The OECD recommended that IMC arrangements be explored as an alternative to amalgamation to capture the proven economies of scale in administrative overheads. The review has been unable to locate any specific consideration of the topic by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The applicability of the international academic debate to English local government must be caveated, given that the size of current English authorities already outweigh the vast majority of international comparators and the absence of a regional tier of government. For example, Moisio, Loikkanen, and Oulasvirta's 2010 study that demonstrated the optimal size in terms of cost efficiency for Finnish municipalities was between 20,000-40,000 residents – an English town council. Hayashi (2002) identified 120,000 as the optimal size for Japanese municipality unit costs. Yoshida (2005) later refined the figure to 125,000 residents (both from OECD 2017). There have been multiple attempts to identify optimal size in a specifically English context. Travers et al (1993) concluded that there no optimal size of local authority that performs better across all services and it is difficult to assert whether larger or smaller authorities perform better even within specific service areas. Performance data from the Audit Commission suggested that larger authorities had lower unit costs for road maintenance and libraries, but worse costs and efficacy in waste collection and housing (Callanan et al 2012).

The most thorough investigation of the problem to date was undertaken by Andrews et al (2006) for the then Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG).[1] The study found that the '*balance of the evidence suggests that performance tends to be better in large (rather) than small authorities'* with strong statistical evidence that central administration costs fall with scale in alignment with the international findings. This specific finding on central administrative costs was used as the primary citation for the underpinning assumptions of the financial modelling in the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and County Council's Network (CCN) 2020 report '*Evaluating the importance of scale in proposals for local government reorganisation*'. It is widely considered in the sector that this report has decisively shaped MHCLG's LGR policy and programme design. To be clear the PwC/CCN report does not attempt to identify the optimal size of local government or engage with the significant body of literature on the topic, rather two population ranges of 300,000 to 400,000 and 300,000 to 800,000 are referenced. Andrew's 2006 study was significantly more nuanced in its conclusions, highlighting the continuity in findings with prior domestic and international research before concluding that '*the relationship between population size and performance remains a complex mosaic of insignificant, positive, negative and non-linear effects',* noting that the '*direction and strength of that difference (size impact) is likely to vary across and within services, and to vary from place to place'*, therefore recommending that '*a universal size formula cannot be applied to decisions on reorganisation'.* Particular attention was drawn to the identification of inverted U relationships (improvement with size up until the point of diseconomy of scale then deterioration) in many service areas. This included decline in consumer satisfaction for district services and upper tier cultural services at populations above 100,000, while the turning point for value for money measures (2004/05 data) was identified at an average population of 480,000. Within that there was significant variation by service area, for example the turning point for waste collection was reached at 156,910 (2000/01) 305,470 (2004/05), 142,591 for Leisure & Culture, 106,530 for

[1] The study used 2001-05 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scores, Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI), Audit Commission service inspections and consumer satisfaction data and RO data.

Public Protection, 355,538 for Housing and 383,652 for Adult Social Services. Meanwhile public transport entered into diseconomies of scale at 813,933.

Andrews returned to the issue in 2015, evaluating the post amalgamation performance of the 2006-09 reorganisation round unitaries. The statistical analysis suggested that few of the desired financial outcomes outlined in the business cases were realized, at least in the immediate aftermath of structural change. He concluded that it is possible that any economies of scale have already been exhausted within English counties and that the sheer magnitude of effort required for restructuring makes it difficult to capture further efficiencies.

In 2025, the Institute for Government (IfG) with Grant Thornton replicated Andrew's 2006 analysis. The IfG noted that the current district council services with lower optimal economies of scale e.g. waste collection are highly visible to residents and their performance can define how residents perceive the performance of their council**.**

This has wider implications for how residents perceive their local area and correspondingly their support for the LGR policy, which is primarily justified in instrumental terms by MCHLG, and the perceived efficacy of the Government's Plan for Change. The IfG therefore recommended that local authorities designing LGR proposals take into account the fact of diseconomies of scale, rather than attempting to maximise scale under the simplistic assumption that larger authorities will benefit all service areas.

The District Councils' Network (DCN) analysed the relationship between size and performance using twenty performance metrics of the former Office for Local Government (OFLOG). The DCN found that a population of 274,775 (median of current unitaries) correlated strongly with better performance for eight of the metrics and moderately with two. No meaningful correlation between size and performance was observed for the remaining ten.

The DCN concluded that:

1. There is little or no evidence to support the Government's preference for large unitary councils and no evidence to support the 500k population level.
2. The bulk of the data analysed show a non-existent or faint relationship between a council's population and its outcomes.
3. When there is an apparent link between population size and outcomes, it more often favours smaller councils.
4. The evidence gives no reason to assume that smaller unitary councils will be less efficient, sustainable or effective due to their size.

The County Council's Network (CCN) with Newton (2025) specifically analysed the relationship between service quality (as proxied through Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection results) and size for Adult Social Care and Children's Services. The analysis found that larger authorities

are more likely to receive a good or outstanding Ofsted rating for children's services. No correlation was observed between size and CQC rating for Adult Social Care, however there are significantly fewer datapoints available given that it is a new inspection framework.

The DCN and CCN analyses are reconcilable with each other and are both fully in line with the Andrew's 2006 findings and the wider global academic and practitioner debate. The optimal scale for performance and cost will vary between and within functions (depending on the activity). Therefore a multi-level division of functions is theoretically the most efficient approach. This is true regardless of whether one is designing jurisdictions for democratic local government, or the local agencies of a centralised government. The contested picture on size and efficiency combined with the academic consensus that democratic health and political trust scales poorly with size suggests that jurisdictions cannot be designed to optimise for a few functions that perform best at very large scales, unless one is willing to tolerate the democratic trade-off. The allocation of functions to local government (and the level within), and the scope and resourcing of said functions is not a problem that jurisdiction design can solve. It is a task for central government to consider.

Relationship of Scale and Local Democratic Health

Policy Response: Jurisdictional design should seek to minimise known scale disbenefits to local democratic health and maximise the success of supplementary democratic mechanisms through unitaries of appropriate size and with coherent footprints.

Negative impacts on the health of local democracy, as assessed by the key determinants of electoral & non-electoral participation, political trust, satisfaction and perceptions of influence, are consistently observed in larger units, reviewed in an English context by Copus et al (2017, 2020 and 2022). Internationally, the same effects have been observed in the United States (Oliver 2000), Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom (Denters 2002), Switzerland (Ladner 2002 and Baglioni 2003) and Sweden (Denk 2012). Nielsen (1981) found '*local distrust, local lack of efficacy, and local lack of saliency are systematically higher in medium-large (Danish) municipalities than in smaller ones'*. Kouba & Dosek (2021) concluded that there is an '*inherent trade-off in the consequences of scale on local democracy'* following analysis of fifteen Latin American countries. Gendzwill and Kjaer (2021) found in the same in relation to size and local turnout following analysis of twelve European countries. In 2001, the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) considered the issue and noted that although larger jurisdictions may reduce individual participation, opportunities for organisational participation (parties, mass media, citizen's groups, non-governmental organisations etc.) are increased, thus overall democratic quality may be enhanced.

Specifically regarding amalgamations, Alexander (2013) found in Australia, resident sense of local identity was damaged by amalgamations, especially when forced. An effect also observed in Denmark (Hansen and Kjaer 2020). Reduced electoral participation and engagement following amalgamation was observed in Israel (Zeedan 2017), Austria (Heinisch et al. 2018), Denmark (Bhatti & Hansen 2019, and Houlberg & Klausen 2021),

Switzerland (Steiner 2003, and Koch & Rochat 2017), Finland (Lapointe, Saarimaa & Tukiainen 2018), Canada (Slack & Bird 2013), Japan (Horiuchi, Saito, & Yamada 2015) and Norway (Baldersheim & Rose 2021). Hansen (2013) found amalgamations lowered political trust in Denmark, linked with lower responsiveness from politicians now responsible for larger constituencies. Solvang, Saglie & Winswold (2023) noted that the decline in trust was not observed post amalgamation in Norway. The heavy use of referenda in the Norwegian amalgamation programme in contrast to Denmark was advanced as the leading explanation.

One could attempt to counter this weight of evidence on the deleterious impact of scale and top-down amalgamation on local democracy by arguing that English local authorities are already significantly larger than international comparators, thus findings derived from the study of small municipalities are not applicable to the English context. Alternatively one could challenge normative assumptions on decentralisation, civic virtue and participation (Treisman 2007), or accord with the CDLR that democracy is potentially more deliberative in larger and so less homogenous populations, due to greater diversity in interests. None of these arguments align with the vision for empowered neighbourhoods and civic renewal set out in the White Paper, the LGR Criteria and wider government policy.

Record of Area Decentralisation Policies in English Local Governance

Policy Response: Jurisdictional design should seek to mitigate against the significant risk of the failure of decentralisations mechanisms or abandonment by a future administration.

Decentralizing and devolving policies (meaning area committees/panels and similar) to sub-local scales below the Town Hall are not new to local government. Significant experimental area decentralization activity took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s and again in the early 2000s. In each round, the implementation of area decentralization to complement more strategic local authorities was seen as the key to delivering aspirations to join-up local service delivery to meet local need, improve public engagement in local decision-making, empower residents and facilitate democratic renewal, enhance community leadership, and think outside the box to find solutions to persistent local issues. **However, such practices have successively struggled to gain a foothold in contemporary local governance regimes, and, in broad terms, have endured a series of institutional failings (Johnston 2012).**

There is not a universal standard in theory or practice for the size or number of area decentralisation mechanisms**.** In 2008, SQW Consulting for the then DCLG identified populations of between 5,000 to 15,000 as the optimum scale for neighbourhood working. The LSE Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (2004) examined neighbourhood governance forms in a specifically urban context and found there was ‘no absolute size’, but rarely more than 5,000 households. Units of 1,000 to 2,000 households (approx. 6000 people) were recommended in more deprived areas for practical intervention purposes. This would become the blueprint for the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programme during the 2000s. A survey of

practices by Griggs & Roberts (2011) found wide variation in the size of neighbourhood governance units across the UK, ranging from 1,000 to 72,000 people.

Reviewing contemporary global best practice to inform the Birmingham City Council (BCC) Shaping Birmingham's Future Together (SBFT) participatory initiative, Higueras and Bussu (2025) identified three challenges in embedding decentralisation and participation mechanisms:

- **Operating at the margins**: They often remain peripheral to core decision-making rather than becoming central to how councils govern (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014).
- **Recommendations ignored or cherry-picked**: Council decisions favour other competing priorities, or selectively use citizen input only when it fits existing political agendas, failing to challenge the status quo and at times entrenching power imbalances (Font et al., 2018).
- **Vulnerable to changes in political leadership**: Processes can be discontinued or weakened when they produce results that challenge existing agendas or power structures. Often if they are perceived to be closely linked to party political agendas, they might be vulnerable to political cycles and changes in government (Bussu et al., 2022).

An enduring challenge has been defining the core purpose and function of area decentralisation mechanisms: local democratic co-governance or local managerial coordination (Davies 2011). In the first conception they are intended to be political spaces that give residents real decision making powers to shape their area. If so how is the relationship with the existing democratic representative institutions in towns and parishes and the Full Council to be managed? Area decentralisation is to augment, not replace, but there is an implicit political challenge in the creation of a potentially new loci of power and associated questions of the mechanisms democratic legitimacy. In practice committees are generally cut off from mainstream council decision-making and have very little influence. If devolving into a pure talking shop is avoided, then the committee risks taking on a de-facto containment role of channelling resident anger away from the heart of the council (Burns et al. 1994). Further there is risk for inclusion. The Commission on the Future of Localism (2017), organised by Locality, found that '*Rights remain too dependent on local capacity and resources. A longstanding concern with localism is that it can actually entrench inequalities, strengthening the position of those with the resources, time and networks, whilst excluding the most marginalised communities*'.

In the second conception, the committee becomes a professional managerial space for the convening and coordination of local stakeholders and partners for delivering neighbourhood management. The committee can then provide a quantifiable function, however it will risk becoming alienating and disempowering to any attendant lacking a lanyard i.e. ordinary residents (Davies 2011). The participatory and transformative potential of the initiative is lost, as Wright et al. (2006) assessed early 2000s area decentralisation measures *'the (programme) is community led in the sense that government decides how the community will be involved, why they will be involved, what they will do and how they will do it.'*

Often, area decentralisation will be presented as delivering community co-governance, whilst in practice being a managerial space for stakeholder coordination. This can lead to mistrust and frustration on all sides. Evaluating community partnerships in Hull, Davies (2007) noted that the community groups and activists saw it as a resource to support community projects and so demanded looser financial control. Public managers saw it as a vehicle to deliver the strategic goals set out in the community plan, which were placed beyond deliberation, and demanded, required and established tighter financial controls and quality assurance pre-checks on community group presentations to ensure relevancy. The opportunity for a space that truly captured and empowered community voice was reduced, but the set strategic goals were delivered. The tension can create cynicism on the value of area decentralisation. Emblematic of the early 2000's initiatives was an overly candid remark by a senior Trafford BC councillor on the Salford Area Panels to a sector conference in 2005: (the attendees are) "*MAD, BAD and SAD – mad to attend, bad, as people think that they can get some money out of it, and sad as people have nothing better to do with their time"*(Johnston 2012).

Good practice can navigate these tensions, however successful community governance is a slow and bespoke process. Mutual Ventures, who have developed the boldest and most thorough prospectus for area decentralisation in this reorganisation round recommend that a piloting 'test and grow' approach be used. **This is not a policy domain with a tested, universal off-the-shelf solution to be applied.** The most successful contemporary example that is applicable to the Greater Lincolnshire geography: Wiltshire, is the product of nearly twenty years of careful practice and political and managerial commitment. This model can be adopted and tailored to Greater Lincolnshire, however we believe that success will maximised by ensuring it is a supplement to fundamentally local jurisdictions. **The wider practice is too experimental and the track record too mixed to be relied on to maintain and enhance resident voice in a scenario where the jurisdiction scale is no longer meaningfully local.**

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APPENDIX 3 : TRAVEL TO WORK DATA TABLES

Table 1: Labour Market Containment – 2011 to 2021 – Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area & Rutland							
Rank 1 is the most self-contained labour market. 2021 ranked the then 309 English Authorities. Isle of Wight was the most self-contained labour market in England in both 2011 and 2021. Haringey LBC was the least in 2021. Lambeth LBC was the least in 2011. The average containment was 48.88% in 2021 and 49.88% in 2011.							
Authority	**Sub Region Designation**	**Census 2021**			**Census 2011**		
		% of Commuter Containment	**National Rank**	**Decile**	**% of Commuter Containment**	**National Rank**	**Decile**
North East Lincolnshire	North	80.46	7	TOP	81.85	7	TOP
North Lincolnshire	North	75.72	18	TOP	76.25	16	TOP
Boston	Central	61.99	80	8	71.73	30	TOP
Lincoln	Central	55.78	119	6	60.87	84	8
East Lindsey	Central	70.32	38	9	70.22	35	9
West Lindsey	Central	41.75	218	3	40.15	228	3
North Kesteven	South	44.66	202	4	46.46	192	5
South Holland	South	65.13	57	9	65.39	56	9
South Kesteven	South	56.85	110	7	56.56	113	7
Rutland	South (FOR OPTION ANALYSIS)	54.50	129	6	53.21	147	6

Table 1 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 2: Labour Market Containment – 2011 to 2021 – Intra-Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area										
	Total commuters within/to Lincolnshire county council footprint		Total commuters leaving Lincolnshire county council footprint		Total commuters within/to Central Lincolnshire		Total commuters within/to Southern Lincolnshire		Total commuters to/within Northern Lincolnshire	
	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011
North East Lincolnshire	2,160	2,533	N/A	N/A	2,060	2,403	100	130	43,489	54,677
North Lincolnshire	1,908	2,271	N/A	N/A	1,739	2,059	169	212	42,633	54,223
Boston	23,443	24,004	1,634	1,376	17,115	19,965	6,328	4,039	26	35
Lincoln	26,873	33,952	3,845	4,526	19,919	26,614	6,954	7,338	310	395
East Lindsey	30,921	37,679	4,344	5,756	29,545	36,149	1,376	1,530	2,716	3,692
West Lindsey	18,598	24,657	4,107	8,809	16,684	22,336	1,914	2,321	3,427	4,704
North Kesteven	29,074	37,419	4,082	5,210	11,559	14,858	17,515	22,561	231	169
South Holland	23,699	25,557	6,751	7,804	2,267	2,066	21,432	23,491	20	8
South Kesteven	26,288	34,725	12,749	19,186	1,313	1,391	24,975	33,334	33	59

Table 2 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 3: % Labour Market Containment – 2011 to 2021 – Intra-Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area										
	% Total commuters within/to Lincolnshire county council footprint		% Total commuters leaving Lincolnshire county council footprint		% Total commuters within/to Central Lincolnshire		% Total commuters within/to Southern Lincolnshire		% Total commuters to/within Northern Lincolnshire	
	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011
North East Lincolnshire	4.41	4.15	N/A	N/A	4.21	3.94	0.2	0.21	88.89	89.54
North Lincolnshire	3.62	3.43	N/A	N/A	3.3	3.11	0.32	0.32	80.97	82
Boston	93.48	94.58	6.52	5.42	68.25	78.66	25.23	15.91	0.1	0.14
Lincoln	87.48	88.24	12.52	11.76	64.84	69.17	22.64	19.07	1.01	1.03
East Lindsey	87.68	86.75	12.32	13.25	83.78	83.23	3.9	3.52	7.7	8.5
West Lindsey	74.76	73.68	16.51	26.32	67.07	66.74	7.69	6.94	13.78	14.06
North Kesteven	87.69	87.78	12.31	12.22	34.86	34.85	52.83	52.92	0.7	0.4
South Holland	77.83	76.61	22.17	23.39	7.44	6.19	70.38	70.41	0.07	0.02
South Kesteven	67.34	64.41	32.66	35.59	3.36	2.58	63.98	61.83	0.08	0.11

Table 3 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 4: Commuter Flows 2021 – Destination of Total Out Commuters for the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area & Rutland											
Authority		NUMBER OF TOTAL COMMUTERS TO									
		North East Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	West Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	Rutland
TOTAL COMMUTERS FROM	North East Lincolnshire	39366	4123	23	148	1263	626	89	6	5	21
	North Lincolnshire	2767	39866	12	312	139	1276	157	2	10	6
	Boston	16	7	15544	221	1291	59	1092	4806	430	15
	City of Lincoln	119	191	123	17136	364	2296	6479	84	391	20
	East Lindsey	2378	338	2853	1038	24798	856	908	339	129	19
	West Lindsey	1272	2155	97	5271	931	10385	1765	43	106	8
	North Kesteven	81	150	1147	7740	1312	1360	14929	483	2103	89
	South Holland	7	12	1935	81	217	34	291	19832	1309	61
	South Kesteven	10	23	470	516	206	121	1581	1095	22299	1843
	Rutland	1	0	3	7	11	4	23	44	900	5369

Table 4 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 5: Commuter Flows 2011 – Destination of Total Out Commuters for the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area & Rutland											
Authority		NUMBER OF TOTAL COMMUTERS TO									
		North East Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	West Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	Rutland
TOTAL COMMUTERS FROM	North East Lincolnshire	49,985	4692	29	253	1257	864	98	10	22	12
	North Lincolnshire	3,803	50420	37	463	138	1421	164	13	35	7
	Boston	28	7	18205	280	1432	48	807	2920	312	20
	City of Lincoln	154	241	187	23423	774	2230	6795	117	426	31
	East Lindsey	3,336	356	3278	1527	30498	846	1051	310	169	16
	West Lindsey	1,760	2944	94	7888	919	13435	1978	81	262	27
	North Kesteven	57	112	1121	11050	1396	1291	19805	509	2247	116
	South Holland	4	4	1677	198	141	50	375	21813	1303	87
	South Kesteven	34	25	321	647	207	216	1501	1339	30494	2301
	Rutland	4	2	1	14	26	9	39	54	1244	7378

Table 5 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 6: Commuter Flows 2021 - Proportion of Total Out Commuters for the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area & Rutland											
Authority		% OF TOTAL COMMUTERS TO									
		North East Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	West Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	Rutland
% OF TOTAL COMMUTERS FROM	North East Lincolnshire	N/A	43.13	0.24	1.55	13.21	6.55	0.93	0.06	0.05	0.22
	North Lincolnshire	21.64	N/A	0.09	2.44	1.09	9.98	1.23	0.02	0.08	0.05
	Boston	0.17	0.07	N/A	2.32	13.54	0.62	11.45	50.41	4.51	0.16
	City of Lincoln	0.88	1.41	0.91	N/A	2.68	16.9	47.7	0.62	2.88	0.15
	East Lindsey	22.72	3.23	27.26	9.92	N/A	8.18	8.67	3.24	1.23	0.18
	West Lindsey	8.78	14.87	0.67	36.37	6.42	N/A	12.18	0.3	0.73	0.06
	North Kesteven	0.44	0.82	6.29	42.46	7.2	7.46	N/A	2.65	11.54	0.49
	South Holland	0.07	0.11	18.22	0.76	2.04	0.32	2.74	N/A	12.33	0.57
	South Kesteven	0.06	0.14	2.81	3.08	1.23	0.72	9.45	6.54	N/A	11.01
	Rutland	0.02	0	0.07	0.16	0.25	0.09	0.52	0.99	20.21	N/A

Table 6 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 7: Commuter Flows 2011 - Proportion of Total Out Commuters for the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area & Rutland											
Authority		% OF TOTAL COMMUTERS TO									
		North East Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	West Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	Rutland
% OF TOTAL COMMUTERS FROM	North East Lincolnshire	N/A	42.35	0.26	2.28	11.34	7.8	0.88	0.09	0.2	0.11
	North Lincolnshire	24.22	N/A	0.24	2.95	0.88	9.05	1.04	0.08	0.22	0.04
	Boston	0.39	0.1	N/A	3.9	19.96	0.67	11.25	40.7	4.35	0.28
	City of Lincoln	1.02	1.6	1.24	N/A	5.14	14.81	45.13	0.78	2.83	0.21
	East Lindsey	25.79	2.75	25.34	11.8	N/A	6.54	8.12	2.4	1.31	0.12
	West Lindsey	8.79	14.7	0.47	39.38	4.59	N/A	9.87	0.4	1.31	0.13
	North Kesteven	0.25	0.49	4.91	48.41	6.12	5.66	N/A	2.23	9.84	0.51
	South Holland	0.03	0.03	14.52	1.71	1.22	0.43	3.25	N/A	11.28	0.75
	South Kesteven	0.15	0.11	1.37	2.76	0.88	0.92	6.41	5.72	N/A	9.83
	Rutland	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.22	0.4	0.14	0.6	0.83	19.17	N/A

Table 7 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Northern Lincolnshire: North Lincolnshire UA and North East Lincolnshire UA

Table 8: Labour Market Containment – Northern Lincolnshire – 2021 vs 2011					
Authority	**Category**	**Total Commuters**		**% Total Commuters**	
		2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
North East Lincolnshire	Total Commuters	48,926	61,065	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	39,366	49,985	80.46	81.86
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	9,560	11,080	19.54	18.14
North Lincolnshire	Total Commuters	52,652	66,125	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	39,866	50,420	75.72	76.25
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	12,786	15,705	24.28	23.75

Table 8 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 9: North East Lincolnshire Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
North Lincolnshire	1	1	4123	4692	43.13	42.35	8.43	7.68
East Lindsey	2	2	1263	1257	13.21	11.34	2.58	2.06
Kingston upon Hull	3	4	845	685	8.84	6.18	1.73	1.12
West Lindsey	4	3	626	864	6.55	7.80	1.28	1.41
Workplace is offshore installation	5	5	536	402	5.61	3.63	1.10	0.66
East Riding of Yorkshire	6	6	479	330	5.01	2.98	0.98	0.54
Workplace is outside the UK	7	10	203	126	2.12	1.14	0.41	0.21
Lincoln	8	7	148	253	1.55	2.28	0.30	0.41
Doncaster	9	9	144	188	1.51	1.70	0.29	0.31
North Kesteven	10	11	89	98	0.93	0.88	0.18	0.16
Boston	14	23	23	29	0.24	0.26	0.05	0.05
Rutland	19	57	21	12	0.22	0.11	0.04	0.02
South Holland	65	69	6	10	0.06	0.09	0.01	0.02
South Kesteven	81	28	5	22	0.05	0.20	0.01	0.04

Table 9 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 10: Commuting Patterns of North East Lincolnshire Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	Total Commuters	Total Commuting within Unitary	% of total commuters within Unitary	% of Total Commuters	
				Workplaces within Northern Lincolnshire	Workplaces in the Lincolnshire County Council Area
E02002726: Immingham & Habrough	3314	2330	70.31	88.65	3.56
E02002727: Grimsby East Marsh & Port	1218	1068	87.68	92.45	2.38
E02002728: Grimsby West Marsh	2462	2142	87.00	92.61	2.19
E02002729: Great Coates & The Willows	1774	1416	79.82	88.39	4.40
E02002730: Sidney Park	2148	1846	85.94	91.25	3.54
E02002731: New Clee	1749	1534	87.71	93.54	1.89
E02002732: Laceby, Healing & Stallingborough	2587	1876	72.52	85.27	5.49
E02002733: Littlefield North	1992	1672	83.94	90.46	3.77
E02002734: Yarborough	1895	1557	82.16	89.60	3.32
E02002735: Holme Hill	1833	1600	87.29	91.65	3.38
E02002736: Weelsby & Old Clee	2376	1985	83.54	90.03	3.58
E02002737: Laceby Acres & Wybers Wood	2307	1818	78.80	87.99	5.46
E02002738: Cleethorpes Beacon Hill	1765	1479	83.80	90.31	4.02
E02002739: Littlefield South & Grange	1708	1405	82.26	89.58	4.51
E02002740: Wellow	2886	2363	81.88	89.54	4.02
E02002741: Cleethorpes West	1376	1137	82.63	89.24	3.34
E02002742: Nunsthorpe	1866	1565	83.87	90.46	3.86
E02002743: Humberston	2072	1632	78.76	86.87	5.02
E02002744: Scartho	3244	2517	77.59	86.90	5.76
E02002745: New Waltham	2913	2228	76.48	85.14	6.93
E02002746: Waltham & East Ravendale	2217	1621	73.12	83.22	8.34
E02002747: Cleethorpes North & Haverstoe	3184	2564	80.53	89.01	4.55

Table 10 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 11: Commuting Destinations of North East Lincolnshire Residents leaving the Unitary by MSOA – Census 2021								
MSOA Name	% of North East Lincolnshire Residents Commuting to							
	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	West Lindsey	North Lincolnshire
E02002726: Immingham & Habrough	0.09	0.36	1.21	0.03	0.09	0.00	1.78	18.35
E02002727: Grimsby East Marsh & Port	0.00	0.41	1.23	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.66	4.76
E02002728: Grimsby West Marsh	0.04	0.04	1.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.10	5.61
E02002729: Great Coates & The Willows	0.00	0.17	1.92	0.45	0.06	0.00	1.80	8.57
E02002730: Sidney Park	0.00	0.09	2.05	0.28	0.00	0.00	1.12	5.31
E02002731: New Clee	0.00	0.11	1.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.63	5.83
E02002732: Laceby, Healing & Stallingborough	0.08	0.46	2.24	0.46	0.00	0.04	2.20	12.76
E02002733: Littlefield North	0.05	0.45	1.91	0.25	0.00	0.05	1.05	6.53
E02002734: Yarborough	0.05	0.11	1.48	0.21	0.00	0.00	1.48	7.44
E02002735: Holme Hill	0.00	0.11	2.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.15	4.36
E02002736: Weelsby & Old Clee	0.00	0.21	2.57	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.76	6.48
E02002737: Laceby Acres & Wybers Wood	0.00	0.35	3.12	0.26	0.00	0.00	1.73	9.19
E02002738: Cleethorpes Beacon Hill	0.11	0.34	2.66	0.11	0.00	0.06	0.74	6.52
E02002739: Littlefield South & Grange	0.18	0.23	1.81	0.18	0.00	0.00	2.11	7.32
E02002740: Wellow	0.03	0.45	2.43	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.83	7.66
E02002741: Cleethorpes West	0.00	0.36	2.11	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.80	6.61
E02002742: Nunsthorpe	0.00	0.05	2.14	0.16	0.00	0.05	1.45	6.59
E02002743: Humberston	0.00	0.29	3.76	0.19	0.05	0.00	0.72	8.11
E02002744: Scartho	0.00	0.49	3.58	0.28	0.00	0.03	1.39	9.31
E02002745: New Waltham	0.10	0.45	4.74	0.21	0.00	0.00	1.44	8.65
E02002746: Waltham & East Ravendale	0.23	0.41	5.95	0.18	0.00	0.00	1.58	10.10
E02002747: Cleethorpes North & Haverstoe	0.00	0.35	3.20	0.16	0.06	0.00	0.79	8.48

Table 11 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 12: North Lincolnshire Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
North East Lincolnshire	1	1	2767	3803	21.64	24.22	5.26	5.75
Doncaster	2	2	1917	2605	14.99	16.59	3.64	3.94
Kingston upon Hull	3	4	1857	1391	14.52	8.86	3.53	2.10
East Riding of Yorkshire	4	5	1524	1107	11.92	7.05	2.89	1.67
West Lindsey	5	3	1276	1421	9.98	9.05	2.42	2.15
Bassetlaw	6	7	344	435	2.69	2.77	0.65	0.66
Lincoln	7	6	312	463	2.44	2.95	0.59	0.70
Workplace is outside the UK	8	19	224	107	1.75	0.68	0.43	0.16
Leeds	9	8	211	401	1.65	2.55	0.40	0.61
Workplace is offshore installation	10	14	181	155	1.42	0.99	0.34	0.23
North Kesteven	14	13	157	164	1.23	1.04	0.30	0.25
East Lindsey	16	17	139	138	1.09	0.88	0.26	0.21
Boston	34	30	12	37	0.09	0.24	0.02	0.06
South Kesteven	41	31	10	35	0.08	0.22	0.02	0.05
Rutland	68	111	6	7	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.01
South Holland	168	57	2	13	0.02	0.08	0.00	0.02

Table 12 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 13: Commuting Patterns of North Lincolnshire Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	Total Commuters	Total Commuting within Unitary	% of total commuters within Unitary	% of Total Commuters	
				Workplaces within Northern Lincolnshire	Workplaces in the Lincolnshire County Council Area
E02002749: Barton upon Humber	3725	2391	64.19	71.79	2.09
E02002750: Goxhill, Barrow & New Holland	1847	1042	56.42	69.84	2.54
E02002751: Winterton & Winteringham	1799	1406	78.15	81.82	2.17
E02002752: Barnetby, Ulceby & Killingholme	2006	988	49.25	78.12	6.23
E02002753: Burton upon Stather, Alkborough & Gunness	2530	2069	81.78	85.38	2.53
E02002754: Crowle & Keadby	2321	1565	67.43	70.10	2.59
E02002755: Scunthorpe North	2695	2348	87.12	89.31	1.71
E02002756: Scunthorpe Central & Crosby	3327	2913	87.56	88.94	1.95
E02002757: Scunthorpe Berkeley	2245	1915	85.30	87.44	1.69
E02002758: Scunthorpe Frodingham	2369	2091	88.27	90.46	2.87
E02002759: Brigg & South Ferriby	2702	1863	68.95	80.24	5.70
E02002760: Scunthorpe Central Park	1792	1491	83.20	85.21	3.79
E02002761: Broughton & Appleby	2040	1507	73.87	82.25	5.00
E02002762: Scunthorpe Lincoln Gardens	2097	1784	85.07	87.74	2.38
E02002763: Scunthorpe Lakeside	3021	2612	86.46	88.51	2.71
E02002764: Scunthorpe Westcliff	1816	1586	87.33	89.48	1.98
E02002765: Scunthorpe Ashby	1995	1730	86.72	89.02	2.81
E02002766: Scunthorpe Bottesford	2888	2437	84.38	87.74	2.77
E02002767: Scunthorpe Yaddlethorpe	2152	1790	83.18	86.57	3.21
E02002768: Epworth & Bracon	1942	1073	55.25	57.52	3.76
E02002769: Messingham & Scawby	1531	1176	76.81	83.34	6.40
E02002770: Kirton in Lindsey & Hibaldstow	2013	1273	63.24	71.68	16.05
E02002771: Westwoodside, Haxey & Owston Ferry	1786	813	45.52	46.92	4.31

Table 13 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 14: Commuting Destinations of North Lincolnshire Residents leaving the Unitary by MSOA – Census 2021								
MSOA Name	% of North Lincolnshire Residents Commuting to							
	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	West Lindsey	North East Lincolnshire
E02002749: Barton upon Humber	0.00	0.46	0.32	0.13	0.00	0.05	1.13	7.60
E02002750: Goxhill, Barrow & New Holland	0.05	0.43	0.32	0.16	0.00	0.00	1.57	13.43
E02002751: Winterton & Winteringham	0.00	0.44	0.28	0.28	0.00	0.00	1.17	3.67
E02002752: Barnetby, Ulceby & Killingholme	0.05	0.85	1.40	0.35	0.05	0.00	3.54	28.86
E02002753: Burton upon Stather, Alkborough & Gunness	0.08	0.20	0.12	0.20	0.00	0.04	1.90	3.60
E02002754: Crowle & Keadby	0.09	0.47	0.04	0.17	0.00	0.04	1.77	2.67
E02002755: Scunthorpe North	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.00	1.34	2.19
E02002756: Scunthorpe Central & Crosby	0.03	0.15	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	1.74	1.38
E02002757: Scunthorpe Berkeley	0.00	0.36	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00	1.29	2.14
E02002758: Scunthorpe Frodingham	0.04	0.38	0.08	0.30	0.00	0.00	2.07	2.20
E02002759: Brigg & South Ferriby	0.00	1.00	0.70	0.30	0.04	0.07	3.59	11.29
E02002760: Scunthorpe Central Park	0.00	0.84	0.28	0.17	0.00	0.00	2.51	2.01
E02002761: Broughton & Appleby	0.00	0.34	0.39	0.39	0.00	0.00	3.87	8.38
E02002762: Scunthorpe Lincoln Gardens	0.00	0.29	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	1.91	2.67
E02002763: Scunthorpe Lakeside	0.03	0.40	0.03	0.20	0.00	0.00	2.05	2.05
E02002764: Scunthorpe Westcliff	0.00	0.50	0.17	0.28	0.00	0.00	1.05	2.15
E02002765: Scunthorpe Ashby	0.05	0.15	0.25	0.35	0.00	0.00	2.01	2.31
E02002766: Scunthorpe Bottesford	0.00	0.48	0.21	0.14	0.00	0.00	1.94	3.36
E02002767: Scunthorpe Yaddlethorpe	0.00	0.79	0.19	0.14	0.00	0.00	2.09	3.39
E02002768: Epworth & Bracon	0.00	0.46	0.15	0.51	0.00	0.05	2.57	2.27
E02002769: Messingham & Scawby	0.07	1.11	0.26	0.20	0.00	0.00	4.77	6.53
E02002770: Kirton in Lindsey & Hibaldstow	0.10	3.33	0.79	1.99	0.00	0.05	9.79	8.45
E02002771: Westwoodside, Haxey & Owston Ferry	0.00	0.84	0.06	0.84	0.00	0.11	2.46	1.40

Table 14 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Central Lincolnshire: Boston Borough, City of Lincoln, East Lindsey and West Lindsey

Table 15: Labour Market Containment – Central Lincolnshire – 2021 vs 2011					
Authority	**Category**	**Commuters**			**%**
		2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
Boston	Total Commuters	25,077	25380	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	15,544	18205	61.99	71.73
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	9,533	7175	38.01	28.27
City of Lincoln	Total Commuters	30,718	38478	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	17,136	23423	55.78	60.87
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	13,582	15055	44.22	39.13
East Lindsey	Total Commuters	35,265	43435	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	24,798	30498	70.32	70.22
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	10,467	12937	29.68	29.78
West Lindsey	Total Commuters	24,877	33466	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	10,385	13435	41.75	40.15
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	14,492	20031	58.25	59.85

Table 15 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 16: Boston Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2021**	**2011**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
South Holland	1	1	4806	2920	50.41	40.70	19.16	11.51
East Lindsey	2	2	1291	1432	13.54	19.96	5.15	5.64
North Kesteven	3	3	1092	807	11.45	11.25	4.35	3.18
South Kesteven	4	4	430	312	4.51	4.35	1.71	1.23
Workplace is outside the UK	5	12	318	40	3.34	0.56	1.27	0.16
Peterborough	6	6	301	269	3.16	3.75	1.20	1.06
Lincoln	7	5	221	280	2.32	3.90	0.88	1.10
Fenland	8	8	149	88	1.56	1.23	0.59	0.35
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	9	7	114	91	1.20	1.27	0.45	0.36
West Lindsey	10	11	59	48	0.62	0.67	0.24	0.19
North East Lincolnshire	16	15	19	28	0.20	0.39	0.08	0.11
Rutland	17	18	15	20	0.16	0.28	0.06	0.08
North Lincolnshire	29	32	7	7	0.07	0.10	0.03	0.03

Table 16 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 17: Commuting Patterns of Boston Borough Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	Total Commuters	Total Commuting within District	% of total commuters within District	% of Total Commuters	
				Workplaces within Lincolnshire County Council Area	Workplaces outside Lincolnshire County Council Area
E02005417: Leake & Butterwick	2087	1375	65.88	93.29	6.71
E02005418: Fenside & Lister Way	4310	2457	57.01	95.08	4.92
E02005419: Boston Central & North	3660	2212	60.44	93.85	6.15
E02005420: Skirbeck	3358	2161	64.35	93.54	6.46
E02005422: Swineshead, Bicker & Holland Fen	1889	976	51.67	92.01	7.99
E02005423: Kirton, Frampton & Algarkirk	3343	1972	58.99	92.10	7.90
E02006864: Fishtoft & Wyberton East	3224	2266	70.29	94.14	5.86
E02006865: Wyberton West & Fen	3195	2124	66.48	92.80	7.20

Table 17 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 18: Commuting Destinations of Boston Borough Residents leaving the District by MSOA – Census 2021								
MSOA Name	% of Boston Borough Residents Commuting to							
	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	West Lindsey	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire
E02005417: Leake & Butterwick	1.53	14.66	2.54	6.80	1.44	0.43	0.05	0.19
E02005418: Fenside & Lister Way	0.79	3.48	5.99	26.29	1.42	0.12	0.00	0.02
E02005419: Boston Central & North	0.71	3.58	4.86	22.73	1.37	0.16	0.00	0.03
E02005420: Skirbeck	0.45	5.45	3.69	18.17	1.31	0.12	0.06	0.18
E02005422: Swineshead, Bicker & Holland Fen	1.06	4.61	7.25	23.61	3.55	0.26	0.00	0.05
E02005423: Kirton, Frampton & Algarkirk	0.99	3.11	4.19	21.51	2.72	0.60	0.03	0.12
E02006864: Fishtoft & Wyberton East	0.65	5.96	2.70	13.09	1.27	0.19	0.06	0.06
E02006865: Wyberton West & Fen	1.35	4.23	3.54	15.71	1.38	0.13	0.03	0.06

Table 18 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 19: City of Lincoln Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
North Kesteven	1	1	6479	6795	47.70	45.13	21.09	17.66
West Lindsey	2	2	2296	2230	16.90	14.81	7.47	5.80
Newark and Sherwood	3	3	1584	1426	11.66	9.47	5.16	3.71
South Kesteven	4	5	391	426	2.88	2.83	1.27	1.11
East Lindsey	5	4	364	774	2.68	5.14	1.18	2.01
Bassetlaw	6	6	275	385	2.02	2.56	0.90	1.00
North Lincolnshire	7	7	191	241	1.41	1.60	0.62	0.63
Workplace is outside the UK	8	17	123	52	0.91	0.35	0.40	0.14
Boston	9	9	123	187	0.91	1.24	0.40	0.49
North East Lincolnshire	10	10	119	154	0.88	1.02	0.39	0.40
South Holland	12	11	84	117	0.62	0.78	0.27	0.30
Rutland	30	26	20	31	0.15	0.21	0.07	0.08

Table 19 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 20: Commuting Patterns of City of Lincoln Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	**Total Commuters**	**Total Commuting within District**	**% of total commuters within District**	**% of Total Commuters**	
				Workplaces within Lincolnshire County Council Area	**Workplaces outside Lincolnshire County Council Area**
E02005442: Ermine	1896	1148	60.55	89.40	10.60
E02005443: Glebe Park	2371	1505	63.48	90.17	9.83
E02005444: Cathedral & West Common	3901	2375	60.88	88.13	11.87
E02005445: Monks Road, St Giles & Greetwell	4028	2274	56.45	87.07	12.93
E02005446: Wharf & University	2330	1388	59.57	81.55	18.45
E02005447: Pelham Bridge & South Common	3118	1426	45.73	85.34	14.66
E02005448: Birchwood West	2174	1177	54.14	89.56	10.44
E02005449: Boultham & New Boultham	2656	1458	54.89	84.45	15.55
E02005450: Hartsholme & Birchwood East	2435	1283	52.69	88.58	11.42
E02005451: Bracebridge North & Boultham Moor	2467	1375	55.74	88.08	11.92
E02005452: Bracebridge South & Swallow Beck	3344	1722	51.50	90.07	9.93

Table 20 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 21: Commuting Destinations of City of Lincoln Residents leaving the District by MSOA – Census 2021								
MSOA Name	**% of City of Lincoln Residents Commuting to**							
	Boston	**East Lindsey**	**North Kesteven**	**South Holland**	**South Kesteven**	**West Lindsey**	**North Lincolnshire**	**North East Lincolnshire**
E02005442: Ermine	0.16	1.79	15.98	0.37	0.95	9.60	0.84	0.32
E02005443: Glebe Park	0.30	1.69	13.41	0.04	1.14	10.12	0.51	0.76
E02005444: Cathedral & West Common	0.59	1.51	14.51	0.36	0.92	9.36	1.26	0.51
E02005445: Monks Road, St Giles & Greetwell	0.52	1.22	19.41	0.45	0.99	8.02	0.65	0.55
E02005446: Wharf & University	0.64	1.24	12.83	0.09	1.07	6.09	0.56	0.26
E02005447: Pelham Bridge & South Common	0.29	0.96	29.86	0.48	1.57	6.45	0.29	0.26
E02005448: Birchwood West	0.55	1.01	25.57	0.18	1.38	6.72	0.51	0.14
E02005449: Boultham & New Boultham	0.26	0.98	19.28	0.34	1.36	7.34	0.94	0.60
E02005450: Hartsholme & Birchwood East	0.33	1.07	25.91	0.29	0.99	7.31	0.49	0.33
E02005451: Bracebridge North & Boultham Moor	0.24	0.36	24.77	0.04	1.38	5.55	0.49	0.16
E02005452: Bracebridge South & Swallow Beck	0.33	1.14	29.10	0.18	2.30	5.53	0.27	0.30

Table 21 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 22: East Lindsey Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
Boston	1	2	2853	3278	27.26	25.34	8.09	7.55
North East Lincolnshire	2	1	2378	3336	22.72	25.79	6.74	7.68
Lincoln	3	3	1038	1527	9.92	11.8	2.94	3.52
North Kesteven	4	4	908	1051	8.67	8.12	2.57	2.42
West Lindsey	5	5	856	846	8.18	6.54	2.43	1.95
South Holland	6	7	339	310	3.24	2.4	0.96	0.71
North Lincolnshire	7	6	338	356	3.23	2.75	0.96	0.82
Workplace is outside the UK	8	10	233	103	2.23	0.8	0.66	0.24
South Kesteven	9	8	129	169	1.23	1.31	0.37	0.39
Workplace is offshore installation	10	9	128	154	1.22	1.19	0.36	0.35
Rutland	24	29	19	16	0.18	0.12	0.05	0.04

Table 22 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 23: Commuting Patterns of East Lindsey Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	Total Commuters	Total Commuting within District	% of total commuters within District	% of Total Commuters	
				Workplaces within Lincolnshire County Council Area	Workplaces outside Lincolnshire County Council Area
E02005424: Holton-le-Clay, Binbrook & Tetney	2642	968	36.64	44.36	55.64
E02005425: Marshchapel, Somercotes & Grimoldby	1529	1035	67.69	77.17	22.83
E02005426: Louth North & East	2946	2288	77.66	85.30	14.70
E02005427: Louth Central & South	1951	1500	76.88	85.44	14.56
E02005428: Mablethorpe	1597	1330	83.28	90.86	9.14
E02005429: Sutton-on-Sea	953	784	82.27	90.77	9.23
E02005430: Wragby, Roughton & Ludford	1661	768	46.24	89.28	10.72
E02005431: Alford, Withern & Willoughby	1995	1643	82.36	93.48	6.52
E02005432: Little Cawthorpe & South Wolds	1743	1231	70.63	88.47	11.53
E02005433: Ingoldmells & Chapel St Leonards	1277	1057	82.77	93.34	6.66
E02005434: Horncastle	2194	1636	74.57	94.58	5.42
E02005435: Skegness North	2127	1827	85.90	95.49	4.51
E02005436: Spilsby & Burgh le Marsh	2106	1615	76.69	94.82	5.18
E02005437: Skegness Town	1746	1497	85.74	95.65	4.35
E02005438: Skegness South	1732	1492	86.14	94.63	5.37
E02005439: Coningsby & Woodhall Spa	3594	2307	64.19	93.04	6.96
E02005440: Wainfleet All Saints	1302	907	69.66	93.70	6.30
E02005441: Mareham, Sibsey & New Leake	2159	903	41.82	93.28	6.72

Table 23 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 24: Commuting Destinations of East Lindsey Residents leaving the District by MSOA – Census 2021								
MSOA Name	% of East Lindsey Residents Commuting to							
	Boston	City of Lincoln	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	West Lindsey	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire
E02005424: Holton-le-Clay, Binbrook & Tetney	1.44	1.78	1.06	0.23	0.26	2.95	4.62	44.81
E02005425: Marshchapel, Somercotes & Grimoldby	2.16	3.34	1.18	0.39	0.13	2.29	2.16	15.70
E02005426: Louth North & East	1.43	2.27	1.02	0.24	0.24	2.44	1.70	9.27
E02005427: Louth Central & South	2.31	1.95	1.13	0.41	0.21	2.56	1.18	9.12
E02005428: Mablethorpe	3.44	1.63	0.69	0.44	0.00	1.38	0.38	3.51
E02005429: Sutton-on-Sea	3.67	1.68	0.94	0.31	0.42	1.47	0.52	3.25
E02005430: Wragby, Roughton & Ludford	4.39	14.87	6.80	0.42	0.84	15.71	1.38	3.31
E02005431: Alford, Withern & Willoughby	5.66	2.06	1.30	0.60	0.30	1.20	0.30	2.01
E02005432: Little Cawthorpe & South Wolds	8.03	3.33	2.35	0.80	0.34	2.98	0.98	4.76
E02005433: Ingoldmells & Chapel St Leonards	6.34	0.55	1.17	1.25	0.16	1.10	0.31	1.41
E02005434: Horncastle	5.52	6.38	3.51	0.73	0.23	3.65	0.27	1.73
E02005435: Skegness North	5.88	0.89	1.03	0.61	0.42	0.75	0.24	1.27
E02005436: Spilsby & Burgh le Marsh	12.35	1.95	1.52	1.23	0.24	0.85	0.14	1.47
E02005437: Skegness Town	5.67	0.74	1.49	1.37	0.23	0.40	0.23	1.49
E02005438: Skegness South	5.37	0.69	0.81	0.81	0.00	0.81	0.40	1.39
E02005439: Coningsby & Woodhall Spa	11.21	4.59	9.10	1.31	0.83	1.81	0.42	1.09
E02005440: Wainfleet All Saints	17.13	0.84	1.77	3.30	0.38	0.61	0.15	1.31
E02005441: Mareham, Sibsey & New Leake	40.02	1.76	3.84	3.71	0.88	1.25	0.32	0.83

Table 24 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 25: West Lindsey Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
Lincoln	1	1	5271	7888	36.37	39.38	21.19	23.57
North Lincolnshire	2	2	2155	2944	14.87	14.7	8.66	8.80
North Kesteven	3	3	1765	1978	12.18	9.87	7.09	5.91
North East Lincolnshire	4	4	1272	1760	8.78	8.79	5.11	5.26
East Lindsey	5	6	931	919	6.42	4.59	3.74	2.75
Bassetlaw	6	5	769	1054	5.31	5.26	3.09	3.15
Newark and Sherwood	7	7	405	412	2.79	2.06	1.63	1.23
Doncaster	8	8	286	286	1.97	1.43	1.15	0.85
East Riding of Yorkshire	9	12	122	120	0.84	0.6	0.49	0.36
Workplace is outside the UK	10	15	119	95	0.82	0.47	0.48	0.28
South Kesteven	11	9	106	262	0.73	1.31	0.43	0.78
Boston	12	16	97	94	0.67	0.47	0.39	0.28
South Holland	17	19	43	81	0.30	0.4	0.17	0.24
Rutland	46	27	8	27	0.06	0.13	0.03	0.08

Table 25 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 26: Commuting Patterns of West Lindsey Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	**Total Commuters**	**Total Commuting within District**	**% of total commuters within District**	**% of Total Commuters**	
				Workplaces within Lincolnshire County Council Area	**Workplaces outside Lincolnshire County Council Area**
E02005492: Caistor, Kelsey & Keelby	2476	814	32.88	44.31	55.69
E02005493: Morton, Blyton & Scotter	2891	1327	45.90	57.70	42.30
E02005494: Market Rasen & Brookenby	2366	1136	48.01	77.43	22.57
E02005495: Gainsborough West	2922	1839	62.94	76.90	23.10
E02005496: Hemswell & Spital	1662	677	40.73	71.66	28.34
E02005497: Gainsborough East	2050	1373	66.98	78.54	21.46
E02005498: Torksey & Stow	1660	701	42.23	77.05	22.95
E02005499: Dunholme & Welton	2291	789	34.44	86.08	13.92
E02005500: Saxilby & Scampton	2014	626	31.08	85.40	14.60
E02005501: Nettleham, Sudbrooke & Scothern	2041	503	24.64	87.16	12.84
E02005502: Cherry Willingham & Bardney	2482	607	24.46	89.00	11.00

Table 26 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 27: Commuting Destinations of West Lindsey Residents leaving the District by MSOA – Census 2021								
MSOA Name	% of West Lindsey Residents Commuting to							
	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	South Kesteven	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire
E02005492: Caistor, Kelsey & Keelby	0.28	5.45	3.39	0.04	2.06	0.20	17.69	27.79
E02005493: Morton, Blyton & Scotter	0.21	7.71	0.76	0.21	2.77	0.14	25.35	1.94
E02005494: Market Rasen & Brookenby	0.51	13.44	11.20	0.30	3.68	0.30	5.83	9.76
E02005495: Gainsborough West	0.38	8.62	1.20	0.10	3.42	0.24	6.98	1.33
E02005496: Hemswell & Spital	0.42	19.37	3.13	0.18	7.34	0.48	13.36	3.55
E02005497: Gainsborough East	0.10	6.54	0.73	0.20	3.41	0.59	6.44	1.22
E02005498: Torksey & Stow	0.30	22.65	1.63	0.06	9.82	0.36	4.04	1.08
E02005499: Dunholme & Welton	0.48	37.49	4.19	0.31	8.86	0.31	3.14	2.36
E02005500: Saxilby & Scampton	0.45	35.35	2.33	0.25	14.95	0.99	2.43	1.14
E02005501: Nettleham, Sudbrooke & Scothern	0.54	43.66	5.05	0.24	12.40	0.64	2.89	1.71
E02005502: Cherry Willingham & Bardney	0.73	42.14	7.78	0.04	13.38	0.48	1.65	1.85

Table 27 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Southern Lincolnshire: North Kesteven, South Holland and South Kesteven

Table 28: Labour Market Containment – Southern Lincolnshire – 2021 vs 2011					
Authority	**Category**	**Commuters**		**%**	
		2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
North Kesteven	Total Commuters	33156	42629	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	14929	19805	45.03	46.46
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	18227	22824	54.97	53.54
South Holland	Total Commuters	30450	33361	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	19832	21813	65.13	65.38
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	10618	11548	34.87	34.62
South Kesteven	Total Commuters	39037	53911	100	100
	Total commuting to workplaces within authority	22299	30494	57.12	56.56
	Total commuting to workplaces outside authority	16738	23417	42.88	43.44

Table 28 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 29: North Kesteven Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
Lincoln	1	1	7740	11050	42.46	48.41	23.34	25.92
South Kesteven	2	2	2103	2247	11.54	9.84	6.34	5.27
West Lindsey	3	5	1360	1291	7.46	5.66	4.10	3.03
East Lindsey	4	3	1312	1396	7.20	6.12	3.96	3.27
Newark and Sherwood	5	4	1308	1338	7.18	5.86	3.94	3.14
Boston	6	6	1147	1121	6.29	4.91	3.46	2.63
South Holland	7	7	483	509	2.65	2.23	1.46	1.19
Peterborough	8	10	228	238	1.25	1.04	0.69	0.56
Bassetlaw	9	8	210	264	1.15	1.16	0.63	0.62
Workplace is outside the UK	10	15	185	99	1.01	0.43	0.56	0.23
North Lincolnshire	12	13	150	112	0.82	0.49	0.45	0.26
Rutland	14	12	89	116	0.49	0.51	0.27	0.27
North East Lincolnshire	16	20	81	57	0.44	0.25	0.24	0.13

Table 29 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 30: Commuting Patterns of North Kesteven Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	**Total Commuters**	**Total Commuting within District**	**% of total commuters within District**	**% of Total Commuters**	
				Workplaces within Lincolnshire County Council Area	**Workplaces outside Lincolnshire County Council Area**
E02005453: Washingborough & Branston	2879	998	34.66	89.02	10.98
E02005455: Skellingthorpe, Witham & Bassingham	4027	1389	34.49	79.24	20.76
E02005456: Bracebridge Heath & Waddington	3370	1397	41.45	88.43	11.57
E02005457: Metheringham, Nocton & Potterhanworth	2374	995	41.91	89.60	10.40
E02005458: Navenby, Harmston & Brant Broughton	1582	669	42.29	81.98	18.02
E02005459: Ruskington North & Billinghay	2233	1105	49.48	90.01	9.99
E02005460: Ruskington West & Cranwell	2007	1146	57.10	88.89	11.11
E02005461: Ruskington South, Leasingham & Osbournby	1496	764	51.07	86.16	13.84
E02005462: Sleaford East	3030	1822	60.13	90.50	9.50
E02005463: Sleaford West	3185	1715	53.85	88.76	11.24
E02005464: Heckington	2216	1133	51.13	89.31	10.69
E02006866: North Hykeham South	2673	950	35.54	84.36	15.64
E02006867: North Hykeham North	2374	846	35.64	86.18	13.82

Table 30 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 31: Commuting Destinations of North Kesteven Residents leaving the District by MSOA – Census 2021								
MSOA Name	% of North Kesteven Residents Commuting to							
	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	South Holland	South Kesteven	West Lindsey	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire
E02005453: Washingborough & Branston	41.13	0.97	2.92	0.49	1.88	6.98	0.45	0.31
E02005455: Skellingthorpe, Witham & Bassingham	30.89	0.87	1.49	0.30	3.30	7.90	1.04	0.00
E02005456: Bracebridge Heath & Waddington	34.69	0.92	4.07	0.27	2.34	4.69	0.59	0.42
E02005457: Metheringham, Nocton & Potterhanworth	31.84	2.23	5.73	0.42	3.12	4.34	0.55	0.51
E02005458: Navenby, Harmston & Brant Broughton	19.47	2.15	2.84	1.07	10.62	3.54	0.25	0.13
E02005459: Ruskington North & Billinghay	13.03	6.05	12.05	1.66	5.60	2.15	0.22	0.09
E02005460: Ruskington West & Cranwell	9.62	3.79	7.08	0.95	8.62	1.74	0.20	0.20
E02005461: Ruskington South, Leasingham & Osbournby	8.56	4.61	2.21	2.14	15.98	1.60	0.13	0.13
E02005462: Sleaford East	5.51	6.11	3.33	3.37	10.59	1.45	0.26	0.20
E02005463: Sleaford West	7.19	5.65	4.14	2.45	13.59	1.88	0.09	0.06
E02005464: Heckington	6.05	12.68	4.06	5.51	8.75	1.13	0.09	0.09
E02006866: North Hykeham South	37.37	0.90	1.72	0.49	2.36	5.99	0.67	0.45
E02006867: North Hykeham North	39.76	0.72	1.64	0.55	2.06	5.81	0.88	0.55

Table 31 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 32: South Holland Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
Peterborough	1	1	2962	3266	27.90	28.28	9.73	9.79
Boston	2	2	1935	1677	18.22	14.52	6.35	5.03
South Kesteven	3	3	1309	1303	12.33	11.28	4.30	3.91
Fenland	4	4	1204	1294	11.34	11.21	3.95	3.88
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	5	5	1004	1059	9.46	9.17	3.30	3.17
North Kesteven	6	6	291	375	2.74	3.25	0.96	1.12
Huntingdonshire	7	7	264	269	2.49	2.33	0.87	0.81
East Lindsey	8	9	217	141	2.04	1.22	0.71	0.42
Workplace is outside the UK	9	18	126	39	1.19	0.34	0.41	0.12
North Northamptonshire[1]	10	10	125	129	1.18	1.12	0.41	0.39
Lincoln	11	8	81	198	0.76	1.71	0.27	0.59
Rutland	12	11	61	87	0.57	0.75	0.20	0.26
West Lindsey	14	14	34	50	0.32	0.43	0.11	0.15
North Lincolnshire	31	105	13	4	0.12	0.03	0.04	0.01
North East Lincolnshire	49	106	7	4	0.07	0.03	0.02	0.01

Table 32 - Source: Office for National Statistics

[1] Composite of former pre-reorganised authorities

Table 33: Commuting Patterns of South Holland Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	Total Commuters	Total Commuting within District	% of total commuters within District	% of Total Commuters	
				Workplaces within Lincolnshire County Council Area	Workplaces outside Lincolnshire County Council Area
E02005465: Donington, Quadring & Gosberton	2412	1391	57.67	87.56	12.44
E02005466: Long Sutton West, Gedney & Holbeach Hurn	1834	1134	61.83	73.28	26.72
E02005467: Holbeach	2521	1809	71.76	81.44	18.56
E02005468: Moulton, Weston & Whaplode	2044	1345	65.80	78.91	21.09
E02005469: Pinchbeck & Deeping St Nicholas	2521	1527	60.57	76.87	23.13
E02005470: Spalding North	5268	4030	76.50	87.15	12.85
E02005471: Spalding East	3402	2600	76.43	86.51	13.49
E02005472: Long Sutton East & Sutton Bridge	2791	1492	53.46	61.38	38.62
E02005473: Spalding South West	3734	2753	73.73	85.30	14.70
E02005474: Fleet Hargate & Holbeach St Johns	1843	981	53.23	64.13	35.87
E02005475: Crowland & Cowbit	2065	767	37.14	48.86	51.14

Table 33 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 34: Commuting Destinations of South Holland Residents leaving the District by MSOA – Census 2021										
MSOA Name	% of South Holland Residents Commuting to									
	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Kesteven	West Lindsey	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire	Peterborough	Rutland
E02005465: Donington, Quadring & Gosberton	18.12	0.58	1.62	3.11	6.09	0.37	0.00	0.00	5.72	1.29
E02005466: Long Sutton West, Gedney & Holbeach Hurn	7.20	0.33	1.09	0.76	2.02	0.05	0.00	0.00	4.91	8.45
E02005467: Holbeach	6.15	0.24	0.32	0.79	2.14	0.04	0.04	0.00	5.87	4.76
E02005468: Moulton, Weston & Whaplode	7.44	0.24	0.44	0.88	4.06	0.05	0.05	0.10	9.20	4.21
E02005469: Pinchbeck & Deeping St Nicholas	4.96	0.08	0.60	1.23	9.44	0.00	0.04	0.04	13.96	1.90
E02005470: Spalding North	4.84	0.32	0.47	0.38	4.56	0.08	0.02	0.00	7.21	1.29
E02005471: Spalding East	4.59	0.12	0.47	1.06	3.79	0.06	0.06	0.00	6.67	1.70
E02005472: Long Sutton East & Sutton Bridge	4.19	0.07	1.40	0.75	1.29	0.21	0.11	0.04	4.91	11.72
E02005473: Spalding South West	5.20	0.29	0.48	0.78	4.77	0.05	0.03	0.00	7.95	1.93
E02005474: Fleet Hargate & Holbeach St Johns	6.29	0.43	0.92	0.54	2.39	0.33	0.00	0.11	15.03	8.74
E02005475: Crowland & Cowbit	4.12	0.29	0.53	0.63	6.00	0.15	0.05	0.00	34.96	3.49

Table 34 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 35: South Kesteven Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
Peterborough	1	1	5042	7791	30.12	33.27	12.92	14.45
Rutland	2	2	1843	2301	11.01	9.83	4.72	4.27
North Kesteven	3	3	1581	1501	9.45	6.41	4.05	2.78
South Holland	4	4	1095	1339	6.54	5.72	2.81	2.48
Newark and Sherwood	5	5	1056	1114	6.31	4.76	2.71	2.07
Melton	6	6	905	894	5.41	3.82	2.32	1.66
Lincoln	7	7	516	647	3.08	2.76	1.32	1.20
North Northamptonshire[2]	8	7	504	756	3.01	3.23	1.29	1.40
Boston	9	13	470	321	2.81	1.37	1.20	0.60
Huntingdonshire	10	9	433	597	2.59	2.55	1.11	1.11
East Lindsey	14	17	206	207	1.23	0.88	0.53	0.38
West Lindsey	17	15	121	216	0.72	0.92	0.31	0.40
North Lincolnshire	42	56	23	25	0.14	0.11	0.06	0.05
North East Lincolnshire	64	47	10	34	0.06	0.15	0.03	0.06

Table 35 - Source: Office for National Statistics

[2] Composite of former pre-reorganised authorities

Table 36: Commuting Patterns of South Kesteven Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	Total Commuters	Total Commuting within District	% of total commuters within District	% of Total Commuters	
				Workplaces within Lincolnshire County Council Area	Workplaces outside Lincolnshire County Council Area
E02005476: Ancaster, Caythorpe & Claypole	1669	770	46.14	69.38	30.62
E02005477: Long Bennington, Allington & Barrowby	1917	1042	54.36	63.64	36.36
E02005478: Grantham North East	2695	1940	71.99	80.93	19.07
E02005479: Grantham North West	2910	1887	64.85	75.81	24.19
E02005480: Grantham South West	2301	1747	75.92	82.49	17.51
E02005481: Grantham South East	4157	2923	70.32	77.80	22.20
E02005482: Corby Glen, Ropsley & Grantham Outskirts	2676	1704	63.68	76.53	23.47
E02005483: Morton & Billingborough	2020	1016	50.30	76.53	23.47
E02005484: Harlaxton, Colsterworth & South Witham	1820	881	48.41	55.55	44.45
E02005485: Bourne West	2474	1397	56.47	66.01	33.99
E02005486: Bourne East	2872	1654	57.59	69.60	30.40
E02005487: Langtoft, Thurlby & Uffington	2270	999	44.01	52.86	47.14
E02005488: Market Deeping	1856	745	40.14	47.84	52.16
E02005489: Deeping St James & Frognall	2035	797	39.16	47.71	52.29
E02005490: Stamford North	2670	1415	53.00	58.43	41.57
E02005491: Stamford Central, West & South	2888	1386	47.99	53.53	46.47

Table 36 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 37: Commuting Destinations of South Kesteven Residents leaving the District by MSOA – Census 2021										
MSOA Name	% of South Kesteven Residents Commuting to									
	Boston	City of Lincoln	East Lindsey	North Kesteven	South Holland	West Lindsey	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire	Peterborough	Rutland
E02005476: Ancaster, Caythorpe & Claypole	1.80	3.65	0.96	15.10	0.96	0.78	0.42	0.06	2.52	1.44
E02005477: Long Bennington, Allington & Barrowby	0.52	2.30	0.37	4.85	0.57	0.68	0.05	0.16	2.71	2.76
E02005478: Grantham North East	0.85	2.34	0.41	4.08	0.74	0.52	0.00	0.00	2.12	1.63
E02005479: Grantham North West	1.24	2.34	0.55	5.57	0.82	0.45	0.00	0.14	2.65	2.51
E02005480: Grantham South West	0.26	1.61	0.43	3.30	0.48	0.48	0.00	0.00	2.09	2.00
E02005481: Grantham South East	0.72	1.52	0.29	4.09	0.70	0.17	0.19	0.00	2.62	2.14
E02005482: Corby Glen, Ropsley & Grantham Outskirts	1.64	1.61	0.82	6.50	1.87	0.41	0.11	0.07	4.71	3.29
E02005483: Morton & Billingborough	4.36	1.29	1.09	10.30	8.81	0.40	0.00	0.00	11.04	2.67
E02005484: Harlaxton, Colsterworth & South Witham	0.93	1.32	0.77	2.47	1.48	0.16	0.00	0.00	7.75	13.19
E02005485: Bourne West	1.41	0.69	0.65	1.74	4.89	0.16	0.12	0.00	21.22	3.76
E02005486: Bourne East	1.36	0.56	0.42	2.96	6.48	0.24	0.00	0.07	18.66	3.38
E02005487: Langtoft, Thurlby & Uffington	1.10	0.70	0.26	2.16	4.63	0.00	0.04	0.00	28.02	5.11
E02005488: Market Deeping	0.86	0.38	0.38	1.40	4.63	0.05	0.00	0.00	38.42	2.26
E02005489: Deeping St James & Frognall	0.88	0.10	0.59	1.08	5.60	0.29	0.00	0.00	40.00	1.92
E02005490: Stamford North	0.71	0.30	0.41	1.35	2.40	0.26	0.00	0.00	15.84	13.71
E02005491: Stamford Central, West & South	1.11	0.73	0.38	1.14	2.08	0.10	0.07	0.00	18.18	12.98

Table 37 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland

Table 38: Rutland Out Commuter Flows - Top Ten Destinations and Intra Invitation Area & Rutland – 2021 vs 2011								
Destination	**Rank**		**Total**		**% of Commuters Leaving Authority**		**% of Total Commuters**	
	2021	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**	**2021**	**2011**
South Kesteven	1	1	900	1244	20.21	19.17	9.16	8.97
Peterborough	2	2	636	1015	14.28	15.64	6.48	7.32
North Northamptonshire[3]	3	3	596	794	13.38	12.24	6.07	5.73
Melton	4	5	544	484	12.22	7.46	5.54	3.49
Leicester	5	4	328	640	7.37	9.86	3.34	4.62
Harborough	6	6	323	209	7.25	3.22	3.29	1.51
Charnwood	7	8	119	145	2.67	2.23	1.21	1.05
Huntingdonshire	8	9	79	138	1.77	2.13	0.80	1.00
West Northamptonshire[4]	9	13	69	88	1.55	1.36	0.70	0.63
Blaby	10	7	64	2021	1.44	3.1	0.65	1.45
South Holland	15	16	44	54	0.99	0.83	0.45	0.39
North Kesteven	18	20	23	39	0.52	0.6	0.23	0.28
East Lindsey	25	27	11	26	0.25	0.4	0.11	0.19
Lincoln	38	37	7	14	0.16	0.22	0.07	0.10
West Lindsey	57	47	4	9	0.09	0.14	0.04	0.06
Boston	69	181	3	1	0.07	0.02	0.03	0.01
North East Lincolnshire	106	95	1	4	0.02	0.06	0.01	0.03
North Lincolnshire	N/a	142	0	4	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.01

Table 38 - Source: Office for National Statistics

[3] Composite of former pre-reorganised authorities
[4] Composite of former pre-reorganised authorities

Table 39: Commuting Patterns of Rutland Residents by MSOA – Census 2021					
MSOA Name	**Total Commuters**	**Total Commuting within Rutland**	**% of total commuters within Rutland**	**% of Total Commuters**	
				Workplaces within Leicestershire County Council Area	**Workplaces outside Leicestershire County Council Area**
E02002863: Market Overton, Cottesmore & Empingham	2130	1374	64.51	11.69	88.31
E02002864: Oakham West, Langham & Whissendine	2235	1294	57.90	21.03	78.97
E02002865: Oakham East	1841	1138	61.81	17.33	82.67
E02002866: Ketton, Ryhall & Luffenham	1776	613	34.52	9.80	90.20
E02002867: Uppingham, Lyddington & Braunston	1892	950	50.21	18.45	81.55

Table 39 - Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 40: Commuting Destinations of Rutland Residents leaving Rutland by MSOA – Census 2021					
Rutland Residents Commuter Destinations	% Rutland Residents Commuting From				
	E02002863: Market Overton, Cottesmore & Empingham	E02002864: Oakham West, Langham & Whissendine	E02002865: Oakham East	E02002866: Ketton, Ryhall & Luffenham	E02002867: Uppingham, Lyddington & Braunston
Blaby	0.61	0.72	0.54	0.23	1.11
Charnwood	0.89	1.83	1.03	0.68	1.64
Harborough	1.55	3.67	3.37	3.21	5.23
Hinckley & Bosworth	0.19	0.45	0.43	0.11	0.53
Leicester	2.25	4.30	4.89	2.25	4.92
Melton	5.40	8.90	6.03	2.65	3.65
NW Leicestershire	0.42	0.63	0.60	0.23	0.26
Oadby & Wigston	0.38	0.54	0.43	0.45	1.11
North Northamptonshire	3.10	4.61	4.29	5.80	13.27
Peterborough	4.88	4.30	4.56	14.08	5.60
South Kesteven	7.51	5.28	4.67	24.16	5.76

Table 40 - Source: Office for National Statistics

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APPENDIX 4a

Local Government Reorganisation Financial Analysis
North Kesteven & South Kesteven Proposal

Assumptions | Financial Analysis of LGR Options

October 2025

This document outlines the assumptions underpinning the detailed financial analysis prepared for North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) & South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) as part of their Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Business Case.

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Module 1: Income | Key assumptions

Key assumptions used in developing Module 1. These were agreed in the working session held on 18 September 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **Fair Funding Review timing:** The module does not include an estimate of the outcome of national funding reforms. A significant number of elements could impact the Year 1 position, including the Fair Funding Review, settlement from government, inflation, political change nationally and locally. The outcomes of the Fair Funding 2.0 Review is expected in Autumn 2025.
2. **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) figures used to project future income**. This was agreed with NSK on 18 September 2025. This is because:
    a. MTFS projects financial sustainability over multiple years and provides most up-to-date and comprehensive view of projected financial positions
    b. They already incorporate anticipated inflation, estimated funding reforms demand pressures and local priorities
    c. Using them for Year 1 builds on a future-oriented baseline, rather than relying on historic spend patterns
    d. HRA is not reflected within the projected income as the General Fund Budget Summary figures have been used. Baseline figures were signed off by NKSD and SKDC during course of module development.
3. **MTFS figures are also used to develop the Year 1 Budget.** By drawing on the MTFS, funding projections are rooted in each authorities' own financial planning assumptions, ensuring that the year 1 budget is consistent, evidence-based, and aligned with each authority's existing strategies.
4. **MTFS 2028/29 figures have been used where available.** This is available for Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), Boston Borough Council (BBC), East Lindsey District Council (ELDC), City of Lincoln Council (CoLC), South Holland District Council (SHDC) and West Lindsey District Council (WLDC). This is not available for North Lincolnshire Council (NLC), North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC), North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and South Kesteven District Council (SKDC), as MTFS figures are only projected through to 2027/28. No additional uplift has been applied to the 2027/28 figures as this is not known.
5. **Disaggregation of Lincolnshire County Council Income.** The process below was agreed with NSK on 18 September 2025:
    a. LCC Summary Revenue Budget (Funding) as documented in MTFS used as starting point.
    b. Separate LCC income into two buckets - grants (including business rates) and council tax.
    c. Apportion grants in accordance with the Pixel model (based on service need and funding allocations).
    d. Apportion the County's Council Tax and Business tax in accordance with the Pixel model percentages
    e. Add the apportioned County income to each District's income as outlined in the MTFS to give the total starting position for each proposed Unitary.
6. **Fire Authority:** assumes a new standalone Fire Authority will be created and a portion of the LCC Business Rates and Council Tax is disaggregated to that based on population.
7. **Relation to Council Tax (Module 3):** Sits alongside the Year 1 Budget. The module outputs are directional and seek to illustrate the range of options that Members of the new Unitary Authorities will have to consider for Council Tax.

Module 2: Expenditure | Key assumptions

Key assumptions used in developing Module 2. These were agreed in the working session held on 18 September 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **MTFS figures from Districts and the County used to project future expenditure.** This was agreed with NSK on 18 September 2025. This is because:
    a. MTFS projects financial sustainability over multiple years and provides most up-to-date and comprehensive view of projected financial positions
    b. They already incorporate anticipated inflation and local priorities
    c. Using them for Year 1 builds on a future-oriented baseline, rather than relying on historic spend patterns
    d. HRA is not reflected within the projected expenditure as the as the General Fund Budget Summary figures have been used. Baseline figures were signed off by NKSD and SKDC during course of module development.
2. **MTFS figures are also used to develop the Year 1 Budget.** By drawing on the MTFS, net operating expenditure projections are rooted in the council's own financial planning assumptions, ensuring that the year 1 budget is consistent, evidence-based, and aligned with each authority's existing strategies. The module does not forecast changes in statutory requirements or new cost pressures beyond those already included in councils' MTFS projections.
3. **MTFS 2028/29 figures have been used where available.** This is available for LCC, BBC, ELDC, CoLC, SHDC and WLDC. This is not available for NLC, NELC, NKDC and SKDC, as MTFS figures are only projected through to 2027/28. No additional uplift has been applied to the 2027/28 figures as this is not known.
4. **Disaggregation of Lincolnshire County Council expenditure has used a mixture of population forecasts, demand projections and relevant unit breakdowns.** The process allows for a more realistic, demand-driven disaggregation of the LCC's high-expenditure areas and was agreed with NSK on 18 September 2025:
    a. LCC Summary Revenue Budget (Expenditure) as documented in MTFS used as starting point.
    b. Revenue Budget 2024/25 and 2025/26 used to estimate Budget Area proportions for 2028/29
    c. Split Adults and Children's Revenue Budgets using Newton modelled demand projections for each District
    d. Split Highways Budget by KM of Carriageway
    e. Split all other County services by population share, based on Newton forecasts
    f. Add the apportioned County figures to the District expenditure from MTFS
    g. Calculate the estimated Day 1 net operating expenditure for each UA

Module 3: Council Tax | Key assumptions

Key assumptions used in developing Module 3. These were agreed in the working session held on 3 October 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **Three options have been developed with several variances:**
    a. **Scenario 1:** This demonstrates the impact of harmonisation over the shortest timeframe, whilst meeting (current) referendum principles, and highlights the challenges faced due to existing district areas having widely varying rates of council tax. This leads to some areas experiencing reductions in rate while other see significant increases.
    b. **Scenario 2a & 2b:** These seek to maximise the increase in council tax rate within referendum limits, and to avoid any district area experiencing a reduction in rate as a result of harmonisation. This is achieved by holding the highest current rate constant (or applying a small increase in 2b), but require an additional year to harmonise without exceeding limits.
    c. **Scenario 3:** This scenario seeks a consistent rate increase within referendum limits over time across each area. However, to achieve this will require a longer harmonisation period.
2. **Relation to Year 1 Budget and Income and Expenditure modules:** The Council Tax Module sits alongside the Year 1 Budget.
3. **Three sources have been used to develop the Module:**
    a. **2025 Tax Base for LCC & Districts:** This is the number of Band D equivalent taxable dwellings, after allowances to account for council tax relief. It is the figure reported by councils on form CTB1 annually. While it is appreciated that councils may agree other figures to account for new development using CTR1) this figure has been used for comparability of cases. Sourced from https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-council-tax
    b. **2025 Tax Base for Unitary Councils:** Sourced from Council Taxbase in England, Nov 2025 (MHCLG)
    c. **Tax Rate - Band D Council Tax Figures: The model does not take into account the relative impact of parish council and other precepts which may fall in any specific area, as these are outside the rate-setting remit of the upper-tier authority.** However, it is important to note that such precepts could considerably increase the rate payable in some areas.
4. **It is potentially the case that LGR may result in some currently unparished areas choosing to seek town or parish status to provide local governance.** This may introduce new precepts which are not currently part of the tax rate in these areas.
5. **The model uses the Band D equivalent tax base after application of a reduction to reflect council tax relief.** The harmonisation of council tax relief schemes will have a differential impact on the taxbase in each predecessor area of the new authority which is outside the scope of the model, and is reliant on a decision by the future council.
6. **Decisions about harmonising currently varying levels of service are critical to the decision around council tax harmonisation.** Setting the new budget based on service levels is a prerequisite for determining the council tax requirement. The interdependence of services and tax rates is thus a key consideration for officers and members.

Module 4: Assets | Key assumptions

Key assumptions used in developing Module 4 (Assets). These were agreed in the working session held on 3 October 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **Property Registers.** These were not consistently provided by each authority, and therefore the value within the Statement of Account Balance Sheet has been used. This approach was further supported by the need to:
    a. **Remove 'Council Dwellings' and 'Further HRA non-dwelling Assets'**. Whilst Asset Registers are more detailed operationally, they do not distinguish between HRA and GF assets. By looking at Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) Balance Sheet (within Statement of Accounts), it was possible to remove Council Dwellings.
    b. **Have consistent asset value information.** By looking at PPE Balance Sheets (within Statement of Accounts), was able to take a consistent approach to identifying the value of assets.
2. **Balance Sheet (Statement of Accounts).** Used to identify the total asset value for each authority under the service area Plant, Property and Equipment, and includes: Other Land and Buildings, Community Assets, Property, Plant and Equipment (Under Construction), Surplus Assets. Also included are Infrastructure Assets and Investment Assets.
3. **Assets reflect General Fund (GF) assets only as specifically requested by NSK.** Councils that have HRAs include: CoLC, NKDC, SHDC, SKDC. Council Dwellings and 'further HRA non-dwelling values' have been removed for these four district councils. NKDC and SKDC figures were provided directly by NSK during development of the Assets module.
4. **Disaggregation of LCC Assets.** Took the LCC PPE Balance Sheet (Land and Buildings) with asset locations and associated value (provided through LCC Work). Identified asset location, value, and proportion of value within each district. Proportion then applied to the Total Statement of Account Balance Sheet for LCC.
5. **Value of Assets in Year 1.** Capital programme investment as set out in the MTFS is used to give an indication of how much investment is planned, and used as a proxy indicator of future asset value growth. Note: Not all investment will increase the value of assets on the Balance Sheet (some may be repairs, replacements, etc). To reflect this, a scaling factor has been applied. This adjusts the investment figures so they better represent the portion that will actually increase the reported asset base.
6. **Planned Capital Receipts.** The module captured the capital receipts that each Council is projecting in the period up to the assumed vesting day (1 April 2028). This was subtracted from the projected Value of Assets in Year 1.
7. **Additional Capital Receipts.** The module assumes that a third of Surplus Assets can be rationalised ahead of Vesting Day. This was informed by asset portfolio view across Lincolnshire footprint and Rutland. This was subtracted from the projected Value of Assets in Year 1.
8. **Year 1 Balance Sheet**. Has been developed using the approach outlined in the steps above.
9. **Backlog Maintenance.** The assets module does not incorporate backlog maintenance for PPE as the module is focussed on estimating what the total asset portfolio would look like for each new potential authority. It is recognised, however, that the scale and condition of the existing asset base will be a critical factor in the early years of the new authority. As such, backlog maintenance and wider asset condition assessments will be key areas of focus for shadow authorities. These should inform future decisions around asset rationalisation, investment prioritisation, and the development of a sustainable asset management strategy moving forward.

Module 5: Liabilities | Key assumptions

Key assumptions used in Module 5 (Liabilities). These were agreed in the working session held on 8 October 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **The quantum of liabilities for each District and Lincolnshire and Rutland County Council has been derived from the balance sheet within the Statement of Accounts.** This means that the liabilities are validated and reliable for projection purposes and comparable to assets information.
2. **The Year 1 Balance Sheet has been developed using the long-term and current liabilities.** This includes: long-term and current liabilities (borrowing only), and excludes: Creditors (Short-Term, Long-Term), Provisions (Long-Term, Short-Term), Deferred Liabilities (i.e. Leases, Pensions). This aligns with the approach taken by the County.
3. **Liabilities reflect General Fund (GF) liabilities only as specifically requested by NSK.** Councils that have HRA's include: CoLC, NKDC, SHDC, SKDC. This breakdown is not provided publicly within Statements of Accounts. CoLC and SHDC provided this breakdown via NKDC.
4. **Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) used as a proxy for forward looking looking liabilities.** CFR as listed within MTFS and Treasury/Capital Management Strategies used as proxy for liabilities to vesting day. The year-on-year increase in CRF between 2024/25 to 2027/28 has been used to average an annual growth rate and applied to the long-term and current-liabilities values for 2024/25 and projected forward to vesting day.
5. **Apportionment of LCC borrowing liabilities.** Allocated following the same distribution profile as assets (i.e. follow the geography). In reality, the apportionment of debt will be worked through in detail as part of the implementation of any new authority.
6. **Apportionment of LCC Dedicated School Grants (DSG) deficits**. Based on the number of U18s within each District (as a proxy for DSG). Alternative approach is to estimate a split of the DSG Deficit across the unitary options based on the number of EHCPs in each District (as a recognised proxy for the drivers of cost in the DSG). However, Information provided at a Constituency level, not District Level, and could not be used.
7. **Current DSC deficits used as proxy esteemed future DSG deficit.** Authorities will also inherit DSG deficits which are currently excluded from local authority accounts due to statutory override. However, this is expected to change prior to vesting day and thus DSG deficits must be accounted for within the proposed future financial model.

Module 6: Members and elections | Key assumptions

Key assumptions used in Module 6 (Members). These were agreed in the working session held on 6 October 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **Scope.** Only Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances are included. Other forms of members' remuneration, such as mileage claims, subsistence, ICT allowances, and other incidental expenses, have been excluded at this stage due to the high degree of variability across councils and the absence of consistent, comparable data. As such, while they are not captured in this financial case, these costs should not be overlooked. The shadow authority will need to review and budget for these allowances and reimbursements.
2. **Future Allowances.** General Members' Allowance in the new unitaries calculated by taking the average rates of LCC, RCC, NEL and NL in Option 1, and the average rates of LCC, NEL and NL in Option 2 and 3. They are not treated for inflation and are presented in current terms. It is likely that the Allowances will have increased by Year 1 of the new Unitary structure. Note: The shadow authority(ies) of the new Council(s) may review allowances, SRAs, administrative support etc which could increase costs in the future but this cannot be assumed at this point in time.
3. **Councilor Numbers for the purposes of financial modelling.** Provided by NSK
    a. **Option 1:** NK+SK+SH+ RUT = 75, BOS+CoL+EL+WL = 72
    b. **Option 2:** NK+SK+SH = 68, BOS+CoL+EL+WL = 72
    c. **Option 3:** NK+SK+SH+BOS = 80, CoL+EL+WL = 60
4. **Total councillor numbers in the new Unitary Authorities will be decided by the shadow leadership for the new authorities**. This analysis does not intend to presume or pre-empt these decisions and is used only to inform the financial analysis for LGR. It is the decision of the future LAs to determine what the final number will be.

Key assumptions used in Module 6 (Elections). These were agreed in the working session held on 6 October 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **Election cost per Elector.** Preference by NSK not to use an estimated Average Cost per Elector of £3.09 per vote which is derived from the 2019 General Election.[1] This has been uplifted to better reflect localised average costs, using costs of conducting elections in the Revenue Outturn (RO6 Central, Protective and Other Services Data: Registering Electors and Conducting Elections data) between 21/22-24/25. This equates to at £9.0 per vote (incl. Rutland) and £9.2 per vote (excl. Rutland).
2. **Maximum savings modelled on 'LGBCE Electorate Data' rather than 'ONS 18+ population data' as a proxy for Max Electors.** Figures were provided by Duncan James (Strategic Lead, LGR). Election savings modelled on the 'max' scenario which assumes that all eligible voters (as per the LGBCE Electorate Data) do vote.
3. **Savings modelled on an annual basis.** All councils vote on a 4 year cycle, except for CoLC and NELC where elections are conducted in thirds, meaning that they conduct three elections every four years in order to elect for all Councillor seats. In order to get a holistic view of the cost of elections for these councils, the model takes the total sum figure votes cast across four-year election cycle, or between 21/22 to 24/25.
4. **No saving to be made in NLC, NELC, RCC, as people already vote once.** Merging these into an Unitary Authority will not cut a second set of local elections - as there is not one to cut. Hence, savings are the same across all three options. This is the same as the LCC output. District residents vote in both county and district/borough elections. Moving to a single "upper-tier" (unitary) would remove the separate district elections, so this is where the election-cost saving sits
5. **Future UAs will operate on whole election cycles.** 1 election every 4 years.

1. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. *Costs of the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election*. March 2025. Available here.

Module 7: Third Party Spend | Key assumptions (1/2)

Key assumptions used in Module 7 (Third Party Spend). These were agreed in the working session held on 1 October 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **Revenue Outturn 2023/2024 Running Costs were used to approximate total Third Party Spend for all Councils.** These are reported net of VAT.
2. **RO Data has been used over contract registers because:**
    a. **Clear distinction between General Fund and HRA Expenditure.** Contract registers do not easily separate spending between the GF and the HRA. This makes it difficult to isolate expenditure that relates only to services funded through the GF. Revenue Outturn (RO) data already aligns with the statutory financial reporting framework and enables the exclusion of HRA expenditure at source, ensuring the analysis reflects only the relevant areas of council spending.
    b. **Consistency and reliability of categorisation.** Contract registers rely on how individual contracts are manually recorded or described, which can lead to inconsistent or incorrect categorisation (e.g. a highways contract being recorded under Transport). RO data avoids this issue by drawing directly from the council's official accounts. Expenditure is categorised according to standard CIPFA codes, providing a consistent and comparable basis for analysis across service areas.
    c. **RO data is prepared and published annually across all local authorities, following a standard methodology.** This makes it easier to benchmark spending patterns across councils and to verify findings against audited figures. Contract registers are less standardised and may be incomplete or maintained differently by each authority, reducing their usefulness for reliable cross-council analysis.
3. **It is assumed that 75% of Third Party Spend is addressable.** This addressability factor was applied to all service areas.
4. **Allocation of Lincolnshire County Council Third Party Spend** is split in the same way as expenditure, using Newton Analysis demand forecasts for Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Education Spend, road length for Highways and Transport spend and population forecasts for the remaining service areas.
5. **Aggregation benefit assumptions have been applied to the Running Expenses.** Aggregation percentages of between 1.3% to 1.6% have been applied to the addressable spend amount for all spend categories. These were updated in response to NSK feedback provided at initial working session on 10 September that there should be greater variability and further evidence base for the saving assumptions used, in order to better reflect the nuances of each option. These were updated and reviewed with NSK at a follow-up working session on 10 October and are baselined against the 1.5% industry benchmark for TPS savings. Rationale for saving assumptions are:
    a. **Option 1, UA1: 1.6%**
        i. Procurement scale increases with the addition of Rutland CC, giving UA1 a broader supplier base and contract portfolio.
        ii. Creates aggregation potential across multiple large spend categories (Highways, Waste, IT), with the addition of Rutland CC contributing to further harmonisation and consistency in contract management and tendering frameworks, particularly in strategic categories (i.e. social care commissioning).
    b. **Option 1, UA2: 1.4%**
        i. Combination of four District authorities which will give some contract leverage across shared-service categories.
        ii. Savings potentials are strong but not as maximised as UA1, which consolidates Rutland CC and a share of Lincolnshire CC.
    c. **Option 1, UA3 and UA4: 0%**
        i. Both North Lincolnshire Council or North East Lincolnshire Council remain unchanged.

Module 7: Third Party Spend | Key assumptions (2/2)

Key assumptions used in Module 7 (Third Party Spend). These were agreed in the working session held on 1 October 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

5. **Aggregation benefit assumptions have been applied to the Running Expenses (cont'd).**
    a. **Option 2, UA1: 1.3%**
        i. The removal of Rutland reduces the overall procurement volumes and dampens the potential saving gained from harmonisation and consistency in contract management frameworks across large spend categories compared to UA1 in Option 1. UA1 still remains a medium-size grouping but lasts the added leverage from Rutlands participation. Therefore, fewer large-scale contracts (e.g. highways) can be consolidated at scale.
    b. **Option 2, UA2: 1.4%**
        i. As with UA2 in Option 1, the main benefits stem from shared-service opportunities, joint contract management and consolidation of suppliers. Further, UA2 in Option 2 has the largest population share of all proposed UA's (36.28%).
    c. **Option 2, UA3 and US4: 0%**
        i. Both North Lincolnshire Council or North East Lincolnshire Council remain unchanged.
    d. **Option 3, UA1: 1.4%**
        i. The addition of Boston enhances the size and diversity of UA1 and helps improve overall purchasing power. Further, UA1 in Option 3 has the largest combined population share of all UA's (37.87%), which only further aids supplier negotiation and framework rationalisation.
        ii. The saving assumption is slightly reduced to Option 1 UA1 which incorporates Rutland CC, and slightly offsets efficiency gains in Option 3 UA1. However, the saving assumption is on-par with that of Option 2 UA2 in, and helps sustain savings near the industry benchmark.
    e. **Option 3, UA2: 1.3%**
        i. The removal of Boston reduces the size and diversity of UA1 and shrinks the overall procurement leverage.
        ii. Opportunities for harmonisation and consistency in contract management frameworks remain but are more limited in size.
        iii. As a smaller grouping, UA2's procurement rationalisation benefits are reduced, justifying the 1.3% savings assumption.
    f. **Option 3, UA3 and US4: 0%**
        i. Both North Lincolnshire Council or North East Lincolnshire Council remain unchanged.
6. **Individual opportunities have not been costed**. An indicative target quantum has been provided. This will need to be refined during implementation.
7. **The analysis does not include spend that is not addressable:** Services such as HRA and Fire.

Module 8: Workforce salary alignment | Key assumptions (1/2)

Key assumptions used in Module 8 (Workforce salary alignment). These were agreed in the working session held on 7 October 2025 and follow-up email exchanges.

1. **No pension and on-cost impact included.** On-costs such as National Insurance, pension contributions, and other employment-related overheads have not been modelled as these vary significantly between local authorities depending on individual pension scheme participation, employer contribution rates, and local policies; however, they are typically expected to range between 25% and 35% and will be in addition to the new structure salaries (post-reorganisation savings and post-salary alignment).
2. **No T&C impact included.** This analysis does not cover wider changes to terms and conditions (e.g., changes to TUPE T&Cs, annual leave, hours of work).
3. **FTE Scope (LCC, RCC and Districts).** Only people on the council payroll provided in the establishment data were included. Data provided through the LGR process including FTE numbers against each pay grade. Total Council pay calculated by taking the midpoint of the low and high bands of each pay band.
4. **Current staffing salaries reflects General Fund (GF) staffing only as specifically requested by NSK.** Councils that have HRA's include: CoLC, NKDC, SHDC, SKDC. This breakdown was provided by all councils via NSK
5. **CoLC, NKDC, SHDC and SKDC have been able to provide updated establishment data in the course of providing further breakdown of HRA roles.** Updated establishment data has not been requested from the other Lincolnshire councils.
6. **NKDC and SKDC Pay Scales have been updated from 2024/25 to 2025/26 in the course of removing HRA roles.** This has not been reflected for other councils.
7. **North Lincolnshire Council Total Employee Costs:** No council payroll provided through LCC Financial Case. Figures taken from the Budget 2025-26 / Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-28, Expenditure on Employees. Figures are assumed to include "on costs" which are over and above salary costs. 30% has been used as a proxy**.** *NLC provided information to LCC on 02 October 2025 on Gross Employee Expenditure is the same as what had already been used in the Financial Case (£130,292,000).*
8. **North Lincolnshire Council Total FTE:** No council establishment list provided through LCC Financial Case. Figures taken from the public domain and reflect 'headcount' rather than FTE. Limitations raised with LCC. *NLC provided information to LCC on 02 October 2025. Has been used to update FTE to 2,622 FTE.*
9. **North East Lincolnshire Council Total Employee Costs.** No council payroll provided through LCC Financial Case. Figures taken from the Budget Summary 2025/26, Expenditure on Employees. *NLC provided information to LCC on 02 October 2025. Has been used to update Employee Costs, updated to £97,614,032.*
10. **North East Lincolnshire Council Salary Costs.** No council payroll provided through LCC Financial Case. Figures taken from the Budget Summary 2025/26, Expenditure on Employees. Figures are assumed to include "on costs" which are over and above salary costs. 30% has been used as a proxy. *NLC provided information to LCC on 02 October 2025. Has been used to update Employee Costs. Updated to £66,007,437.*
11. **North East Lincolnshire Council Total FTE.** No establishment data provided through LCC Financial Case. Figures taken from the Budget Summary 2025/26, Expenditure on Employees. *NLC provided information to LCC on 02 October 2025. Has not been used as it refers to 'head count' rather than FTE.*
12. **Pay inflation before vesting day excluded.** Salaries are shown in today's terms for Year 1.

Module 8: Workforce salary alignment | Key assumptions (2/2)

Key assumptions used in Module 8 (Workforce salary alignment). These were agreed 7th October 2025.

13. **Organisational profiling.** Developed during LCC Financial Case and estimates approximate # of FTE within each area once out-of-scope roles are factored in.
14. **Out of scope roles for Aggregation and Long-term Transformation Benefits (LCC).** All LCC roles provided in the Establishment Data that relate to Fire, Social Care and 'central' Education roles are deemed out of scope for calculating Aggregation and Long-term Transformation Benefits. This equates to ~35% of FTE.
15. **Out of scope roles for Aggregation and Long-term Transformation Benefits (Districts).** NSK roles categorised as Waste & Street Scene and Wellbeing Services were deemed out-of-scope for calculating Aggregation and Long-term Transformation Benefits. The same proportions were applied to the other districts for consistency. This equates approximately 4% of total FTE.
16. **Aggregation Benefits assumptions (UA1 and UA2):** Have been applied to the remaining 58% of FTE. Within this FTE, these assumptions have been applied to the estimated # of FTE in each area. Service Delivery (1% of FTE), Front Office (3% of FTE), Internal and Enabling Services (3% of FTE), Strategic Services (3% of FTE).
17. **No Benefit assumptions (UA3 and UA4):** No benefit assumptions have been applied to NLC and NELC as they remain unchanged.
18. **Calculating savings:** The financial savings calculation is based solely on the reduction in salaries associated with reduction in FTE. No on-costs (e.g. employer National Insurance, pension contributions, training, or overhead allocations) have been included in this calculation. Additional savings may be realised if on-costs are factored in. Savings are therefore calculated by taking the average Median Salary for relevant Councils and multiplied by the estimated # of FTE within each area.
    a. **Option 1 (Non-Leadership):** UA1 Median Salary: £31,848 and UA2 Median Salary: £27,175.
    b. **Option 2 (Non-Leadership):** UA1 Median Salary: £32,618and UA2 Median Salary: £27,175.
    c. **Option 3 (Non-Leadership):** UA A1 Median Salary: £31,528 and UA2 Median Salary: £27,176
19. **Top line structure for UA1 and UA2.** LCC salaries has been used to modeline future top-line costs and calculate savings. These are comparable with UA salaries and agreed in the working session on 7th October. NSK provided an indicative view of top line structure: 1 x CX, 5 x Directors, 12 x AD.
20. **Salary alignment (LCC and Districts).** Salaries have been modelled to show the cost "if no one loses". No district staff will earn on average less in the unitary than in the previous district. Given how wide both the district and county bands are, staff have been aligned to the middle of the band. In practice, this incurs additional costs to the new Unitary Authority, and it is possible that not all current District Council FTE will earn more in future. Assumed salaries align in first year.
21. **Disaggregation of LCC FTE.** In alignment with population. In Option 1 and Option 2: UA1 (47%) and UA2 (53%). In Option 3: UA1 (56%) and UA2 (44%).
22. **Salary alignment.** Salaries have been modelled to show the cost "if no one loses". No district staff will earn on average less in the unitary than in the previous district. In practice, this incurs additional costs to the new Unitary Authority, and it is possible that not all current District Council FTE will earn more in future. Assumed salaries align in first year. For NLC and NELC, calculated by estimating the average difference in salaries using several data points include Median FTE Salary and Senior Leadership Salaries.
23. **Redundancy Costs.** Calculated by multiplying the estimated number of reduced FTE (Leadership and Core Roles) x Average Median Salary Point.

Aggregation Benefits and Transition Costs | Key assumptions

Key assumptions used in developing the aggregation benefits:

1. **Benefits phasing.** As per the phasing presented at the Draft Walkthrough on 15 October.
    a. Option 1:
        i. **Y1:** 50%
        ii. **Y2:** 75%
        iii. **Y3:** 90%
        iv. **Y4:** 100%
        v. **Y5:** 100%
    b. **Option 2 and 3:**
        i. **Y1:** 60%
        ii. **Y2:** 80%
        iii. **Y3:** 90%
        iv. **Y4:** 100%
        v. **Y5:** 100%

Key assumptions used in developing the transition costs:

1. **Costs have been included in Year 1, noting that they may be incurred at points throughout the phasing period.** This will be dependent on how much work occurs before Vesting Day in Year 1. It is assumed that costs will be funded.
2. **Costs are based on the assumed complexity of change required.** They are higher in Option 1 given the additional inclusion of Rutland. They are informed by experience in realising benefits from complex transformation programmes and previous rounds of LGR elsewhere.

Disaggregation of top tier services | Key assumptions

Disaggregating top tier services into two authorities will mean increased costs or a reduction in benefit which arises primarily from the loss of economies of scale. These disbenefits represent additional costs that will need to be recognised within the financial case.

Key assumptions used in developing these costs.

1. The financial case recognises that the disaggregation of LCC will create an ongoing disbenefit arising from the loss of economies of scale. These efficiencies arise because costs and resources are spread across a larger organisational base, enabling stronger purchasing power, greater discounts, and the ability to sustain specialist expertise within central teams. This has been reflected as an additional cost pressure within the financial analysis.
2. By creating multiple unitary authorities, these economies of scale are reduced. Each new authority will need to enter into its own contracts, maintain its own systems and licences, and manage its own corporate infrastructure. This results in higher unit costs and reduced purchasing power.
3. Importantly, this represents an ongoing financial pressure (i.e. cost). That is, a recurring disbenefit that will continue beyond the transition to the new Unitarity Authorities, and is therefore treated separately and in addition to the one-off implementation costs associated with the reorganisation itself.
4. To quantify this disbenefit, an uplift factor of 2% has been applied to the top-tier expenditure lines most affected by scale efficiencies, including ASC and CSC, to reflect the reduced economies of scale that would result from operating multiple unitary authorities. An additional uplift factor of 0.5% has been applied to Net Cost Operating Expenditure for LCC (and Rutland in Option 1) to account for other costs incurred due to disaggregation not associated directly with ASC or CSC.

Transformation Benefits | Key assumptions

These are additional efficiency savings and income growth which the new authority(ies) could achieve post-vesting day through wider transformation opportunities e.g. by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models. For clarity, these potential savings are over and above reorganisation (aggregation) benefits identified above.

Key assumptions used in developing the long-term transformation benefits for Benefit Area 1 (Staffing)

1. **Baseline data is from Module 8: Workforce Salary Alignment.** Year 1 new salary structures multiplied by the proportion of in-scope staffing within each discipline area as identified in the Staffing & Pay Module.
2. **Proportion of roles deemed 'out of scope' for calculating aggregation benefits are also deemed out of scope for calculating long-term transformation benefits**. This equates to approximately 42% of all roles. Saving assumptions have been applied to the remaining approximate 58% of roles and the estimated FTE within each area.
3. **Assumptions applied to UA1 and UA2**
    a. Front Office (2% of FTE)
    b. Service Delivery (1% of FTE)
    c. Internal and Enabling Services (2% of FTE)
    d. Strategic Services (2% of FTE)
4. **Assumptions applied to UA3 and UA4:** 0%

Transformation Benefits | Key assumptions

These are additional efficiency savings and income growth which the new authority(ies) could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models. For clarity, these potential savings are over and above reorganisation (aggregation) benefits identified above.

Key assumptions used in developing the long-term transformation benefits for <u>Benefit Area 2 (Third Party Expenditure)</u>

1. **Baseline data is from Module 7: Third Party Expenditure.** Running Expenses from RO Data.
2. **Spending deemed 'out of scope for calculating aggregation benefits also deemed out of scope for calculating long-term transformation benefits.** This includes fire.
3. **Forecasted TPS figures from Districts and the County MTFS have been used to project future growth.** Year-on-year growth of 2.5% has been applied to baseline figures to project the expected TPS through to vesting day. This is the average growth projection outlined within MTFS.
4. **Assumptions applied to UA1 and UA2:** 2%
5. **Assumptions applied to UA3 and UA4:** 0%

Transformation Benefits | Key assumptions

These are additional efficiency savings and income growth which the new authority(ies) could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models. For clarity, these potential savings are over and above reorganisation (aggregation) benefits identified above.

Key assumptions used in developing the long-term transformation benefits for Benefit Area 3 (Fees and Charges)

1. **Baseline data has not been required within modules and as such is drawn from the following documents:**
    a. **BBC:** BUDGET SETTING REPORT AND ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL STRATEGIES - 2024/25-2028/29
    b. **ELDC:** BUDGET SETTING REPORT AND ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL STRATEGIES - 2025/26-2029/30
    c. **CoLC:** MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-2030
    d. **NKDC:** Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2024/25
    e. **SHDC:** BUDGET SETTING REPORT AND ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL STRATEGIES – 2025/26-2029/30
    f. **SKDC:** Budget proposals for 2024/25 and indicative budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27
    g. **WLDC:** BUDGET BOOK 2025/26 TO 2029/30
    h. **NLC:** Financial Strategy Budget 2025-26 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-28
    i. **NELC:** Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25
2. **Figures project expected income in Year 1.** Year-on-year growth of between 0.4% to 5.0% has been applied to the baseline figures to project the expected fees and charges through to vesting day.
3. **LCC fees and charges have been removed.** This is because upper tier authorities have low to moderate discretion to increase their fees and often constrained by statutory frameworks and national policy. This approach was agreed with LCC.
4. **Assumptions applied to UA 1 and 2:** 1%
5. **Assumptions applied to UA 3 and 4:** 0%

Long-term Transformation Costs | Key assumptions

These are the costs associated with the additional benefits which the new authority(ies) could achieve post-vesting day.

Key assumptions used in developing the long-term transformation costs:

1. **The long-term transformation costs are assumed to be one third of the benefits.** This assumption is based upon previous LGR engagements and has been agreed with LCC. Case studies of transformational change delivery across local authorities suggest that typical RoI ratios for transformation can be between 1:2 to 1:10. It is assumed that transformation investment returns a modest 1:3 return per £1 invested. Long-term transformation costs are calculated as one third of the total long-term transformation benefits estimated. These one-off costs will cover activities such as service redesign, change management, systems integration, programme delivery resources, and enabling technologies.
2. **The Transformation Cost Profiling has been amended following a specific request at the Draft Walkthrough on 22 October.** The profiling better reflects the typical investment-to-benefit lag often seen in major transformation programmes. The Transformation Benefit Profiling remains as presented at the walkthrough. Note that transformation costs and benefits inherently follow different life-cycle patterns, i.e. spend first, change next, benefit later. These curves should not be identical, as it would imply that benefits arise simultaneously with spending. This has now been updated within the Financial Case. The transformation cost profiling for all options is now:
    a. Year 1: 10%
    b. Year 2: 25%
    c. Year 3: 35%
    d. Year 4: 20%
    e. Year 5: 10%

Summary | Key assumptions

Key assumptions used in develop the summary position:

1. **The term 'Payback Period' has been rephrased to 'Net Benefit Period' following the draft walkthrough on 22 October 2025.** The period of time required for the cumulative benefits and costs of LGR to equalise, resulting in a net zero balance. From this period onwards the cumulative benefits will outstrip the cumulative costs of implementation and disaggregation.

End of document

APPENDIX 4b

Local Government Reorganisation Financial Analysis
North Kesteven & South Kesteven Proposal

Executive Summary | Financial Analysis of LGR Options

October 2025

This **Executive Summary** brings together the analysis modules estimate the likely Year 1 position for the proposed new authorities. It shows both the costs and benefits of LGR and longer-term transformation.

The aim is **not to forecast the future**, but to give a transparent financial view of creating new authorities.

Additional appendices accompanying the Executive Summary include:

1. **Assumptions**
   The assumptions used for developing the financial model. These are set out in Appendix 4a
2. **Sensitivity Analysis**
   Testing the impact of key assumption variables. This is set out in Appendix X
3. **Council Tax Harmonisation**
   The outputs based on four different approaches and scheduled between 1 and 7 years. These are set out in Appendix 4d

Financial analysis prepared for North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) & South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) as part of their Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Business Case.

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Introduction |

NKDC and SKDC have reviewed three options for LGR (outlined below) across the Lincolnshire area. This report outlines the financial analysis for the recommended option to support the preparation of LGR submission. The three options cover the current Lincolnshire County Council area and North Lincolnshire UA and North East Lincolnshire UA. with Option 1 including Rutland UA.



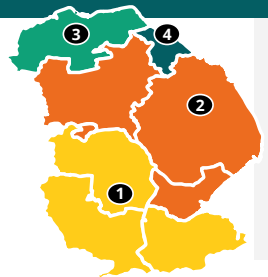


As Is - Existing County Council and Unitary Authority boundaries



Retention of existing two-tier model for Lincolnshire County Council and its seven Districts, and the North and North East Lincolnshire Unitary Authorities. This As Is option represents the baseline against which the costs and benefits of "Do Something" options are measured against.

Recommended Option



- **UA 1:** North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland
- **UA 2:** ***Boston,*** East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln
- **UA 3:** North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)
- **UA 4:** North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)

Combined population:[1] 1,111,230

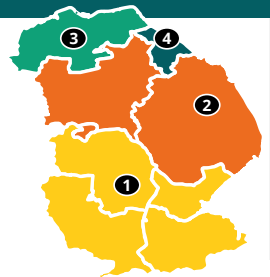
Alternative Option - Rutland included in UA 1



- **UA 1:** North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland, ***Rutland***
- **UA 2:** Boston, East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln
- **UA 3:** North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)
- **UA 4:** North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)

Combined population:[1] 1,151,873

Alternative Option - Boston moved to UA 1



- **UA1:** North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland, ***Boston***
- **UA 2:** East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln
- **UA 3:** North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)
- **UA 4:** North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)

Combined population:[1] 1,111,230

1. Office for National Statistics. Estimates of the population for England and Wales.

Introduction | Overview of the financial analysis

Purpose:

- Uses latest local data, as far as is possible, and is consistent with the data sets collated for other financial modelling.
- Provides a "Year 1" directional estimate of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities.
- Tests assumptions through a series of modules aligned to major areas of income and expenditure.
- Includes indicative transformation benefits based on an assumption of future ambitions to drive change.

1. An estimated Year 1 Position

From local, published Medium Term Financial Strategies (MTFS) and Statement of Accounts, a baseline view of the potential new authorities is developed that includes:

- Income
- Expenditure
- Assets
- Liabilities

A view of potential Year 1 impact of Council Tax, Workforce and Democratic arrangements is included.

2. Analysis of structural change

Applies cost and benefit assumptions to outline the estimated impact of reorganisation:

- Staffing reductions and redundancy costs
- Asset rationalisation
- Contract and procurement savings
- Reduced democratic costs

3. Profiles estimated costs and savings for reorganisation and transformation over a five-year period which includes:

- Aggregation benefits
- One-off transition costs
- Recurring financial disbenefit from disaggregating LCC
- Payback period
- Long-term transformation benefits and implementation costs

Why this matters

This shows not just the benefits LGR could drive but also the likely cost of implementation. It also provides an estimate of the initial financial position for the new council(s) in order to help inform strategic and operational decisions that the shadow authorities would need to consider.

Note: Year 1 refers to Vesting Year (01 April 2028)

Introduction | Approach to the financial analysis (1/2)

The analysis undertaken and assumptions applied provides an estimate of forecast "Year 1" budgets and financial balance for the new Unitary Authorities options.

Forecast Budgets for new Unitary Authorities

- **Income including Council Tax**
- **Expenditure**

Impact of aggregation, disaggregation and transition

- **Recurring LGR aggregation benefits**
  - FTE consolidation (including senior leadership)
  - Third party and property spend reduction
  - Democracy and elected member cost reduction
- **Recurring LGR financial disbenefit from disaggregating LCC**
  - Additional FTE and overhead costs
- **One off transition costs**
  - Redundancies; IT migrations; contingency
  - Engagement, design, transition and programme support
  - Organisation closedown and establishment

- **Transformation**
  - Staffing and operating model transformation
  - Third Party Spend
  - Increase fees

Finance Balance for new Unitary Authorities

- **Assets (Non-HRA)**
  - Fixed Assets
- **Liabilities (Non-HRA)**
  - Short Term Borrowing
  - Long Term Borrowing

Together, these outputs form the basis of the initial financial position (eg. FY 2028/29) for the new unitary authorities following their establishment.

This will also highlight areas of financial risk that should be the focus of mitigation efforts during the transition period.

Introduction | Approach to the financial analysis (2/2)

Set out below is the methodology and logic for assumptions applied. The complexity involved in creating multiple unitary authorities has been taken into account in the form of increased transition and disaggregation costs and reductions in economies of scale. To note, transformation costs and benefits are applied after reorganisation based on an assumed level of ambition and further change to realise the full benefit of unitirisation.

Reorganisation Benefits and Costs

Reorganisation Benefits

Recurring Aggregation Benefits: Savings achieved through consolidation e.g. management, systems and support functions. These are ongoing efficiencies generated through removing duplication and streamlining processes.

Economies of Scale: Larger single structures can operate more efficiently by sharing systems, centralising procurement, and pooling specialist capacity. In the current model, these savings are recognised but subsequently dampened to reflect the fact that breaking up the County into multiple unitaries reduces the achievable economies of scale.

Reorganisation Costs

One-off Transition Costs: Upfront investment needed to create new authorities. These are time-limited and occur during implementation.

Ongoing Disaggregation Costs or reduction in potential benefits: Reduction in economies of scale or where there is greater fragmentation which arises when services or teams are split across multiple new organisations. Each additional unitary authority introduces new overheads and reduces the advantage of economies of scale.

Transformation
Post-Vesting Day

Transformation Benefits

Efficiency and productivity improvements realised once new authorities are established and operating effectively.

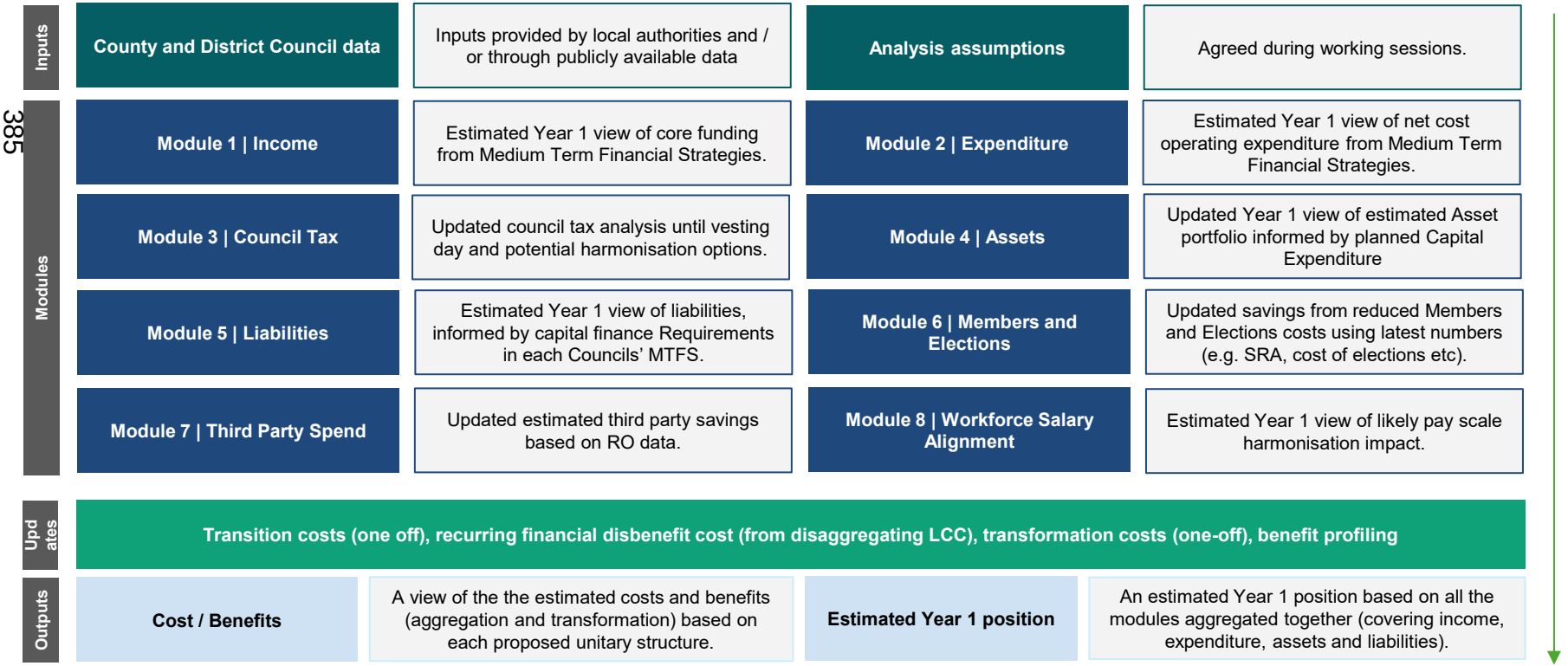
Reflect long-term service redesign, innovation, and better outcomes for residents.

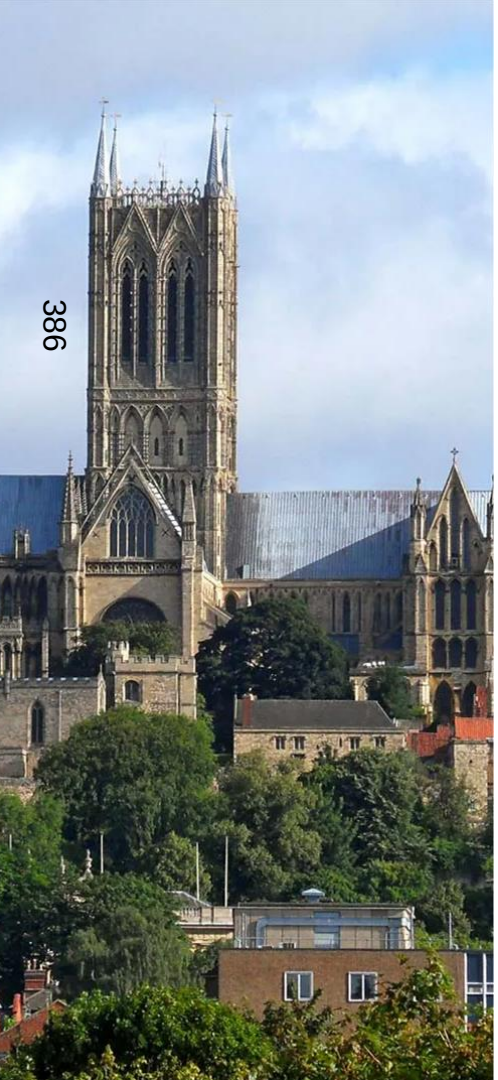
Transformation Costs

Investment required to modernise and redesign services (e.g. digitalisation, workforce reform, asset rationalisation).

Incurred after reorganisation and are distinct from transition costs. These are short-term costs intended to unlock longer-term service and financial improvements.

Introduction | Overview of the approach and methodology





Estimated Year 1 Position	Balance Sheet	Aggregation Benefits	Transition Costs	Financial disbenefit from disaggregating LCC	Long-term Transformation Benefits	Long-term Transformation Costs

New Unitary Authority UA 1	New Unitary Authority UA 2	Existing Unitary Authority UA 3	Existing Unitary Authority UA 4
North Kesteven South Kesteven South Holland	Boston East Lindsey West Lindsey Lincoln	North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)	North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)

Estimated Year 1 Position

An estimated Year 1 income and net expenditure position is set out on this page

MTFS figures have been used to estimate forward-looking income and net expenditure for the purposes of developing the Year 1 position. The baseline position was agreed with the Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officers for NKDC and SKDC on the 18 September 2025.

The Year 1 position is not intended to predict the outcome of national funding reforms or new grant schemes. A significant number of elements could impact the Year 1 position, including the Fair Funding Review, future settlements from government, inflation, political change nationally and locally. HMG is expected to provide more detail on the Fair Funding Review outcome in Autumn-25.

See accompanying 'Assumptions' document (appendix 4a) for full list of assumptions applied in developing the Year 1 position.

Modelling indicates that the proposed new councils will begin operations in the following financial position.

- **Opening deficits:** The combined opening position across the new UAs shows significant core funding pressures. All will start with an operating deficit, which is not unexpected as local government is operating in a challenging financial context.
- **Efficiency requirements:** To achieve a balanced budget, savings are required across multiple councils, with many needing recurring efficiency gains over the next 5 years. These are outlined in the notes below.
- **Strategic trade-offs:** Councils will face early policy choices: draw on reserves, amend Council Tax, or accelerate service transformation. Longer-term gains from LGR aggregation and longer-term transformation integration are a potential offset.
- **Fire Authority:** Assumes a standalone FA will be created and a portion of LCC Business Rates and Council Tax disaggregated.

	Option 2					
	UA 1 - North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland	UA 2 - Boston, East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln	UA 3 - North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)	UA 4: North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)		Standalone Fire Authority
Core Funding	-371.35M	-466.59M	-225.99M	-218.19M		-29.69M
Net Cost Operating Expenditure	380.2M	503.5M	238.4M	224.2M		31.1M
Budget Gap	8.8M	36.9M	12.4M	6.0M		1.4M

Authority	North Lincolnshire UA	North East Lincolnshire UA	Lincolnshire County Council	Boston Borough Council	East Lindsey District Council	City of Lincoln Council Council	North Kesteven District Council	South Holland District Council	South Kesteven District Council	West Lindsey district Council
Year Used	2027/28	2027/28	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2027/28	2028/29	2027/28	2028/29
Source	Financial Strategy Budget 2025-26 Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-28. Pg 7.	Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025/26 – 2027/28. Pg 10.	Council Budget 2025/26 'Budget Book. Pg 99.	BUDGET SETTING REPORT AND ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL STRATEGIES - 2024/25-2028. Pg 22.	BUDGET SETTING REPORT AND ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL STRATEGIES - 2025/26-2029/30. Pg 19.	MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-2030. Pg 66.	NK Financial Plan 2025/26. Updated Appendix 1. Page 119 of report pack.	Appendix 1b - MTFS by Service, item 93. Pg 1.	Budget Proposals for 2025/26 and indicative budgets for 2026/27 and 2027/28. Sect 4.1.	BUDGET BOOK 2025/26 TO 2029/30.
MTFS Note	MTFS only goes up to 2027/28. Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget. Gap increases to £13.4m if not achieved	MTFS only goes up to 2027/28. Savings needed to be achieved to manage within indicative budget envelopes.	Significant financial deficit exists across all four years of the financial plan currently, which increases annually.	Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget over the next 5 years.	Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget over the next 5 years.	Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget over the next 5 years.	MTFS only goes up to 2027/28.	Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget over the next 5 years.	MTFS only goes up to 2027/28. The need for a strong reserves position can be seen from the future forecast deficits.	Funding gaps identified over next 5 years. Council has a number of projects and initiatives which will help meet the future funding gaps

An estimated Year 1 assets and liabilities position is set out on this page.

The Year 1 Balance Sheet reflects General Fund (GF) assets and liabilities only. It includes:

- The Net Book Value (NBV) listed on the balance sheet within the Statement of Accounts. This includes: Surplus Assets, Assets under Construction, Other Land and Buildings and Community Assets. Infrastructure Assets and Investments assets are also included. **It does not include Council Dwellings and other HRA Assets.**
- Long-term and current liabilities (borrowing only) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit.

Both assets and liabilities reflect the estimated value in Year 1 informed by informed by Capital Finance Requirements and Planned Capital Expenditure.

See accompanying 'Assumptions' document (appendix 4a) for full list of assumptions used to develop the Balance Sheet.

Balance Sheet

Modelling indicates that the proposed new councils will begin operations in the following financial position.

- **Assets:** Set out below is an evidence-based estimate of what each new authority would be accountable for on Year 1, drawn from existing Statement of Account asset values, taking in planned and additional disposals of surplus assets into account. Assumption that asset value follows geography i.e. allocated by physical location.
- **Liabilities:** Also below is the financial obligations that would transfer into any new unitary councils. It brings together debt, borrowing, and the DSG deficit to provide a clear Year 1 picture of the liabilities position. Allocated following the same distribution profile as assets. In reality, the apportionment of debt will be worked through in detail as part of the implementation of any new authority.

	Option 2			
	UA 1 - North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland	**UA 2 - Boston, East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln**	**UA 3 - North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)**	**UA 4 - North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)**
Assets				
Fixed Assets	1210.4M	1883.3M	667.4M	423.1M
Liabilities				
Long Term Borrowing (GF only)	232.7M	352.5M	135.2M	158.0M
Short Term Borrowing (GF only)	4.6M	17.1M	50.0M	76.7M
Dedicated Schools Grant	-16.0M	-17.1M	-8.7M	-15.9M

Authority	North Lincolnshire UA	North East Lincolnshire UA	Lincolnshire County Council	Boston Borough Council	East Lindsey District Council	City of Lincoln Council Council	North Kesteven District Council	South Holland District Council	South Kesteven District Council	West Lindsey district Council
Sources (Asset)	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025*	*Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/2025 Financial Year*	*Statement of Accounts - 2024/2025*	*Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025*	*Financial Statements 2024-25*	*Statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025*	*Unaudited Statement of accounts North Kesteven District Council 2024/25*	*Unaudited Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2025*	*SKDC 24/25 Statement of Accounts*	*Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 (Unaudited Statement)*
Long Term Borrowing	*As above. Pg 19.*	*As above. Pg 17.*	*As above. Pg 36.*	*As above. Pg 53.*	*As above. Pg 29.*	*Provided by Duncan James (09/10)*	*Provided by Tracey Bircumshaw (09/10)*	*Provided by Duncan James (09/10)*	*Confirmed verbally by Richard Wyles (23/09)*	*As above. Pg 29.*
Short Term Borrowing	*As above.*	*As above.*	*As above.*	*As above.*	*As above.*	*As above.*	*As above.*	*As above.*	*As above.*	*As above.*

Aggregation Benefits

The estimated aggregation benefits <u>as a whole</u> are set out on this page.

- **Staffing:** Benefits from reduction in duplicated roles across leadership, front office, service delivery, internal and enabling services and strategic services.
- **Third Party Spend:** Benefits from reduction in addressable spend across all in-scope service areas.
- **Democracy:** Benefits from changing the number of councillors and streamlining elections.
- **Property:** Benefits from reduced operational expenditure spent on rationalised assets (i.e. surplus assets).

See accompanying 'Assumptions Log' document for full list of assumptions (appendix Z) used to develop the aggregation benefits.

		TOTAL (£)	UA 1 - North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland	UA 2 - Boston, East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln	UA 3 - North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)	UA 4 - North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)
Estimated Staffing Benefits						
Senior Leadership Structures savings	**Recurring**	**2.71M**	*0.72M*	*1.99M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
Front Office Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**	**0.71M**	*0.38M*	*0.33M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
Service Delivery Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**	**0.42M**	*0.23M*	*0.20M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
Internal and Enabling Services Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**	**1.14M**	*0.61M*	*0.53M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
Strategic Services Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**	**0.42M**	*0.23M*	*0.19M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
TOTAL FTE BENEFITS	**Recurring**	**5.40M**	2.17M	3.24M	0.00M	0.00M
Estimated Third Party Spend Benefits						
TPS Aggregation savings	**Recurring**	***10.62M***	*4.15M*	*6.47M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
Estimated Members' Allowances Benefits						
Allowances+SRA savings	**Recurring**	***0.50M***	*0.29M*	*0.21M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
Estimated Election Benefits						
Election Costs savings	**Recurring**	***1.40M***	*0.70M*	*0.70M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
Estimated Property Benefits						
Property OpEx savings	**Recurring**	***0.12M***	*0.03M*	*0.10M*	*0.00M*	*0.00M*
Total Aggregation Benefits	**Recurring**	**18.05M**	**7.33M**	**10.72M**	**0.00M**	**0.00M**

Benefit as a % of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA1 and UA2	1.93%	2.13%	0%	0%

Aggregation benefits phasing					
	Y1	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Aggregation benefits profile	**60.00%**	**80.00%**	**90.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Aggregation benefits over a 5 year period					
	Y1	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	**10.83M**	**14.44M**	**16.25M**	**18.05M**	**18.05M**

Transition Costs

The estimated transition costs as a whole are set out on this page.

- **New unitarites setup & closedown costs:** Spend to design the new UA and manage the change (training, comms, process redesign).
- **IT & Systems costs:** Spend on new / upgraded systems to support a single UA (e.g. finance, HR, CRM).
- **External transition, design and implementation support costs:** Resources needed to run the transformation programme (e.g. Project management)
- **Redundancy Costs:** Payments and support for staff reductions due to structural changes.
- **Contingency:** A buffer for unexpected costs, reflecting risk and **complexity.**

See accompanying 'Assumptions" document (appendix 4a) for full list of assumptions used to develop the aggregation costs.

One off transition costs for Option 2 as a whole	Total (£)	Notes
New unitarities setup & closedown costs	2.65M	• **Creating the new council:** Activities needed to stand the new organisations up such as drafting constitutions, aligning organisational policies, setting up new democratic structures, and setting up localities for four large UAs. • **Organisation Closedown:** It will be more complex in UA1 and UA2 to settle accounts, change financial codes, and close multiple councils with different legacy systems. • **Internal Programme Management:** Extra capacity is needed to run all the planning, operating model design, data work, and mobilisation in a short timescale.
IT & Systems Costs	2.25M	• **Councils will run many different core systems.** Higher costs will come from migrating and cleaning data, hramornsing infrastructure, setting up shared identity and integration platforms.
External transition, design and implementation costs	8.75M	• **More work needed in UA1 and UA2 because of the wider scope of change** across governance, HR, finance, ICT, and service design, and the need to involve partners like the NHS and emergency services (i.e. setting up new Fire Authority)
Redundancy costs	3.67M	• **Estimated number of reduction in FTE (Leadership and Core Roles) x Average Median Salary Point for Councils**. • Note: Given redundancy costs within local government are highly specific and dependent on personal circumstances, making it difficult to calculate exact outcomes at this stage. This approach was outlined with NSK during development of staffing module.
Contingency	5.20M	• **All options include a contingency amount which is 30% of the total costs**. This extra provision is sensible in all options because of risks like supplier delays, poor data quality, and the need to protect statutory services during transition.
Total	**22.52M**	

Cost as a % of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA 1 and UA2	2.55%

Transition costs over a five year period					
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M

Transition costs phasing					
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Aggregation cost profile	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Disaggregation of top tier services

Disaggregating top tier services into two authorities will mean increased costs or a reduction in benefit which arises primarily from the loss of economies of scale.

These disbenefits represent additional costs which are recognised within the financial case.

See accompanying 'Assumptions' document (appendix 4a)for full list of assumptions used to develop the disaggregation costs.

Potential increased cost of reduction in benefit incurred as a result of creating multiple unitary authorities	
	Cost (£)
Impact of disaggregating top tier services	12.94M
Cost as a % of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA1 and UA2	1.46%

The proposals under consideration would require top tier services to be disaggregated across two unitary authorities.

- These efficiencies arise because costs and resources are spread across a larger organisational base, enabling stronger purchasing power, greater discounts, and the ability to sustain specialist expertise within central teams.
- By creating multiple unitary authorities, these economies of scale are reduced. Each new authority will need to enter into its own contracts, maintain its own systems and licences, and manage its own corporate infrastructure. This results in higher unit costs and reduced purchasing power.
- Importantly, this represents an *ongoing financial pressure (i.e. cost)*. That is, the potential loss of benefit through a reduction in economies of scale will continue beyond the transition to the new Unitarity Authorities. It is therefore treated separately and in addition to the one-off implementation costs associated with the reorganisation itself.
- Examples of where these ongoing disbenefits may arise:
  - Reduced purchasing power and higher prices on third-party spend and contracts
  - Stranded overheads and duplication of roles
  - Increased ICT costs due to duplicate licences and systems
  - Fragmentation of shared services, leading to inefficiencies and higher overheads
  - Loss of opportunities to achieve further efficiencies that could have been realised under a single, larger authority.

Transformation Benefits

The estimated transformation benefits are set out on this page.

These are additional benefits which the new UAs could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models.

These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above (previous slide).

The scope of transformation savings would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

See accompanying 'Assumptions ' document 9appendix 4a)for full list of assumptions used to develop the transformation benefits.

Benefit Area	UA 1 - North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland (Baseline)	UA 2 - Boston, East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln (Baseline)	UA 3 - North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged) (Baseline)	UA 4 - North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged) (Baseline)	UA1 & UA2 Savings Assumption	UA3 & UA4 Savings Assumption	UA 1 - North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland (Benefit)	UA 2 - Boston, East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln (Benefit)	UA 3 - North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged) (Benefit)	UA 4 - North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged) (Benefit)
Front Office FTE	13.71M	16.01M	10.54M	7.24M	2.00%	0.00%	0.27M	0.32M	0.00M	0.00M
Service Delivery FTE	24.41M	28.52M	18.78M	12.90M	1.00%	0.00%	0.24M	0.29M	0.00M	0.00M
Internal and Enabling Services FTE	23.00M	26.87M	17.69M	12.16M	2.00%	0.00%	0.46M	0.54M	0.00M	0.00M
Strategic Services FTE	8.09M	9.45M	6.22M	4.28M	2.00%	0.00%	0.16M	0.19M	0.00M	0.00M
Addressable Third Party Expenditure	340.54M	492.60M	181.56M	208.83M	2.00%	0.00%	6.81M	9.85M	0.00M	0.00M
Sales, Fees and Charges	25.74M	42.72M	32.32M	40.06M	1.00%	0.00%	0.26M	0.43M	0.00M	0.00M
Benefit as a % of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA1 and UA2					2.24%		**8.21M**	**11.61M**	**0.00M**	**0.00M**
										19.82M

Benefit Area	Rationale on long-term transformation benefit areas and key inputs used for the baseline
Post Aggregation Staffing	**Long-term staffing benefits will result from continued service transformation, process automation, and organisational redesign that enables a leaner workforce beyond initial aggregation savings.** These reflect a shift from one-off structural integrations to long-term workforce optimisation through digital, standard processes and new operating models. • **Baseline data is from Module 8: Workforce Salary Alignment.** Year 1 new salary structures multiplied by the proportion of in-scope staffing within each discipline area as identified in the Staffing & Pay Module. • **Proportion of roles deemed 'out of scope' for calculating aggregation benefits are also deemed out of scope for calculating transformation benefits.** This equates to approximately 42% of all roles. Saving assumptions have been applied to the remaining approximate 58% of roles and the estimated FTE within each area.
Post Aggregation Addressable Third Party Expenditure	**Long-term TPS benefits will arise from embedding strategic procurement practices, data-driven spend management, and redesigned service delivery models that reduce external costs beyond initial aggregation savings.** These reflect a shift from short-term contract consolidation to a mature, category-led approach that delivers long-term commercial leverage. • **Baseline data is from Module 7: Third Party Expenditure.** Running Expenses from RO Data. • **Spending deemed 'out of scope for calculating aggregation benefits also deemed out of scope for calculating transformation benefits.** This includes fire. • **Forecasted TPS figures from Districts and the County MTFS have been used to project future growth.** Year-on-year growth of 2.5% has been applied to baseline figures to project the expected TPS through to vesting day. This is the average growth projection outlined within MTFS.
Sales, Fees and Charges	**After reorganisation, the new UAs will be able to review and harmonise the inherited fee structure from former districts.** Districts typically have inconsistent pricing policies for similar discretionary services (e.g. garden waste, licensing, planning). Aligning to a single charging framework creates an opportunity to raise underpriced areas to market rates. • **Baseline data has not been required within modules.** It is drawn from MTFS, Budget Setting Report or Statement of Accounts. • **Figures project expected income in Year 1.** Year-on-year growth of between 0.4% to 5.0% has been applied to the baseline figures to project the expected fees and charges through to vesting day. • **AIL LCC and RCC fees and charges have been removed.** This is because upper tier authorities have low to moderate discretion to increase their fees and often constrained by statutory frameworks and national policy.

Transformation benefits phasing	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Transformation benefits profile	0%	20%	50%	100%	100%

Transformation Costs

The estimated transformation costs are set out on this page.

These are the costs associated with the additional benefits which the new authority(ies) could achieve post-vesting day.

The scope of transformation savings and therefore costs would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

See accompanying 'Assumptions ' document (appendix 4a) for full list of assumptions used to develop the transformation costs.

Transformation Benefit	UA 1 - North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland (Benefit)	UA 2 - Boston, East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln (Benefit)	UA 3 - North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged) (Benefit)	UA 4 - North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged) (Benefit)
	8.21M	11.61M	0.00M	0.00M
				19.82M

Transformation Cost	UA 1 - North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland (Benefit)	UA 2 - Boston, East Lindsey, West Lindsey and Lincoln (Benefit)	UA 3 - North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged) (Benefit)	UA 4 - North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged) (Benefit)
	2.71M	3.83M	0.00M	0.00M
				6.54M

Cost as a % of Net Cost Operating Expenditure for UA1 and UA2	0.74%

Cost area	Notes on transformation costs
Transformation Cost	• **Case studies of transformational change delivery across local authorities suggest that typical RoI ratios for transformation can be between 1:2 to 1:10.** It is assumed that transformation investment returns a modest 1:3 return per £1 invested. • **Transformation costs are calculated as one third of the total transformation benefits estimated**. These one-off costs will cover activities such as service redesign, change management, systems integration, programme delivery resources, and enabling technologies.

Transformation cost phasing	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Transformation costs profile	10%	25%	35%	20%	10%

Transformation costs over a 5 year period	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65M	-1.64M	-2.29M	-1.31M	-0.65M

Summary

The estimated full costs and benefits over a five-year period are set out on this page.

Key figures include:

- **Net in year benefit/cost:** This is the financial impact (either a benefit or a cost) realised in a specific year of the financial case.
- **Cumulative benefit/cost:** This is the running total of all benefits and costs from the start of the financial case up to that year.
- **Net benefit period:** Length of time it takes for the cumulative benefits of the financial case to equal (or exceed) its initial costs.

This takes into account:

- Aggregation benefits and transition costs.
- One-off transformation benefits and costs.
- Recurring financial disbenefit costs.

Combined position for the two new unitary authorities						
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Total 5 year Benefit / (Costs)
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	10.83M	14.44M	16.25M	18.05M	18.05M	**77.62M**
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	-12.94M	**-64.70M**
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	0.00M	**-22.52M**
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00M	3.96M	9.91M	19.82M	19.82M	**53.51M**
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65M	-1.64M	-2.29M	-1.31M	-0.65M	**-6.54M**
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	**-25.28M**	**3.83M**	**10.93M**	**23.62M**	**24.28M**	**37.38M**

Net in year benefit/(cost) after 5 Years (Yearly Result) (£M)	Cumulative benefit/(cost) after 5 Years (Total Running Balance) (£M)	Net benefit period (Years)
24.28M	**37.38M**	**5.0 Years**

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APPENDIX 4c

Local Government Reorganisation Financial Analysis
North Kesteven & South Kesteven Proposal

Sensitivity Testing | Financial Analysis of LGR Options

October 2025

Financial analysis prepared for North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) & South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) as part of their Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Business Case.

This **Sensitivity Analysis** sets out potential variations on costs and benefits for key levers within the financial analysis.

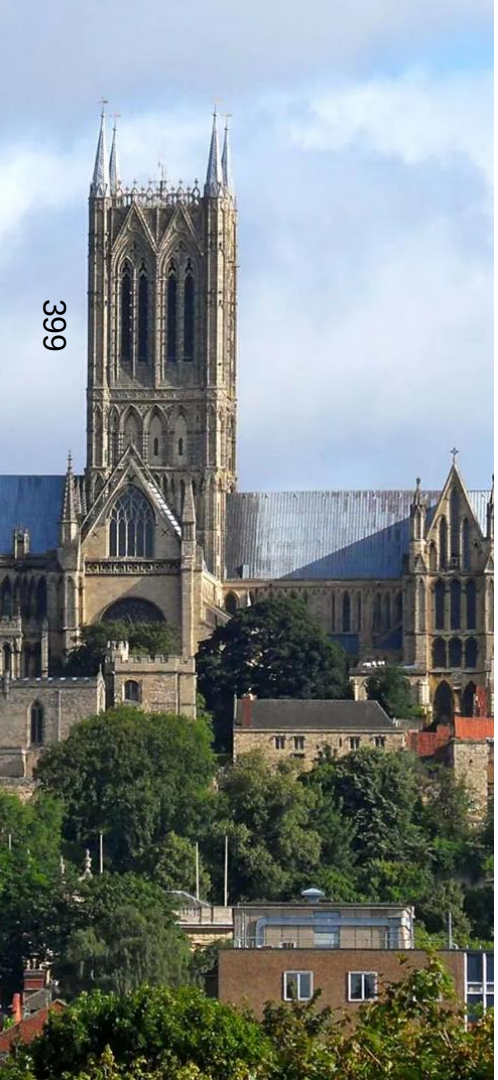
Note on methodology:

The sensitivity analysis testing applies percentage (±%) adjustments to each module's base position, not to top-line total for cost or benefit. This allows for the % impact to apply across underlying assumptions which provides the full modelled effect on total costs or benefits.

Contents

Sensitivity analysis covers:

- Aggregation Benefits (Staffing) (Increase)
- Aggregation Benefits (TPS) (Increase)
- Transition Costs (Increase)
- Disaggregation Disbenefit (Decrease)
- Disaggregation Disbenefit (Increase)
- Transformation Benefit (Increase)



LGR Proposed Structure

New Unitary Authority UA 1	New Unitary Authority UA 2	Existing Unitary Authority UA 3	Existing Unitary Authority UA 4
North Kesteven South Kesteven South Holland	Boston East Lindsey West Lindsey Lincoln	North Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)	North East Lincolnshire UA (unchanged)

Sensitivity Testing | Aggregation Benefits (Staffing) (Increase)

Relevant page in Executive Summary	11

Lever	*Current assumption applied*	*Fully Realised Annual Benefit*	*Annual benefit where + 0.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 1% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 1.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 2% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 2.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 3% applied*
Reduction in Service Delivery FTE	1%	**0.42M**	**0.63M**	**0.84M**	**1.06M**	**1.27M**	**1.48M**	**1.69M**
Reduction in Front Office FTE	3%	**0.71M**	**0.83M**	**0.95M**	**1.07M**	**1.19M**	**1.30M**	**1.42M**
Reduction in Internal and Enabling Service FTE	3%	**1.14M**	**1.33M**	**1.52M**	**1.71M**	**1.90M**	**2.09M**	**2.28M**
Reduction in strategic Services FTE	3%	**0.42M**	**0.49M**	**0.56M**	**0.63M**	**0.70M**	**0.77M**	**0.84M**
TOTAL		**2.70M**	**3.29M**	**3.88M**	**4.46M**	**5.05M**	**5.64M**	**6.23M**

Sensitivity Testing | Aggregation Benefits (TPS) (Increase)

Relevant page in Executive Summary	11

Lever	*Current assumption applied*	*Fully Realised Annual Benefit*	*Annual benefit where + 0.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 1% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 1.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 2% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 2.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 3% applied*
Reduction in TPS UA1	1.3%	**£4.15M**	**£5.75M**	**£7.35M**	**£8.95M**	**£10.54M**	**£12.14M**	**£13.74M**
Reduction in TPS UA1	1.4%	**£6.47M**	**£8.78M**	**£11.09M**	**£13.40M**	**£15.72M**	**£18.03M**	**£20.34M**
TOTAL			**£14.53M**	**£18.44M**	**£22.35M**	**£26.26M**	**£30.17M**	**£34.08M**

Sensitivity Testing | Transition Cost (Increase)

Relevant page in Executive Summary	12

Lever	*Current assumption applied*	*Current one-off cost*	*Cost where + 0.5% applied*	*Cost where + 1% applied*	*Cost where + 1.5% applied*	*Cost where + 2% applied*	*Cost where + 2.5% applied*	*Cost where + 3% applied*
New unitarities setup & closedown costs	N/A	2.65M	**2.66M**	**2.68M**	**2.69M**	**2.70M**	**2.72M**	**2.73M**
IT & Systems Costs	N/A	2.25M	**2.27M**	**2.28M**	**2.29M**	**2.30M**	**2.31M**	**2.32M**
Service / operating model design & implementation costs	N/A	8.75M	**8.79M**	**8.84M**	**8.88M**	**8.93M**	**8.97M**	**9.01M**
Redundancy costs[1]	N/A	3.67M	**4.25M**	**4.84M**	**5.42M**	**6.01M**	**6.63M**	**7.18M**
Contingency	N/A	5.20M	**5.39M**	**5.59M**	**5.78M**	**5.98M**	**6.19M**	**6.37M**
TOTAL		**22.52M**	**23.37M**	**24.22M**	**25.07M**	**25.91M**	**26.81M**	**27.61M**

1. % uplift has been applied to FTE within the staffing module to estimate the incremental increase in redundancy costs, rather than applying a blanket uplift to the baselined current cost.

Sensitivity Testing| Disaggregation Disbenefit (Decrease)

Relevant page in Executive Summary	13

		Annual Cost					
Lever	***Current assumption applied***	***Fully Realised Annual Disbenefit***	***Applying -0.1% Assumption: 1.9% cost***	***Applying -0.2% Assumption: 1.8% cost***	***Applying -0.3% Assumption: 1.7% cost***	***Applying -0.4% Assumption: 1.6% cost***	***Applying -0.5% Assumption: 1.5% cost***
Cost of disaggregating ASC TPS	2%	**7.03M**	**6.67M**	**6.32M**	**5.97M**	**5.62M**	**5.27M**
Cost of disaggregating CSC TPS	2%	**2.04M**	**1.94M**	**1.84M**	**1.74M**	**1.64M**	**1.53M**
Contingency provision for disaggregation	0.5%	**3.87M**	**3.10M**	**2.32M**	**1.55M**	**0.77M**	**0.00M**
TOTAL		**12.94M**	**11.71M**	**10.48M**	**9.26M**	**8.03M**	**6.80M**

Sensitivity Testing | Disaggregation Disbenefit (Increase)

Relevant page in Executive Summary	13

		Annual Cost					
Lever	*Current assumption applied*	*Fully Realised Annual Disbenefit*	*Applying +0.1% Assumption: 2.1% cost*	*Applying +0.2% Assumption: 2.2% cost*	*Applying +0.3% Assumption: 2.3% cost*	*Applying +0.4% Assumption: 2.4% cost*	*Applying +0.5% Assumption: 2.5% cost*
Cost of disaggregating ASC TPS	2%	**7.03M**	**7.38M**	**7.73M**	**8.08M**	**8.43M**	**8.78M**
Cost of disaggregating CSC TPS	2%	**2.04M**	**2.15M**	**2.25M**	**2.35M**	**2.45M**	**2.56M**
Contingency provision for disaggregation	0.5%	**3.87M**	**4.64M**	**5.42M**	**6.19M**	**6.96M**	**7.74M**
TOTAL		**12.94M**	**14.17M**	**15.39M**	**16.62M**	**17.85M**	**19.08M**

Sensitivity Testing | Transformation Benefit (Increase)

Relevant page in Executive Summary	14

Lever	*Current assumption applied*	*Fully Realised Annual Benefit*	*Annual benefit where + 0.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 1% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 1.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 2% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 2.5% applied*	*Annual benefit where + 3% applied*
Reduction in Service Delivery FTE	2%	**0.59M**	**0.74M**	**0.88M**	**1.03M**	**1.18M**	**1.33M**	**1.47M**
Reduction in Front Office FTE	1%	**0.52M**	**0.79M**	**1.05M**	**1.31M**	**1.57M**	**1.84M**	**2.10M**
Reduction in Internal and Enabling Service FTE	2%	**0.99M**	**1.24M**	**1.48M**	**1.73M**	**1.98M**	**2.22M**	**2.47M**
Reduction in strategic Services FTE	2%	**0.35M**	**0.43M**	**0.52M**	**0.61M**	**0.70M**	**0.78M**	**0.87M**
Reduction in TPS	2%	**16.67M**	**20.84M**	**25.00M**	**29.17M**	**33.34M**	**37.50M**	**41.67M**
Increase in Fees	1%	**0.68M**	**1.03M**	**1.37M**	**1.71M**	**2.05M**	**2.40M**	**2.74M**
TOTAL		**19.80M**	**25.05M**	**30.31M**	**35.56M**	**40.81M**	**46.07M**	**51.32M**

This page pulls together all the key elements from the various detailed sensitivity tables show above.

Table created by NK/SK based on PwC data.

Aggregation Saving		Baseline	0.50%	1.00%	1.50%	2.00%	2.50%	3.00%	min-max
Staffing (excl snr mgmt)		2.7	3.29	3.88	4.46	5.05	5.64	6.23	**3.53**
Third Party Spend		10.62	14.53	18.44	22.35	26.26	30.17	34.08	**23.46**
No change elements		4.73	4.73	4.73	4.73	4.73	4.73	4.73	**0**
TOTAL		**18.05**	**22.55**	**27.05**	**31.54**	**36.04**	**40.54**	**45.04**	**26.99**
	Phasing								
Y1	0.6	10.83	13.53	16.23	18.92	21.62	24.32	27.02	**16.19**
Y2	0.8	14.44	18.04	21.64	25.23	28.83	32.43	36.03	**21.59**
Y3	0.9	16.25	20.30	24.35	28.39	32.44	36.49	40.54	**24.29**
Y4	1	18.05	22.55	27.05	31.54	36.04	40.54	45.04	**26.99**
Y5	1	18.05	22.55	27.05	31.54	36.04	40.54	45.04	**26.99**
Transition		-22.52	-23.27	-24.22	-25.07	-25.91	-26.81	-27.61	**-5.09**
Transformation	Phasing	**19.82**	**25.05**	**30.31**	**35.56**	**40.81**	**46.07**	**51.32**	**31.50**
Y1	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.00**
Y2	0.2	3.96	5.01	6.06	7.11	8.16	9.21	10.26	**6.30**
Y3	0.5	9.91	12.53	15.16	17.78	20.41	23.04	25.66	**15.75**
Y4	1	19.82	25.05	30.31	35.56	40.81	46.07	51.32	**31.50**
Y5	1	19.82	25.05	30.31	35.56	40.81	46.07	51.32	**31.50**
Transformation Cost	Phasing	**-6.54**	**-8.27**	**-10.00**	**-11.73**	**-13.47**	**-15.20**	**-16.94**	**-10.40**
Y1	0.1	-0.65	-0.83	-1.00	-1.17	-1.35	-1.52	-1.69	**-1.04**
Y2	0.25	-1.64	-2.07	-2.50	-2.93	-3.37	-3.80	-4.23	**-2.60**
Y3	0.35	-2.29	-2.89	-3.50	-4.11	-4.71	-5.32	-5.93	**-3.64**
Y4	0.2	-1.31	-1.65	-2.00	-2.35	-2.69	-3.04	-3.39	**-2.08**
Y5	0.1	-0.65	-0.83	-1.00	-1.17	-1.35	-1.52	-1.69	**-1.04**
Transformation Net		**13.28**	**16.78**	**20.31**	**23.83**	**27.34**	**30.87**	**34.38**	**21.11**
Y1		-0.65	-0.83	-1.00	-1.17	-1.35	-1.52	-1.69	-1.04
Y2		2.33	2.94	3.56	4.18	4.80	5.41	6.03	3.70
Y3		7.62	9.63	11.65	13.67	15.69	17.71	19.73	12.11
Y4		18.51	23.40	28.31	33.21	38.12	43.03	47.93	29.42
Y5		19.17	24.22	29.31	34.39	39.46	44.55	49.63	30.46
		Baseline	**-0.10%**	**-0.20%**	**-0.30%**	**-0.40%**	**-0.50%**		
Disaggregation disbenefit		-12.94	-11.71	-10.48	-9.26	-8.03	-6.8		**6.14**
			0.10%	**0.20%**	**0.30%**	**0.40%**	**0.50%**		
		-12.94	-14.17	-15.39	-16.62	-17.85	-19.08		**-6.14**

Model Baseline	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y5 Cuml
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	10.83	14.44	16.25	18.05	18.05	77.62
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-64.70
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52	0	0	0	0	-22.52
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00	3.96	9.91	19.82	19.82	53.51
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65	-1.64	-2.29	-1.31	-0.65	-6.54
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	**-25.28**	**3.83**	**10.93**	**23.62**	**24.28**	**37.37**
Net benefit cuml	**-25.28**	**-21.46**	**-10.53**	**13.09**	**37.37**	

Step 1 (0.5% application; Baseline Transition, Disaggregation)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y5 Cuml
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	13.53	18.04	20.30	22.55	22.55	96.97
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-64.70
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52	0	0	0	0	-22.52
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00	5.01	12.53	25.05	25.05	67.64
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.83	-2.07	-2.89	-1.65	-0.83	-8.27
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	**-22.76**	**8.04**	**16.99**	**33.01**	**33.83**	**69.11**
Net benefit cuml	**-22.76**	**-14.71**	**2.27**	**35.28**	**69.11**	

Step 3 (1.5% application; Baseline Transition, Disaggregation)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y5 Cuml
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	18.92	25.23	28.39	31.54	31.54	135.62
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-64.70
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52	0	0	0	0	-22.52
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00	7.11	17.78	35.56	35.56	96.01
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-1.17	-2.93	-4.11	-2.35	-1.17	-11.73
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	**-17.71**	**16.47**	**29.12**	**51.81**	**52.99**	**132.68**
Net benefit cuml	**-17.71**	**-1.24**	**27.88**	**79.69**	**132.68**	

Step 5 (3.0%; application; Baseline Transition, Disaggregation))	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y5 Cuml
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	27.02	36.03	40.54	45.04	45.04	193.67
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-64.70
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52	0	0	0	0	-22.52
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00	10.26	25.66	51.32	51.32	138.56
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-1.69	-4.23	-5.93	-3.39	-1.69	-16.94
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	**-10.13**	**29.12**	**47.33**	**80.03**	**81.73**	**228.08**
Net benefit cuml	**-10.13**	**18.99**	**66.32**	**146.35**	**228.08**	

Impact of changing key inputs (1)

The top table reflects the baseline position in the model.

The next three tables retain the baseline for the one-off transition cost, and the ongoing cost of disaggregation.

Step 1 table applies the 0.5% to both aggregation benefits and Transformation benefits, with the transformation cost benefit ratio also applied.

Step 3 table applies the mid point 1.5%

Step 5 table applies the maximum 3.0% used in the sensitivity range.

Table created by NK/SK based on PWC data

Impact of changing key inputs (2)

Model Baseline	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y5 Cuml
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	10.83	14.44	16.25	18.05	18.05	77.62
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-64.70
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52	0	0	0	0	-22.52
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00	3.96	9.91	19.82	19.82	53.51
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65	-1.64	-2.29	-1.31	-0.65	-6.54
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	**-25.28**	**3.83**	**10.93**	**23.62**	**24.28**	**37.37**
Net benefit cuml	**-25.28**	**-21.46**	**-10.53**	**13.09**	**37.37**	

Model Baseline - Plus top end Transition Cost	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y5 Cuml
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	10.83	14.44	16.25	18.05	18.05	77.62
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-12.94	-64.70
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-27.61	0	0	0	0	-27.61
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00	3.96	9.91	19.82	19.82	53.51
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65	-1.64	-2.29	-1.31	-0.65	-6.54
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	**-30.37**	**3.83**	**10.93**	**23.62**	**24.28**	**32.28**
Net benefit cuml	**-30.37**	**-26.55**	**-15.62**	**8.00**	**32.28**	

Model Baseline - Plus low end disaggregation cost	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y5 Cuml
Total Aggregation Benefits (£M)	10.83	14.44	16.25	18.05	18.05	77.62
Total Financial Disbenefit Costs (£M)	-6.80	-6.80	-6.80	-6.80	-6.80	-34.00
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	-22.52	0	0	0	0	-22.52
Total Transformation Benefits (£M)	0.00	3.96	9.91	19.82	19.82	53.51
Total One-Off Transformation Costs (£M)	-0.65	-1.64	-2.29	-1.31	-0.65	-6.54
In-year Net Benefit / (Costs) (£M)	**-19.14**	**9.97**	**17.07**	**29.76**	**30.42**	**68.07**
Net benefit cuml	**-19.14**	**-9.18**	**7.89**	**37.65**	**68.07**	

The top table again reflects the baseline position in the model.

The mid table retains the model baseline for aggregation; disaggregation and transformation; and applies the upper end for the one-off transition cost

The bottom table retains the model baseline for aggregation; transition and transformation; and applies the lower end for the ongoing disaggregation costs.

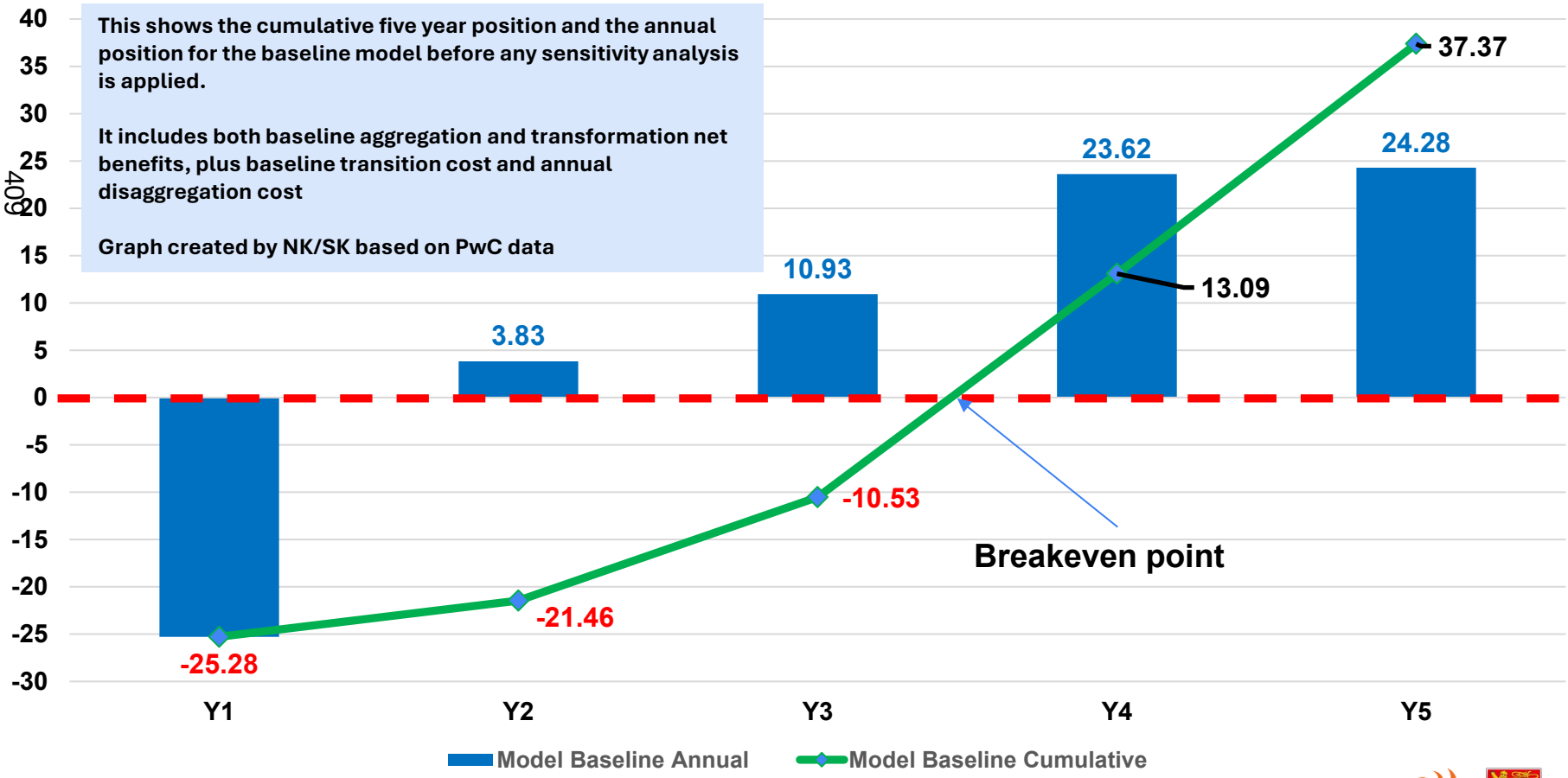
Table created by NK/SK based on PwC data

Pre-Sensitivity Analysis Impacts - Baseline Model Cumulative & Annual Benefit £m

This shows the cumulative five year position and the annual position for the baseline model before any sensitivity analysis is applied.

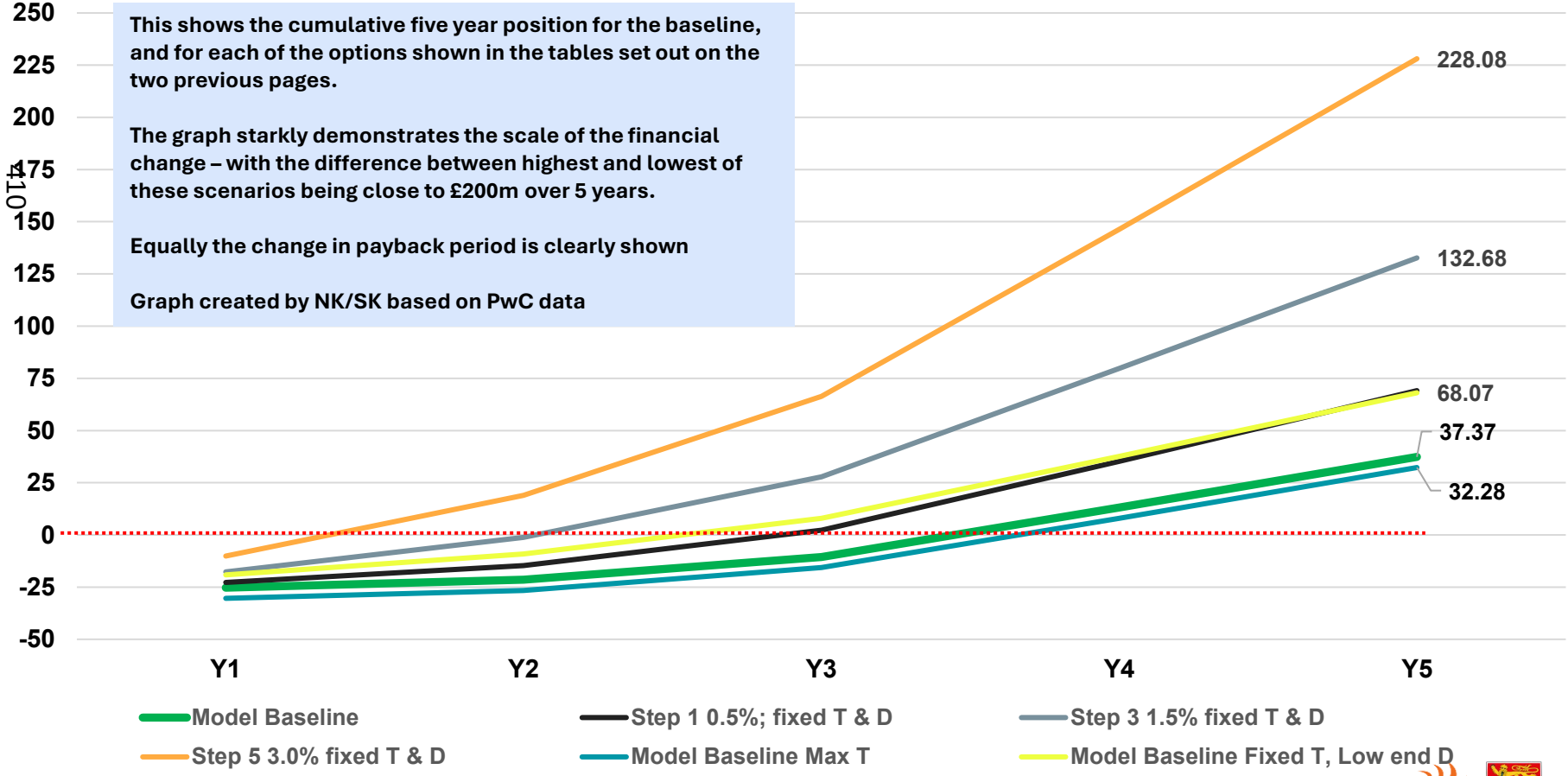
It includes both baseline aggregation and transformation net benefits, plus baseline transition cost and annual disaggregation cost

Graph created by NK/SK based on PwC data



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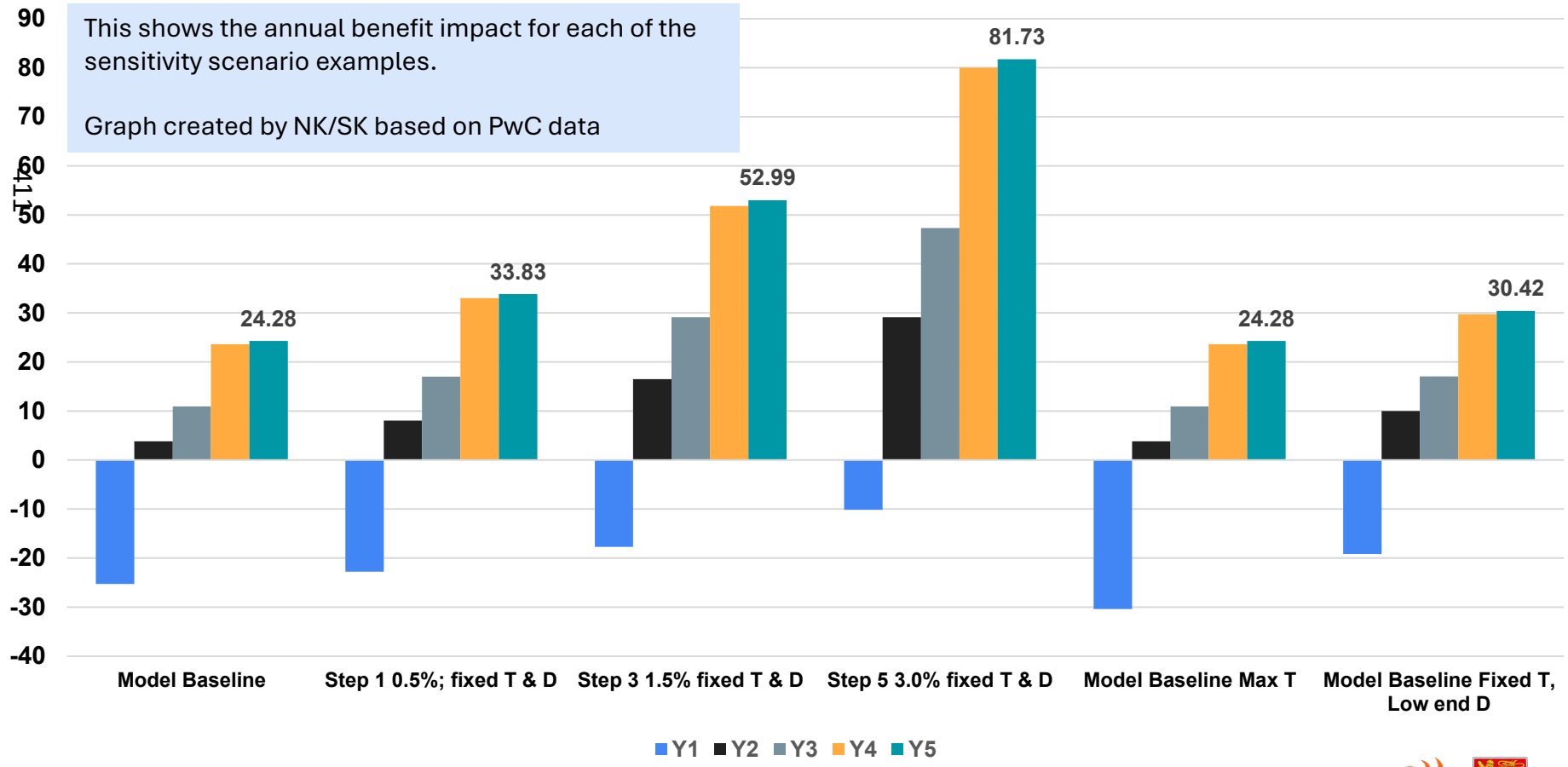
Sensitivity Analysis Impacts - Cuml Benefit £m



Sensitivity Analysis Impacts - In year Benefit

This shows the annual benefit impact for each of the sensitivity scenario examples.

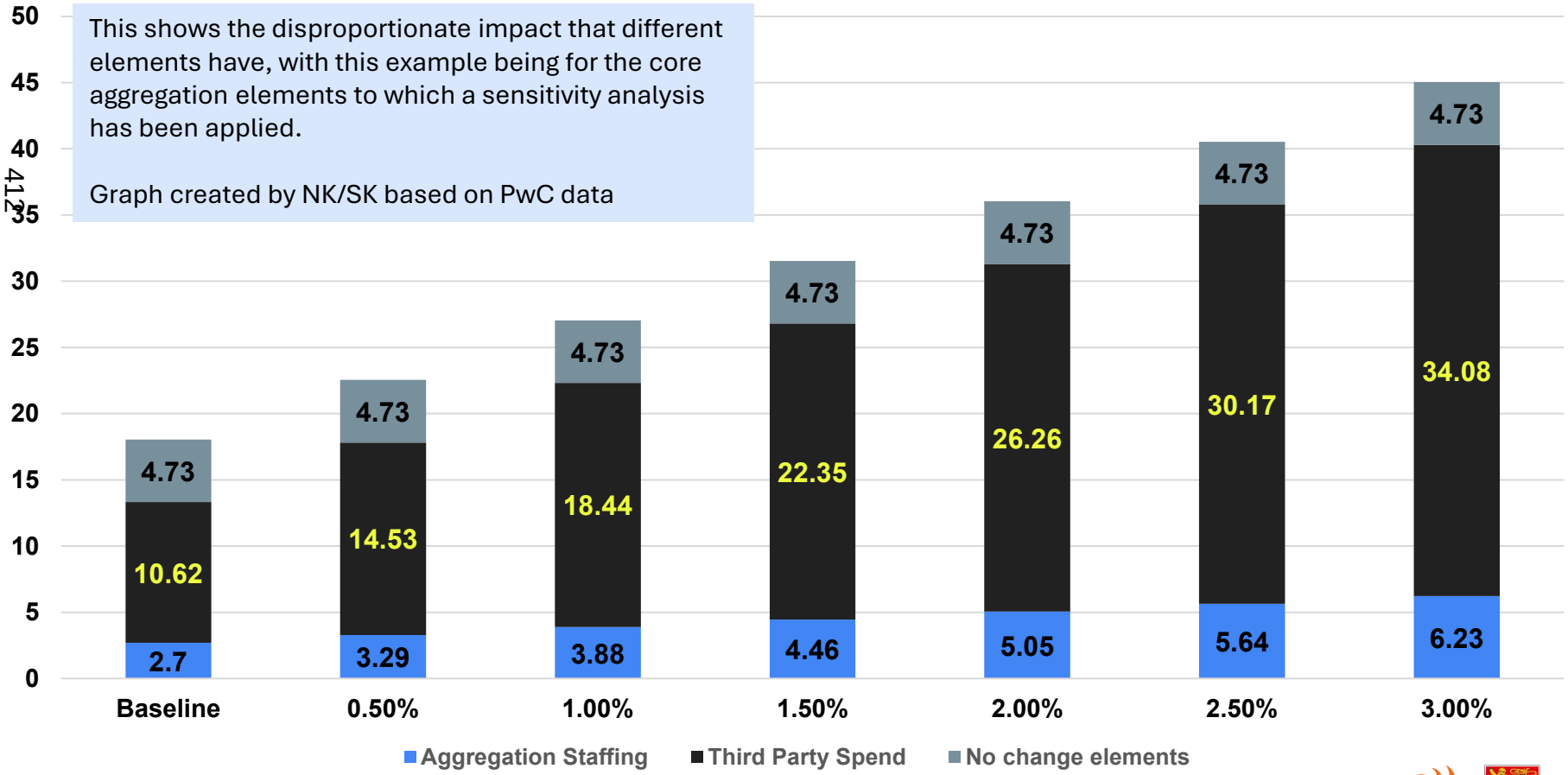
Graph created by NK/SK based on PwC data



Sensitivity Analysis Impacts - Aggregation Benefits elements

This shows the disproportionate impact that different elements have, with this example being for the core aggregation elements to which a sensitivity analysis has been applied.

Graph created by NK/SK based on PwC data



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APPENDIX 4d

Council Tax Harmonisation Outputs for 1-3 year approach

North Kesteven & South Kesteven Proposal

10th October 2025

Context

A uniform rate of council tax must be in payment across the whole area by the seventh year

- *The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Finance) Regulations 2008*
- *The Local Government (Structural and Boundary Changes) (Amendment) Regulations 2018*

Referendum principles apply, with some flexibilities

The approach can be used to preserve low rates, generate additional income, or to distribute current requirements more fairly - but not all three at the same time

Ultimately, it's a decision for members

Why model Council Tax Harmonisation now?

- Providing a projected council tax requirement for future years in the outputs of financial modelling provides a degree of credibility to other projections.
- It is an additional tool in determining whether a proposed new geography is viable from the outset.
- Any distinct local matters (such as LAs which rarely or never maximise their increase) can be factored into both the harmonisation model, and the council tax requirement used in other financial models.
- It provides an early steer for members in their duties when LGR implementation is underway.

Steps in the process

The model proceeds through a range of steps which broadly speaking **project the baseline**, **create the new geography** and **create the harmonisation outputs:**

Determine the future tax base

The basis for the calculation is the no. of Band D equivalents after deductions for council tax relief (*Live Tables on Council Tax, 1.34*).

We apply an appropriate uplift - either based on population growth, historic change in taxbase, or a method you deem appropriate.

Calculate assumed rates up to 2027/28

Until vesting day, we assume that Districts, Counties and Unitaries will seek to increase at the maximum rate possible within referendum principles, including the Adult Social Care precept.

Harmonisation will begin from these uplifted rates, which exclude parish precepts.

Create hybrid/district county rates

We calculate the total council tax requirement for each District, and include the County rate to provide a hybrid rate. Unitary council rates are already comparable.

This provides the 'building blocks' for modelling new geographies.

Apply harmonisation approaches

We apply the harmonisation levers we're discussing today model a range of scenarios.

Calculate gains/losses

For each year of the process we calculate the difference between the Baseline for each year (District and County apply max. increases as usual) and the Harmonised CT requirement - and determine the additional or foregone income as a result of harmonising.

The Levers

There are four key 'settings' which can be altered to change the outputs produced by the model. These do not have to be set from the outset, and can be adjusted - but are key to understanding how the model works:

1 Method of Increasing the Taxbase

By default the model uses change in working age population to uprate the proposed taxbase each year. Other LAs have applied either a flat rate (eg. 0.5%/yr) or have used a calculation based on historic changes

2 Pace of Harmonisation

The law requires that the harmonisation process is complete, with all parts of the new area paying the same rate of council tax by the seventh year. A longer period may provide less dramatic changes in rates, but effectively prolongs the process and can result in significant foregone income over time

3 Direction of Harmonisation

The harmonisation model can target the lowest, highest or a mean/median rate in the target year. This will then provide an annual change in rate each year which includes the standard increase applied, along with a factor which brings the rate closer to the harmonisation target.

4 Exceptional Rates

The harmonisation model can apply an exceptional rate (eg. 7.49%) in one or more years prior to vesting day. This accounts for areas (such as Somerset) where the council has requested additional flexibility to set a higher rate due to financial pressures.

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Inputs

The basic building blocks of the council tax harmonisation model which apply to all scenarios

The tax base

This is the number of Band D equivalent taxable dwellings, after allowances to account for council tax relief. It is the figure reported by councils on form CTB1 annually.

While it is appreciated that councils may agree other figures to account for new development (using CTR1) this figure has been used for comparability of cases.

Tax Rates

These are the rates in payment for the 2025/26 financial year, excluding any Parish Precepts

Council	2025 Taxbase (Band D equivalents)	2025/26 Band D Rate (ex PP)	Type of Council
Lincolnshire	249,550	£1,625.85	County Council
Boston	20,704	£261.55	District Council
Lincoln	26,141	£316.98	District Council
East Lindsey	48,602	£171.54	District Council
North Kesteven	40,293	£194.40	District Council
South Kesteven	50,141	£189.37	District Council
South Holland	30,912	£215.76	District Council
West Lindsey	32,757	£248.76	District Council
North Lincolnshire	52,687	£1,800.36	Unitary Council
North East Lincolnshire	47,584	£1,952.04	Unitary Council
Rutland	16,130	£2,218.95	Unitary Council

Baseline rates

Table 1 : Band D rate increased by maximum for council type annually													
Band D Rate	Council Type	Base	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	2036/37
Lincolnshire	County Council	£1,625.85	£1,706.98	£1,792.16	£1,881.59	£1,975.48	£2,074.05	£2,177.55	£2,286.21	£2,400.29	£2,520.07	£2,645.82	£2,777.84
Boston	District Council	£261.55	£269.37	£277.42	£285.72	£294.26	£303.06	£312.12	£321.45	£331.07	£340.97	£351.16	£361.66
Lincoln	District Council	£316.98	£326.46	£336.22	£346.27	£356.63	£367.29	£378.27	£389.58	£401.23	£413.23	£425.58	£438.31
East Lindsey	District Council	£171.54	£176.67	£181.95	£187.39	£192.99	£198.77	£204.71	£210.83	£217.13	£223.63	£230.31	£237.20
North Kesteven	District Council	£194.40	£200.21	£206.20	£212.36	£218.71	£225.25	£231.99	£238.93	£246.07	£253.43	£261.00	£268.81
South Kesteven	District Council	£189.37	£195.03	£200.86	£206.87	£213.05	£219.43	£225.99	£232.74	£239.70	£246.87	£254.25	£261.85
South Holland	District Council	£215.76	£222.21	£228.86	£235.70	£242.75	£250.00	£257.48	£265.18	£273.11	£281.27	£289.68	£298.34
West Lindsey	District Council	£248.76	£256.20	£263.86	£271.75	£279.87	£288.24	£296.86	£305.74	£314.88	£324.29	£333.99	£343.97
North Lincolnshire	Unitary Council	£1,800.36	£1,890.20	£1,984.52	£2,083.55	£2,187.52	£2,296.67	£2,411.28	£2,531.60	£2,657.93	£2,790.56	£2,929.80	£3,076.00
North East Lincolnshire	Unitary Council	£1,952.04	£2,049.45	£2,151.71	£2,259.08	£2,371.81	£2,490.17	£2,614.43	£2,744.89	£2,881.86	£3,025.66	£3,176.64	£3,335.15
Rutland	Unitary Council	£2,218.95	£2,329.68	£2,445.93	£2,567.98	£2,696.12	£2,830.66	£2,971.91	£3,120.20	£3,275.90	£3,439.37	£3,610.99	£3,791.18

This table provides a baseline, derived from the 2025/26 rate increased by the maximum appropriate increase each year without triggering a potential referendum. This assumes that the Adult Social Care precept will continue to be available to upper-tier authorities after 2028/29.

This is used to reflect the position which would occur in future years should LGR not take place, and enables comparison with harmonised rates.

Maximum Increase per annum	
County Council	4.99%
District Council	2.99%
Unitary Council	4.99%

Summary Table – 1, 2, and 3 year harmonisation

Change in Council Tax Requirement	Target Rate	2028/29	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total Change
1 Year Harmonisation	Low	-£10,150,978	-£11,238,443	-£16,275,925	-£19,688,607	-£23,355,179	-£27,292,149	-£31,517,055	-£139,518,336
	Median	£1,937,914	£3,294,813	£4,770,357	£6,372,626	£8,110,196	£9,992,175	£12,028,230	£46,506,311
	High	£19,561,745	£23,480,706	£43,608,211	£57,983,094	£74,145,511	£92,280,315	£112,590,179	£423,649,762
	Weighted Average	£0	£1,250,024	£2,612,800	£4,096,080	£5,708,100	£7,457,605	£9,353,880	£30,478,487

Change in Council Tax Requirement	Target Rate	2028/29	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total Change
2 Year Harmonisation	Low	-£5,042,908	-£10,506,765	-£11,009,528	-£13,721,305	-£15,539,774	-£17,512,943	-£19,652,125	-£92,985,347
	Median	£925,848	£2,005,837	£3,410,294	£4,937,556	£6,595,983	£8,394,454	£10,342,396	£36,612,368
	High	£9,505,867	£20,247,375	£23,391,070	£34,222,926	£42,339,343	£51,295,972	£61,165,272	£242,167,825
	Weighted Average	-£20,037	£0	£1,293,837	£2,704,377	£4,239,645	£5,908,166	£7,718,990	£21,844,978

Change in Council Tax Requirement	Target Rate	2028/29	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	Total Change
3 Year Harmonisation	Low	-£3,305,423	-£6,922,879	-£10,875,021	-£11,183,300	-£11,514,623	-£11,871,300	-£12,255,848	-£67,928,395
	Median	£611,932	£1,301,434	£2,076,140	£3,529,824	£5,110,615	£6,827,169	£8,688,676	£28,145,788
	High	£6,218,210	£13,181,062	£20,957,035	£23,897,518	£31,731,667	£37,912,908	£44,680,506	£178,578,906
	Weighted Average	-£6,549	-£6,994	£0	£1,339,185	£2,799,164	£4,388,243	£6,115,244	£14,628,293

Harmonising in one year, to the minimum rate

One Year Minimum

Harmonise to the minimum rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,189

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.52%	2,094	2,189	2,298	2,412	2,533	2,659	2,792	2,931
South Kesteven	4.79%	2,088	2,189	2,298	2,412	2,533	2,659	2,792	2,931
South Holland	3.37%	2,117	2,189	2,298	2,412	2,533	2,659	2,792	2,931
Annual increase in rate			4.22%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			316,721,822	334,188,872	352,619,221	372,065,995	392,585,249	414,236,129	437,081,044
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(3,307,804)	(2,811,684)	(2,264,420)	(1,662,359)	(1,001,616)	(278,061)	512,694

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,168

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	0.05%	2,167	2,168	2,277	2,390	2,510	2,635	2,766	2,904
Lincoln	-2.67%	2,228	2,168	2,277	2,390	2,510	2,635	2,766	2,904
East Lindsey	4.81%	2,069	2,168	2,277	2,390	2,510	2,635	2,766	2,904
West Lindsey	0.70%	2,153	2,168	2,277	2,390	2,510	2,635	2,766	2,904
Annual increase in rate			0.65%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			283,608,879	299,249,767	315,753,242	333,166,875	351,540,862	370,928,165	391,384,667
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(9,405,761)	(9,228,079)	(9,016,188)	(8,767,348)	(8,478,635)	(8,146,933)	(7,768,923)

Harmonising in one year, to the median rate

One Year Median

Harmonise to the median rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,194

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.79%	2,094	2,194	2,304	2,419	2,539	2,666	2,799	2,939
South Kesteven	5.06%	2,088	2,194	2,304	2,419	2,539	2,666	2,799	2,939
South Holland	3.63%	2,117	2,194	2,304	2,419	2,539	2,666	2,799	2,939
Annual increase in rate			4.49%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			319,257,338	336,864,221	355,442,114	375,044,569	395,728,089	417,552,296	440,580,096
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(772,288)	(136,335)	558,473	1,316,215	2,141,225	3,038,106	4,011,746

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,255

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	4.06%	2,167	2,255	2,368	2,486	2,610	2,740	2,877	3,021
Lincoln	1.23%	2,228	2,255	2,368	2,486	2,610	2,740	2,877	3,021
East Lindsey	9.01%	2,069	2,255	2,368	2,486	2,610	2,740	2,877	3,021
West Lindsey	4.74%	2,153	2,255	2,368	2,486	2,610	2,740	2,877	3,021
Annual increase in rate			4.69%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			294,971,430	311,238,957	328,403,630	346,514,926	365,625,051	385,789,089	407,065,165
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			1,956,790	2,761,112	3,634,200	4,580,703	5,605,554	6,713,992	7,911,575

Harmonising in one year, to the maximum rate

One Year Maximum

Harmonise to the maximum rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,189

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.52%	2,094	2,189	2,298	2,412	2,533	2,659	2,792	2,931
South Kesteven	4.79%	2,088	2,189	2,298	2,412	2,533	2,659	2,792	2,931
South Holland	3.37%	2,117	2,189	2,298	2,412	2,533	2,659	2,792	2,931
Annual increase in rate			4.22%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			320,177,892	337,835,543	356,467,004	376,125,981	396,869,141	418,756,276	441,850,475
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			148,267	834,987	1,583,363	2,397,627	3,282,277	4,242,086	5,282,125

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,332

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	7.60%	2,167	2,332	2,448	2,571	2,699	2,834	2,975	3,123
Lincoln	4.68%	2,228	2,332	2,448	2,571	2,699	2,834	2,975	3,123
East Lindsey	12.72%	2,069	2,332	2,448	2,571	2,699	2,834	2,975	3,123
West Lindsey	8.30%	2,153	2,332	2,448	2,571	2,699	2,834	2,975	3,123
Annual increase in rate			8.25%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			305,009,675	321,830,806	339,579,614	358,307,260	378,067,726	398,917,972	420,918,099
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			11,995,035	13,352,960	14,810,184	16,373,036	18,048,229	19,842,874	21,764,508

Harmonising in one year, to the weighted average

One Year Weighted Average

Weighted Average

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,198

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.97%	2,094	2,198	2,308	2,423	2,544	2,671	2,804	2,944
South Kesteven	5.24%	2,088	2,198	2,308	2,423	2,544	2,671	2,804	2,944
South Holland	3.81%	2,117	2,198	2,308	2,423	2,544	2,671	2,804	2,944
Annual increase in rate			4.67%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			272,089,989	287,095,616	302,928,796	319,635,167	337,262,887	355,862,767	375,488,420
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			272,089,989	286,541,997	301,771,622	317,821,070	334,734,848	352,559,895	371,345,715
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement				553,619	1,157,173	1,814,098	2,528,039	3,302,871	4,142,706

Years to Harmonise:	1
	2029/30
Final value:	£2,240

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	3.37%	2,167	2,240	2,352	2,470	2,593	2,722	2,858	3,001
Lincoln	0.56%	2,228	2,240	2,352	2,470	2,593	2,722	2,858	3,001
East Lindsey	8.28%	2,069	2,240	2,352	2,470	2,593	2,722	2,858	3,001
West Lindsey	4.04%	2,153	2,240	2,352	2,470	2,593	2,722	2,858	3,001
Annual increase in rate			3.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			293,014,640	309,174,251	326,225,056	344,216,205	363,199,557	383,229,831	404,364,764
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement				696,406	1,455,626	2,281,982	3,180,060	4,154,733	5,211,174

Harmonising in two years, to the minimum

Two Years Minimum

Harmonise to the minimum rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	2
	2029/30 to 2030/31
Final value:	£2,293

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.66%	2,094	2,191	2,293	2,408	2,528	2,654	2,787	2,926
South Kesteven	4.79%	2,088	2,189	2,293	2,408	2,528	2,654	2,787	2,926
South Holland	4.08%	2,117	2,204	2,293	2,408	2,528	2,654	2,787	2,926
Annual increase in rate			4.51%	4.51%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			318,395,610	333,576,815	351,973,410	371,384,567	391,866,240	413,477,468	436,280,543
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(1,634,016)	(3,423,741)	(2,910,232)	(2,343,787)	(1,720,624)	(1,036,722)	(287,807)

Years to Harmonise:	2
	2029/30 to 2030/31
Final value:	£2,273

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	2.41%	2,167	2,219	2,273	2,386	2,505	2,630	2,762	2,899
Lincoln	1.00%	2,228	2,250	2,273	2,386	2,505	2,630	2,762	2,899
East Lindsey	4.81%	2,069	2,169	2,273	2,386	2,505	2,630	2,762	2,899
West Lindsey	2.74%	2,153	2,212	2,273	2,386	2,505	2,630	2,762	2,899
Annual increase in rate			2.70%	2.72%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			288,330,684	298,742,417	315,217,912	332,602,022	350,944,857	370,299,291	390,721,111
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(4,683,956)	(9,735,428)	(9,551,518)	(9,332,201)	(9,074,639)	(8,775,807)	(8,432,479)

Harmonising in two years, to the median

Two Years Median

Harmonise to the median rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	2
	2029/30 to 2030/31
Final value:	£2,299

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.79%	2,094	2,194	2,299	2,414	2,535	2,661	2,794	2,933
South Kesteven	4.93%	2,088	2,191	2,299	2,414	2,535	2,661	2,794	2,933
South Holland	4.21%	2,117	2,206	2,299	2,414	2,535	2,661	2,794	2,933
Annual increase in rate			4.64%	4.64%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			319,654,206	336,201,200	354,742,528	374,306,401	394,949,212	416,730,463	439,712,940
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(375,420)	(799,356)	(141,114)	578,047	1,362,347	2,216,274	3,144,590

Years to Harmonise:	2
	2029/30 to 2030/31
Final value:	£2,362

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	4.40%	2,167	2,263	2,362	2,480	2,604	2,734	2,870	3,014
Lincoln	2.97%	2,228	2,294	2,362	2,480	2,604	2,734	2,870	3,014
East Lindsey	6.85%	2,069	2,211	2,362	2,480	2,604	2,734	2,870	3,014
West Lindsey	4.74%	2,153	2,255	2,362	2,480	2,604	2,734	2,870	3,014
Annual increase in rate			4.71%	4.72%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			293,951,358	310,503,220	327,627,317	345,695,800	364,760,750	384,877,123	406,102,904
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			936,718	2,025,375	2,857,887	3,761,577	4,741,254	5,802,026	6,949,314

Harmonising in two years, to the maximum

Two Years Maximum

Harmonise to the maximum rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	2
	2029/30 to 2030/31
Final value:	£2,293

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.66%	2,094	2,191	2,293	2,408	2,528	2,654	2,787	2,926
South Kesteven	4.79%	2,088	2,189	2,293	2,408	2,528	2,654	2,787	2,926
South Holland	4.08%	2,117	2,204	2,293	2,408	2,528	2,654	2,787	2,926
Annual increase in rate			4.51%	4.51%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			320,102,438	337,154,019	355,747,895	375,367,213	396,068,527	417,911,509	440,959,119
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			72,813	153,463	864,253	1,638,859	2,481,663	3,397,319	4,390,769

Years to Harmonise:	2
	2029/30 to 2030/31
Final value:	£2,441

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	6.13%	2,167	2,300	2,441	2,563	2,691	2,825	2,966	3,114
Lincoln	4.68%	2,228	2,332	2,441	2,563	2,691	2,825	2,966	3,114
East Lindsey	8.63%	2,069	2,247	2,441	2,563	2,691	2,825	2,966	3,114
West Lindsey	6.48%	2,153	2,293	2,441	2,563	2,691	2,825	2,966	3,114
Annual increase in rate			6.44%	6.46%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			298,829,000	320,893,300	338,590,405	357,263,496	376,966,400	397,755,908	419,691,948
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			5,814,360	12,415,454	13,820,975	15,329,273	16,946,903	18,680,811	20,538,357

Two Years Weighted Average

Harmonising in two years, to the weighted average

Weighted Average

Years to Harmonise:	2
	2029/30 to 2030/31
Final value:	£2,303

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.88%	2,094	2,196	2,303	2,418	2,539	2,665	2,798	2,938
South Kesteven	5.02%	2,088	2,193	2,303	2,418	2,539	2,665	2,798	2,938
South Holland	4.30%	2,117	2,208	2,303	2,418	2,539	2,665	2,798	2,938
Annual increase in rate			4.73%	4.73%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			272,093,507	286,541,997	302,344,645	319,018,801	336,612,529	355,176,541	374,764,350
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			272,089,989	286,541,997	301,771,622	317,821,070	334,734,848	352,559,895	371,345,715
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			3,517		573,023	1,197,732	1,877,681	2,616,646	3,418,635

Years to Harmonise:	2
	2029/30 to 2030/31
Final value:	£2,347

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	4.06%	2,167	2,255	2,347	2,464	2,587	2,716	2,852	2,994
Lincoln	2.64%	2,228	2,287	2,347	2,464	2,587	2,716	2,852	2,994
East Lindsey	6.50%	2,069	2,204	2,347	2,464	2,587	2,716	2,852	2,994
West Lindsey	4.40%	2,153	2,248	2,347	2,464	2,587	2,716	2,852	2,994
Annual increase in rate			4.36%	4.38%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			292,991,086	308,477,845	325,490,244	343,440,869	362,381,461	382,366,617	403,453,945
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(23,555)		720,814	1,506,645	2,361,964	3,291,520	4,300,355

Harmonising in three years, to the minimum

Three Years Minimum

Harmonise to the minimum rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	3 2029/30 to 2031/32
Final value:	£2,404

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.70%	2,094	2,192	2,296	2,404	2,523	2,649	2,759	2,889
South Kesteven	4.80%	2,088	2,189	2,294	2,404	2,523	2,649	2,782	2,899
South Holland	4.32%	2,117	2,209	2,304	2,404	2,523	2,649	2,782	2,846
Annual increase in rate			4.60%	4.60%	4.61%	4.99%	4.99%	4.70%	3.74%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			318,963,259	334,755,879	351,339,900	370,716,120	391,160,929	411,776,335	430,604,082
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(1,066,367)	(2,244,676)	(3,543,741)	(3,012,234)	(2,425,936)	(2,737,855)	(5,964,268)

Years to Harmonise:	3 2029/30 to 2031/32
Final value:	£2,382

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	3.20%	2,167	2,237	2,308	2,382	2,501	2,626	2,757	2,895
Lincoln	2.26%	2,228	2,278	2,330	2,382	2,501	2,626	2,757	2,895
East Lindsey	4.81%	2,069	2,169	2,273	2,382	2,501	2,626	2,757	2,895
West Lindsey	3.43%	2,153	2,227	2,338	2,382	2,501	2,626	2,757	2,895
Annual increase in rate			3.40%	3.80%	3.03%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			289,937,720	303,218,877	314,692,780	332,047,929	350,360,206	369,682,397	390,070,196
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(3,076,920)	(5,258,968)	(10,076,650)	(9,886,294)	(9,659,290)	(9,392,701)	(9,083,394)

Harmonising in three years, to the median

Three Years Median

Harmonise to the median rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	3 2029/30 to 2031/32
Final value:	£2,410

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.79%	2,094	2,194	2,299	2,410	2,530	2,656	2,789	2,928
South Kesteven	4.88%	2,088	2,190	2,297	2,410	2,530	2,656	2,789	2,928
South Holland	4.40%	2,117	2,211	2,308	2,410	2,530	2,656	2,789	2,928
Annual increase in rate			4.69%	4.69%	4.69%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			319,790,721	336,487,022	354,056,269	373,582,295	394,185,172	415,924,287	438,862,303
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(238,904)	(513,534)	(827,373)	(146,059)	598,307	1,410,097	2,293,953

Years to Harmonise:	3 2029/30 to 2031/32
Final value:	£2,474

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	4.52%	2,167	2,265	2,367	2,474	2,598	2,728	2,864	3,007
Lincoln	3.56%	2,228	2,307	2,389	2,474	2,598	2,728	2,864	3,007
East Lindsey	6.15%	2,069	2,196	2,331	2,474	2,598	2,728	2,864	3,007
West Lindsey	4.74%	2,153	2,255	2,368	2,474	2,598	2,728	2,864	3,007
Annual increase in rate			4.72%	4.79%	4.67%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			293,629,003	309,976,284	326,865,793	344,892,278	363,912,915	383,982,530	405,158,974
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			614,363	1,498,439	2,096,363	2,958,055	3,893,418	4,907,433	6,005,384

Harmonising in three years, to the maximum

Three Years Maximum

Harmonise to the maximum rate in the target year

Years to Harmonise:	3 2029/30 to 2031/32
Final value:	£2,404

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.70%	2,094	2,192	2,296	2,404	2,523	2,649	2,782	2,920
South Kesteven	4.80%	2,088	2,189	2,294	2,404	2,523	2,649	2,782	2,920
South Holland	4.32%	2,117	2,209	2,304	2,404	2,523	2,649	2,782	2,920
Annual increase in rate			4.60%	4.60%	4.61%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			320,083,760	337,107,775	355,042,484	374,622,899	395,283,165	417,082,834	440,084,743
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			320,029,626	337,000,556	354,883,641	373,728,354	393,586,865	414,514,190	436,568,350
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			54,134	107,219	158,842	894,545	1,696,300	2,568,644	3,516,393

Years to Harmonise:	3 2029/30 to 2031/32
Final value:	£2,556

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	5.65%	2,167	2,290	2,419	2,556	2,683	2,817	2,958	3,105
Lincoln	4.68%	2,228	2,332	2,441	2,556	2,683	2,817	2,958	3,105
East Lindsey	7.30%	2,069	2,220	2,382	2,556	2,683	2,817	2,958	3,105
West Lindsey	5.88%	2,153	2,280	2,414	2,556	2,683	2,817	2,958	3,105
Annual increase in rate			5.85%	5.86%	5.87%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			296,814,559	316,546,468	337,620,040	356,239,616	375,886,053	396,615,981	418,489,154
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			3,799,918	8,068,623	12,850,610	14,305,393	15,866,557	17,540,884	19,335,564

Harmonising in three years, to the weighted average

Three Years Weighted Average

Weighted Average

Years to Harmonise:	3 2029/30 to 2031/32
Final value:	£2,414

New UA2	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
North Kesteven	4.85%	2,094	2,195	2,302	2,414	2,534	2,660	2,793	2,933
South Kesteven	4.94%	2,088	2,192	2,300	2,414	2,534	2,660	2,793	2,933
South Holland	4.46%	2,117	2,212	2,310	2,414	2,534	2,660	2,793	2,933
Annual increase in rate			4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			272,098,157	286,550,550	301,771,622	318,414,177	335,974,559	354,503,388	374,054,073
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			272,089,989	286,541,997	301,771,622	317,821,070	334,734,848	352,559,895	371,345,715
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			8,167	8,553		593,107	1,239,712	1,943,493	2,708,358

Years to Harmonise:	3 2029/30 to 2031/32
Final value:	£2,459

New UA1	Overall Rate of Increase	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36
Boston	4.29%	2,167	2,260	2,357	2,459	2,581	2,710	2,845	2,987
Lincoln	3.34%	2,228	2,302	2,379	2,459	2,581	2,710	2,845	2,987
East Lindsey	5.92%	2,069	2,191	2,321	2,459	2,581	2,710	2,845	2,987
West Lindsey	4.52%	2,153	2,251	2,352	2,459	2,581	2,710	2,845	2,987
Annual increase in rate			4.49%	4.50%	4.51%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
New Unitary Council Tax Requirment			292,999,924	308,462,298	324,769,430	342,680,302	361,578,949	381,519,847	402,560,476
Pre-Harmonisation Council Tax Requirement			293,014,640	308,477,845	324,769,430	341,934,223	360,019,496	379,075,097	399,153,590
Overall in-year impact on Council Tax Requirement			(14,716)	(15,547)		746,078	1,559,452	2,444,750	3,406,886

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APPENDIX 4e

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Lincolnshire LGR
Baseline Financial Assumptions

October 2025

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   - Organisational Change
   - Service and Transformation
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1. Overview

Lincolnshire LGR Context for Financial Assumptions

Peopletoo have been commissioned to establish a set of financial baseline assumptions for Lincolnshire, which 3 of the LGR bids can agree as reasonable but which allows for individual bid changes where there is a clear rationale. The financial baseline does not attempt to undertake financial modelling for respective LGR bids as this is the responsibility for each bid, and the financial business case must align with the overall business case.

There are a number of LGR bids in Lincolnshire with very different proposed footprints and in all but one bid it appears that North Lincolnshire and North-East Lincolnshire remain in their current status although some bids have an intention to possibly integrate at a later date. This has added a complexity to the financial baselines as both these councils were excluded from scope although we have included a higher level of analysis for Adults and Children's and Third Party Spend in those Unitary Councils for reference. We excluded 1 Unitary Authority option as no bids are in effect taking that approach although Lincolnshire County Council are creating one integrated Unitary Authority but retaining North East Lincs and North Lincs as separate entities and we have included as an effective 3 Unitary model.

However, we have assumed and included North Lincs and North East Lincs in our base financial assumptions and impact is as follows:

1. For 2 Unitary Authority figures we have assumed both existing UAs are in and fully integrated and therefore comfortable that this has been factored into financial value or %

2. For 3 and 4UA, it is more difficult. We looked to factor in and allow for the fact that unlike more conventional 3 or 4UA models where there is full integration of all Councils, if North Lincolnshire and North East remain stand alone there is a reduction in the level of service integration opportunity. However, we also reflected this in the transition and disaggregation costs where we think it is a factor.

The financial assumptions should be considered in light of each bid strategy to deliver transition and transformation. As discussed, we have seen previous LGR Councils and current business cases that vary significantly in approach and hence the assumptions on savings and costs.

As with many LGR footprints currently developing business cases, not all key data has been shared by all Councils and it has been difficult to obtain detailed data, particularly for the County Council and the existing Unitaries. The approach by the Districts has been very positive.

Our Methodology and Approach (1)

Peopletoo have used our experience gained as follows:

- Work on the majority of previous LGR Councils including different delivery models where Councils have transferred into one Unitary or where they have disaggregated as in Cumbria and Northamptonshire. This has also provided learning as to what is achievable and key risks including financial robustness as with Somerset Council where a £100m financial gap emerged 6 months post 'go-live'
- We are currently involved in 12 LGR footprints which has provided us with an evidence bank of different approaches and our own work in working with financial baseline assumptions and financial modelling income/savings/cost and net benefits for the final business case
- In the transformation savings assumptions, we have substantial experience from working across over 100 Councils in service transformation and savings realisation.

Cipfa have undertaken the Council Tax harmonisation workstream and have also reviewed the overall financial baseline assumptions in this document from a Quality Assurance perspective using their sector experience and MHCLG insight.

We have reviewed the financial business cases in the current LGR business case round which includes methodologies and approaches developed by five different consultancies. The models have very different assumptions and levels of robustness as well as ambition which will create some difficulties for MHCLG in assessing and comparing business cases. The financial outcomes hence vary significantly.

Our Methodology and Approach (2)

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Key Principles applied:

- The assumptions in organisational change including transition and one off costs and disaggregation are very difficult to estimate and all financial business cases have different methodologies. None are done on the basis of a detailed model specific to any one footprint given disproportionate resource cost against output as we identified in the original scope and methodology and we have used our experience and compared to that used across the majority of financial business cases for reasonableness
- The transformation savings are based on our detailed experience, with some allowance for Lincolnshire specific aspects where available and we have high levels of confidence. We have also compared these to the majority of other financial models for a reasonableness check
- We have taken the approach of being ambitious where possible, but cautious and pragmatic where necessary, and allow bids to evidence differences reflecting their own approach.

We have developed the assumptions based on:

- Data made available from Lincolnshire Councils
- Where there are gaps particularly for the County Council and North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire for Adults and Children's services, Property and Third Party spend, we have used publicly available data wherever possible
- As agreed in the original scope and approach, we have not done detailed modelling for Lincolnshire specific assumptions and have used sector experience referenced against all financial business cases and varied by our experience and any relevant data received for Lincolnshire, for example, level of shared services already in place

Subject to all Councils agreeing, we will provide access to the data room we have created.

Our Methodology and Approach (3)

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Changes since first draft following feedback:

- The first draft was not bid specific given the many different models and we focused on building assumptions for a fully integrated 2/3/4 Unitary Authority model with some changes for North East Lincs and North Lincs were included were stated
- Following feedback, we have been more specific in including North East Lincs and North Lincs impact and developed assumptions to be more bid specific and included a County 3UA model which we did not have before
- In summary, comparatively 2UA with highest level of integration will have higher transition and disaggregation costs but will benefit from greater savings given level of integration and the 3UA having the lowest transition and integration costs as a result of the County not being divided as in the two 4UA model
- We have sought to create the right balance and differentials as a result particular with the inclusion of the County 3UA model.

Further Analysis:

- We have not been provided with Newton data and hence have not been able to include the narrative in this document
- We have incorporated feedback received from all participating Lincolnshire Councils.

Bids Overview

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South & East Lincolnshire Partnership (SELCP) Bid	Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) Bid	City of Lincoln (CoL) Bid	South & North Kesteven (S&N Kesteven) Bid
2 Unitary Authorities (UAs)	3 Unitary Authorities (UAs)	4 Unitary Authorities (UAs)	4 Unitary Authorities (UAs)
Unitary Authority 1 (535,569): • North Lincolnshire • North East Lincolnshire • West Lindsey • City of Lincoln **Unitary Authority 2 (585,180):** • East Lindsey • Boston • South Kesteven • North Kesteven • South Holland	**Unitary Authority 1 (789,502):** • West Lindsey • East Lindsey • City of Lincoln • North Kesteven • South Kesteven • Boston • South Holland **Unitary Authority 2 (171,336):** • North Lincolnshire **Unitary Authority 3 (159,911):** • North East Lincolnshire	**Unitary Authority 1 (209,899):** • Lincoln Strategy Area (City of Lincoln plus parts of North Kesteven and West Lindsey) **Unitary Authority 2 (579,613):** • Remainder of West Lindsey • Remainder of North Kesteven • East Lindsey • South Kesteven • Boston • South Holland **Unitary Authority 3 (171,336):** • North Lincolnshire **Unitary Authority 4 (159,911):** • North East Lincolnshire	**Unitary Authority 1 (410,360):** • Rutland • South Kesteven • North Kesteven • South Holland **Unitary 2 (420,585):** • East Lindsey • City of Lincoln • Boston • West Lindsey **Unitary Authority 3 (171,336):** • North Lincolnshire **Unitary Authority 4 (159,911):** • North East Lincolnshire

Assumptions - Overview

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The table below outlines the assumptions that have been applied in developing this work:

Assumption	SELP Bid (2UAs) £m/%	LCC Bid (3UAs) £m/%	CoL Bid (4UAs) £m/%	S&N Kesteven Bid (4 UAs) £m/%
Transition Costs	32.95-40.1	22.15-26.8	29.2-33.85	28.8-33.45
Disaggregation Costs	0.7-0.9%	Nil	0.7-0.9%	0.7-0.9%
Senior Leadership & Management Savings	6.6	4.3	1.4	3.6
Merging Council Services: Front-Office Functions	3-5%	4-6%	3-5%	3-5%
Merging Council Services: Place Based Services	6-8%	7-9%	6-8%	6-8%
Merging Council Services: Back-Office Functions	5-8%	5-8%	5-8%	5-8%
Merging Highways and Operational Services	5-7.5%	-	-	-
Property	3-10%	3-10%	3-10%	3-10%
3rd Party Spend	5-10%	5-10%	5-10%	5-10%

Note: 2UA model % for categories of Merging services, Property and 3rd Party spend should be applied to all spend including North East Lincs and North Lincs. 2UA model Disaggregation costs reflect County Council only and could be more than offset by aggregation savings of fully integrating North East Lincs and North Lincs which no other bid is proposing.

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Financial Assumptions: Organisational Change

1. Transition and One-Off Costs
2. Disaggregation
3. Management cost impact
4. Democratic (out of scope)

Transition Costs: Our Approach

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"Transition costs" generally refer to up-front, *non-recurring* costs to set up the new unitary councils and close down the old councils. The costs cover a range of items: programme management and legal costs, TUPE/HR/consultation costs (staff transfers, redundancy, pay/harmonisation), ICT systems integration or replacement, branding and communications, new constitutional set-up . The one-time implementation costs of reorganisation are substantial across all recent cases, typically on the order of £50–£100+ million, and they grow with the number of new councils.

Sector Evidence and Benchmarking - What we have seen generally in the sector

- We have reviewed current LGR financial business cases as well as previous modelling undertaken and sensed checked for Lincolnshire. The modelling undertaken by different consultancies and LGR Councils varies substantially
- Programme management internal and external will vary depending upon how this is set up, sourced and established

Lincolnshire-specific Considerations - Conditions/context in Lincolnshire that needs to be factored in

- Lincolnshire councils will need to consider approach to transition and level of internal and external resource and where external resource is sourced as in the past this has been largely done by one of the big consultancies and hence higher day rates. We have amended traditional approach to allow for greater internal resource and lower external rates than the normal models
- Note different bids will vary to our assumptions as we have provided a range based on the specific bids which accounts for some bids having existing Unitaries - North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire remaining as is - which would reduce the variation in transition costs shown in our assumptions. The lower level of transition costs reflected by retaining existing Unitaries is reflected in lower savings from integration.

Resulting baseline assumptions – see detail on next slide

Note: A 10% contingency should be considered for transition costs on all bids

Transition Cost Assumptions - Breakdown

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Transition Costs	Description	SELP Bid (2UAs) (£m)	LCC Bid (3UAs) (£m)	CoL Bid (4UAs) (£m)	S&N Kesteven Bid (4 UAs) (£m)
Organisation of Closedown	Predecessor Council closedown - legal and financial and excl PMO	1.75-2.25	1.25-1.75	1.25-1.75	1.25-1.75
Public Consultation	Public meetings, Media Comms, PMO, Consulting	0.95-1.1	0.65-0.8	0.95-1.1	0.8-0.95
ICT Costs	Critical systems integration to cover off estimated costs of core systems integration for example Finance, Data Centres, IT networks excludes transformation and rationalisation.	17.5-22.5	10-12.5	15.0-17.5	15.0-17.5
Shadow Council and New Council	Media/Comms, Member allowances, interim statutory roles, recruitment costs for senior staff	3.5-4.0	3-3.5	3.6-4.1	3.5-4.0
External Consultancy Support	Costs of transitioning to new UAs and excludes Transformation	4.75-5.25	3.75-4.25	4.4-4.9	4.25-4.75
Internal Programme Management		4.5-5.0	3.5-4	4-4.5	4-4.5
	Total	**32.95-40.1**	**22.15-26.8**	**29.2-33.85**	**28.8-33.45**
*Note, 10% contingency should be considered for transition costs on all bids					

Baseline Costs – Disaggregation of County Services

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Sector Evidence and Benchmarking - What we have seen generally in the sector

- All sources acknowledge that creating multiple unitary authorities introduces additional costs for services formerly run on a county-wide basis. This reflects the new disaggregated directorates, commissioning teams, and corporate support that each new UA would need. However, these costs are often substantially overstated as the assumption is made that all services including the management structure and overheads are nearly duplicated in full for each service area, which is misleading
- Some proposals have modelled disaggregation costs as a flat assumption across all county net revenue, for instance modelled as 2.0%/2.25%/2.5% for 3UA/4UA/5UA where full integrated Unitaries. Also, general view that it is between 1 and 3%. A more granular and cautious approach can be taken which applies percentage uplifts to particular service lines.

Lincolnshire-specific Considerations - Conditions/context in Lincolnshire that needs to be factored in

- For the 2UA options, creating one additional upper-tier authority will require some disaggregation of statutory functions (ASC, Children's, Place, Corporate). However, the scale of duplication is lower than in other reorganisations (e.g. Essex 4UA/5UA), as services are only split once, not multiple times. As a result, the disaggregation costs are lower, when compared to other LGR proposals with more complex disaggregation. In addition, there is a full integration of North and North East Lincs into one of the new Unitaries which will deliver greater savings and allows a more seamless transfer
- The County 3 UA bid will have the least disaggregation cost and between the 2 and 3UA model will be the 4 model but again management savings will be higher in 2UA model given level of disaggregation

Baseline Costs – Disaggregation of County Services

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Resulting baseline assumptions:

- Note the assumptions only apply to disaggregation of current County Council services. District Council services aggregation (and North East Lincs and North Lincs for 2 UA) are included in Transition costs. As North East Lincs and North Lincs 'county council' type services are being retained but merged into one of the new UAs then further disaggregation costs are not relevant but instead included in aggregating of services in Transition costs which contributes to higher costs but increased management savings in that section
- Disaggregation costs per service line for the current County Council services are shown on the following page. And apply to all bids excluding the County 3UA bid which will be Nil. The net effect is a 0.74% cost to the county net revenue budget and would apply a range of 0.7 to 0.9%. These can be phased 50/75/100% over Y1–Y3 but in line with savings assumptions.
- These % uplifts should be dialled down further where there is evidence of scalable or shared delivery across both new authorities (e.g. outsourced highways, common case-management systems)
- Bids could be cautious and add a contingency figure as conscious that the % calculated is lower than usually in financial business cases – we do not believe they are required to be at 1-3% level
- Critical to note that in some of the other LGR financial cases, disaggregation costs are potentially more than offset by applying a local offer model of provision to reduce cost and demand for Children's and Adults and the financial impact is modelled in detail over a 4 year plus period
- Furthermore, for the 2UA Model, the aggregation benefits of North East and North Lincs Councils are in the main accounted for under Senior Management costs, Highways and Operations and merger of District type services and front and back office services as these are also applied to the spend for North East Lincs and North Lincs but there were will be further gains from aggregating all Children's and Adults services across the current County Council and North East Lincs and North Lincs in terms of the operational delivery level.

Baseline Costs – Disaggregation of Current County Council Services

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Service	23/24 Outturn	% Cost	Explanation	Disaggregation Cost
Education services	£424,561,000	+0.5%	Limited duplication expected; core statutory duties and school place planning functions will need to be replicated, but most delivery is DSG-funded and unaffected.	£2,122,805.00
Highways and transport services	£52,917,000	+0.5%	Client and policy leadership duplicated, but large elements are already outsourced contracts which can be scaled, limiting overhead.	£264,585.00
Children Social Care	£129,442,000	+1%	Statutory leadership roles (DCS, safeguarding boards, QA) must be duplicated, though some specialist functions could still be shared.	£1,294,420.00
Adult Social Care	£265,565,000	+1.25%	High statutory burden and market oversight responsibilities make duplication unavoidable; full sets of leadership and safeguarding functions needed in both UAs.	£3,319,562.50
Public Health	£35,984,000	+0.25%	Very low uplift as joint DPH appointments and shared commissioning support can contain costs; duplication limited to minimum governance.	£89,960.00
Housing services (GFRA only)	£5,526,000	+0.25%	County-level enabling and strategy duplicated, but main housing responsibilities remain with districts; impact is modest.	£13,815.00
Cultural and related services	£10,875,000	+0.5%	Service leadership and support functions need replicating unless trusts/partnership models are extended, hence a small uplift applied.	£54,375.00
Environmental and regulatory services	£28,990,000	+0.5%	Trading Standards and regulatory oversight require two leadership teams, though some specialist back-office functions can be shared.	£144,950.00
Planning and development services	£8,527,000	+0.5%	Strategic planning and minerals/waste policy duplicated; opportunity exists to mitigate if joint plans or policy teams are agreed.	£42,635.00
Fire and rescue services	£32,752,000	+0%	Assumes a single combined FRA across both UAs, avoiding recurring duplication costs.	£0
Central services	£9,098,000	+2%	Full duplication of statutory officers, democratic core, and corporate services (finance, HR, ICT, legal) required; this is the largest driver of overhead.	£181,960.00
Total	**£1,004,237,000**			£7,529,067.50

The above table shows the assumed disaggregation costs, discussed on the previous slide, with service-level costs and explanation of the % selected.

Baseline Efficiencies – Senior Leadership Savings

Sector Evidence and Lincolnshire-context

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Sector Evidence and Benchmarking - What we have seen generally in the sector

- Consolidation of senior management and overhead roles is widely treated as a key source of efficiency, however experience suggests that realising those savings is more challenging and protracted than many proposals assume.
- Actual returns depend heavily on the legacy structures, transitional costs, staffing and pay/pension differentials, with many authorities reporting only gradual or partial realisation of such savings in the first few years.

Lincolnshire-specific Considerations - Conditions/context in Lincolnshire that needs to be factored in

- Lincolnshire's large geography, rural service delivery and demographic profile means that leadership structures will need to be broader than urban comparators. As such, appropriate comparator authorities have been used as benchmarks.
- Furthermore, significant sharing of senior management already exists between district councils. The modelling methodology will therefore need to directly quantify existing expenditure on senior management salaries, to take account of this.

Modelling Approach

1. Quantify existing senior management structures in Lincolnshire County Council and all seven District Councils (Chief Exec, Exec/Corporate/Strategic Directors, Directors, ADs).
2. Collect data from appropriate existing unitaries as benchmarks and map role counts from these benchmarks (North Northants, West Northants, Wiltshire, North Yorkshire), to build anticipated new structures for the proposed new unitaries
3. Apply Lincolnshire average costs per tier to model the cost of the anticipated new structures.
4. Savings = Current cost – Modelled new cost.

Baseline Efficiencies – Senior Leadership Savings

Inputs

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We have collated senior management structures from publicly available data (pay policy statements, statements of accounts, and published org charts) across Lincolnshire County Council, the seven districts, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire. Adjustments have been made to reflect the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership, where posts are already shared. By aggregating these structures, we identify a baseline total cost of £13.2m in salaries, and **a total cost of £17.7m including pension/on-costs**.

Local Authority	Senior Management FTE	Total £ Inc. On-Costs
Lincolnshire County Council	29	£4,891,429
Boston/East Lindsey/South Holland	16	£2,329,340
City of Lincoln Council	15	£1,671,589
North Kesteven District Council	10	£1,227,024
South Kesteven District Council	6	£843,750
West Lindsey District Council	6	£735,413
North Lincolnshire Council	26	£3,331,463
North East Lincolnshire Council	21	£2,723,625
Total	129	**£17,753,633**

We have also calculated the average salary costs for the four tiers of senior leadership in Lincolnshire. These figures have been derived from published pay data and reflect the actual local pay environment, ensuring that our modelling is grounded in Lincolnshire-specific assumptions rather than generic benchmarks. These are:

Chief Executive: £205,539, **Executive Director:** £161,288, **Director:** £145,964, **Assistant Director / Head of Service:** £128,278

Baseline Efficiencies – Senior Leadership Savings
Benchmarks

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To understand what senior management teams might look like in Lincolnshire under different unitary models, we have reviewed the published structures of existing unitary councils at different population scales.

Benchmarks have been selected by matching to unitaries with similar population sizes and broad geographic characteristics to Lincolnshire, ensuring that the role counts we apply are proportionate and realistic. This gives us a clear picture of how many Chief Executives, Executives, Directors, and Assistant Directors/Heads of Service are typically required to run authorities of different sizes.

Unitary Benchmark Type	Unitary Authority Name	Population	Chief Exec	Executive Directors	Directors	Assistant Directors	Total Salary & On-costs (Using Lincs. Average £)
Small Population Unitary	Westmorland & Furness	228,187	1	5	5	19	£4,179,092
Medium Population Unitary Tier 1	West Northants	434,349	1	5	5	27	£5,205,319
Medium Population Unitary Tier 2	Wiltshire	517,979	1	4	15	16	£5,092,611
Large Population Unitary Tier 1	North Yorkshire	627,629	1	8	4	31	£6,056,333
Large Population Unitary Tier 2	North Yorkshire 'Plus'	782,808	1	8	6	39	£7,374,490

In all proposals, North Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire will be presented, with their actual senior management cost used, as opposed to benchmarks. This is to differentiate between proposals that leave these two unitaries in their existing configuration and proposals which consolidate them into new unitaries (e.g. SELCP-led proposal).

Baseline Efficiencies – Senior Leadership Savings
Benchmarks

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We matched the population of each proposed unitary to the most appropriate benchmark council, shown in the below table.

Proposal	Proposed New Unitary Authority	Population	Benchmark Type	Estimated Leadership Cost	Total Proposal Cost
Lincolnshire CC	Lincolnshire County	789,502	Large Population Unitary Tier 2	£7,374,490	£13,429,578
	North Lincolnshire	171,336	Itself	£3,331,463	
	North East Lincolnshire	159,911	Itself	£2,723,625	
N&S Kesteven	Kesteven (N&S), South Holland & Rutland	410,360	Medium Population Unitary Tier 1	£5,205,319	£16,465,726
	Boston, Lindsey (E&W), Lincoln	420,585	Medium Population Unitary Tier 1	£5,205,319	
	North Lincolnshire	171,336	Itself	£3,331,463	
	North East Lincolnshire	159,911	Itself	£2,723,625	
SELCP	Boston, East Lindsey, Kesteven (N&S) , South Holland	585,180	Large Population Unitary	£6,056,333	£11,148,944
	Lincoln, North-East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, West Lindsey	535,569	Medium Population Unitary Tier 2	£5,092,611	
City of Lincoln Bid	Lincoln Strategy Area (City of Lincoln plus parts of North Kesteven and West Lindsey	209,899	Small Population Unitary	£4,179,092	£16,290,513
	Remainder of West Lindsey, Remainder of North Kesteven, East Lindsey, South Kesteven, Boston, South Holland	579,613	Large Population Unitary	£6,056,333	
	North Lincolnshire	171,336	Itself	£3,331,463	
	North East Lincolnshire	159,911	Itself	£2,723,625	

Baseline Efficiencies – Senior Leadership Savings

Proposal Costs & Savings

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Total costs per proposal are listed below, including reference to North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire. Anticipated coast are then subtracted from the baseline costs of the existing configuration.

Proposal	Proposed Unitaries	Anticipated Population	Estimated/Actual Leadership Cost	Total Proposal Senior Management Cost	Baseline Senior Management Cost	Annual Savings
Lincolnshire CC	Lincolnshire County	789,502	£7,374,490	£13,429,578	£17,753,633	£4,324,055
	North Lincolnshire	171,336	£3,331,463			
	North East Lincolnshire	159,911	£2,723,625			
N&S Kesteven	Kesteven (N&S), South Holland & Rutland	410,360	£5,205,319	£16,465,726	£20,044,753 (Includes Rutland CC Costs)	£3,579,027
	Boston, Lindsey (E&W), Lincoln	420,585	£5,205,319			
	North Lincolnshire	171,336	£3,331,463			
	North East Lincolnshire	159,911	£2,723,625			
SELCP	Boston, East Lindsey, Kesteven (N&S) , South Holland	585,180	£6,056,333	£11,148,944	£17,753,633	£6,604,689
	Lincoln, North-East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, West Lindsey	535,569	£5,092,611			
City of Lincoln Bid	Lincoln Strategy Area (City of Lincoln plus parts of North Kesteven and West Lindsey	209,899	£4,179,092	£16,290,513	£17,753,633	£1,463,120
	Remainder of West Lindsey, Remainder of North Kesteven, East Lindsey, South Kesteven, Boston, South Holland	579,613	£6,056,333			
	North Lincolnshire	171,336	£3,331,463			
	North East Lincolnshire	159,911	£2,723,625			

*This figure does not include redundancy costs, this is factored in on the following slide.

Baseline Efficiencies – Senior Leadership Savings

Proposal Costs & Savings

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We then calculated the total costs per proposal, to subtract these from the baseline costs of the existing configuration. Shown in the below table.

Proposal	Annual Saving	Estimated Redundancy Costs
North Kesteven and South Kesteven-led	£3,579,027	£4,473,783.75
SELCP-led Proposal	£6,604,689	£8,255,861.25
Lincolnshire County Council	£4,324,055	£5,405,068.75
City of Lincoln-led Proposal	£1,463,120	£1,828,900.00

A 125% of salary assumption has been applied to estimate redundancy costs, reflecting typical local authority payouts that combine redundancy, notice, and pension strain. This provides a balanced midpoint based on evidence from recent reorganisations, where senior management exit costs typically range between 100–150% of annual salary.

While redundancy costs represent a significant one-off outlay, these can be set against the recurring annual savings to understand the net cumulative benefit of each proposal.

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Financial Assumptions: Service and Transformation

1. District Services
2. Merging County Council Services
3. Property Services
4. Third Party Spend

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District Services

Baseline Efficiencies – Merging District Council Services

Merging Front-Office Functions

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Sector Evidence and Benchmarking - What we have seen generally in the sector

- Front-office efficiencies are real but modest under reorganisation alone: 1–4% of district front-office staff spend, with the higher end only in fewer/larger UA options. Bigger gains come from “enabling/transformation” programmes after reorg (standardising processes, channels and systems)

Lincolnshire-specific Considerations - Conditions/context in Lincolnshire that needs to be factored in

- Front-office consolidation is already underway in parts of the county. Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland already share many services, including a number delivered via their shared services company PSPS. The Councils also operate with a shared management team. PSPS deliver HR, Customer Contact, Finance, Revenues & Benefits, ICT, Procurement and Health & Safety.
- The City of Lincoln and North Kesteven also operate a shared Revenues & Benefits service. These arrangements reduce the scope for further savings compared with a fully standalone baseline, as some of the potential “merger dividend” has already been captured.
- However, duplication persists across the wider county. Councils such as South Kesteven, West Lindsey and others continue to run their own customer-facing functions, and no county-wide standardisation exists in housing options, planning casework or environmental health. These services remain largely district-based and therefore present a greater opportunity for rationalisation if merged
- Note that the 2UA model will increase potential integration savings given North East Lincs and North Lincs are included.

Note: ‘Front Office’ spend refers to customer-facing and operational roles that directly deliver council services to the public. This includes customer service / contact centres, revenues and benefits processing staff, housing officers, environmental health officers)

Baseline Efficiencies – Merging District Council Services

Merging Front-Office Functions

Resulting baseline assumptions

- SELP Bid - Two new unitaries: 3-5% on district front office staff spend and a further 3-5% on North East Lincs and North Lincs spend
- LCC Bid - Three new unitaries: 4-6% on district front office staff spend.
- CoL/N&S Kesteven Bids - Four new unitaries: 3-5% on district front office staff spend – not differentiated as not material between bids

Phasing of Savings

- Year 1: Minimal savings – focus on designing a common customer access model and aligning systems (e.g. CRM, R&B platforms).
- Years 2–3: Initial savings from process alignment, service consolidation, and standardising customer contact arrangements (~30–40% of total savings).
- Years 4–5: Full realisation as ICT systems, customer channels, and service delivery teams are integrated and embedded (100% of identified savings).

Note: 'Front Office' spend refers to customer-facing and operational roles that directly deliver council services to the public. This includes customer service / contact centres, revenues and benefits processing staff, housing officers, environmental health officers)

Baseline Efficiencies – Merging District Council Services

Merging Services (Place-based)

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Sector Evidence and Benchmarking - What we have seen generally in the sector

- District service savings from reorganisation alone are consistently modest. Benchmarking from other financial models suggests around 1% of gross service delivery expenditure, or alternatively 2.5–3.5% FTE reductions as districts merge.
- Unlike back office (where processes are more standardised), place-based functions are shaped by local geography, assets, and political choice (e.g. waste collection frequency, leisure centre provision, housing stock). Realising savings at scale would require not only integrating teams but also aligning service standards, contractual arrangements, and asset strategies - which is more complex and politically sensitive than back-office or front-office consolidation.

Lincolnshire-specific Considerations - Conditions/context in Lincolnshire that needs to be factored in

- Deep integration already exists across South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership with a single shared management team and a range of shared services. Some services, at an operational level, such as Waste and Street Cleaning, remain place-based.
- Core functions such as refuse collection, street cleansing, leisure services, environmental health enforcement, and planning delivery are still largely run as standalone operations. Service models, contractual arrangements, and service standards vary district by district, meaning duplication persists across much of the county.
- Compared with other areas that have developed LGR proposals, Lincolnshire appears to have marginally more shared services in certain place-based functions but still significant duplication in the majority of frontline services. The rural geography and dispersed populations also constrain opportunities for full integration of services
- Note that the 2UA model will increase potential integration savings given North East Lincs and North Lincs included.

Baseline Efficiencies – Merging District Council Services

Merging Services (place-based)

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Resulting baseline assumptions

These savings are realised by aggregation and new operating models and should only be applied to where councils are merged and should not be applied to North Lincolnshire and North-East Lincolnshire.

- SELP Bid - Two Unitaries = 6-8% on District Council spend and North East Lincs and North Lincs spend
- LCC Bid - Three Unitary proposal = 7-9% on District Council spend
- CoL/S&N Kesteven Bids - Four Unitary = 6-8% on District Council spend – not differentiated as not material

Phasing of Savings

Year 1: Negligible savings (0–25%) mainly design and consultation, no service reductions.

Year 2: 25-50% of target - early consolidation where contracts align, some back-office/service overlap stripped out.

Year 3: 50–100% of target - service models start to harmonise, some contracts come up for renewal, limited depot/asset rationalisation.

District Services Considerations (including Placed Based for Existing Unitary Authorities)

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While LGR creates opportunities to reduce costs and improve efficiency, councils must carefully manage a range of practical considerations to ensure district services remain resilient, consistent, and responsive to local needs. These include:

- **Contract alignment:** Existing district-level contracts will vary in length, standards, and cost. Councils need a clear strategy for harmonisation, extensions, or re-procurement.
- **Workforce integration:** Harmonisation of terms and conditions, union engagement, and the cultural alignment of teams across different legacy councils all require careful management.
- **Policy and service standard harmonisation:** Different districts often have different bin types, collection frequencies, or grounds maintenance specifications. Councils must decide on consistent standards while managing resident expectations.
- **Asset rationalisation:** Depots, workshops, and vehicle fleets will need reviewing to avoid duplication but also maintain geographic coverage and resilience.
- **Technology integration:** Councils must unify disparate systems (CRM, route optimisation, fleet management, GIS, reporting tools) without disrupting live operations.
- **Financial baselining:** Clear visibility of current service costs across districts is essential to identify savings opportunities, avoid hidden overspends, and measure efficiency gains post-LGR.
- **Geographic challenges:** Larger service areas may create longer travel times in rural areas; depot locations, route design, and resource deployment need rethinking.

District Service Considerations – Waste Focus (Example)

Following LGR, existing waste collection contracts will need to remain in place during the early years of the new Council. This creates a critical window for the new authority to plan for service harmonisation, allowing for the collation of accurate data and contract information, undertaking a gap analysis in systems, processes and policies across legacy councils, and conducting options appraisals (both collection service and service delivery) to deliver a fit for purpose new service operating model to be implemented when legacy contracts expire.

Key considerations include:

- **Existing contracts & termination dates:** Collection contracts and termination dates vary across districts; careful alignment and forward planning is essential to allow for co-terminating contracts to be facilitated.
- **Data accuracy & preparation:** Use the transition period to collate robust data (contracts, rounds, vehicles, bring sites, staff, receptacles per household information, tonnages, assets, costs, ICT arrangements, processes and systems) to identify where harmonisation activities need to be focussed to underpin future decision-making.
- **Collection profiles & service standards:** Review current collection frequencies, materials collected, receptacle types, and recycling policies across districts by conducting a gap analysis of service provision (including statutory requirements e.g. food waste). This can then be used to inform an options appraisal for the new Council's waste collection service.
- **Routing & rounds redesign:** As district boundaries will no longer exist, a rounds re-design project will be required to inform the implementation of the preferred new collection service, identified from the options appraisal. This will ensure the new service is efficient and effective.

District Service Considerations – Waste Focus (Example)

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Key Considerations (Continued)

- **Commercial waste:** A review / feasibility study of the legacy Commercial waste services should be conducted to identify opportunities for harmonisation, expansion across the new council area and improvements in service offer, boosting income and ensuring only household waste is collected.
- **In-house vs outsourced models:** Conduct a service delivery options appraisal to identify the preferred future service delivery model (in-house, outsourced, alternative or hybrid) for both collection and disposal contracts, balancing cost, flexibility, and risk considerations, especially in terms of vehicle procurement.
- **ICT systems:** Harmonise legacy systems (CRM / back-office systems, in-cab technology, workshop ICT systems etc) to support efficient operations.
- **Depot and/or workshop review:** Review ownership, availability, and rationalisation opportunities for depots and/or workshops across the legacy districts.
- **Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs):** Review HWRC provision across the new unitary area, with regards to site locations and coverage to identify where there is overlap or under utilisation; explore opportunities to rationalise sites while maintaining resident access within 20 minutes.
- **Disposal contracts:** Review existing agreements including minimum tonnage guarantees or throughput clauses. Reducing residual waste tonnages, while desirable, may risk breaching these thresholds and incurring financial penalties
- **Phasing of savings:** Efficiencies will only be realised once harmonisation activities have been implemented, and these will need to be phased due to the size of each workstream. This requires careful planning across multiple concurrent strands, whilst simultaneously ensuring appropriate stakeholder engagement is delivered. The focus from now through to the early years of the new Council should be on delivering the preparatory activities necessary (data collation and data sharing activities, followed by reviews, appraisals and studies) to inform the successful harmonisation of services.

Waste Collection Variations Across Districts

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- Whilst all districts have the same collection frequencies, there is a difference in delivery models with City of Lincoln having an External Waste provider (Biffa), with this contract having recently been re-let. This variation reflects local choices and contracts, but they can create complexity when considering LGR.
- By mapping out the current position across all districts, we can clearly see the differences and use this as a baseline for developing a consistent, efficient, and future-ready collection model.

Waste Collection Frequencies						Delivery Models		Performance
Local Authority	Residual Waste		Recycling		Food Waste Collection Commencing	In-House	External	% of Household Waste Recycled (23/24)
	Fortnightly	Monthly	Fortnightly	Monthly				
Boston	✓		✓		September 26	✓		33.1%
East Lindsey	✓		✓		October 26	✓		41%
West Lindsey	✓		✓		March 26	✓		
City of Lincoln	✓		✓		March 26		✓ (Biffa)	31.4%
South Holland	✓		✓		September 26	✓		31.4%
South Kesteven	✓		✓		April 26	✓		40.5%
North Kesteven	✓		✓		March 26	✓		43.8%

Merging County Council Services

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Merging County Council Type Services

We have received little data from the County Council or the existing two Unitary Authorities and have taken the following approach to financial baseline assumptions.

County Council and North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire:

We have assumed that the impact of North East Lincs and North Lincs is only on the 2UA model. However, whilst neutral for other bids, for 2UA bid, we have assumed higher Transition and Disaggregation costs as a result of greater integration and as such this is offset by higher savings which we would prudently include as follows:

1. Children's and Adults: The full impact should be modelled as set out in the Children's and Adults section of this document and depends on the application of the 'local offer' hub model. We have included greater management savings in management impact section
2. Highways and Other Operational services: 5-7.5% of these costs across County Council and existing Unitary Authorities

Children's and Adults:

This is set out in a separate section in terms of current performance, opportunities and challenges. For these services only, we have included North Lincolnshire Council and North-East Lincolnshire Council. We have incorporated narrative as to how opportunities identified as a result of disaggregation and re-establishing these services into new unitaries could be financially modelled and incorporated within transformation savings within the financial case for each bid. Publicly available reports Peopletoo have produced for Warwickshire (2 unitary model) and Greater Essex (5 unitary model) will provide an example of how and outcomes and benefits have been modelled to support the bids.

Merging County Council Type Services

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Highways and Other Operational Services:

We have not included these services as not overlapping with District Services as distinct to County Council. The biggest area being Highways and as with some other services these are usually outsourced and are included in the Third Party spend Oxygen Finance analysis we have done. There is little disaggregation impact potentially as in other sector LGR footprints and we have suggested retaining county wide contracts like Highways but creating a strategic commissioning forum across new Unitaries except for 2UA integration of existing UAs

District and County Services Integration:

- Back office services is included in assumptions and set out in next slide
- Disaggregation and management savings included in Organisational Change section
- Property and FM included here
- Third Party spend included here

Sector Evidence and Benchmarking - What we have seen generally in the sector

- All proposals generally include a 'safe and legal' assumption, where county-level services re initially transitioned "as-is" into the new unitaries with minimal change to ensure stability and maintain performance. As such, no immediate savings are generally assumed, although there is opportunity to expand existing commissioning frameworks where this would create benefit to increased capacity and lower cost from day one. County-run services seen as outside the scope of Day 1 merger savings, which focused solely on District staff and corporate overheads.

Baseline Efficiencies – Merging District Council Services

Merging Backoffice Functions

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Sector Evidence and Benchmarking - What we have seen generally in the sector

- Efficiency opportunities are typically found by consolidating enabling service functions such as Finance, HR and Payroll, IT and Digital, Procurement and Commissioning, Legal and Governance, and Business Support / Admin.
- This evidence underpins an assumption of 10–15% efficiencies for a single Unitary and 8–12% for a two Unitary model and a sliding scale down from two Unitary figures . This is based on areas with standalone district models.

Lincolnshire-specific Considerations - Conditions/context in Lincolnshire that needs to be factored in

- Several districts already participate in shared service arrangements, which reduces the scope for additional savings compared to areas starting from a “standalone” baseline. For example:
  - Through the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland), some functions are delivered jointly via PSPS Ltd. This covers HR, ICT, Finance, Revenues & Benefits, Procurement, Customer Contact, and Health & Safety, alongside a shared management structure to below Assistant Director level.
  - Democratic Services remains place-based, but otherwise most enabling services in these three councils are already operated as a single service. West Lindsey also participates in some shared corporate arrangements with North Kesteven (e.g. ICT support, procurement partnerships).
  - As a result, a significant proportion of the “merger dividend” in back-office functions has already been realised locally. Future efficiencies may therefore be smaller than in areas starting from a standalone baseline, though there remains scope in aligning ICT platforms, procurement, and customer contact systems county-wide.

Baseline Efficiencies – Merging Council Services

Merging Backoffice Functions

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Resulting baseline assumptions

- In line with evidence from recent reorganisations, we have taken a cautious approach to estimating back-office savings. While merging corporate functions can generate efficiencies, these are often overstated in early business cases and eroded by transition costs, meaning actual realisable savings are typically lower and slower to materialise.
- Estimated savings for all bids: 5-8% but for 2UA Model then % is to be applied to all spend of Councils including North East Lincs and North Lincs
- These % savings can be applied to the combined net budgets for district and council enabling and corporate support services (Finance, HR, ICT, Legal, Procurement, Customer Contact, Business Support)

Phasing:

Year 1: No savings, design shared service operating model.
Year 2: Early consolidation (finance, HR) ~30–40% of total savings.
Year 3: Full realisation as ICT, procurement, and customer platforms are unified.

Note:
1. 'Back-office' spend refers to corporate enabling and support functions that do not directly deliver services to residents. This includes finance, HR/Payroll, Legal & Governance, IT/digital/ data, procurement and commissioning, corporate policy and strategy, central admin/business support.

2. ICT and digital savings are particularly subjective and vary widely between business cases. Some focus narrowly on ICT estate costs (applications, licences, infrastructure, people), with reported savings typically in the 5–10% range. Higher figures are often linked to wider digital transformation or legacy system replacement, which can require significant up-front investment and long payback periods. For prudence, only evidenced ICT savings should be included here; broader digital transformation opportunities should be captured in service-specific cases

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Property

Property
Key Considerations

Local Government Reorganisation provides a significant opportunity to reshape the council's property estate, delivering financial savings and enabling more efficient, fit-for-purpose assets. Realising these benefits requires clear strategy, careful phasing, and alignment with the wider transformation programme.

- Key considerations
  - **Rationalisation and repurposing opportunities** :Substantial scope across both office accommodation and operational assets (e.g. depots, leisure facilities, civic buildings).
  - **Phasing of savings:** Capital receipts and facilities management (FM) savings are dependent on the transformation plan; however, opportunities can be unlocked early in the transition phase through estate consolidation and smarter FM contracts.
  - **Strategic asset management:** A consolidated approach to asset planning is essential to maximise value, reduce duplication, and align property decisions with future service delivery models.
  - **Balancing local access with efficiency:** Decisions on asset disposal or repurposing must consider both financial savings and maintaining service accessibility for residents.

Property
Key Considerations

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Opportunity:

- Councils post-LGR are identifying **20–30% opportunity in assets and FM** – depending on political appetite for rationalisation.
- Financial business cases to date typically assume **3–10% savings**, often excluding capital asset value and focusing primarily on FM efficiencies.
- The scale of opportunity is less about the number of unitary councils created and more about the **ambition of the strategic asset management approach** adopted.
- This draws on our experience delivering Property and FM projects following LGR in Cornwall and Northumberland, as well as our broader work on Property and FM projects across local government.

3rd Party Spend

3rd Party Spend
Key Considerations

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Key considerations:

- **Strategic commissioning approach:** Opportunity to move from fragmented, district-led procurement towards a single, strategic model. This reduces duplication, aligns service specifications, and increases buying power.
- **Contract consolidation:** Many suppliers currently hold multiple, small contracts across different districts. Consolidating these into larger, combined contracts improves economies of scale, simplifies management, and reduces overheads.
- **Stronger contract management:** Centralised contract management ensures consistent performance monitoring, clear accountability, and the ability to drive continuous improvement and savings.
- **Quick wins vs longer-term transformation** : Some savings can be achieved early through demand management and improved contract oversight, but the largest benefits depend on re-procurement and service redesign aligned to the new authority's transformation plan.
- **Adults' and Children's services:** Usually treated separately as part of wider commissioning transformation.

Opportunity:

- **Adults & Children's services: 5-10%** savings are generally expected, depending on the starting position.
- Other service areas: Typically, 10–20% potential, though to avoid double-counting with other workstreams, **a cautious assumption of 5-10%** is prudent.
- **Financial business cases for LGR frequently model only 1-3% savings on non-social care spend**, often weighted towards a two-unitary authority model, suggesting scope for more ambitious but realistic targets.
- Our work with other councils, including post-LGR examples such as Somerset, demonstrates that greater savings are achievable where contract registers are consolidated, commissioning is strategic, and contract management is strengthened.

3rd Party Spend
Oxygen Finance

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Overview:

- To assess the scale of 3rd party spend and potential opportunities, we used **Oxygen Finance Data Insights** to compile spend data across councils. While not perfect, the dataset provides a strong indication of the overall scope and scale of 3rd party expenditure.
- The analysis includes data from all district councils, the county council, and the two existing unitary authorities.
- A full download of the data analysed has been shared as a separate document.

Key Findings:

- **Total 3rd Party Spend across all councils was c£1.67bn**
- **Total 3rd Party Spend across District Councils was c£262m**
- **Lincolnshire County Council showed the highest 3rd party spend at 56% (c£943m)** of all spend, followed by North East Lincs at c£238m (14%) and North Lincs at c£227m (14%).
- The highest combined spend area across all councils was 'Health & Social Care' (c£661m)
- The highest combined spend area across District councils was 'Buildings' (c£128m)
- **The district with the highest 3rd party spend, was shown to be City of Lincoln at c£62m (4%).**
- There were **x3 suppliers that were used by all Council's** (Anglian Water, British Gas & Royal Mail).
- There were **x18 suppliers used by all Districts**, the largest combined spend being with; Lindum Group Ltd (c£25m) and Total energies (c£20m)

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Council Tax Harmonisation

Council Tax Harmonisation

- We set out a comprehensive information request in relation to council tax harmonisation, however there was only limited information available. Recognising the time sensitivity, we have sourced alternative data where possible to enable modelling as the next step. Further refinement can follow as more robust data becomes available, but we have used the best available information to fill gaps.
- A more detailed report on Council Tax Harmonisation has been shared separately and summarised below.
- Key Findings:
  - For areas within the county council's geography, many districts have built in growth to tax base assumptions around 1.5%, this is sourced from long-term assumptions that we have seen in the MTFP plans.
  - We would anticipate housing growth of around 1.1% would be a reasonable level of growth of tax base at a broad level, although we may look at this in a more granular level in some of the further modelling.
  - For unitarities NEL and NL we anticipate growth of taxbase in the region of 0.8% and Rutland 1.6%.
- Harmonisation Assumptions:
  - Vesting Day will be 1 April 2028.
  - Harmonisation is applied on day one and we will assume the weighted average approach is applied across the options modelled where reasonable.
  - There are political concerns where the rate differential is significant, but this is a planning assumption along the lines of what most others we have consulted are modelling.
- Next Steps:
  - A clear rationale is lacking from authorities' long term growth assumptions, if there were formal workings or documented rationale behind the longer-term growth in tax base assumptions, it would be useful to obtain from the councils.
  - We will use our toolkit to support setting up a model of a few scenarios.
  - We will apply appropriate assumptions as set out above (or using specific MTFS assumptions where appropriate) to form a draft council tax Harmonisation model.

Council Tax Harmonisation

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Tax Base

Local Authority	Tax Base
Lincolnshire County Council	248,008.50
Boston	20,291.00
East Lindsey	48,166.00
Lincoln	25,764.25
North Kesteven	40,000.00
South Holland	30,890.00
South Kesteven	50,140.50
West Lindsey	32,756.75
Northeast Lincolnshire (UA)	47,205.46
North Lincolnshire (UA)	52,168.20
Rutland (UA)	16,293.17

Baseline Council Tax Rates

Local Authority	Exc. Parish Precepts 25-26	Inc. Parish Precepts 25-26
Lincolnshire County Council	1626	1626
Boston	262	293
East Lindsey	172	258
Lincoln	317	317
North Kesteven	194	317
South Holland	216	261
South Kesteven	189	243
West Lindsey	249	336
Northeast Lincolnshire (UA)	1952	1973
North Lincolnshire (UA)	1800	1840
Rutland (UA)	2219	2284

Note, A more detailed report on Council Tax Harmonisation has been shared separately

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Other Key Factors

Other Key Considerations

- Pay Harmonisation:
  - The potential impacts of **pay harmonisation, pay protection and pension strain after vesting day are generally not reflected** in financial business cases, though they are often acknowledged as issues.
  - Evidence (e.g. the Essex 5UA Business Case) suggests that the **fewer Unitary Authorities created, the greater the risk and cost of pay harmonisation**, due to reduced opportunities for rationalisation.
  - The **financial impact is highly uncertain** and will depend on local decisions. It could result in either additional costs or potential savings.
  - **Recommendation:** These factors should be excluded from current financial modelling **unless a detailed local analysis is undertaken.**
- External Audit Fees - New Unitaries:
  - We have excluded this factor, as there is **no evidence that it will differ significantly between Councils**.
  - **Some business cases have assumed savings of c£1m for a 3 unitary authority model**, with a 10% adjustment applied up or down from that baseline.
- Democratic Services:
  - Note, this has been excluded from scope, although there are well-established methodologies available for calculating the associated savings.

Phasing of Savings and Costs

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- Key Considerations:
  - No material difference is expected in the business case based on the number of Unitary Authorities established.
  - It is essential to align one-off, transition, and transformation costs with the timing of benefits realisation.
  - The speed of savings realisation will depend on the approach taken before vesting day and the balance between transition/setup activities and transformation.
  - While phasing should be cautious, it is important to combine ambition with pragmatism to avoid prolonged net cost periods and extended payback terms.
  - Our recommended approach is to accelerate transformation during the transition and setup phases.
- Assumptions:
  - Although assumptions in sector business cases vary considerably, especially regarding transformation savings, the table below provides a set of assumptions to serve as a starting point:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Management Savings & Redundancy Costs	100%			
Transformation Savings:				
Variation A:	50%	100%		
Variation B:	0%	25%	75%	100%

APPENDIX 5a

Greater Lincolnshire LGR Proposal

Evaluation of & Recommendations for Children's Services Delivery Models

Prepared by:
Kath O'Dwyer

Kath O'Dwyer Consultancy

October 2025

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1. About the author

Kath has over 42 years of experience in local government, including more than eight years as a Local Authority Chief Executive.

During this time, Kath successfully led the turnaround and improvement of two failing councils that had been subject to concerns from both the Government and the Local Government Association. Each improvement programme placed a strong emphasis on whole organisation culture change. In one case, this involved addressing a negative organisational culture that had arisen due to a lack of focus on this key issue during a previous Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process.

Kath started her career as a Children's Social Worker and has 34 years' experience at all levels within Children's Services. She was a DCS in 4 different local authorities where she led the effective turnaround of four Children's Services directorates to remove government intervention and deliver improved Ofsted inspection ratings. Kath also has 3 years' experience as part of a government intervention team in relation to Children's services which was commissioned by government and delivered via a contract with Serco.

She has experience of effective working within Combined Authority arrangements and in leading an organisation and Children's Services directorates in a post LGR context.

Kath has a well-established regional and national profile, having contributed as a conference and podcast speaker, served as a judge for national awards, and acted as a lead for LGA Peer Reviews and a spokesperson for Solace. She is widely recognised for her authentic and effective leadership and currently chairs the SOLACE Group Board.

She has extensive experience of partnership working across, health and care, blue light services and voluntary and community groups.

Kath has a proven track record of integrity, honesty and a clear moral code and has a passion for public service, and local government in particular, and in improving service delivery to ensure the sustainable improvement of organisations, services, teams and leaders.

2. The Commission:

To provide a recommendation and high level modelling of a delivery model for children's services in Greater Lincolnshire.

The commission is constructed in two parts:

Part1

- To critically evaluate the potential delivery models for Children's Services in Greater Lincolnshire. Each evaluation should include case studies and learnings from tried examples, for example reorganisation in Cumbria.
- A risk assessment/ matrix comparing the various delivery models should be provided.
- An assessment against the DCN/ Staff College Children's Services Maturity Matrix should also be provided.
- To provide a clear recommendation for the most suitable delivery model.

Part 2

- To provide high level modelling of the recommended delivery model using the PWC and PeopleToo data.
- To provide a high-level recommendation for the staffing structure of the recommended delivery model.

3. Context

a) LGR Proposals

On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon MP, issued statutory invitations to all Councils in two-tier areas and small neighbouring unitary authorities to work together to develop unitary proposals.

The MHCLG guidance states that this can include:

- A single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned (Type A),
- A single tier of local authority covering an area that is currently a district, or two or more districts (Type B),
- A single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned, or one or more districts in the county; and one or more relevant adjoining areas Type C,
- A combined proposal – a proposal that consists of two or more Type B proposals, two or more Type C proposals, or one or more Type B proposals and one or more Type C proposals.

The model that South Kesteven DC and North Kesteven DC have proposed is for a three unitary split of Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland, creating three unitary authorities.

Unitary 1 (South)	**Unitary 2 (Central)**	**Unitary 3 (North)**
**South Kesteven DC **North Kesteven DC **South Holland DC *Rutland CC	**Boston BC, **City of Lincoln C, **East Lindsey DC **West Lindsey DC	*North East Lincolnshire (NEL) *North Lincolnshire (NL)
Population: 405,519	Population: 417,932	Population:328,422
It is argued that '*Service disaggregation will enable sub-regional horizontal integration of Adult's and Children's services with the current district services for homelessness, temporary accommodation and community safety, plus housing landlord responsibilities for authorities with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA)*'.		
*Current Children's Services delivery Councils **Currently served by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) CYPS		

b) MHCLG Guidance

Local Government Reorganisation: Considerations for partnership working in social care for new unitary authorities

Published 25th July 2025

Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.

b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.

c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.

c) MHCLG LCR Feedback Letter Dated 3rd June 2025

For proposals that would involve disaggregation of services, we would welcome further details on how services can be maintained, such as social care, children's services, SEND, homelessness, and for wider public services including public safety. Under criterion 3c you may wish to consider:

- How each option would deliver high-quality and sustainable public services or efficiency saving opportunities.
- What would the different options mean for local services provision, for example:
  do different options have a different impact on SEND services and distribution of funding and sufficiency planning to ensure children can access appropriate support, and how will services be maintained?
- What is the impact on adults and children's care services?
- Is there a differential impact on the number of care users and infrastructure to support them among the different options?
- What partnership options have you considered for joint working across the new unitaries for the delivery of social care services?
- Do different options have variable impacts as you transition to the new unitaries, and how will risks to safeguarding to be managed?
- Do different options have variable impacts on schools, support and funding allocation, and sufficiency of places, and how will impacts on school be managed?

d) Timetable

- **28 November 2025** – Submission of the full proposal to government
- **April/May 2027** – Elections for Shadow Authorities
- **April 2028** – Vesting Day for new Unitary Councils

PART 1

4. Potential delivery models:

In relation to Children's services there are a range of models to be considered in determining arrangements within the LGR process.

These options include:

1. A single Shared Service for Children's Services across the wider Greater Lincolnshire footprint.
2. Shared services model across 2 new Unitary authorities (LCC footprint & Rutland), with the combining of 2 current unitary CYPS services (NL & NEL) into the 3rd new Unitary council.
3. The creation of 3 new Unitary Authorities - South/ Central /North (Disaggregation).
4. Alternative Delivery Model - Children's Trust / CiC.

Local Context

Currently across Greater Lincolnshire there are 4 Children's Services authorities:
- Lincolnshire County Council,
- North East Lincolnshire,
- East Lincolnshire,
- Rutland.

Each of these 4 current organisations have their own:
- DCS,
- CYPS Leadership Team,
- Lead Member,
- Scrutiny Committee,
- Accountability & Governance arrangements,
- Service delivery teams,
- Partnership arrangements and Boards,
- Commissioning arrangements,
- Ofsted ratings,
- Practice models,
- Etcetera.

Therefore, whichever model is chosen for the post LGR arrangements, consideration will need to be given to each of the issues above.

OPTION 1:

1. A single Shared service for Children's services across the whole of the wider Greater Lincolnshire footprint

This option is where one authority hosts and delivers Children's Services on behalf of all of the 3 of the new authorities, under a formal shared services agreement or delegation.

This would involve the joining up of the three current unitary authorities (Rutland; NEL & N) and LCC Children's Services into one Greater Lincolnshire service, hosted by one of the three new unitary authorities and providing services across the whole Greater Lincolnshire area.

A single Shared service
across 3 Local Authority's (LA) hosted by one of the 3 new Unitary LA's

Unitary 1 (South)	Unitary 2 (Central)	Unitary 3 (North)
**South Kesteven DC **North Kesteven DC **South Holland DC *Rutland CC	**Boston BC, **City of Lincoln C, **East Lindsey DC **West Lindsey DC	*North East Lincolnshire *North Lincolnshire
(currently served by *Lincolnshire County Council CYPS)		

STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS:
• Offers opportunities to secure greater economies of scale. • Some key partners may already operate across the whole or the majority of the proposed footprint which facilitates engagement. • Potential alignment with the GLCA. • Lower risk of inequity between areas.	• The size of the service would be a huge challenge to manage. • Challenges of accountability in each of the constituent LA's. • Risk of combining and seeking to standardise different practice models and approaches across the whole area. • Governance complexity. • Potential dilution of local focus. • Local identity and loyalties will be tested. • Significant work to align: - cultures and ways of working, - social care practices, - workforce pay, terms and conditions, - case management systems, - staffing structures, - partnerships and stakeholder relationships.

	• Predecessor authorities have different Ofsted ratings and different improvement priorities to align. • It would be a challenge to not lose local voices and views from children, families and frontline practitioners. • While the logic of shared services can make sense as separate councils evolve post LGR, a disconnect between newly established councils almost always occurs over a period of years, despite good intentions at inception (District Councils' Network, 2025). • Learning shows that shared services 'almost always disaggregate within a few years of LGR' (District Councils' Network, 2025).
Within this option there is a second consideration of **Central Leadership, Diffused Delivery.**	
This is where a single leadership team operates a single Children's Services directorate which oversees delivery of children's services across the three new authorities, but delivery is decentralised into locality-based teams aligned to former council areas or other relevant geographies. Some of the strengths and limitations identified above would be in part mitigated by the decentralised delivery into locality-based teams aligned to former council areas.	
STRENGTHS	**LIMITATIONS:**
• Combines strategic leadership with place-based delivery. • Easier to maintain partner relationships. • Economies of scale. • Potential for greater commissioning power.	• Blurred lines of accountability if not clearly defined. • Potential inconsistencies between areas. • Requires strong central oversight and performance management. • Potential loss of individual locality focus on need.
Implications for the 4 x current CYPS arrangements:	

• **DCS**
  • The role of a single DCS over such a big footprint and on such a shared service model may be unattractive to the market.
  • A single DCS would have a huge task in effectively overseeing services across such a large footprint.	

- Salary requirements to attract to the DCs role my compromise other Chief Executive (CX) & Exec salaries.
- 3 current DCS's would be displaced but could be 'converted' into lead roles for the 3 LA's footprints.
- Ofsted may not think oversight over such a large area was acceptable.
- DfE may not think oversight over such a large area was acceptable.
- The management relationship between the DCS and the 2 LA's that do not host the role would need to be carefully thought through.
- The political relationship between the DCS and the 2 LA's that do not host the role would need to be carefully thought through.

- **CYPS Leadership Team**
  - A new tier of exec CYPS senior leadership would be required, but this could be recruited from the 4 existing teams.
  - 3 x current CYPS Leadership Teams would be displaced but some could be 'converted' into lead roles for the 3 x LA's footprints.
  - This would result in a diverse and very large leadership team for the DCS to manage.

- **Accountability & Governance**
  - There would need to be 1 x DCS reporting into 3 x CX's and 3 x Exec Leadership Teams and 3 x Lead Members.
  - There would be and 3 x locality leadership teams reporting into 1 x DCS – this could be problematic and could result in the DCS having limited overall influence or oversight.
  - There could be 1 x shared CYPS O&S Committee which would provide reduced duplication or there could be 3 x CYPS O&S Committee that the DCS would need to serve, supported by the 3 x locality leadership teams.
  - There could be 1 x LCSP which would provide a reduced duplication opportunity for partners or there could be 3 x LSCP that the DCS would need to serve.

- **Service delivery teams**

  Current service delivery teams based on the localities could remain as part of the new one organisation structure:
  - Rutland (existing Unitary),
  - NEL (existing Unitary),
  - NL (existing Unitary),
  - Boston & South Holland (existing LCC Locality),
  - Lincoln & West Lindsey (existing LCC Locality),
  - N&S Kesteven (existing LCC Locality),
  - East Lindsey (existing LCC Locality).

  This would retain a locality focus but could lose opportunities for consistency and economies of scale.

  It would also create complications as Boston & South Holland would be in separate councils under the proposed arrangement.

- **Partnership arrangements**

- The current 4 LA partnership arrangements could join up to become 1 or 3.
- There are multiple partnerships attended by some agencies, causing possible duplication. Streamlining may reduce this.
- The size of a single partnerships footprint may result in a loss of focus for individual areas.
- The synergy with other partnerships such as CSP's and H&WB Boards would also need to be considered.

- **Commissioning arrangements**
  - The current 4 x commissioning arrangements could remain in place although this may result in inequity; different approaches; loss of a market management opportunity; loss of economies of scale.
  - Combining commissioning arrangements could create significant opportunities for market management; however, it may lead to a loss of local knowledge and existing market providers. Additionally, this approach would involve a complex recommissioning process and could cause potential service disruptions.

- **Ofsted ratings**

Current Ofsted ratings differ:

SEND		
Rutland (existing Unitary)	May 2023	No WSA
NEL (existing Unitary)	Sept 2018 March 2022	Written statement of action Good progress
NL (existing Unitary)	Dec 2021	No WSA
LCC (existing County)	Feb 2025	Improvement required
Children's Social Care		
Rutland (existing Unitary)	April 2024	Good
NEL (existing Unitary)	Oct 2021 Sept 2024	Inadequate Improvements noted
NL (existing Unitary)	Oct 2022	Outstanding
LCC (existing County)	April 2023	Outstanding

Children's Social Care
NEL CSC is on an improvement journey, and although good progress has been noted in the 7th Monitoring visit, they remain on an improvement plan.
Both LCC & NL are rated as Outstanding, with Rutland rated Good.

It would be important in any shared service arrangements to ensure a continued and robust focus on improvement. However, the coming together of all 4 councils into a single service could support the NEL improvement journey.

SEND
NEL SEND has demonstrated good progress since the inspection in 2018 when a Written Statement of Action (WSA) was required.
LCC has been judged to require some improvement. Whilst Rutland and NL have some areas for development there was no Written Statement of Action (WSA) required.
A shared service arrangement across the 3 x new Unitaries would involve working with NHS Lincolnshire for 2 x new LA footprints and with NHS Humber and North Yorkshire for the new North Unitary.

- **Practice models**
  It is important to consider the existing social work practice models across the four current local authorities (LAs) and how these might be affected by:
  - Adopting a single practice model for the entire service, or
  - Adapting the current four models into three, aligned with the new three-LA arrangements.

  Although detailed information on the current practice models was not available, if a single shared service model across the three new unitary authorities is proposed, careful consideration must be given to the models currently in use and whether changes would be required.

Opinion:

Whilst this model is an option for consideration, the size and scale of the footprint is too big, with great risk and budget responsibilities on the shoulders of one DCS and the potential disruption of most aspects of current delivery arrangements.

Learning from other LGR experiences suggest that while the logic of shared services can make sense as separate councils evolve post LGR, a disconnect between newly established councils almost always occurs over a period of years, despite good intentions at inception. Learning also shows that shared services 'almost always disaggregate within a few years of LGR'.

This option is not recommended.

OPTION 2

2. Combination of Shared Service and Aggregated Model:
a) Shared Service across 2 x new unitary authorities (South & Central - LCC footprint + Rutland),
b) with the combining of 2 x current unitary CYPS services (NL & NEL) into the 3rd new Unitary council - North

Shared service		Unitary 3 (North)
Unitary 1 (South)	**Unitary 2 (Central)**	
South Kesteven DC & North Kesteven DC South Holland DC *Rutland CC	West Lindsey DC & City of Lincoln C Boston BC East Lindsey DC	North East Lincolnshire & North Lincolnshire

Currently served by Lincolnshire County Council CYPS:

- Boston & South Holland (existing LCC Locality),
- Lincoln & West Lindsey (existing LCC Locality),
- N&S Kesteven (existing LCC Locality).

This option has 2 component parts:

- A single leadership team oversees delivery of children's services across two councils (South & Central - LCC footprint + Rutland) where one authority hosts and delivers Children's Services on behalf of one other of the new authorities, under a formal shared services agreement or delegation.
- The coming together of North East Lincolnshire & North Lincolnshire Councils to create Unitary 3 (North).

a) Shared service across 2 x new Unitaries

STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS:
• Easier to manage workforce and contracts in the short term. • Economies of scale. • If a localities delivery model was agreed, it would provide some continuity for current LCC services & Rutland services. • Some key partners may already operate across the proposed footprint which would facilitates engagement. • Recruitment and retention of staff is likely to be easier in the 2 x predecessor LA's.	• Still 2 x existing LA CYPS departments coming together to create one shared service. • Challenges of accountability across the 2 new LA's. • Governance complexity. • Potential dilution of local focus. • Risks of inequity between areas. • Potentially some sacrificing of area based delivery and local relationships. • Local identity and loyalties will be tested • Significant work to align: - cultures and ways of working, - social care practices, - workforce pay, terms and conditions,



	- case management systems , - staffing structures, - partnerships and stakeholder relationships. • Predecessor authorities may have different Ofsted ratings and different improvement priorities to align. • Critical not to lose local voices and views from children, families and frontline practitioners. • While the logic of shared services can make sense as separate councils evolve post LGR, a disconnect between newly established councils almost always occurs over a period of years, despite good intentions at inception. • Learning shows that shared services 'almost always disaggregate within a few years of LGR'.
b) Combining of 2 x current unitary CYPS services (NL & NEL) into the 3rd new Unitary council.	
STRENGTHS	**LIMITATIONS:**
• Economies of scale, • Continuity for current services if delivery is maintained in 2 localities within the new authority, • Opportunity for area based delivery and local relationships to be maintained, • Some key partners may already operate across proposed footprint which would facilitates engagement, • Recruitment and retention of staff is likely to be less of a challenge due to 'lift & shift' opportunity.	• Potential inequity in workforce and contracts. • Requirement for a change to single accountability. • Governance changes required. • Risks of inequity between areas. • Local identity and loyalties could be tested. • Significant work to align: - cultures and ways of working, - social care practices, - workforces pay, terms and conditions, - case management systems, - staffing structures, - partnerships and stakeholder relationships. • Predecessor authorities have different Ofsted ratings and different improvement priorities to align.
Implications for the 4 x current CYPS arrangements:	
• **DCS** • 2 x current DCS's would be displaced.	

- The role of a single DCS over a shared service model may be unattractive to the market.
- The role of a single DCS over what is currently a 2 x LA footprint of NEL & NL may be unattractive to the market.
- Salary requirements to attract to the new footprint DCS roles may compromise other existing CX & Exec salaries.
- The management relationship between the DCS over the shared service and the LA that does not host the role would need to be carefully thought through.
- The political relationship between the DCS over the shared service and the LA that do not host the role would need to be carefully thought through.

- **CYPS Leadership Team**
  - 2 x new CYPS senior leadership teams would be required, but this could be recruited from the 4 existing teams.
  - Members of the 4 x current CYPS Leadership Teams would be displaced.

- **Accountability & Governance**
  - The single DCS over the shared service model would need to report into 2 x CX's and 2 x Exec Leadership Teams.
  - The single DCS over a shared service model would have 2 x Lead Members and 2 x locality leadership teams which could be problematic and could result in the DCS having limited overall influence or oversight.
  - There could be 1 x shared CYPS O&S Committee over the shared service model which would provide a reduced duplication opportunity for the DCS or there could be 3 x CYPS O&S Committees that the 2 x DCS's would need to serve, supported by the 2 or 3 x locality leadership teams.
  - There could be 2 or 3 x LCSPs instead of 4, which would provide a reduced duplication opportunity for partners.

- **Service delivery teams**

  Current service delivery teams based in the localities could remain as part of the new shared service structure:
  - Boston & South Holland (existing LCC Locality),
  - Lincoln & West Lindsey (existing LCC Locality),
  - East Lindsey DC (existing LCC Locality),
  - N&S Kesteven (existing LCC Locality),
  - Rutland (current Unitary).

This would retain a local focus but is not totally aligned to the split of the current LCC services into the 2 x new Unitary LA's with Boston & South Holland (existing LCC Locality) being separate within the 2 x new Unitary proposals.

Current service delivery teams based in the localities could lose opportunities for consistency and economies of scale.

For Unitary 3 (North) the current service delivery teams based on the localities of NL and NEL could remain as part of the combined service structure.

This would retain a locality focus but could lose opportunities for consistency and economies of scale.

- **Partnership arrangements**
  - The current 4 x LA partnership arrangements could join up to become 2 or to become 3.
  - There is potentially currently multiple partnerships that some agencies attend so this may reduce some duplication for partners.
  - The size of a shared service partnerships footprint and a combined current LA partnership may result in a loss of focus for individual areas.
  - The synergy with other partnerships such as CSP's and H&WB Boards would also need to be considered.

- **Commissioning arrangements**
  - The current commissioning arrangements would need to be remodelled to a 3 LA model or to a 2 x shared service model and a combined current LA model although this may result in inequity; different approaches; loss of a market management opportunity; loss of economies of scale.
  - If commissioning arrangements were to be combined within the shared service footprint this could bring market management opportunities but may result in some loss of local knowledge re need and the market providers.
  - The current 2 x LA commissioning arrangements for the new combined unitary 3 model could remain in place via a locality arrangement although this may result in inequity; different approaches; loss of a market management opportunity; loss of economies of scale together.
  - If commissioning arrangements for the new combined unitary 3 model were to be combined this could lead to the need to create new contracts and arrangements.

- **Ofsted ratings**

Current Ofsted ratings differ:

SEND			
Shared service Unitary 1 & 2 (South & Central)	Rutland (existing Unitary)	May 2023	No Written Statement of Action (WSA)
	LCC (existing County)	Feb 2025	Improvement required
Unitary 3	NEL (existing Unitary)	Sept 2018 March 2022	WSA Good progress
	NL (existing Unitary)	Dec 2021	No WSA
Children's Social Care			
Shared service Unitary 1 & 2 (South & Central)	Rutland (existing Unitary)	April 2024	Good
	LCC (existing County)	April 2023	Outstanding

Unitary 3	NEL (existing Unitary)	Oct 2021 Sept 2024	Inadequate Improvements noted
	NL (existing Unitary)	Oct 2022	Outstanding

Children's Social Care

NEL CSC is on an improvement journey, and although good progress has been noted in the 7th Monitoring visit, they remain on an improvement plan. NL are rated as Outstanding. It would be important in the new Unitary 3 (North) service arrangements to ensure a continued and robust focus on NEL improvement. However, the coming together of NEL & NL into a single service could support the NEL improvement journey.

LCC is rated Outstanding, with Rutland rated Good.
A shared service arrangement between Unitary 1 & 2 (South & Central) could support Rutland's journey to Outstanding.

SEND

In relation to new Unitary 3 - NEL has demonstrated good progress since the inspection in 2018 when a WSA was required. NL have some areas for development but there was no WSA required. There would need to be a combined focus on improvement.

LCC has been judged to require some improvement whereas Rutland has some areas for development there was no Written Statement of Action (WSA) required.

Within a shared service arrangement between Unitary 1 & 2 (South & Central) there would need to be a combined focus on improvement.

A shared service arrangement between Unitary 1 & 2 (South & Central) across the 2 new Unitaries would involve working with NHS Lincolnshire

NHS Humber and North Yorkshire would serve the new Unitary 3 (North).

- **Practice models**

Consideration would need to be given to the existing social work practice models across the current 4 x LA's and how this would be impacted by:

- A single practice model across the shared service – bringing together Rutland and LCC.
- A single practice model across the new Unitary 3 (North) bringing together NEL & NL.

Information about the different practice models within the 4 x current LA's was not available, but if a single shared service model across the 2 x new Unitary Shared service and the new Unitary combined service (North) were to be considered, thought would need to be given to the practice models currently in use and whether or not changes to the model would be required.

Within this option (2b) there is a second consideration of
Central Leadership , Diffused Delivery

This is where a single leadership team operates a single Children's Services directorate but with dedicated leadership for each locality which oversees delivery of children's services into locality-based teams aligned to former council areas or other geographies:

Shared service across new Unitary LA's 1 (South) & 2 (Central):

- Boston & South Holland (existing LCC Locality),
- Lincoln & West Lindsey (existing LCC Locality),
- East Lindsey DC (existing LCC Locality),
- N&S Kesteven (existing LCC Locality),
- Rutland (current Unitary).

Combined service within Unitary 3 (North):

- NEL (current Unitary),
- NL (current Unitary).

STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS:
• Combines strategic leadership with place-based delivery. • Easier to maintain partner relationships. • Retains local responsiveness.	• Blurred lines of accountability if not clearly defined. • Potential inconsistencies between areas. • Requires strong central oversight and performance management.

Opinion:

Whilst this model is an option for consideration, the size and scale of each of the two footprints is significant, with great risk and budget responsibilities on the shoulders of one DCS and the potential disruption of most aspects of current delivery arrangements.

The coming together of NEL & NL LA's unto Unitary 3 (North) is favoured as it brings economies of scale and improvement opportunities for NEL

For the shared service arrangement between Unitary LAs 1 (South) and 2 (Central), insights from previous Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) experiences indicate that, although shared services may appear logical as councils evolve post-LGR, a disconnect between newly established councils almost always emerges over time, despite initial good intentions. Evidence also suggests that shared services tend to disaggregate within a few years following LGR.

This option is not recommended.

OPTION 3

3. The creation of 3 x new Unitary Authorities

Under this option, as part of local government reorganisation, the county council, three unitary authorities, and the relevant district authorities would combine to form three new single-tier unitary authorities.

Known as **Disaggregation**, this approach requires each new unitary authority to establish its own Children's Services structure and workforce from day one, with local leadership, systems, and separate services.

All Children's Services functions, such as early help, social care, SEND, and education services, would be divided into three distinct structures, operating consistently within the boundaries of each new authority.

Unitary 1 (South)	**Unitary 2 (Central)**	**Unitary 3 (North)**
**South Kesteven DC & **North Kesteven DC **South Holland DC *Rutland CC	**City of Lincoln C & **West Lindsey DC **Boston BC **East Lindsey DC	*North East Lincolnshire (NEL) *North Lincolnshire (NL)
Part of the County + Rutland	Part of the County	Coming together of 2 x existing Unitary LA's.
Current County Locality Delivery arrangements: • Boston & South Holland (existing LCC Locality), • Lincoln & West Lindsey (existing LCC Locality), • N&S Kesteven (existing LCC Locality), • Rutland (Existing Unitary).		Current County Locality Delivery arrangements: • North East Lincolnshire, • North Lincolnshire.
(currently served by **Lincolnshire County Council CYPS)		

STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS:
• Opportunity for alignment with place-based priorities. • Opportunity for a localities delivery model to mitigate service disruption during transition. • Local accountability. • Local ownership from the start. • Aligns with direction of travel of key partners towards neighbourhood and community working.	• Possible loss of some experienced senior staff. • Risk of some service disruption during transition. • Boston & South Holland areas would need to be separated. • May be some dilution of local needs and identities. • Large systems may lose agility Potential challenges in recruiting DCS level leadership for each authority.

• Builds on district council strengths in place-based leadership, prevention, early help and collaboration. • Communication is personalised and relates to local priorities. • Opportunity to create consistency in practice and standards. • Streamlined and clear management • Some economies of scale. • Single culture and vision for each LA. • Potential for no DCS or management recruitment difficulties.	• Costly duplication. • Potential for initial workforce uncertainty and anxiety. • Need to transfer of records and data and establish new case management and ICT systems. • Need to invest in strategic and operational alignment with key partners, whose scope may cover a wider /different footprint. • May lose opportunities for economies of scale in specialist provision, for example in SEND or fostering, but this can be mitigated through developing regional partnership arrangements.

Implications for 4 x current CYPS arrangements:

- **DCS**
  - The role of DCS over a clear footprint may be attractive to the market.
  - 1 current DCS and Leadership team would be displaced but this may be managed through natural wastage.
  - Clear relationship between DCS and CX and Exec Leadership teams.
  - Clear relationship between DCS and Lead Member and political leadership.

- **CYPS Leadership Team**
  - 1 x current CYPS Leadership Teams would be displaced.
  - Although new CYPS senior leadership teams would need to be established this could be streamlined into:
    - Unitary 1 (South) – Rutland CYPS Leadership Team,
    - Unitary 2 (Central) – LCC CYPS Leadership Team,
    - Unitary 3 (North) – NEL or NL CYPS Leadership Team.

- **Accountability & Governance**
  - There would be 1 x DCS reporting into 1 x CX's and 1 x Exec Leadership Team.
  - There would be 1 x Lead Member and 1 x Political leadership teams reporting into 1 x DCS.
  - There could be 1 x CYPS O&S Committee for each new Unitary Council.
  - There could be 1 x LCSP for each new Unitary Council.
  - There would likely be synergy with each new Unitary CSP & H&WBB.

- **Service delivery teams**

  Current service delivery teams based on the localities could remain as part of the new organisational structures:
  - Rutland (existing Unitary),
  - Boston & South Holland (existing LCC Locality),
  - Lincoln & West Lindsey (existing LCC Locality),
  - N&S Kesteven (existing LCC Locality),

- NEL (existing Unitary),
- NL (existing Unitary).

This would retain a locality focus and create opportunities for consistency and economies of scale.

- **Partnership arrangements**
  - The current 4 LA partnership arrangements would reduce to 3.
  - Existing partnership arrangements could be streamlined into:
    - Unitary 1 (South) – Current Rutland arrangements with added membership from the relevant current County partners, which could reduce duplication for some partners,
    - Unitary 2 (Central) – LCC arrangements with largely unchanged membership,
    - Unitary 3 (North) – NEL or NL combined membership, which could reduce duplication for some partners.
  - Partnerships footprints could provide increased focus for individual LA areas, whilst opportunities for collaboration across one or more partnerships remains an option.
  - The synergy with other partnerships such as CSP's and H&WB Boards would be streamlined.

ICB		
Unitary 1 (South)	**Unitary 2 (Central)**	**Unitary 3 (North)**
The new Unitary would involve working with both NHS Lincolnshire and NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR).	The new Unitary would involve working with NHS Lincolnshire.	The new Unitary would involve working with NHS Humber and North Yorkshire.

- **Commissioning arrangements**
  - The current commissioning arrangements would need to be disaggregated and combined to mirror the 3 x Unitary arrangements.
  - Regional commissioning remains an option where appropriate.
  - Action would be required to mitigate any risks of inequity; loss of a market management opportunity; loss of economies of scale.

- **Ofsted ratings**

  Current Ofsted ratings differ:

SEND				
Unitary 1 (South)	Rutland	May 2023	No WSA	No significant performance assessment differences. Opportunity to learn from each other and continue to improve together.
	LCC	Feb 2025	Improvement required	
Unitary 2 (Central)	LCC	Feb 2025	Improvement required	Single inspection judgement for the footprint.

Unitary 3 (North)	NEL	Sept 2018 March 2022	Written statement of action Good progress	No significant performance assessment differences. Opportunity to learn from each other and continue to improve together.
	NL	Dec 2021	No WSA	
		Children's Social Care		
Unitary 1 (South)	Rutland	April 2024	Good	No significant performance assessment differences. Opportunity to learn from each other and continue to improve together.
	LCC	April 2023	Outstanding	
Unitary 2 (Central)	LCC	April 2023	Outstanding	Single inspection judgement for the footprint.
Unitary 3 (North)	NEL	Oct 2021 Sept 2024	Inadequate Improvements noted	NEL CSC is on an improvement journey from Inadequate, and although good progress has been noted in the 7th Monitoring visit, they remain on an improvement plan. NL are rated as Outstanding, The coming together of the 2 councils into a single service could positively support the NEL improvement journey.
	NL	Oct 2022	Outstanding	

- **Practice models**
  Consideration would need to be given to the existing social work practice models across the current 4 x LA's and how this would be impacted by the implementation/ adaptation of the current 4 x models into 3 x models based on the 3 x LA arrangements,

Opinion:

This model is recommended and is the preferred model based on:

- Clear governance and accountability.
- Reasonable sized footprints.
- Limited differences in Ofsted performance judgements.
- Limited impact on current service delivery arrangements - particularly if a localities model of delivery is adopted.
- No likelihood of significant difficulties in recruiting / retaining existing DCS and CYPS Leadership team personnel.
- Clarity in partnership arrangements.
- Some disaggregation of LCC current arrangements, in particular, but the structure of social work teams (other than Boston & South Holland which would need to be split) could largely be a 'lift & shift'.
- Coming together of NEL & NL could cause some challenges but these could be mitigated if a localities model of delivery is adopted.

- Practice models and related systems across the new 3 x Unitary footprints will require further consideration.

OPTION 4

3. The creation of an Alternative Delivery Model - Children's Trust / CiC

This option is where the delivery of children's services is outsourced to a Trust or not-for-profit organisation that is separate from, but accountable to, the three new unitary councils.

The 3 new authorities could create a wholly owned or a jointly commissioned Children's Trust to deliver services across boundaries.

STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS:
• This can provide operational independence, while retaining accountability through a joint governance board. • Children's Trusts have a strong record of improving services under DfE statutory intervention, but in all but one case this is an intervention rather than a strategic council decision. • Allows focus on improvement and innovation. • Clear operational leadership.	• Having Children's Services outside of the council can lead to 'blame' and criticism from the council(s) involved which destabilises effective services for children and families. • Requires upfront setup time and cost. • Complex to unwind if authorities later wish to separate. • Limited council control over spend or practice standards. • Confused governance with DCS of the Trust and DCS in each LA. • *"The Government considers that an independent trust model for partnership working is untested outside the context of local authority intervention. On balance, this model is not considered appropriate for delivering high-quality outcomes in social care services in the context of LGR"* (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2025)

This option to be excluded from further consideration as MHCLG has made it clear that government does not consider this option to be suitable.

5. Learning from others

Learning from Shared Services arrangements

a) A single Shared Service for Children's Services across the wider Greater Lincolnshire footprint

No examples have been identified of a shared service for Children's Services operating across a wider regional footprint.

b) Shared services model across 2 x new Unitary authorities

There are well-documented examples of shared leadership in Children's Services. These arrangements, however, have typically been local decisions by neighbouring councils rather than part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The most common model involves a shared Director of Children's Services (DCS) or a shared Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) leadership team, while retaining separate council services. Examples include:

- Harrow and Brent Councils,
- Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) & Halton,
- Tri-Borough Partnership: Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, and Hammersmith & Fulham,
- East Sussex and Surrey County Councils,
- Southwark and Lambeth.

Learning from the creation of Unitary Authorities (Disaggregation)

Previous LGR processes provide clear lessons on disaggregating Children's Services. Key examples include:

- Bedfordshire,
- Cumbria,
- Dorset.

Bedfordshire
Two Separate Children's Services from Day One.

In 2009, Bedfordshire was reorganised into two new unitaries: Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. Each appointed its own DCS and leadership team and adopted its own delivery model.

Initially, some shared arrangements were in place for fostering and adoption, asylum support, youth offending, family group conferencing, and emergency duty teams. A shared Safeguarding Children Board also operated briefly. Over time, each council developed its own approach.

The learning from this approach

- Understanding constancy, focus and determination to drive improved outcomes for children is critical.
- Enabled strong local ownership and services.
- Supported political and community identity.
- Significant challenges in recruiting and retaining experienced staff, especially at senior levels, but possible to combat this through focused leadership work.
- Initial duplication of back office functions.
- Shared service arrangements are often short lived.
- Challenges in delivery of some specialist services.

Cumbria

Two Separate Children's Services from Day One.

In 2023, six district councils and Cumbria County Council were reorganised into two unitary councils, Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council.

The learning from this approach

- Common purpose for children and families across the council and with partners is essential.
- Build in engagement with children and families from initial planning onwards.
- Respond to what you're hearing from them.
- Understanding constancy, focus and determination to drive forwards improved outcomes for children is critical.
- Using community and partnership support to help deliver coordinated, connected and integrated family help through place-based family help hubs which include both a physical and virtual offer.
- Communicate constantly and effectively about plans and priorities. A year after inception, Ofsted highlighted the effectiveness of its approach to delivery, with a particular emphasis on the:
    - Firm establishment of a unique identity for the new unitary children's services.
    - Council's relentless drive for improvement.
    - Shared vision for children across the workforce and with partners which is supporting service improvements.
    - Ways in which it listens and acts on what children say matters to them and their families.
    - Swift action to recruit to and stabilise the workforce.

Dorset

Reorganising into Two Unitary Authorities

In 2019, nine councils in Dorset were reorganised into two new unitary authorities: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP), and Dorset.

BCP initially faced significant challenges aligning operating models, data systems, and cultures. After a difficult start, services are now performing well.

The learning from this approach

- The importance of providing early support for new political leaders so there is a clear vision and shared goals across the organisation.
- Proactively engaging with local communities and partners to build trust and understand local priorities.
- Investing in cultural change alongside structural change to mitigate the risks of post-merger frictions around, for example, practice and thresholds.
- Planning early for safe and effective digital integration.
- Maintaining focus on performance and safeguarding – leadership instability and poor change management are significant risks during transition.
- The council and its partners have harnessed place-based leadership to adopt and embed a child centred locality team model which provide a 'multi-disciplinary team around the child and adults in the family.'
- Six locality teams bring together early help, children's social care, educational psychology and SEND services to provide consistent support for families within a practice framework which emphasises strengthening families and communities and working with them and partners to create a bright and ambitious future for children, their families and the communities they live in. 'Family help locality-based services are successful in achieving consistency across the *county.* This way of working means that families receive a continual service by the same practitioners until it is no longer needed, while families become linked into community early intervention and prevention services as part of Dorset's Strategic Alliance plan. Easy access to universal and universal plus provision is seen as crucial' (Dorset Council, 2023).
- The council has taken a long-term view of making sure children thrive and families are supported to be the best they can be through its Dorset Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, a multi-agency partnership.
- The Strategic Alliance brings together senior people from the council, police, health, fire and rescue services, schools, early years settings and the voluntary and community sector to shape and transform services for children and young people in ways that achieve improved outcomes. The partnership's '10 year and beyond' plan recognises that a focus on children and young people is crucial to the future wellbeing and prosperity of Dorset (Dorset Council, 2025).

Learning in relation to the disaggregation of Children's services:

- Seize opportunities to establish locality based co-located neighbourhood teams that can help families with tailored support in a wide range of needs.
- Referrals will be better managed through a council wide multi-agency dedicated and skilled team that works with family/early help to protect children who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.
- 'Appoint your DCS early' - so they can:
    - Help articulate a clear vision and values to win hearts and minds and support workforce recruitment and retention.
    - Initiate high-quality planning and sufficiency to meet local needs.
    - Inform arrangements to disaggregate and migrate data and establish ICT infrastructure.
    - Pin down risks and challenges early.
- As well as a safe and legal on day one, focus on 'what happens on day two and beyond'.

- Be really clear about services you can separate out before vesting day and which ones you can't but have plans in place to disaggregate early on. Separating out small contracts can take 'an inordinate amount of time.'
- Most staff are subject to TUPE, but that doesn't stop their anxieties about change, so visibility and regular communication is critical.
- 'If I'd only known' how complex, expensive, difficult and full of risk it is to separate out a county-level ICT service: 'I think we would have worked harder at a potentially different solution – actually spending some serious money upfront to buy what we needed and implement it in a different way rather than trying to split what we had.'
- 'The biggest thing we did that really made a difference was recruiting into the director and assistant director posts so that I had a full senior management team from day one and everybody was clear about their role.'
- Never take your eye off children's services: Ofsted arrived a year after vesting day and our work paid off, 'we got good, and we now know outcomes for our children are better than they were' and a recent SEND inspection highlighted that 'things have got better since LGR.'
- Despite the challenges, **'no regrets… it's worth it!'**

Summary

Based on the learning from others, a shared service arrangement in whole or part across the three new unitary authorities is not recommended.

Learning from those who have disaggregated services from day one, suggests that, although complex, and with some risks, disaggregation into the new LA footprints is the best choice. Such a decision would not preclude some regional working and commissioning opportunities.

6. Assessment against the DCN/Staff College Children's Services Maturity Matrix

Maturity Matrix Model

Colin Foster, Chief Executive of the Northampton Children's Trust, offers a Children's Services Maturity Matrix which is useful as a practical self-assessment tool to inform discussions and options for LGR.

The matrix uses a five point scale across seven key aspects of Children's Services:

• Inspection Outcomes,

• Quality of Practice,

• Workforce Stability,

• Local Area Partnership,

• Financial Sufficiency,

• Effectiveness of Corporate Support,

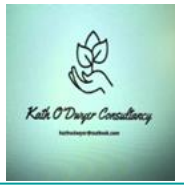
• Effectiveness of Political Support.

'Developing a judgement on each level of maturity on the scale of 1-5 in the 7 areas will lead to a structured discussion and effective articulation of where Children's services are at'.

While not a fixed model, 'an honest self-assessment of services against a maturity matrix creates a good starting place when considering LGR, helping to create a plan and risk log' to highlight opportunities and risks.

'It is within the gift of political leadership and officer leadership of LAs to create the right conditions which empower professionals in Children's Services and deliver the best possible outcomes for children, young people, families and care experienced young adults. LGR is a real opportunity to do this incredibly well, but if not done well can cause challenges for many years and continually fail residents'.

He proposes five grade descriptors for each level of maturity and shows these in a completed table:



Children's Services Maturity Matrix

	Inspection Outcomes	Quality of Children's Services Practice	Workforce Stability	Local Area Partnership Approach	Financial Sufficiency	Effectiveness of Corporate Support	Effectiveness of Political Support
5	Inspection outcomes are consistently positive and plans to continuously improve are clear as is the impact.	There is systemic understanding, activity and impact of children's service practice and QA. CYP play an active part in assessing the quality of services and driving continuous improvement. Data shows strong performance.	Children's Services workforce held in high regard, recognised, and celebrated. There is a high number of care experienced young people employed. Data shows low turnover of workforce and swift appointments.	The partnership has a clear plan which is underpinned by excellent relationships and strong impact can be evidenced.	Financial planning is joined up and fully resourced. Plans adapt as transformation progresses and there has been significant impact.	Corporate support for Children's Services is embedded in everything people do. It flows from top to bottom and is aligned with public outcomes.	Political support for Children's Services is embedded in everything people do. It flows from top to bottom and is aligned with public outcomes.
4	Inspection outcomes are improving with increased consistency of positive feedback and judgements. There are strong plans to improve, and impact is clearly evident.	QA of practice is articulated well and has a demonstrable impact on outcomes. There is some involvement of CYP in assessing the quality of services and driving continuous improvement. Majority of data shows strong performance with some small areas for development.	There is a fully coherent approach to recruitment and retention in an aspirational workforce plan. The workforce feel valued and supported.	The partnership plan is clear, there is commitment from all partners to deliver the plan and some impact can be evidenced.	Financial planning is understood by all and clear plans are in place with demonstrable impact.	There is some strong corporate support for Children's Services in most services that is articulated in different ways.	There is some strong political support for Children's Services in most services that is articulated in different ways.
3	Inspection outcomes are variable with some improvements in some areas but this is not consistent. There are strong plans in place to improve with some impact.	There are some good examples of QA and some impact on practice can be demonstrated. There is some meaningful involvement of CYP. Data shows some strengths with targeted areas for development.	There is some join up in approach to recruitment and retention but there has been little impact. Some of the workforce can see the improvements.	The partnership understands the need to improve, there are good relationships and variable impact can be evidenced but better planning is needed.	Financial planning has the right level of detail with some plans, but impact is variable.	There is variable corporate support for Children's Services but plans in place to improve.	There is variable political support for Children's Services but plans in place to improve.
2	Inspection outcomes are of a low standard and plans to improve are not coherent.	There is inconsistent QA of practice which has little impact and data is concerning.	There are some variable approaches to recruitment and retention with high levels of agency workforce.	There is an increasing awareness of the need for partnership working to improve services with some developing relationships but limited impact.	There are some financial initiatives to enable improvement, but they are ad hoc and do not show a full understanding of the requirements needed.	There is low effectiveness of corporate support for Children's Services variable understanding.	There is low effectiveness of political support for Children's Services variable understanding.
1	Inspection outcomes are poor and there is ineffective planning to improve.	There is no effective QA of practice and data is concerning.	There is no sustainable workforce plan for recruitment and retention and there are high levels of vacancies / agency workforce.	The partnership is not joined up, relationships need to develop and there is no evidence of impact.	There is no joined up financial planning in place and lack of shared understanding about priorities for improvement. Plans are not flexible or achievable.	There is little or no corporate support for Children's Services and high levels of tension.	There is little or no political support for Children's Services and high levels of tension.



Assessment: Based on Ofsted reports

Summary

SUMMARY OF SCORES			
	Unitary 1 (South)	Unitary 2 (Central)	Unitary 3 (North)
Inspection Outcomes	5	5	4
Quality of Practice	4	5	3
Workforce Stability	4	5	4
Local Area Partnership	4	5	3
Financial Sufficiency	4	5	4
Effectiveness of Corporate Support	4	5	3
Effectiveness of Political Support	4	5	3
Totals	29	35	24

Breakdown of scores detail

	Unitary 1 (South)		Unitary 2 (Central)	Unitary 3 (North)	
	LCC	**Rutland**	**LCC**	**NEL**	**NL**
Inspection Outcomes	Outstanding (April 2023)	Good (April 2024)	Outstanding (April 2023)	Inadequate but improving (October 2021) Monitoring Visit (September 2024)	Outstanding (October 2022)
SCORE	**5**		**5**	**4**	
Quality of Practice	Outstanding social work practice. There is a shared understanding by professionals and families of the authority's strength-based model of practice. Scaling is used well at each meeting. Social workers demonstrate excellent practice, having significant knowledge and understanding of children's needs. Partnership working is one of Lincolnshire's strengths, which has stimulated creative and innovative practices to support the work with	Good-quality direct work undertaken with children and families is impactful and it makes a positive difference to their lives. Child protection enquiries start promptly. They provide a thorough analysis of children's needs and the level of risk children face. Timely initial child protection conferences help to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to protect children. Work undertaken in the duty and assessment service is having a positive impact on children's experiences. Skilful practitioners have used life-story work to help	Outstanding social work practice. There is a shared understanding by professionals and families of the authority's strength-based model of practice. Scaling is used well at each meeting. Social workers demonstrate excellent practice, having significant knowledge and understanding of children's needs. Partnership working is one of Lincolnshire's strengths, which has stimulated creative and innovative practices to support the work with vulnerable children and their families.	Since the most recent monitoring visit in January 2024, children subject to child in need and child protection planning are better safeguarded and benefit from greater consistency of worker.	Children benefit from a consistently high standard of social work practice. The commitment to children as a priority for the council and across the partnership is exemplary. Children in need of help and protection are provided the right help when they need it. Children and families are supported effectively in order to build resilience through a wide-ranging early help offer. The focus on a relational strength-based approach is a powerful element of

	vulnerable children and their families. Numerous approaches are used to determine quality and improve and strengthen practice and learning. Leaders have successfully focused on the areas for development since the last inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) inspection in 2019. This has led to strengthening of practice with vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation and going missing and the response to homeless 16- and 17-year olds.	many children to understand their family history and to process early trauma. Skilled social workers in the disabled children's service have a good understanding of the needs of disabled children in care. Pathway planning is effective. An embedded, relationship-based model of practice used by practitioners in Rutland is helping to ensure that children and families receive consistent support that makes a positive difference to children's lives.	Numerous approaches are used to determine quality and improve and strengthen practice and learning. Leaders have successfully focused on the areas for development since the last inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) inspection in 2019. This has led to strengthening of practice with vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation and going missing and the response to homeless 16- and 17-year olds.		social work practice in North Lincolnshire. Children and families develop meaningful relationships with their social worker, even when intervention is time-limited. Parents who are benefiting from children in need services or child protection planning told inspectors that support had come at the right time for them. They said that social workers are reliable, that they are helpful, that they went 'above and beyond' and that they did not feel judged. Sensitive work undertaken with children and family members aids the social worker in their understanding of family relationships and of the child's world. Assessments, including those for disabled children, are comprehensive. Children in the care of North Lincolnshire



					children's services receive an exceptional service from workers who demonstrate that they care for them. Consequently, children told inspectors that they felt loved and that they felt listened to. Social workers, managers and leaders are ambitious for the children they care for. Foster carers told inspectors that they build strong and trusting relationships with social workers, enabling them to be open and honest during matching or if they need additional support.
Score	**4**		**5**	**3**	
Workforce Stability	A targeted recruitment strategy has led to an increase in permanent social workers. Additional funding has been made available to support the children's services workforce. This is helping the authority to stabilise its workforce and to	Challenges remain in respect of the stability of the workforce. Leaders are fully aware of these challenges and have clear action plans in place to address them. Instability in the workforce is placing pressures on staff	A targeted recruitment strategy has led to an increase in permanent social workers. Additional funding has been made available to support the children's services workforce. This is helping the authority to stabilise its workforce and to	An effective workforce strategy has resulted in significantly improved workforce stability. A now permanent and experienced senior leadership team has energised and escalated	The 'grow your own' approach is contributing to the service's succession planning and a carefully considered approach to retention and recruitment. Although there is movement of workers, there is a longevity in the

	manage workloads more consistently.	who undertake additional work. However, for a small but significant number of care leavers, their experiences have not been as positive due to changes in PA and periods of staff absences. A care leaver described feeling bewildered by the number of changes in worker they have experienced. Rutland has some exceptionally skilled practitioners, who are kind and compassionate. These practitioners, who have manageable workloads, spend time with children and families, and they build positive relationships with them. This is having a positive outcome for many children and their families. Despite the above, recruitment and retention have remained a challenge in Rutland. As a result, a few children, predominantly in the throughcare service, have experienced many changes in social worker and PA.	manage workloads more consistently.	the pace of improvement in this practice area. Children's social care is benefiting from an experienced and permanent senior leadership team for the first time since the inadequate inspection judgement in 2021. Workforce stability continues to improve. The council and senior leaders have made North East Lincolnshire a more attractive place to work and have successfully recruited significantly more social workers than this time last year. Overall, this has resulted in an increase in the number of permanent staff, rising from 30% to 70% since the last judgement inspection.	workforce, with the vast majority of social workers being permanent employees. The culture of compassionate leadership and the strength-based approach has fostered a highly motivated, enthusiastic and loyal workforce.

		Positively, in response to this, vacancies have been recruited to, and new permanent staff have very recently started or are due to start work in Rutland imminently.			
SCORE	**4**		**4**	**4**	
Local Area Partnership	Children also benefit from strong partnership working. Partnership working is one of Lincolnshire's strengths. Strong partnerships at the strategic senior level are mirrored by strong and effective operational multi-agency working.	Too often strategy meetings are delayed due to a lack of police capacity. Strong relationships with midwifery services ensure the early identification of need, support and intervention pre-birth. Children are not consistently having their health needs assessed in a timely way when they enter care. Strategic partnerships are mostly effective and are particularly strong with education partners. Overall, the local authority works effectively with other agencies. The operation of early help services and a community partnership with Leicester City Football Club	Children also benefit from strong partnership working. Partnership working is one of Lincolnshire's strengths. Strong partnerships at the strategic senior level are mirrored by strong and effective operational multi-agency working.	Professional relationships have significantly improved and there is increasing confidence from partner agencies in both social workers' practice and management decision-making.	The commitment to children as a priority for the council and across the partnership is exemplary. Partners, notably schools and health professionals, are confident to lead in delivering interventions and the early help plan. High-quality information-sharing by a wide range of partner agencies, and a clear understanding of consent and threshold for services. There is excellent partner agency participation, enabling effective information-sharing. When more specialist help is needed, there are a range of services which

		have resulted in positive outcomes for many children in terms of developing confidence, self-esteem and self-belief. These are examples of strategic partnerships enabling effective multi-agency operations. Leaders recognise that there is, however, more to do as a partnership to strengthen timely police engagement in multi-agency strategy meetings and the timeliness of initial and review health assessments for children in care in Rutland.			support children and families with issues such as substance misuse, for their emotional well-being and mental health, and when they live with domestic abuse. These agencies form strong multi-agency networks around the child and family, contributing to comprehensive child in need or child protection plans, which help reduce the risks for children. Where children are at risk of exploitation, there is a strong and swift multi-agency approach to identifying and managing the risk to the child. Transformational systems leadership has ensured that the whole council, and the partnership, prioritises children. Strategic partnerships are robust and well-embedded.
SCORE	**4**		**5**	**3**	
Financial Sufficiency	They have responded to these pressures by contributing to placement	*No reference to finance in Ofsted report but based on*	They have responded to these pressures by contributing to placement sufficiency	*From 2022*	*No reference to finance in Ofsted report but based on*

	sufficiency financially and strategically, with cross-council support. The council has supported the development of three children's homes in Lincolnshire. They have further successfully invested in their fostering services. Additional funding has been made available to support the children's services workforce	*Outstanding judgement this is assessed to be good*	financially and strategically, with cross-council support. The council has supported the development of three children's homes in Lincolnshire. They have further successfully invested in their fostering services. Additional funding has been made available to support the children's services workforce	There are historic and some current concerns about the use of resources and the recent base budget position of the department. The service has over recent years had significant budget overspends met corporately at year end. The LA has approved both long term increases in the base budget for children's services and the use of one-off resources to fund immediate pressures and improvement activity.	*Outstanding judgement this is assessed to be good*
SCORE	**4**		**5**	**4**	
Effectiveness of Corporate Support	Leaders are well supported by a strong corporate performance team. The chief executive officer also brings a wealth of experience to the service, having previously been director of children's services in Lincolnshire. There is confidence across the council in the leadership of children's services. The council's senior leadership team integrated approach ensures a shared clear vision	A stable, permanent leadership team, with strong political and corporate support, has been successful in improving the quality and impact of social work practice with children. Leaders have created a culture whereby staff at every level operate in a reflective and open manner, and within a culture that keeps children's safety and well-being at the centre of their practice. Leaders and	Leaders are well supported by a strong corporate performance team. The chief executive officer also brings a wealth of experience to the service, having previously been director of children's services in Lincolnshire. There is confidence across the council in the leadership of children's services. The council's senior leadership team integrated approach ensures a shared clear vision across the local	*From 2022* Corporate leaders have overseen a decline in services to vulnerable children and their families. Key corporate support functions around finance and HR were not routinely integrated into leadership team conversations and opportunities as a result appear to have been missed, to bring capacity	Uncompromising and visionary political and executive leadership and from the leadership of the director of children's services (DCS), who have an unwavering ambition for children and families. This united political and service leadership has successfully fostered a compassionate and caring culture which has become

	across the local authority and a strong focus on delivering high-quality children's services.	managers are child focused. They are committed to getting things right for children. Political and corporate leaders have shown ambition as corporate parents.	authority and a strong focus on delivering high-quality children's services	and expertise to address key service issues.	the bedrock of the council and the service. The commitment to children as a priority for the council and across the partnership is exemplary. The council, leaders and social workers are exceptionally proud of the children of North Lincolnshire. The local authority is an aspirational and ambitious corporate parent. North Lincolnshire Council and the senior leadership team keep children and their families at the heart of everything they do. Transformational systems leadership has ensured that the whole council, and the partnership, prioritises children. The highly impressive alliance forged between the leader of the council, the lead member for children's services, the chief executive and the DCS has

					ensured that this high-performing authority has not rested on its laurels.
SCORE	**4**		**5**	**3**	
Effectiveness of Political Support	Lincolnshire's children in care council, Voices4Choices, continues to influence service development through conversations with elected members. Elected members have unlocked significant financial resources to ensure that Lincolnshire continues to provide outstanding services for children and their families. Elected members and senior leaders across the council work successfully together to support the needs of children and their families. The lead member is a strong advocate for children's services and has provided continuity in the role since 2005.	A stable, permanent leadership team, with strong political and corporate support, has been successful in improving the quality and impact of social work practice with children. Political and corporate leaders have shown ambition as corporate parents.	Lincolnshire's children in care council, Voices4Choices, continues to influence service development through conversations with elected members. Elected members have unlocked significant financial resources to ensure that Lincolnshire continues to provide outstanding services for children and their families. Elected members and senior leaders across the council work successfully together to support the needs of children and their families. The lead member is a strong advocate for children's services and has provided continuity in the role since 2005.	*From 2022* Senior leaders and elected members are out of touch with the needs of the local population. Political leadership whilst demonstrating some greater engagement remains underdeveloped. The Portfolio Holder had carried previous experience holding the role under different party leadership in the past. Despite this it did not result in the quality of political leadership of the children's agenda that one would wish to see. Whilst there are some signs of greater political engagement in the children's agenda, particularly from the Leader, the quality and confidence of other political	Uncompromising and visionary political and executive leadership and from the leadership of the director of children's services (DCS). This united political and service leadership has successfully fostered a compassionate and caring culture. The council, leaders and social workers are exceptionally proud of the children of North Lincolnshire. The local authority is an aspirational and ambitious corporate parent. The highly impressive alliance forged between the leader of the council, the lead member for children's services, the chief executive and the DCS has ensured that this high-

				leaders is still underdeveloped. There is a stability in political leadership and a wider council senior management team more closely engaged with understanding and supporting required improvement.	performing authority has not rested on its laurels.
SCORE	**4**		**5**	**3**	

Summary

The matrix analysis indicates that disaggregating services into three new Unitary Councils, Unitary 1 (South), Unitary 2 (Central), and Unitary 3 (North), would involve certain risks. However, each new Unitary Council is expected to maintain strong capabilities within its respective Children's Services.

Unitary 1 (South) - The County elements are rated *Outstanding* by Ofsted, while Rutland is rated *Good*. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and disaggregation may lead to changes in both officer and political leadership, creating some risks in separating County services. However, the current strong performance across this footprint provides a solid foundation for joint leadership, shared learning, and maintaining high standards in Children's Services.

Unitary 2 (Central) - This area includes elements of the County rated *Outstanding* by Ofsted, although it represents only part of the current County footprint. LGR and disaggregation could bring leadership changes and risks in service separation. Nevertheless, existing performance offers a strong basis for sustaining high-quality Children's Services.

Unitary 3 (North) – This unitary combines two existing authorities: North Lincolnshire (*Outstanding*) and North East Lincolnshire (*Inadequate*). This creates challenges and a potential risk to North Lincolnshire if focus shifts toward improving North East Lincolnshire. However, Ofsted's latest monitoring visit shows good progress since the 2021 *Inadequate*

judgment. While LGR and disaggregation may introduce leadership changes and risks in merging services, current performance provides a strong platform for joint leadership and shared learning to achieve high standards in Children's Services.

It will be important to consider the learning from other LA's who have been through LGR and ensure early and detailed planning to deliver the 3 x Unitary model.

7. Data Analysis

2025 Newton Report

Scenario 2 – East, North & West

The Newton report describes the three new unitary authorities differently from other sources. In Scenario 2, the report refers to them as **East, North, and West**, whereas this commission and the submission to MHCLG identify them as **Unitary 1 (South), Unitary 2 (Central), and Unitary 3 (North)**.

Additionally, the composition of the existing councils within Newton's Scenario 2 differs from that outlined in this commission and in the MHCLG proposal.

For clarity:

Proposal to MHCLG	Areas covered	Newton Scenario 2	Areas covered	Differences
Unitary 1 (South)	South Kesteven DC; North Kesteven DC; South Holland DC; Rutland CC	West	North Kesteven, South Kesteven, Lincoln, West Lindsey	Rutland not included in the Newton Scenario. Differences in Lincoln, West Lindsey and South Holland locations
Unitary 2 (Central)	East Lindsey DC Boston BC, City of Lincoln C, West Lindsey DC	East	East Lindsey, Boston, South Holland	Differences in Lincoln, West Lindsey and South Holland locations
Unitary 3 (North)	North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire	North	North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire	No difference

Therefore, although the Newton Report considers the impact of LGR on people services in Lincolnshire, it is based on a data split within the scenario 2 that is not comparable to the Unitary 1 (South); Unitary 2 (Central); Unitary 3 (North) modelling.

The only aspect of the Newton Scenario 2 modelling which corresponds with the composition of LA's within this commission is that for Unitary 3 (North) / Newton Scenario 2 North.

I will therefore extract from the Newton report the info relating to Unitary 3 (North) only.

	North Lincolnshire North East Lincolnshire & North Lincolnshire

Total population:	335.7k
% population U18	20.6%
Under 18's population	69k
Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 score	26.78
Total demand CSC	5.7k
Total demand SEND	3.7k
ICB boundaries	NHS Humber and North Yorkshire
% change CSC (2025 – 2040)	-11%
% change SEND (2025 – 2040)	+39%
2025 CSC per resident	£80
2025 SEND per resident	£176
2025 Total per resident	£256
2040 CSC per resident	£116
2040 SEND per resident	£387
2040 Total per resident	£503
Total increase CSC per resident between 2025-40	£36
Total increase SEND per resident between 2025-40	£211
Total £ Increase	£247
Total % Increase	46%
CSC Provision Spend 2025	£14m
CSC Staffing cost 2025	£13m
CSC Service Cost 2025	27
Predicted CSC Service Cost 2040	39
PREVALENCE PER 10,000 U18 POPULATION	
CiN	116
CP	30
Referrals	455
Early Help	618
CiC	55
Children's Residential	3.7
Indep Fostering	2.0
Internal Fostering	41
Other	9.0
COST PER WEEK CIC	
2025	£704
2030	£829
2040	£1,150
% + /-	63%

COST PER WEEK RESIDENTIAL	
2025	£4,481
2030	£5,277
2040	£7,320
% + /-	63%
COST PER WEEK INDEP FOSTERING	
2025	£687
2030	£809
2040	£1,122
% + /-	63%
COST PER WEEK INTERNAL FOSTERING	
2025	£520
2030	£611
2040	£847
% + /-	63%
SEND	
Spend per resident 2025	£176
Spend per resident 2040	£387
% growth in spend (2025-2040)	122%
Mainstream Prevalence 2025	177
Mainstream Prevalence 2030	261
Mainstream Prevalence 2040	267
MAINTAINED SPECIAL SCHOOLS (MSS)	
MSS Prevalence 2025	74
MSS Prevalence 2030	89
MSS Prevalence 2040	90
INDEPENDENT NON-MAINTAINED SPECIAL SCHOOLS (INMSS)	
INMSS Prevalence 2025	12
INMSS Prevalence 2030	15
INMSS Prevalence 2040	16
OTHER DEMMAND	
Other Prevalence 2025	139
Other Prevalence 2030	171
Other Prevalence 2040	177
Education: SEND - UNIT COSTS VARIATION AND FORECASTING	
Mainstream	
2025	£185
2030	£218
2040	£302
% + /-	63%
Maintained Special Schools	
2025	£374
2030	£441
2040	£611
% + /-	63%
Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools	
2025	£4,342
2030	£5,115
2040	£7,096

% + /-	63%
Other	
2025	£91
2030	£107
2040	£149
% + /-	63%
SEND DEFICIT DISTRIBUTION	
Cumulative spend on EHCPS over past 3 yrs	26%
Service cost 2025 (placements cost + staffing)	£59m
Service cost 2040 (placements cost + staffing)	£131m
HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT	
DIRECT TRANSPORT DEMAND VARIATION AND FORECASTING	
Spend per resident 2025	£137
Spend per resident 2040	£421
% growth in spend (2025-2040)	211%
PARENTAL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT DEMAND VARIATION AND FORECASTING	
Direct Transport Prevalence 2025	3082
Direct Transport Prevalence 2030	5896
Direct Transport Prevalence 2040	6586
Education: HTS transport - UNIT COST DEMAND VARIATION AND FORECASTING	
Parental Prevalence 2025	64
Public Transport Prevalence 2025	1498
Parental Prevalence 2030	123
Public Transport Prevalence 2030	2867
Parental Prevalence 2040	137
Public Transport Prevalence 2040	3202
Education: DEMAND VARIATION AND FORECASTING	
Direct Transport	
2025	£72
2030	£85
2040	£117
% + /-	63%
Parental	
2025	£61
2030	£71
2040	£99
% + /-	63%
Public Transport	
2025	£17
2030	£20
2040	£28
% + /-	63%
Home Education Prevalence	250
Persistent Absent Prevalence	2041
Severe Absent Prevalence	246
Exclusions Prevalence	12

Name	Total Population 0-16	Total Population 0-4	Total Population 5-10	Total Population 11-16

	(MY 2024)	(MY 2024)	(MY 2024)	(MY 2024)
Unitary 1 (South)	74670	17890	26785	29995
Unitary 2 (Central)	72088	18207	26013	27868
Unitary 3 (North)	64317	16368	23025	24924

Summary

It is difficult to analysis the Newton data due to the differences in councils composition within the Newton work and that which is requested in this commission

Therefore further work will need to be commissioned to allow consideration of refreshed Newton data based on the 3 x Unitary model (S/ C/ N).

8. Risk

In relation to LGR planning, this Risk Register based on a model developed by Colin Foster, Chief Executive, Northampton Children's Trust, provides a good basis for discussions with Councillors, colleagues and partners:

Leadership Continuity	LGR can result in senior leaders across the LA(s) retiring or in some cases being made redundant.
	Currently, there are four DCS's within the Greater Lincolnshire footprint, but only three will be required under the new unitary model. There is a risk that some may leave or retire before Vesting Day or during LGR implementation, although this cannot be predicted. One DCS position may potentially be displaced. Similarly, there are four CYPS Senior Leadership Teams in the current structure, and three will be needed under the new model. As with the DCS roles, there is a risk of departures or retirements, and one team may be displaced. In terms of continuity: Unitary 1 (South) has the Rutland DCS and CYPS Senior Leadership Team who would be unfamiliar with the services currently provided by LCC for the new Unitary but is an experienced CYPS Leadership team. Unitary 2 (Central) has the LCC DCS and CYPS Senior Leadership Team who are familiar with the services currently provided by LCC for the new Unitary and is an experienced CYPS Leadership team. Unitary 3 (North) has both the NEL & NL DCS's and CYPS Senior Leadership Team either of which would be familiar with the services currently provided by for half the new Unitary, but both of which are experienced CYPS Leadership teams.
Workforce Alignment	LGR can mean a split of countywide children's services, resulting in the workforce having to choose an LA. This can mean at least one new council having a less experienced children's services leadership team and wider workforce.
	Staff turnover is a real risk and a constant challenge in most CYPS services. There is a risk that experienced practitioners plan to retire because fear the changes and fear that they will not be working in the same team as they do currently. Unitary 1 (South) has the Rutland CYPS Directorate staff and all those practitioners and managers within LCC who currently serve the children within the districts of South Kesteven DC; North Kesteven DC and South Holland DC; aspects of the County and are experienced CYPS practitioners and managers. If a localities model were to be adopted, then teams and practitioners currently serving Rutland and the County localities could remain largely unchanged (at least in the short term) but have single leadership. Unitary 2 (Central) has the LCC CYPS Directorate staff and all those practitioners and managers within LCC who currently serve the children

	within the districts of Lincoln/West Lindsey; Boston within the County who are experienced CYPS practitioners and managers, and who are familiar with the services currently provided by LCC for the new Unitary footprint. If a localities model were to be adopted, then teams and practitioners currently serving the area could remain largely unchanged. Unitary 3 (North) has both the NEL & NL CYPS Directorate staff and all those practitioners and managers who currently serve the children within the new Unitary footprint. These staff and managers would be familiar with the services currently provided by for half the new Unitary, but both of which are experienced CYPS teams. If a localities model were to be adopted, then teams and practitioners currently serving the 2 x unitary authorities could remain largely unchanged (at least in the short term) but have single leadership. There will also be the challenge of different contracts, pensions and terms across different councils. Harmonising contracts will be challenging and the planning for this will need to commence as soon as possible. There will be a need to ensure that staff care is prioritised and that staff are given confidence in the new arrangements and that Leaders protect and support morale throughout the LGR process.
Financial Stability	Ineffective financial planning around the whole LA system that supports children's services and service reductions can lead to significant, unexpected additional costs such as children's homes provision, housing for care experienced young adults, workforce pay and reward offer, early help provision. Cross boundary delivery models also rely on council investment into the infrastructure.
	The modelling commissioned by PwC and PeopleToo will help leaders identify and understand the financial implications, challenges and opportunities. This will need to be given early consideration and planning to mitigate the risks that the data identifies.
Equality, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIEB)	EDIEB is a priority consideration. Much work has already taken place to embed EDIEB across councils, but there is more to do. Commitments can become disjointed and dissipate through the LGR process.
	There will be an opportunity to 'take the best' from each of the councils involved in the Greater Lincolnshire LGR process in relation to Equality, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIEB). Each of the 4 x DCS's will have an understanding of these issues within their CYPS context. Early planning and considerations as well as political appetite will need be to be undertaken as part of LGR planning.
Corporate Parenting	Corporate parenting is a priority across all LGR plans. LAs have a moral and statutory responsibility to be the best possible corporate parent for children in care and care experienced young adults and commitment to fulfilling this duty can become disjointed and dissipate through the LGR process.

	There will be an opportunity to 'take the best' from each of the councils involved in the Greater Lincolnshire LGR process in relation to Corporate Parenting policies, protocols and initiatives. Each of the 4 x DCS's will have an understanding of these issues within their CYPS context. Early planning and considerations as well as political appetite will need be to be undertaken as part of LGR planning.
Shared Support Services	While the logic of shared services can make sense as separate councils evolve post LGR, a disconnect between newly established councils almost always occurs over a period of years, despite good intentions at inception. This most often applies to support services such as IT, housing, transport, HR, finance, communications and marketing and training.
	There will be the option of shared services especially for those service areas that are complex and difficult to disaggregate within the required timescales. Where this is the case, it is suggested that the learning from others is considered: • *'Appoint your DCS early' - so they can:* *- Help articulate a clear vision and values to win hearts and minds and support workforce recruitment and retention.* *- Initiate high-quality planning and sufficiency to meet local needs.* *- Inform arrangements to disaggregate and migrate data and establish ICT infrastructure.* *- Pin down risks and challenges early.* • *Be really clear about services you can separate out before vesting day and which ones you can't but have plans in place to disaggregate early on. Separating out small contracts can take 'an inordinate amount of time.'* • *'If I'd only known' how complex, expensive, difficult and full of risk it is to separate out a county-level ICT service: 'I think we would have worked harder at a potentially different solution – actually spending some serious money upfront to buy what we needed and implement it in a different way rather than trying to split what we had.'* It is advisable to establish a clear plan for full disaggregation either before or immediately after Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Evidence from previous LGR experiences shows that, although shared services may seem logical as councils evolve post-LGR, a disconnect between newly formed councils almost always develops over time, despite initial good intentions. Furthermore, learning indicates that shared services typically disaggregate within a few years of LGR.
Corporate Leadership	Lack of experience or willingness to consider experienced views in Children's Services can lead to ill-informed decision making and added risk. This often focuses on short term financially led decision making with long-term impact.

	Although this is a risk, consideration within the Matrix would suggest that there is a high degree of Corporate commitment and understanding across the current 4 x councils that host children's services responsibilities.
Political Leadership	Lack of experience or willingness to consider experienced views in Children's Services can lead to inaccurate advice to elected members from senior officers leading to ill-informed decision making and added risk.
	Although this is a risk, consideration within the Matrix would suggest that there is a high degree of Corporate commitment and understanding across the current 4 x councils that host children's services responsibilities.
Children's Services Leadership	Poor leadership of children's services gives poor advice to corporate and political leadership leading to ill-informed decision making and increased risk. Often this can stem from a serial interim with little or no track record as a DCS or in some cases an inexperienced DCS.
	There are currently 4 x DCS's within the greater Lincolnshire footprint and 3 x DCS's will be required within the 3 x Unitary model. There is a risk that some may leave, retire etcetera between now and Vesting Day or at the point of LGR implementation. However this cannot be predicted. There is however the potential for one DCS to be displaced. There are currently 4 x CYPS Senior Leadership Teams within the greater Lincolnshire footprint and 3 x Teams will be required within the 3 x Unitary model. There is a risk that some may leave, retire etcetera between now and Vesting Day or at the point of LGR implementation. However this cannot be predicted There is however the potential for one CYPS Senior Leadership Team to be displaced. However, there is currently sufficient /excess of senior managers who currently serve the child population of Greater Lincolnshire and therefore the proposed 3 x new Unitary model. Learning from councils that have been through LGR and have chosen a disaggregation approach advise the early appointment of the DCS.
Workforce Recruitment and Retention	Significant structural change can unsettle the workforce and lead to an exodus if plans are not clear or well communicated.
	Staff turnover is a real risk and a constant challenge in most CYPS services. There is a risk that experienced practitioners plan to retire because fear the changes and fear that they will not be working in the same team as they do currently. There is also a risk that some practitioners and managers will seek to 'take control of their own destiny' and exit prior to LGR. There will also be the challenge of different contracts, pensions and terms across different councils. Harmonising contracts will be challenging and the planning for this will need to commence asap. There will be a need to ensure that staff care is prioritised and that staff are given confidence in the new arrangements and that Leaders protect and support morale throughout the LGR process.

Services for Children	Significant structural change can lead to an inexperienced workforce which has a negative impact on services for children.
	Staff turnover is a real risk and a constant challenge in most CYPS services. There is a risk that experienced practitioners plan to retire because fear the changes and fear that they will not be working in the same team as they do currently. There is also a risk that some practitioners and managers will seek to 'take control of their own destiny' and exit prior to LGR. There are currently 4 x CYPS Directorates within the greater Lincolnshire footprint and 3 will be required within the 3 x Unitary model. There is a risk that some may leave, retire etcetera between now and Vesting Day or at the point of LGR implementation. However this cannot be predicted.
Delivery of Families First Partnership Reforms	Families First reforms are to be implemented by 2027 with significant planning and pilots required across the partnership. Attention on LGR may divert focus.
	The social care reforms have specifically allocated funding to local authorities for early help and prevention. Lincolnshire CC has been one of the three pathfinders identified nationally to trial arrangements. It is understood that Rutland, North and NE Lincs have got different models but do have an early help offer. All children's services departments across the country are preparing for the Families First reforms and as such early consideration and liaison with the DfE will be required to ensure focus and delivery against the new requirements. There will also likely be a different roles played by schools across the current LA CYPS footprints. This will require early consideration and liaison with all schools will be required to ensure focus and clarity of expectations (and training) against any agreed Early Help requirements.
Partnership Relations	Relationships with partners can suffer as a result of new structures and changes in workforce. This can significantly impact on how safeguarding partnerships, and 'front door' arrangements work. Important to consider health and police structures and how these align with LGR plans.
	The current four local authority (LA) partnership arrangements would reduce to three, streamlined as follows: • Unitary 1 (South): Based on existing Rutland arrangements, with added membership from relevant county partners—potentially reducing duplication for some partners. • Unitary 2 (Central): LCC arrangements, largely unchanged in membership. • Unitary 3 (North): Combined membership from NEL and NL, which could also reduce duplication for some partners. These revised partnership footprints would allow for greater focus within individual LA areas, while still enabling opportunities for collaboration across one or more partnerships. Additionally, alignment with other partnerships, such as Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Health & Wellbeing Boards, would be streamlined.

	Police Unitary 1 (South) - The new Unitary would involve working with both Leicester Police covering Rutland, and Lincolnshire Police serving the aspects of the current County footprint. Unitary 2 (Central) - The new Unitary would involve working with Lincolnshire Police serving the aspects of the current County footprint. This would be no change. Unitary 3 (North) - the new Unitary would involve working with Humberside Police. This would be no change. Health Unitary 1 (South) - The new Unitary would involve working with both NHS Lincolnshire and NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). Unitary 2 (Central) - The new Unitary would involve working with NHS Lincolnshire. This would be no change. Unitary 3 (North) - the new Unitary would involve working with NHS Humber and North Yorkshire. This would be no change.
Creation of an Alternative Delivery Model	Children's Trusts have a strong record of improving services under DfE statutory intervention, but in all but one case this is an intervention rather than a strategic council decision. Having Children's Services outside of the council can lead to 'blame' and criticism from the council(s) involved which destabilises effective services for children and families
	"the Government considers that an independent trust model for partnership working is untested outside the context of local authority intervention. On balance, this model is not considered appropriate for delivering high-quality outcomes in social care services in the context of LGR" *(Local Government Reorganisation: Considerations for partnership working in social care for new unitary authorities)* This option to be excluded from further consideration as MHCLG has made it clear that government does not consider this option to be suitable.

Summary

Each of these risks individually could have an adverse effect, however, the combined impact of multiple risks would be significant and far-reaching. It is therefore essential, when developing design principles and implementation plans, to assess both the likelihood and potential impact of each risk in detail for all three new unitary councils.

9. Other Factors to consider in deciding which model(s) could be suitable and in implementation of the chosen model:

The LGA identified nine key enablers:

- Longevity,
- Political impetus,
- Leadership and vision,
- Communication,
- Engagement and co production,
- Culture and staff stability, governance and accountability,
- Detailed planning and dedicated resources,
- IT,
- Management information.

Applying these in the context of LGR structural change highlights the importance of:

Longevity:

- Commit to a long-term structural model to ensure stability, continuity, and an environment where high-quality practice can thrive.
- Careful planning of how support and services for children and families will operate is essential, alongside consistency in implementing change.
- Early appointment of senior officers reinforces this commitment. Over time, the effectiveness of any council's children's services will largely depend on the effectiveness of the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

Political impetus:

- Strong political backing is critical to driving change.
- Political leaders must understand that Children's Services are complex, sensitive, and volatile.
- Elected members act as powerful advocates and influencers; therefore, appointing a shadow cabinet early in the process is key.

Leadership and vision:

- Articulate a clear vision of *why* the change is happening and how it will improve outcomes for children and families – this motivates and attracts staff.
- Leaders should be visible, values-driven, focused on practice and performance, approachable, and willing to listen. This fosters trust and helps staff feel supported during significant change.

Communication:

- Share the bigger picture about local children and families and the impact individuals and teams can make to create a sense of connection and belonging.
- In large-scale change, timely updates are essential. Delays in communication can fuel rumours and uncertainty.

Engagement and Co-production:

- Children and families want to tell their story once and have services join up around them.

- Actively learn from children and families about barriers and respond to feedback.
- Triangulate insights by listening to staff and partners about what works and what hinders progress.

Culture and staff stability:

- A key challenge ‘is how to make the experience feel different and positive for staff, and how to create the conditions that ensure staff retention and continued recruitment both during the process of restructuring itself and as the new organisational form matures.’

Social workers won’t stay where they don’t feel valued and trusted:

- Somewhere they can share their emotions, discuss difficult cases, receive good supervision and support, in a service that isn’t risk averse or rushes to blame.
- What encourages commitment and retention is a service culture which supports learning in a complex and challenging environment.

Governance and accountability:

- Establish clear oversight and reporting lines, supported by transparent performance management, quality assurance, and accurate data—always remembering that behind the numbers are real children and families.

Detailed planning and dedicated resources:

- A constant theme from large scale change in children’s services is the need for dedicated project and programme management supported by HR, finance and legal resource to keep the change process on track.
- The importance of keeping support in place for some time after the ‘go live’ date to deal with legacy issues.

IT and management information systems:

- Ensuring effective data transfer and identifying the right case management system is a big responsibility.
- Safely transferring the right children and family records in a LGR context is a significant and sensitive task.

In any approach to planning large scale transformation for children's services, as well as the risks and benefits of the delivery model, it is important to understand which 'enablers' are in place, which may need more attention, and which are likely to militate against the approach.

Build on local place knowledge in managing large scale change across Children’s Services: All the parties to LGR decisions bring with them local knowledge and wisdom. In choosing which planning option and delivery mechanism to provide the best services for children and families, use design principles which embed the importance of structures which:

- Enable children’s services to operate as an integrated whole.
- Recognise place matters by capturing and building on the inter-relationship between children, families and communities.
- Align with and support partnership working, promote cross-council working, and are underpinned by a unified evidence-based model of practice.

And consider which enablers are in place, which may need more attention, and which are likely to mitigate against your chosen approach.

Your Greater Lincolnshire DCS's have also identified the further following issues for consideration in the planning for LGR:

- Education services face their own set of challenges in a disaggregated system. school improvement functions are really different across different councils as are our different responses to the issue that grants have been cut from central government
- Planning for school places could be difficult and risky
- Specialist placements are unevenly distributed; you may end up again with some local authorities that have got more challenges than others or some that have got more placements than others (LCC DCS LGR Discussion 27.08.25).

10. Preferred model

The creation of 3 x new Unitary Authorities

This option is where, through the process of local government reorganisation, the county council, the three existing unitary authorities and the relevant district authorities combine to become 3 new single tier unitary authorities.

Unitary 1 (South)	Unitary 2 (Central)	Unitary 3 (North)
South Kesteven DC North Kesteven DC South Holland DC Rutland CC	City of Lincoln C West Lindsey DC Boston BC East Lindsey DC	North East Lincolnshire North Lincolnshire

Each new unitary authority would establish its own Children's Services structure and workforce from day one, with local leadership, systems, and separate services.

Within each of the three unitary councils, all Children's Services functions, such as early help, social care, SEND, and education services, would be consolidated into a single, unified directorate, operating consistently across the new organisational footprint.

STRENGTHS

- Alignment with place-based priorities,
- Local accountability,
- Local ownership from the start,
- Aligns with direction of travel of key partners towards neighbourhood and community working,
- Builds on district council strengths in place-based leadership, prevention, early help and collaboration,
- Communication is personalised and relates to local priorities,
- Consistency in practice and standards,
- Streamlined management,
- Economies of scale,
- Single culture and vision.

LIMITATIONS:

- High transition risk,
- Loss of experienced staff,
- Risk of service disruption during transition,
- Boston & South Holland areas would need to be separated,
- Local needs and identities may be diluted,
- Large systems may lose agility Potential challenges in recruiting DCS level leadership for each authority,
- Costly duplication,
- Recruiting and retaining staff, particularly at senior levels, can be a challenge,
- Potential for initial workforce uncertainty and anxiety,
- Need to transfer of records and data and establish new case management and ICT systems,

- Need to invest in strategic and operational alignment with key partners, whose scope may cover a wider footprint,
- May lose opportunities for economies of scale in specialist provision, for example in SEND or fostering, but this can be mitigated through developing regional partnership arrangements.

Within each of the three new unitary footprints, it is recommended that service delivery be organised into locality-based teams. Where possible, these teams should align with former council areas to help mitigate risk, meet government expectations for locality-based services, and maintain continuity.

Within this model there is also an option for **Transitional Planning / Deferred disaggregated model for some or all services.** This would be the option of former council Children's Services functions continuing to operate for a defined period (e.g., 1 – 2 years), during which longer-term arrangements are co-designed and implemented. This could include those services that are complex to disaggregate such as:

- Commissioning arrangements – where new contracts would be required and potentially some joining up of contracts.
- IT systems – this would be wider than Children's Services.
- Social Work Recording systems – where a new single system would need to be decided upon and existing records decanted into the new system.

Not recommended but may be a pragmatic solution for some services.

Within this model there is also an option for **some continued partnership / shared services or collaboration for some services** across a wider footprint.

Not recommended.

This model of **the creation of 3 x new Unitary Authorities** is recommended and is the preferred model based on the fact that this offers:

- Clear governance and accountability,
- Reasonable sized footprints,
- Limited differences in Ofsted performance judgements,
- Limited impact on current service delivery arrangements - particularly if a localities model of delivery is adopted,
- No likelihood of significant difficulties in recruiting / retaining existing DCS and CYPS Leadership team personnel,
- Clarity in partnership arrangements,
- Some disaggregation of LCC current arrangements but this could largely be a 'lift & shift',
- Coming together of NEL & NL could cause some challenges but these could be mitigated if a localities model of delivery is adopted.

Practice models across the new 3 x Unitary footprints will require further consideration.

PART 2:
Greater Lincolnshire LGR Proposal

High Level Modelling for the Recommended Delivery Model for Children's Services

Prepared by:
Kath O'Dwyer

PART 2

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11. Background

The Commission

To provide a recommendation and high level modelling of a delivery model for children's services in Greater Lincolnshire.

The commission is constructed in two parts:

Part 2

- To provide high level modelling of the recommended delivery model
- To provide a high-level recommendation for the staffing structure of the recommended delivery model.

Update since the Part 1 report completion.

Political developments in recent weeks have resulted in a decision that Rutland is no longer part of the core proposal, and that North and North East Lincolnshire remaining separate for legal compliance with a view to merge in future.

Therefore, the new proposal is:
Unitary 1 - SK, NK, SH
Unitary 2 - BBC, COLC, EL, WL
Unitary 3 - N Lincs
Unitary 4 - NE Lincs

This report will therefore focus upon the creation of Unitary 1 and Unitary 2 councils from the existing County Council footprint.

Government guidance

Government guidance suggests that:

'Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.

b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.

c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.'

'For proposals that would involve disaggregation of services, we would welcome further details on how services can be maintained, such as social care, children's services, SEND, homelessness, and for wider public services including public safety. Under criterion 3c you may wish to consider:

- *How each option would deliver high-quality and sustainable public services or efficiency saving opportunities.*
- *What would the different options mean for local services provision, for example:*
  - *Do different options have a different impact on SEND services and distribution of funding and sufficiency planning to ensure children can access appropriate support, and how will services be maintained?*
  - *What is the impact on adults and children's care services?*
  - *Is there a differential impact on the number of care users and infrastructure to support them among the different options?'*

Key questions that require answering to inform the proposal are how to, if one decides to do so, safely disaggregate the Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services? What are the benefits from doing so?

MHCLG are encouraging of innovative partnerships, for example Regional Care Cooperatives. It is expected that these will augment disaggregated services, rather than be a delivery model.

The Preferred model - the creation of 2 x new Unitary Authorities from the County footprint

This conclusion is based on Part 1 work undertaken as part of this commission.

This option is where, through the process of local government reorganisation, the county council, the three existing unitary authorities and the relevant district authorities combine to become 2 new single tier unitary authorities.

This option would mean each new unitary standing up its own Children's Services structure and workforce, with local leadership and systems with separate services from day one.

In each of the 2 x Unitary Councils, the vast majority of Children's Services functions (e.g. early help, social care, SEND, education services) would be merged into a single, unified directorate, operating consistently across the new organisational footprint.

Unitary 1	Unitary 2
South Kesteven DC North Kesteven DC South Holland DC	City of Lincoln C West Lindsey DC Boston BC East Lindsey DC

STRENGTHS

- Alignment with place-based priorities,
- Local accountability,
- Local ownership from the start,
- Aligns with direction of travel of key partners towards neighbourhood and community working,
- Builds on district council strengths in place-based leadership, prevention, early help and collaboration,
- Communication is personalised and relates to local priorities,

- Consistency in practice and standards,
- Streamlined management,
- Economies of scale,
- Single culture and vision.

LIMITATIONS:

- High transition risk,
- Loss of experienced staff,
- Risk of service disruption during transition,
- Boston & South Holland areas would need to be separated,
- Local needs and identities may be diluted,
- Large systems may lose agility,
- Potential challenges in recruiting DCS level leadership for each authority,
- Costly duplication,
- Recruiting and retaining staff, particularly at senior levels, can be a challenge,
- Potential for initial workforce uncertainty and anxiety,
- Need to transfer of records and data and establish new case management and ICT systems,
- Need to invest in strategic and operational alignment with key partners, whose scope may cover a wider footprint,
- May lose opportunities for economies of scale in specialist provision, for example in SEND or fostering, but this can be mitigated through developing regional partnership arrangements.

However, within each of the 2 x new Unitary footprints, it is recommended that delivery be focused into locality-based teams, wherever possible aligned to former council areas to mitigate risk, meet government expectations for locality-based services, and maintain continuity.
Within this model, there is also an option for Transitional Planning / Deferred Disaggregation for some or all services. This would involve former council Children's Services functions continuing to operate for a defined period (e.g., 1–2 years), during which longer-term arrangements are co-designed and implemented. This could apply to services that are complex to disaggregate, such as:

- Commissioning arrangements – requiring new contracts and potentially some consolidation.
- IT systems – changes extending beyond Children's Services.
- Social Work Recording systems – requiring selection of a new single system and migration of existing records.

Not recommended.

Within this model there is also an option for some continued partnership/ shared services or collaboration for some services across a wider footprint.

Not recommended but may be a pragmatic solution for some services.

This model of the creation of 2 x new Unitary Authorities is recommended and is the preferred model based on the fact that this offers:

- Clear governance and accountability,
- Reasonable sized footprints,
- Limited differences in Ofsted performance judgements,
- Limited impact on current service delivery arrangements - particularly if a localities model of delivery is adopted,
- Little likelihood of significant difficulties in recruiting / retaining existing DCS and CYPS Leadership team personnel,

- Clarity in partnership arrangements,
- Some disaggregation of LCC current arrangements but this could largely be a ‘lift & shift’,
- Coming together of NEL & NL could cause some challenges but these could be mitigated if a localities model of delivery is adopted.

12. High level modelling of the recommended delivery model

For the **Lincolnshire County Council** footprint, service delivery for some services is currently managed through a locality model for Children's Services, based on the current 7 x District Council footprints.
However, some services are currently delivered in the following arrangements:

- **a)** Across the whole County Council footprint from a central team/resource.
- **b)** On a North and South footprint.
- **c)** On 7 x District Council footprints or a combination of these district footprints.

NB: Some services delivered on a combination of the district footprints bringing together Boston and South Holland which, in the new proposals, would be in separate Unitary Authorities. Therefore disaggregation of those services may be required.

a) Children's Services currently delivered on a single cross-county footprint

CYPS SLT	
Management Team	1 x DCS 1 x AD Safeguarding 1 x AD Children's Care Services 1 x AD Early Help 1 x AD Children's Health & Commissioning 1 x AD Education
Sector Led Improvement	1 x Head of Children's Transformation 1 x Head of Service Sector Led Improvement – Early Help 1 x Head of Service Sector Led Improvement – Safeguarding 1 x Social Care Team Manager (Sector Led Improvement)

Children in Care	
CiC Social Work Teams	1 x Children's Corporate Parenting Manager
North	1 x Team Manager 4 x Advanced Practitioner 2 x Life Story Worker 4 x Practice Supervisor 7 x Social Worker – Level 1 5 x Social Worker – Level 2 3 x Social Worker – Student
South	1 x Team Manager 3 x Advanced Practitioner 1 x Life Story Worker 4 x Practice Supervisor 6 x Social Worker – Level 1 5 x Social Worker – Level 2 3 x Social Worker – Student
Unaccompanied CiC South	1 x Practice Supervisor 4 x Social Worker Level 2
Fostering, Adoption & Leaving Care	1 x Head Of Fostering, Adoption & Leaving Care
Leaving Care	1 x Children's Services Manager
North (2 teams)	2 x Team Manager

	1 x Co-Ordinator 2 x Leaving Care Worker 12 x Project Worker 1 2 x Project Worker 2
South (2 teams)	2 x Team Manager 1 x Leaving Care Worker 2 x Practice Supervisor 15 x Project Worker 1 3 x Project Worker 2 1 x Project Worker 3
Fostering	
North	1 x Team Manager 3 x Advanced Practitioner 2 x Children and Families Officer 4 x Placement Support Worker 3 x Practice Supervisor 4 x Social Worker Level 1 3 x Social Worker Level 2 3 x Student Social Worker
South	1 x Team Manager 1 x Advanced Practitioner

	1 x Children and Families Officer 2 x Placement Support Worker 3 x Practice Supervisor 2 x Social Worker Level 1 9 x Social Worker Level 2 3 x Student Social Worker
Fostering Recruitment	1 x Adoption and Fostering Marketing & Recruitment Officer 1 x Practice Supervisor 2 x Social Worker Level 1 2 x Social Worker Level 2
Adoption	1 x Head of Service – Adoption
	1 x Service Manager for the L3R Regional Adoption Agency 1 x Team Manager 6 x Advanced Practitioner Adoption Support 1 x Children and Families Officer 3 x Early Help Worker 3 x Practice Supervisor Adoption 2 x Social Worker Level 1 5 x Social Worker Level 2 3 x Student Social Worker 1 x Family Adoption Links Marketing and Recruitment Officer

	1 x Performance Support Officer - Level 2 1 x Adoption Panel Chair 1 x Adoption Panel Vice Chair 1 x Agency Advisor to Adopt/Perm/Foster Panel 1 x Fostering Panel Chair 1 x Fostering Panel Vice Chair 8 x Independent Panel Member
Secure	1 x Principal 2 x Deputy Manager 1 x Catering Manager 1 x Catering Supervisor 3 x Cook 1 x Handy Person 10 x Relief Residential Care Officer Level 1 25 x Residential Care Officer Level 1 15 x Residential Care Officer Level 2 5 x Residential Care Officer Level 3 4 x Night Care Officer 1 x Site Manager 3 x Support Worker

	3 x Teaching Assistant 1 x Technical Supervisor 1 x Head Teacher 1 x Deputy Head 12 x Instructor 1 x Maths Teacher 2 x Senior Teaching Assistant - Advanced Skills 1 x Teacher 1 x Unqualified Teacher
Semi Independence	1 x Registered Manager - Children's Home
Denton Ave (Semi- Independence Unit)	1 x Residential Care Officer Level 1 4 x Residential Care Officer Level 2 1 x Residential Care Officer Level 3
Rowston Close Gainsborough **(Semi- Independence Unit)**	1 x Relief Residential Care Officer Level 1 1 x Residential Care Officer Level 1 2 x Residential Care Officer Level 2
Youth Hub	1 x Team Manager 1 x Comm & Interventions Practice Supervisor 1 x Snr Comm & Interventions 12 x Sports worker 6 x Activity Worker

	4 x Relief Activity Worker 2 x Apprentice
YOT	1 x Head of Youth Offending 1 x RJ Team leader 1 x Adv Prac 4 x Comm Interv Worker 2 x Effective Practice Officer 2 x Group work Facilitator 1 x Panel Coordinator#3 x Practice Supervisors 2 x relief Intev Worker 1 x Student SW 3 Relief Intev & Group Facilitators 1 x LCVYS Development Worker 2 x Victim Liaison Officers 9 x YOT Officers 7 x YOT Workers 4 x Youth Development Officers 11 x Youth Development workers
Education	
School Standards	1 x Head of School Standards 9 x Education Locality Lead

	3 x Interim Locality Lead
Virtual School	1 x H of Virtual School 1 x Assistant Head 2 x Inclusion Caseworkers 4 x Progress Coordinator (CwSW) 2 x Educ Progress Coordinator LAC) 8 x Education (Progress) Coordinator Looked After Children 1 x Education Officer-Looked After Children 1 x Children in Care Employment Officer 1 x Education (Progress) Coordinator Looked After Children 1 x ePEP Coordinator Virtual School 1 x Virtual School Aspiration Coach
Admissions	1 x H of S School Strategy 1 x Team Leader – Admissions 1 x Systems and Data Support Officer 1 x Admissions Officer - Process and Data 1 x Principal Fair Access Officer 5 x School Admissions Caseworker
Educ Welfare	2 x Team Manager 1 x Inclusion & Attendance Manager 13 x Safeguarding & Education Welfare Officer

	1 x Attendance Lead 1 x EM & Trav Family Education & Supp Officer 1 x EM & Traveller Education Team Leader 2 x Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Officer
Provision Planning	1 x Admissions & Educ Provision Manager 2 x Educ Provision Officer 1 x SEND & AP Provision Officer 1 x Educ Reorganisation Officer
Food Educ Service	2 x Programme Officer
Inclusion	1 x Head of Inclusion 1 x Team Manager – Inclusion Team 1 x Team Manager- Specialist Teachers 1 x Inclusion Team Manager - Quality and Effectiveness 2 x Dyslexia Outreach Teacher 7 x Specialist Language Teacher 1 x Specialist Language Teacher – Supply 2 x Specialist Speech and Language Teaching Assistant 2 x Assistant Caseworker Pupil Reintegration 17 x Pupil Reintegration Caseworker 1 x Pupil Reintegration Caseworker - Data and Information 1 x Pupil Reintegration Practice Supervisor

	1 x Pupil Reintegration Team Panel Clerk 3 x SEND Advice Line SALL Advisor 1 x Qualified Habilitation Specialist 1 x Registered Qualified Habilitation Specialist 5 x SEST Teacher of children and young people with a vision impairment 3 x SEST Teacher of children and young people with multisensory impairment 1 x SEST Lead Teacher of deaf children and young people 1 x SEST Senior Lead Teacher 5 x SEST Specialist Teaching Assistant 9 x SEST Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People 1 x Specialist Assistive Technology Resource Officer 1 x Visual Impairment Lead Specialist Teacher 1 x Lead Teacher - Specialist Teaching Team 9 x STT Specialist Teacher 5 x STT Supply Specialist Teacher 22 x Teacher - Specialist Teaching Service 2 x Team Leader - Specialist Teaching Service 4 x Inclusion Quality and Effectiveness Lead
Safeguarding in Education	1 x Safeguarding in Schools Team Leader 2 x Safeguarding & Educ Welfare Officer
Music Service	1 x Head of Service

	1 x Business Manager 5 x Partnership Manager 74 x Tutor 1 x x Music Support Tutor (Claims) 1 x Event & Project Coordinator
Home Tuition	2 x County Interim Home Tuition Learning Mentor 44 x County Interim Home Tuition Teacher 3 x County Interim Home Tuition Team: Team Leader 1 x Home Tuition Casework Coordinator
InspireU	1 x Principal 3 x Senior Lead 4 x Provision Manager 2 x Pastoral Lead 4 x Wellbeing Coach 1 x Support Coordinator 25 x Learning Support Assistant 7 x Job Coach 6 x Employment Coordinator 5 x Functional Skills and GCSE Tutor L2 2 x Employability + PSD Tutor L1 3 x Employability + PSD Tutor L2

	2 x EHCP Assistant 1 x Additional Support Specialist 1 x Cover Tutor 1 x Functional Skills and GCSE Maths Tutor 1 x Functional Skills Tutor 2 x Performance Officer:- Exams + Data 1 x Sstems Officer
Children's Commissioning	1 x Head of Children's Commissioning 1 x Children's Commissioning Manager 1 x Commissioning Manager 2 x Commissioning Team Manager – Commercial Services 1 x Strategic Commissioning Manager 15 x Commissioning Officer 2 x Commissioning Support Officer 5 x Placement Support Officer 1 x Senior Placement Support Officer 1 x Programme Officer – Children's 1 x Integrated Commissioning 1 x Senior Programme Officer
Safeguarding	

Quality & Standards	1 x Head of Service
Audit & Quality	5 x Team Manager Q & S 1 x Practice Supervisor Q & S 1 x Care Proceedings Case Manager 1 x Inspections & Policy Officer 4 x Practice Advisors 2 x Practice Advisors (Educ) 1 x Practice Advisors (Health) 2 x Independent Chair 21 x Indep Chair / LADO 3 x Indep Chair / LADO (Relief) 1 x Snr Liaise Officer 6 x Liaise Case Workers 2 x Learning & Devel Officers
LCSP	1 x CDOP Co-ordinator 1 x Independent Chair/ LADO 1 x Safeguarding Board Business Mgr 1 x LSCP Analyst 1 x LSCP Senior Safeguarding Co-ordinator 1 x Policy and Audit Officer

	1 x E-Learning Officer 1 x LSCP Training and Development Officer 1 x LSCP Training Support Officer 1 x Training Officer
ABG Participation Team	3 x Participation Officers
OT	1 x OT Team Manager 1 x Practice Supervisor – OT 2 x Advanced Practitioner OT 1 x Relief Worker – COVID 19 1 x Relief OT 4 x Occupational Therapist Level 1 4 x Occupational Therapist Level 2

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Commentary

There are a number of options in relation to the services to children, that are current delivered and configured on a **County wide footprint**:

1. Decision to leave as is and operate as a shared service hosted by one or more of the new Unitary Councils.
2. Decision to leave as is and operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded.
3. Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day.

I would recommend that plans for disaggregation of the vast majority of services are developed and implemented in for Vesting Day.

b) The following services that are currently delivered on a North & South basis across the County

	North	South

CiC Social Work Teams	North	South
		Unaccompanied CiC South
Fostering	North	South
Leaving Care	North (2 teams)	South (2 teams)

Commentary

I am unclear as to the geography for the North and South split, however:

- **If these relate to the 2 x new Unitary Authority footprints, they could be delivered as an authority wide service in each of the new Unitary Authorities.**
- If these do not correspond with the 2 x new Unitary Authority footprints, they could be delivered:
  - as a shared service hosted by one or more of the new Unitary Councils.
  - operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded.
  - Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day.
- **For the North & South services that have 2 x teams in each (Leaving Care), depending on current footprint, these could be managed and delivered on a locality basis within each LA.**

c) Current Children's Services currently delivered on a County Locality Model

The following services are currently delivered by the County Council on a Locality Model and as such would potentially, in the most part, allow a 'lift & shift' approach in the proposed 2 x New Unitary Authority model.

Some services delivered on a combination of the district footprints bring together Boston and South Holland which in the new proposals would be in separate Unitary Authorities. Therefore disaggregation of those services may be required.

There are also management and leadership arrangements for these services that sit centrally and would therefore require further consideration.

	County Footprint	Boston & South Holland	East Lindsey	N & S Kesteven	Lincoln & West Lindsey
Early Help	1 x Head of Service - Pathfinder			1 x Head of Service NK/SK Locality	1 x Head of Service Lincoln & West Lindsey Locality
		1 x Team Manager 2 x Practice Supervisor 6 x Snr EH Worker 40 X EH Worker	1 x Team Manager 2 x Practice Supervisor 5 x Snr EH Worker 30 X EH Worker	1 x Team Manager 3 x Practice Supervisor 6 x Snr EH Worker 45 X EH Worker	1 x Team Manager 2 x Practice Supervisor 7 x Snr EH Worker 50 X EH Worker
	Central Hub 1 x Team Manager 2 x Practice Supervisors 1 x Snr EH Worker 8 x EH Worker 1 x CE & Missing Co-ordinator 1 x Youth Housing Officer	7 x EH Worker 1 x Educ mentor	1 x Practice Supervisor 1 x Snr EH Worker 7 x EH Worker 1 x Educ mentor	1 x Practice Supervisor 2 x Snr EH Worker 10 x EH Worker 1 x Educ mentor	1 x Practice Supervisor 3 x Snr EH Worker 14 x EH Worker 1 x Educ mentor 1 x Student SW
	County Footprint	**Boston & South Holland**	**East Lindsey**	**N & S Kesteven**	**Lincoln & West Lindsey**

Contact	1 x Team Manager FGC & FT & Time	1 x Family Time Coordinator 6 x FT Worker	1 x Family Time Coordinator 5 x FT Worker	1 x Family Time Coordinator 25 x FT Worker 11 Relief FT Workers	1 x Family Time Coordinator
Time				1 x Practice Supervisor 4 x Time EH Worker	
FGC				2 x FGC Coordinators 14 x FGC Practitioners 1 x FGC Practitioner (adults)	
Fast	1 x Head of Service	**Boston**	**North**	**North**	**Gainsborough**
		1 x Team Manager 3 x Practice Supervisor 7 x Advanced Prac 6 x Level 1 SW 4 x Level 2 SW 3 x Student SW	1 x Team Manager 2 x Practice Supervisor 6 x Advanced Prac 4 x Level 1 SW 2 x Level 2 SW 4 x Student SW	2 x TM 4 x Practice Supervisor 6 x Advanced Prac 5 x Level 1 SW 1 x Level 2 SW 4 x Student SW	1 x TM 4 x Practice Supervisor 9 x Advanced Prac 7 x Level 1 SW 3 x Level 2 SW 4 x Student SW
		Spalding	**South**	**South**	**Lincoln City**
		1 x Team Manager	1 x Team Manager	1 x TM	2 x TM

		3 x Practice Supervisor 5 x Advances Prac 8 x Level 1 SW 2 x Level 2 SW 3 x Student SW	2 x Practice Supervisor 5 x Advanced Prac 4 x Level 1 SW 1 x Level 2 SW 4 x Student SW	4 x Practice Supervisor 6 x Advanced Prac 8 x Level 1 SW 4 x Level 2 SW 3 x Student SW	4 x Practice Supervisor 7 x Advanced Prac 8 x Level 1 SW 5 x Level 2 SW 3 x Student SW
Screening Team					8 x Advanced Practitioner 6 x Practice Supervisor 3 x Senior Early Help Worker
Early Years	1 x Head of Early Years 1 x Early Years Entitlements Consultant 1 x Early Years Entitlements Outreach Officer 1 x EYE Outreach Officer (Early Years Entitlements) 1 x Sector Support and Development Consultant 1 x Senior Early Years Entitlement Officer 1 x Senior Project Officer Early Years and Childcare	1 x Early Years Locality Lead 4 x Early Years Practitioner 5 x Early Years Specialist Teacher	1 x Early Years Locality Lead 4 x Early Years Practitioner 1 x Early Years Specialist Teacher 2 x Specialist Teacher	1 x Early Years Locality Lead 5 x Early Years Practitioner 6 x Early Years Specialist Teacher	1 x Early Years Locality Lead 5 x Early Years Practitioner 2 x Early Years Specialist Teacher 3 x Specialist Teacher

	3 x Sufficiency & Sustainability Officer 4 x Support Officer (EYE) 2 x Sustainability and Development Consultant 1 x Sustainability and Development Manager				
Childrens Centres	1 x Team Manager-Quality Assurance Ch Centre 1 x Wraparound Childcare Programme Consultant 3 x Wraparound Programme Delivery Officer 1 x Sector Support & Development Consultant 1 x Early Help Worker – FAB 1 x Business Support Officer-Training Director 4 x Early Years Improvement Advisor 1 x Early Years Improvement Advisor - Transition 1 x Early Years Improvement Advisor (SEND/Inclusion) 1 x Early Years Lead Advisor - Sector Improvement				

	1 x Early Years Practitioner Lead for 0-2s 1 x Early Years Practitioner Lead for Early Intervention 1 x Lead Consultant - Professional 1 x Principal Advisor – Early Education and Childcare 4 x Sector Support & Development Consultant				
	County Footprint	**Boston & South Holland**	**East Lindsey**	**N & S Kesteven**	**Lincoln & West Lindsey**
Family Hubs		3 x Family and Baby Project Officer 1 x Senior Performance Officer 10 x Infant Feeding Peer Support Worker 4 x Family Health Worker – Antenatal Education Programme 2 x Senior Family Health Worker – Antenatal Education Programme 1 x Senior Health Visitor – Antenatal Education Programme 2 x Specialist Health Visitor			
Family Centres				**Grantham** 2 x Caretaker / Cleaner	

TAC Team		2 x Team Manager 17 x EH Consultant 2 x Snr EH Consultant 1 x Practice Supervisor			
SEND	1 x Head of SEND 1 x Assistant Head 1 x SEND Review Manager 1 x SEND Employment Lead 1 x SEND Employment Officer	1 x Team Manager 2 x Practice Supervisors 3 x Caseworkers 2 x Assistant Case Workers 3 x Caseworker Level 1 4 x Caseworker Level 2 1 x Systems Officer	1 x Team Manager 1 x Practice Supervisors 2 x Caseworkers 3 x Caseworker Level 1 5 x Caseworker Level 2 3 x Assistant Case Workers EL ESCO 1 x Practice Supervisor 8 x Keyworker	1 x Team Manager 2 x Practice Supervisors 1 x Caseworker 2 x Assistant Case Worker 6 x Caseworker Level 1 8 x Caseworker Level 2 1 x SEND Systems Officer	1 x Team Manager 2 x Practice Supervisors 4 x Caseworkers 3 x Assistant Case Workers 2 x Caseworker Level 1 7 x Caseworker Level 2 1 x Young Voices Chair
CwD					**CWD Lincoln** 1 x Team Manager 3 x Practice Supervisors 4 x Advanced Practitioners 4 x SW Level 1 8 x SW level 2

					3 x SW Students
0-19 Health Hub	1 x Children's Health Safeguarding Nurse Advisor 4 x Community Practice Educator 9 x Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (Student Health Visitor) 1 x Children and Young People's Continence Care Service Lead 2 x Children's Continence Deputy Nurse 1 x Children's Health Lead Nurse	1 x Children's Health Locality Manager 8 x Family Health Worker 5 x Health Visitor 3 x Practice Supervisor – Children's Health 1 x Registered Nurse 2 x Relief Health Visitor 1 x Relief Senior Health Visitor 15 x Senior Health Visitor	1 x Children's Health Locality Manager 2 x Snr C&YP Nurse 5 x C&YP Nurse 9 x Family Health Worker 5 x Health Visitor 2 x Practice Supervisor – Children's Health 2 x Registered Nurse 3 x Relief Health Visitor 8 x Senior Health Visitor	1 x Children's Health Locality Manager 8 x Family Health Worker 2 x Health Visitor 3 x Practice Supervisor – Children's Health 3 x Registered Nurse 2 x Relief Health Visitor 20 x Senior Health Visitor	1 x Children's Health Locality Manager 11x Family Health Worker 7 x Health Visitor 4 x Practice Supervisor – Children's Health 5 x Registered Nurse 4 x Relief Health Visitor 20 x Senior Health Visitor
	County Footprint	**Boston & South Holland**	**East Lindsey**	**N & S Kesteven**	**Lincoln & West Lindsey**
Residential	1 x Hof S CiC & Residential Estate 3 x Service Lead Residential Estates 2 x Handy person				
		Albion Street **Spalding (SH)**	**Riverhead House, Louth**	**91 Eastgate** **Sleaford (NK)**	**Wickerby Cresent** **Lincoln**

		1 x Registered Manager 1 x Assistant Manager 8 x Relief Residential Care Officer L1 6 x Residential Care Officer L1 5 x Residential Care Officer L2 1 x Residential Care Officer L2	1 x Registered Manager 2 x Assistant manager 1 x Cook 1 x Handy Person 13 x Relief Residential Care Officer L1 22 x Residential Care Officer L1 13 x Residential Care Officer L2 3 x Residential Care Officer L3 6 x Night Care Officer	1 x Registered Manager 1 x Assistant Manager 3 x Relief Residential Care Officer L1 2 x Residential Care Officer – CU L3 5 x Residential Care Officer L1 4 x Residential Care Officer L2	2 x Registered Manager 1 x Assistant Manager 1 x Cook 1 x Handy Person 10 x Relief Residential Care Officer L1 10 x Residential Care Officer L1 6 x Residential Care Officer L2 2 x Residential Care Officer L3
		Haven Cottage **Boston**	**33 Northholme**	**The Beacon** **Grantham (SK)**	**Robin House,** **Lincoln**
		1 x Registered Manager 1 x Assistant Manager 2 x Cook 1 x Handy Person 8 x Relief Residential Care Officer L1 11 x Residential Care Officer L1 5 x Residential Care Officer L2	1 x Registered Manager 11 x Relief Residential Care Officer L1 2 x Residential Care Officer – CU L1 1 x Residential Care Officer – CU L2 2 x Residential Care Officer – CU L 3 4 x Residential Care Officer L1	1 x Registered Manager 1 x Assistant Manager 8 x Relief Residential Care Officer L1 6 x Residential Care Officer Level 1 5 x Residential Care Officer Level 2 3 x Residential Care Officer Level 3	1 x Registered Manager 1 x Assistant Manager 5 x Relief Residential Care Officer L1 4 x Residential Care Officer Level 1 5 x Residential Care Officer Level 2 2 x Residential Care Officer Level 3

		3 x Residential Care Officer L3 1 x Support Worker	5 x Residential Care Officer L2		

Summary of Teams /Services currently delivered by the County on a locality model basis aligned to the district council footprints

	Unitary 1 (South)	**Unitary 2 (Central)**
Boston & South Holland currently configured under 1 x Locality within County arrangements so may require disaggregation	South Kesteven DC North Kesteven DC South Holland DC	City of Lincoln C West Lindsey DC Boston BC East Lindsey DC
Early Help Teams 2 teams per current Locality + Central Hub	Boston & South Holland N & S Kesteven	Boston & South Holland East Lindsey Lincoln & West Lindsey
Contact 1 x teams per current Locality	Boston & South Holland N & S Kesteven	Boston & South Holland East Lindsey Lincoln & West Lindsey
Fast	North K South K Spalding	Boston North South

		Gainsborough Lincoln City
Early Years 1 x team per current Locality + Central Resource	Boston & South Holland N & S Kesteven	Boston & South Holland East Lindsey Lincoln & West Lindsey
SEND 1 x team per current Locality + Central Resource	Boston & South Holland N & S Kesteven	Boston & South Holland East Lindsey Lincoln & West Lindsey
0-19 Health 1 x team per current Locality + Central Resource	Boston & South Holland N & S Kesteven	Boston & South Holland East Lindsey Lincoln & West Lindsey
Residential 8 x Units + Central Resource	Albion Street, Spalding (SH) 91 Eastgate, Sleaford (NK) The Beacon, Grantham (SK)	Riverhead House, Louth Wickerby Cresent, Lincoln Haven Cottage, Boston 33 Northholme Robin House, Lincoln

Commentary

County Footprint

For those services within the table above which are delivered, in part, as a centralised function across the County Footprint, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- be duplicated in each of the 2 x new Unitary Councils,

- remain centralised, hosted by one Council, and continuing to serve the county footprint.
- There is also the option of these services remaining centralised for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation.

I would recommend that these overarching teams be disaggregated to service each Unitary authority separately.

Boston & South Holland

For those services within the table above which are delivered on a Boston and South Holland footprint, if these two districts are to be in separate Unitary authorities, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- be separated into each of the 2 x new Unitary Councils,
- remain centralised, hosted by one Council, and remaining to serve the 2 x district footprints.
- There is also the option of these services remaining centralised for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation.

I would recommend that these overarching teams be disaggregated to service each Unitary authority separately.

East Lindsey

For those services within the table above which are delivered on an East Lindsey footprint, **no change** should be required, although management and leadership considerations may be required.

N & S Kesteven

For those services within the table above which are delivered on a North & South Kesteven footprint, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- be separated into each of the 2 x locality areas,
- remain joint and serve the 2 x locality footprints across the new Unitary authority.
- There is also the option of these services remaining joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation into localities.

I would recommend that these services remaining joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation into localities.

Lincoln & West Lindsey

For those services within the table above which are delivered on a Lincoln & West Lindsey footprint, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- be separated into each of the 2 x locality areas,
- remain joint and serve the 2 x locality footprints across the new Unitary authority .
- There is also the option of these services remaining joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation into localities.

I would recommend that these services remaining joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation into localities.

Summary of all Children's services delivered by the County on the 3 x models of delivery (a); b) & c)):

a) Centralised,



b) New Unitary Council,
c) North & South.

County wide footprint	New Unitary Council footprints	North & South Footprints
Children's Services Management Team	FAST	CiC Social Work Teams – 1 x North & 1 x South & 1 x UASC CiC Sth
Sector Led Improvement	Contact - 1 x teams per Locality	Fostering – 1 x North & 1 x South
Early Help - Central Resource	Early Help Teams 2 teams per Locality	Leaving Care - North x 2 & South x 2
Early Years - Central Resource	Early Years - 1 x team per Locality	
SEND - Central Resource	SEND - 1 x team per Locality	
0-19 Health - Central Resource	0-19 Health 1 x team per Locality	
Residential - Central Resource	Residential - 8 x Units	
Secure Accommodation Unit		
Semi-Independence Residential - Denton Ave & Rowston Close		
Youth Hub		
YOT		
Fostering Recruitment		
Adoption		
School Standards		
Virtual School		
Admissions		
Educ Welfare		

Provision Planning		
Food Educ Service		
Inclusion		
Safeguarding in Education		
Music Service		
Home Tuition		
InspireU		
Children's Commissioning		
Safeguarding Quality & Standards		
Audit & Quality		
LCSP		
ABG Participation Team		
OT		

Summary - High level modelling of the recommended delivery model

The services to children currently provided by the County Council are a mix of service delivery designs – Centralised; New Unitary Council footprints (with some shared locality arrangements) and via a North & South split.

There are therefore options for consideration:

County Wide services

There are a number of options in relation to the services to children that are current delivered and configured on a County wide footprint:

- Decision to leave as is and operate as a shared service hosted by one or more of the new Unitary Councils.

- Decision to leave as is and operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded.
- Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day.

I would suggest that there should be a mix of these arrangements to deliver as much disaggregation as possible, where it makes sense for effective leadership and the delivery of services close to communities.

Current Centralised Overarching Teams with locality based services

For those services which are delivered in part as a centralised overarching function across the County Footprint, with locality based service teams, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- be duplicated in each of the 2 x new Unitary Councils,
- remain centralised, hosted by one Council, and remaining to serve the county footprint.

There is also the option of these services remaining centralised for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation.

I would recommend that these overarching teams be disaggregated to service each Unitary authority separately.

North and South split

I am unclear as to the geography for the North and South split, however, if these relate to the 2 x new Unitary Authority footprints, they could be delivered as an authority wide service in each of the new Unitary Authorities. For the North & South services that have 2 x teams in each (Leaving Care), depending on current footprint, these could be managed and delivered on a locality basis within each LA.

However, if the North and South split does not correspond with the 2 x new Unitary Authority footprints, they could be delivered:

- as a shared service hosted by one or more of the new Unitary Councils,
- operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded.
- Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day

I would recommend that these services remaining joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation into localities.

Locality Model

The services which are currently delivered by the County Council on a Locality Model would potentially, in the most part, allow a 'lift & shift' approach in the proposed 2 x New Unitary Authority model. There are, however, some management and leadership arrangements for these services that sit centrally and would therefore require further consideration.

For those services which are delivered on a 2 x locality footprint, but within the same new Unitary footprint, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- be separated into each of the 2 x locality areas,
- remain joint and serve the 2 x locality footprints.

There is also the option of these services remaining joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation.

I would recommend that these services remaining joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation into localities.

Boston and South Holland

For those services which are delivered on a Boston and South Holland footprint, if these two districts are to be in separate Unitary authorities, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- be separated into each of the 2 x new Unitary Councils,
- remain centralised, hosted by one Council, and remaining to serve the 2 x district footprints.

There is also the option of these services remaining centralised for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation.

I would recommend that these services be separated into each of the 2 x new Unitary Councils

Proposals

Based on the information and analysis above I would suggest the following arrangements:

CS Snr Management Team	Create one team per new Unitary Authority
Sector Led Improvement	Disband – current Ofsted rating of outstanding
School Standards	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority
Provision Planning	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority
Food Educ Service	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority
Virtual School	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority
Music Service	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council
Admissions	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority

Educ Welfare	One Team per new Unitary Authority
Home Tuition	One Team per new Unitary Authority
InspireU	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority
SEND	One Team per new Unitary Authority (Split central team – already 4 localities)
OT	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority
Inclusion	One Team per new Unitary Authority
CiC Social Work Teams	One Team per new Unitary Authority
Fostering	One Team per new Unitary Authority
Fostering Recruitment	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority
Adoption	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council
Residential	One Team per new Unitary Authority (Split central team – already 4 localities)
Semi Independence	1 Unit per each Unitary Council (depending on geography)
Leaving Care	Two Teams per new Unitary Authority – Locality focussed
Fast CwD	Join together and split into 1 service per new Unitary Authority (Largely already 4 localities)

Screening Team	
Contact	Join together and split into 1 service per new Unitary Authority
Time	
TAC Team	
Early Help	One Team per new Unitary Authority (Split central team – already 4 localities)
Early Years	One Team per new Unitary Authority (Split central team – already 4 localities)
Children's Centres	Join together and split into 1 service per new Unitary Authority
Family Centres	
Family Hubs	
YOT	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council
Youth Hub	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council
Secure	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council
Quality & Standards	Join together and split into 1 service per new Unitary Authority
Audit & Quality	
LCSP	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council

Safeguarding in Education	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority
ABG Participation Team	Join together and split into 1 service per new Unitary Authority
FGC	
0-19 Health Hub	One Team per new Unitary Authority (Split central team – already 4 localities)
Children's Commissioning	Split into one Team per new Unitary Authority but look to appropriate collaboration re market management

13. High-level recommendation for the staffing structure of the recommended delivery model.

Suggested proposals for current County wide services

Services to be disaggregated into separate services for each new Unitary authority

Service	Staffing	Proposal
School Standards	13 staff	Split – 6/7 staff per new Unitary Authority
Provision Planning	5 staff	Split – 2/3 staff per new Unitary Authority
Food Education Service	2 staff	Split – 1 staff per new Unitary and join with provision planning team
Virtual School	23 staff	Split – 11/12 staff per new Unitary Authority
Fostering Recruitment	6 staff	Split – 3 staff per new Unitary Authority
Admissions	10 staff	Split – 5 staff per new Unitary Authority
OT	14 staff	Split – 7 staff per new Unitary Authority
InspireU	72 staff	Split – 36 staff per new Unitary Authority
Children's Commissioning	32 staff	Split – 16 staff per new Unitary Authority
Youth Hub	27 staff	Split – 13/14 staff per new Unitary Authority

Services for which it is recommended that there is a continued shared service arrangement across the Lincolnshire area

Service	Staffing	Proposal

YOT	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council	The sharing of Youth Offending services across councils is not uncommon and provides capacity, strong relationships with the courts; economies of scale. Examples of a shared authority service include: Cheshire Youth Justice service covers the geographical areas of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington and has been operating as a pan-Cheshire partnership since 2017.
Secure	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council	Secure Accommodation Units are a regional and national resource with approx. 14 units across England. It is the case that each of these units are hosted by one local authority.
LCSP	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council	Arrangements can cover two or more local authority boundaries by agreement and where this is in place local authorities can agree to delegate their safeguarding duties to a single authority Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance
Adoption	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council	In 2015, the government_ announced plans to regionalise adoption services to improve adopter recruitment and support, reduce costs, and speed up matching to deliver the best outcome for children in care. Regional Adoption Agencies bring together local services and expertise to streamline the adoption process and provide a child-centred approach to adoption in England. There are currently 32 Regional Adoption Agencies in England. The Lincolnshire adoption service is part of Family Adoption Links, a regional adoption agency consisting of: • Lincolnshire County Council • North Lincolnshire Council • Leicester City Council • Leicestershire County Council

		• Rutland County Council • Northamptonshire Children's Trust
Music Service	Shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x Council	The Lincolnshire Music Service is the lead organisation of the Lincolnshire Music Education Hub. A Music Hub is a partnership coordinated by a Hub Lead Organisation (HLO), that is responsible for supporting, delivering and enabling high quality music education for children and young people within a local area. The Hub programme funds a network of 43 Hub partnerships which cover every area of England. The Arts Council delivers the Hub programme on behalf of the Department for Education.

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A suggested structure for each of the 2 x new Unitary Authorities:

DCS		
1 x Assistant Director - Education	**1 x Assistant Director - Children's Care & Support**	**1 x Assistant Director - Young People & Partnerships**
3 x Heads of Service	**3 x Heads of Service**	**3 x Heads of Service**

School Support	Pupil Support	SEND	CiC	CiN	Early Help	Young Peoples Services**	Assurance	Commissioning & Health
TEAMS			TEAMS			TEAMS		
School Support	**Pupil Support**	**SEND**	**CiC**	**CiN**	**Early Help**	**Young Peoples Services**	**Assurance**	**Commissioning & Health**
School Standards	Admissions	SEND	CIC SW including UASC-CiC	CiN including Fast, Screening Team & CwD	Youth	YOT	Quality, Audit & Standards	0-19 Health
Provision Planning & Food Educ Service	Educ Welfare	OT	Fostering & Recruitment		Early Help	Secure	FGC & ABG Participation Team	Commissioning
Virtual School	Home Tuition	Inclusion	Residential (incl Semi independence)		Early Years		Safeguarding in Education	
Music Service	InspireU		Adoption	Contact, TAC Team & Time	Children's Centres Family Centres Family Hubs		LSCP	
			Leaving Care					



*suggested shared services across 2 x new Unitary Authorities

Shared service host authority suggestions:

Unitary 1 – Young Peoples Services – YOT & Secure
Unitary 2 – Music Service, Adoption & LSCP

Each of the New Unitary Councils will need to establish an appropriate senior management structure for their Children's Services to oversee, manage and lead these services.

As outlined below, it may be that existing roles/postholders in the County could fulfil these roles, without too much disruption or to many recruitment challenges.

Executive / Senior Management Team

Future Need **Unitary 1 (South)**	**Future Need** **Unitary 2 (Central)**	***Existing structures***	**Gap**
South Kesteven DC North Kesteven DC South Holland DC	City of Lincoln C West Lindsey DC Boston BC East Lindsey DC	**Lincs CC**	
1 x Director of Children's Services - (Statutory DCS)	1 x Director of Children's Services - (Statutory DCS)	1 x Director of Children's Services - (Statutory DCS)	-1
1 x Assistant Director - Education	1 x Assistant Director - Education	1 x Assistant Director – Education	-1

1 x Assistant Director - Children's Care & Support	1 x Assistant Director- Children's Care & Support	1 x Assistant Director - Children's Care Services 1 x Assistant Director - Early Help 1 x Assistant Director - Safeguarding 1 x Assistant Director - Children's Health & Commissioning	-1 -1 +1 +1
1 x Assistant Director - Young People & Partnerships	1 x Assistant Director - Young People & Partnerships		
4	4	6	-2

The table above outlines how the Children's Services Senior Management Team could be configured in a way that utilises existing knowledge, skills and experience, and minimises disruption and recruitment challenges.

Option for consideration:

- **DCS**
  - The County DCS could 'slot' into one of the Unitary Authority DCS roles.
  - Is there an existing Assistant Director within the County with the skills and experience to be considered for the remaining DCS role, or would external recruitment be necessary?

- **AD Education**
  - The County AD Education could 'slot' into one of the Unitary Authority AD Education roles.
  - Is there another existing Assistant Director, or Head of Service, within the County with the skills and experience to be considered for the remaining AD Education role, or would external recruitment be necessary?

- **Assistant Director - Children's Care & Support and Assistant Director - Young People & Partnerships**
  For the role of Assistant Director - Children's Care & Support and the role of Assistant Director - Young People & Partnerships, within the two new Unitary Authorities there are 4 Assistant Director roles within the County structure that could be considered for these roles, dependant on skills, knowledge and experience. These existing roles within the County Structure are:
  - Assistant Director - Children's Care Services,
  - Assistant Director - Early Help,
  - Assistant Director – Safeguarding,
  - Assistant Director - Children's Health & Commissioning.

Depending on the career plans of current postholders, and their transferable skills, knowledge and experience there could be minimum increased costs, disruption or recruitment challenges to deliver these arrangements.

Wider Management/Leadership Team

The table below summarises the nature and number of Heads of Service, Team Managers and other managers within the current County Council Children's Services Dept.

Children's Services Wider Management /Leadership		
County Wide Services		
Head of Service	**Team Manager**	**Other**
1 x Head of Children's Transformation		
1 x Head of Service Sector Led Improvement – Early Help		
1 x Head of Service Sector Led Improvement – Safeguarding		
1 x Children's Services Manager - Leaving Care		
1 x Head Of Fostering, Adoption & Leaving Care		
1 x Head of Service – Adoption	1 x Team Manager - Adoption	
1 x Service Manager for the L3R Regional Adoption Agency		
	1 x Principal – Secure	
		1 x Registered Manager – 2 x Semi Independence Units
1 x Head of Youth Offending	1 x RJ Team leader YOT	
1 x Head of School Standards	9 x Education Locality Lead	



1 x H of Virtual School		
1 x H of S School Strategy	1 x Team Leader – Admissions	
	2 x Team Manager- Educ Welfare	
	1 x Admissions & Educ Provision Manager	
1 x Head of Inclusion	1 x Team Manager – Inclusion Team	
	1 x Team Manager- Specialist Teachers	
	1 x Inclusion Team Manager - Quality and Effectiveness	
	1 x Safeguarding in Schools Team Leader	
1 x Head of Service – Music Service	5 x Partnership Manager – Music Service	
1 x Principal - InspireU	3 x Senior Lead- InspireU	4 x Provision Manager- InspireU
1 x Head of Children's Commissioning	1 x Children's Commissioning Manager	
	1 x Commissioning Manager	
	2 x Commissioning Team Manager – Commercial Services	
	1 x Strategic Commissioning Manager	
1 x Head of Service – Quality Standards	5 x Team Manager Q & S	
	1 x Safeguarding Board Business Mgr	
	1 x OT Team Manager	
County Locality Model		
1 x Head of Service – Pathfinder EH	5 x Team Manager	

	1 x Team Manager FGC & FT & Time	
1 x Head of Service - FAST	10 x Team Manager - FAST	
1 x Head of Early Years	4 x Early Years Locality Lead	
	1 x Team Manager-Quality Assurance Ch Centre	
	2 x Team Manager - TAC	
1 x Head of SEND	4 x Team Manager - SEND	
	1 x Team Manager - CwD	
	4 x Children's Health Locality Manager	
1 x Hof S CiC & Residential Estate	3 x Service Lead Residential Estates	9 x Registered Managers
North & South Footprints		
	1 x Team Manager South - CiC SW	
	1 x Team Manager North – CiC SW	
	2 x Team Manager- Leaving Care North	
	2 x Team Manager- Leaving Care South	
	1 x Team Manager - Fostering North	
	1 x Team Manager - Fostering South	
Totals		
21 x Heads of Service	**92 x Team Managers**	**14 x Other Senior Managers**

Staffing implications for the changes in structure proposed

Current County Council arrangements include 21 x Heads of Service; 92 x Team Managers; 14 x Other Senior Managers.

In relation to Heads of Service, the proposed structure above would require 9 posts/ postholders per new Unitary Council, with one shared, so 17 roles in total. The current County Model has 21 Head of Service roles, so potentially 4 posts more than would be needed in the new structures.

In relation to Team Manager/ Locality Lead roles, the proposed structure above would require 25 posts/ postholders per new Unitary Council, and 5 shared service Team Managers, so 55 roles in total. The current County Model has 92 Team Manager/Locality Lead roles.

In relation to Other Manager/ Lead roles, the proposed structure above would require 12 posts/ postholders across the 2 x new Unitary Councils. The current County Model has 14 Other Manager/ Lead roles, so potentially 2 posts more than would be needed in the new structures.

Therefore, depending on more detailed analysis of role functions and responsibilities, there are potentially a significant number of posts that would no longer be required or could be repositioned as required.

The proposals outlined above will require further consideration and discussion with those that know these services well, as nuances and issues may not be obvious from a desk top analysis.

Overall Summary

It is proposed that in the creation of 2 new Unitary authorities (Unitary 1 - SK, NK, SH; Unitary 2 - BBC, COLC, EL, WL), which together will cover the current County Council footprint, there would be a combination of shared services and separate services.

As outlined in Part 1 of this commission, separate unitary footprint services present both strengths and limitations:

STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS:
• Opportunity for alignment with place-based priorities. • Opportunity for a localities delivery model to mitigate service disruption during transition. • Local accountability and local ownership from the start. • Aligns with direction of travel of key partners towards neighbourhood and community working. • Builds on district council strengths in place-based leadership. • Communication is personalised and relates to local priorities. • Opportunity to create consistency in practice and standards. • Streamlined and clear management. • Some economies of scale. • Single culture and vision for each LA.	• Possible loss of some experienced senior staff. • Risk of some service disruption during transition. • Boston & South Holland areas would need to be separated. • Costly duplication. • Potential for initial workforce uncertainty and anxiety. • Need to transfer of records and data and establish new case management and ICT systems. • May lose opportunities for economies of scale in specialist provision, but this can be mitigated through developing regional partnership arrangements.

In relation to those services for which it is proposed a shared service arrangement, again, as outlined in Part 1of this commission, this would present both strengths and limitations:

STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS:
• Combines strategic leadership. • Easier to maintain partner relationships. • Economies of scale. • Potential for greater commissioning power.	• Blurred lines of accountability if not clearly defined. • Requires strong central oversight and performance management. • Potential loss of individual locality focus on need.

There is valuable learning for local areas that have experienced LGR in the past and it will be important to consider the learning from other LA's who have been through LGR and ensure early and detailed planning to deliver the 2 x Unitary model.

Bedfordshire - Initially the councils operated some shared service arrangements covering fostering and adoption, support for asylum seeking young people, youth offending, family group conferencing and emergency duty team. Subsequently each council developed its own arrangements.

Learning from those who have disaggregated services from day one, suggests that, although complex, and with some risks, disaggregation into the new LA footprints is the best choice.

However, such a decision would not preclude some regional working as outlined above, where there is a clear rationale for cross authority provision.

Section 8 of the Part 1 report focuses on risk, and it will be important that these issues are further considered by the implementation team as any single one of these risks will have an adverse effect, the impact of a combination of them will have a significant and widespread impact. It will be important in relation to design principles and implementation plans, to assess the likelihood and impact of each for these risks in more detail for each of the 2 x new Unitary councils.

Section 9 of Part 1 report focusses on the other factors to consider in deciding which model(s) could be suitable and in implementation of the chosen model. It will be important in relation to design principles and implementation plans, to assess the likelihood and impact of each for these risks in more detail for each of the 2 x new Unitary councils.

In addition, the Greater Lincolnshire DCS's have also identified the further following issues for consideration in the planning for LGR:

- Education services face their own set of challenges in a disaggregated system. school improvement functions are really different across different councils as are our different responses to the issue that grants have been cut from central government.
- Planning for school places could be difficult and risky.
- Specialist placements are unevenly distributed; you may end up again with some local authorities that have got more challenges than others or some that have got more placements than others.

The current County Councils service delivery model includes a Boston & South Holland footprint for some services. As these two localities are proposed to be in separate new Unitaries, this would require further consideration.

A number of services which are currently configured to deliver across the whole County footprint, are proposed to continue to be delivered on a shared service basis as the separation of these services into a 2 new Unitary model could be complex and may not, in the long-term, be advantageous. Where this is the case, there is a clear rationale for maintaining a regional approach. However, in relation to those services further consideration would need to be given to:

- Decision to leave as is and operate as a shared service hosted by one or more of the new Unitary Councils on a permanent basis.
- Decision to leave as is and operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded. This could be described as transitional planning or as a deferred disaggregated model and would involve some former county Children's Services functions continuing to operate for a defined period (e.g., 1 – 2 years), during which longer-term arrangements are co-designed and implemented. This could include those services that are complex to disaggregate.
- Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day.

I would recommend an approach of 'leave as is' and operate as a shared service hosted by one of the new Unitary Councils on a permanent basis.

14. Other Issues to consider

Governance

Currently across Lincolnshire there is one Children's Services authority - Lincolnshire County Council. This organisation has its own

- Lead Member,
- Scrutiny Committee,
- Accountability & Governance arrangements,
- Partnership arrangements and Boards,
- Commissioning arrangements,
- Ofsted ratings,
- Practice models.

If 2 x new Unitary authorities are to be stablished in place of the County as part of LGR arrangements, further consideration will need to be given to each of the issues above.

Partners

Effective safeguarding requires strong operational and strategic links with Lincolnshire Police and as such there will be a need to:

- Review and update multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH).
- Align thresholds and escalation protocols.
- Share data securely across agencies.

The VCSE sector plays a vital role in prevention, and a range of other support ad community support. Strategic partnerships for each new Unitary authority should:

- Formalise VCSE involvement in commissioning and delivery.
- Provide core funding and capacity-building support.
- Embed VCSE organisations into effective partnership arrangements and locality teams, where appropriate.

Alignment with the Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) is essential. Priorities include:

- Joint planning for community child health services.
- Integrated SEND pathways.

The 2 x new Unitary authorities would both involve working with NHS Lincolnshire

- Partnerships footprints could provide increased focus for individual LA areas, whilst opportunities for collaboration across one or more partnerships remains an option.
- The synergy with other partnerships such as CSP's and H&WB Boards would need to be separated or a decision for a joint board.
- There is a potential capacity issue for the ICB as it would need to build relationships and arrangements with 2 x Unitary Councils, rather than 1 x County.

The 2 x new Unitary authorities would both involve working with Lincolnshire Constabulary

- Partnerships footprints could provide increased focus for individual LA areas, whilst opportunities for collaboration across one or more partnerships remains an option.
- The synergy with other partnerships such as CSP's and H&WB Boards would need to be separated or a decision for a joint board.
- There is a potential capacity issue for the ICB as it would need to build relationships and arrangements with 2 x Unitary Councils, rather than 1 x County.

Commissioning arrangements

- The current commissioning arrangements would need to be disaggregated and combined to mirror the 2 x Unitary arrangements.
- Regional commissioning remains an option where appropriate.
- Action would be required to mitigate any risks of inequity; loss of a market management opportunity; loss of economies of scale.
- Some contract would need to be reconfigured to reflect 2 x Unitary arrangements.

Ofsted Judgements

Service Area	Location	Date	Judgement
Children's Social Care	LCC	April 2023	Outstanding
SEND	LCC	Feb 2025	Improvement required
YOT	LCC	April 2023	Outstanding

These inspection judgements provide a sound basis for the delivery of high quality services. In the case of Children's social care, plans for disaggregation will need to ensure that there is no negative impact on the quality of services.

Place-Based Localities

Via this approach there is strategic alignment and a fit with LGR goals and existing governance structures enabling a smoother transition during LGR.

There is a level of operational simplicity which will support an ease of implementation and transition. It builds on familiar district boundaries, which supports continuity, stakeholder engagement, and operational clarity, together with alignment with local identity and cohesion to create community identity.

While it may not fully reflect demand hotspots or deprivation clusters, these limitations can be mitigated through targeted commissioning and performance monitoring within each locality. This approach offers some ability to reflect local demand, demographics, and service pressure and some potential to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes.

The model offers a good governance fit with clarity and feasibility of leadership and accountability arrangements.

Operational modelling has some constraints but does provide sufficient data to propose a staffing and service delivery structure for the County Council footprint. However, even this data presents limits to the ability to assess travel time, caseload distribution, and supervision structures at a granular level.

The future unitary must balance local responsiveness with economies of scale. Locality-based teams may be preferable for many services, with some centralised functions which can drive consistency and efficiency.

However, the locality model offers a compelling framework for:

- Tailored service delivery that reflects local needs, deprivation levels, and population projections.

- Operational resilience, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas, through adjusted workforce deployment and flexible staffing.
- Partnership integration, enabling closer alignment with NHS, VCSE, and safeguarding partners at the place level.
- Strategic commissioning, with the potential to market shaping and outcome-based contracts.

Regional Care Co-operatives

As part of reforms to the children's social care system, the Department for Education (DfE) is working in partnership with local government to develop Regional Care Co-operatives (RCCs). The ambition is for RCCs to plan, commission and deliver children's care places in fostering, children's homes and secure homes. Greater Manchester and the South East were selected as the successful RCC pathfinder regions. Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs): pathfinder regions - GOV.UK

It will be important for consideration of the roll out of RCC's in the planning for children's Commissioning and Fostering services in Lincolnshire.

Newton Report

I believe that there is a sound and compelling argument for the creation of 2 x Unitary Authorities from the current County Council boundaries for the provision of services to Children.
However, the Newton Report suggests that there are 5 key messages from their analysis which require strategic considerations as part of the wider LGR process:

- *The government's forthcoming decisions about the size of new unitary councils will have profound, long-lasting impacts on the most vulnerable members of society. The evidence strongly suggests larger-scale councils are essential to preserve service quality, prevent rising costs, and ensure financial sustainability of people-based services.*
  My assessment and analysis suggests that for Children's Services, the proposal for the creation of 2 x Unitary Authorities from the current County Council boundaries, should not have a particularly detrimental effect on the service quality, the prevention of rising costs, or the financial sustainability of children's services, notwithstanding the current financial pressures for all councils in relation to the demand and cost of care placements and SEND services.

- *New unitary councils with populations substantially below 500,000 people will increase the price councils pay for care, putting further financial costs on these under-pressure services. Modelling suggests that if all new unitary councils had a population below this figure, this would result in additional unit costs of between £180m and £270m annually solely as a result of reductions in purchasing power. In contrast, if all new unitary councils had a population above 500,000, it would reduce care fees by £65m a year across England.*
  My assessment and analysis suggests that for Children's Services, the proposal for the creation of 2 x Unitary Authorities from the current County Council boundaries, should not have a particularly detrimental effect on costs or the financial sustainability of children's services, notwithstanding the current financial pressures for all councils in relation to the demand and cost of care placements and SEND services. The Newton data outlines these predictions in detail, and as such will need to be given further consideration in the planning and financial forecasting as part of the LGR process.

- *Splitting county councils into smaller local authorities will require hundreds of new senior roles as councils already grapple with a shortfall in care staff. Modelling shows that if all*

new unitary councils had a population of below 500,000, this would result in a requirement of between 500 - 1,100 additional management and senior roles in care services. In contrast, if all new unitary councils had a population of above 500,000, fewer senior managers than are currently in place will be required, saving those areas money to reinvest in care services.

My assessment and analysis suggests that for Children's Services, the proposal for the creation of 2 x Unitary Authorities from the current County Council boundaries, should not have a significant impact on the number of management and senior roles required. However, this will require more detailed consideration based on final decisions on structure and disaggregation.

- *Breaking up high-performing county councils into substantially smaller councils could lead to worse services. The report reveals that larger authorities are more likely to receive 'Outstanding' or 'Good' ratings from Ofsted for children's services. Currently, 16 of the 21 county councils are already good or outstanding for these services. Consequently, directors of care and special needs services warn in the report that smaller services could struggle to attract staff and invest in improving services.*

  My assessment and analysis suggests that for Children's Services, the proposal for the creation of 2 x Unitary Authorities from the current County Council boundaries, should not have a significant impact on the Ofsted judgements, the attraction of staff and the cost of improvement, as all service areas are starting from a strong base of positive inspection judgements. However, it is imperative that the 2 x new Unitary Authorities retain a focus on performance and improvements where necessary and seek to recruit high calibre managers and leaders.

- *Splitting county councils into smaller unitaries covering populations as small as 300,000 or lower could see some of these new authorities overwhelmed with demand. The report finds that the smaller the council, the more they could experience extreme concentrations of care users: effectively meaning care costs are highly variable between new authorities and may exceed planned budgets. This could leave some councils exposed to unaffordable costs and the use of expensive out of area placements. This could challenge their financial sustainability from inception.*

  My assessment and analysis suggests that for Children's Services, the proposal for the creation of 2 x Unitary Authorities from the current County Council boundaries, should not have a significant impact on the demand for services, notwithstanding the current financial pressures for all councils in relation to the demand and cost of care placements and SEND services. The deployment of a localities model within the LGR proposals may not fully reflect demand hotspots or deprivation clusters, although these limitations can be mitigated through targeted commissioning and performance monitoring within each locality. This approach offers some ability to reflect local demand, demographics, and service pressure and some potential to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes.

15. Summary and Conclusions

The preferred model outlined in Part 1 of this commission, remains to be the creation of 2 x new Unitary Authorities from the County footprint.

Within each of the 2 x new Unitary footprints it would be recommended that delivery is focussed into locality-based teams, where possible, aligned to former council areas to mitigate and reduce risk, meet the government locality expectations and ensure some continuity.

The majority of Children's services are recommended for disaggregation other than for those services where there is a compelling case of the continuation of county wide single provision, however there are only a small number of services where this is the case.

- 15 services remain as delivery on a locality basis,
- 10 services – split to create delivery on a locality basis,
- 5 services – remain on a county footprint as a shared service across both Unitary Councils hosted by 1 x of the new Unitary Councils.

There are further options in relation to the 10 services to children, that are current delivered and configured on a County wide footprint:

- Decision to leave as is and operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded.
- Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day

The latter is recommended.

For those services that are currently configured on a North and South split, if these footprints relate to the 2 x new Unitary Authority footprints, I recommend that they should be delivered as a separate council wide service in each of the 2 x new Unitary Authorities with future consideration of disaggregation into localities.

For those services which are currently delivered on a locality basis but with a centralised function across the County Footprint, I would recommend that these overarching teams be disaggregated to service each Unitary authority separately.
However, there are further options of:

- Leave as is and operate as a shared service on a time limited basis to allow the new Unitary Authorities the time and space to disaggregate once the new Councils have been formed and embedded.
- Develop plans for disaggregation and implement in advance of Vesting Day

The latter is recommended.

The services which are currently delivered by the County Council on a Locality Model would potentially, in the most part, allow a 'lift & shift' approach in the proposed 2 x New Unitary Authority model. There are, however, some management and leadership arrangements for these services that sit centrally and would therefore require further consideration.

For those services which are delivered on a 2 locality footprint, but within the same new Unitary footprint, I would recommend that these services remain joint and serve each of the 2

locality footprints within each of the new Unitary Authorities with future consideration of disaggregation into localities.

For those services which are delivered on a Boston and South Holland footprint, if these two districts are to be in separate Unitary authorities, these should be separated into each of the 2 new Unitary Councils.

For those services which are delivered on a North & South Kesteven and a Lincoln & West Lindsey footprint, decisions would need to be made as to whether these should:

- Be separated into each of the 2 x locality areas.
- Remain joint for a time limited period with a view to future disaggregation into localities.
- Remain joint and serve the footprint of each new Unitary authority.

I would recommend that they remain joint and serve the footprint of each new Unitary authority, with future consideration of disaggregation into localities.

There is also an option for transitional planning/ deferred disaggregated arrangements for some aspects of service systems etcetera. This would be the option of former County Children's Services functions continuing to operate for a defined period (e.g., 1 – 2 years), during which longer-term arrangements are co-designed and implemented. This could include those services that are complex to disaggregate such as:

- Commissioning arrangements – where new contracts would be required and potentially some joining up of contracts.
- IT systems – this would be wider than Children's Services.
- Social Work Recording systems – where a new single system would need to be decided upon and existing records decanted into the new system.

This is not recommended but may be a pragmatic solution where appropriate.

Social Work Practice models across the new 2 x Unitary footprints could continue without disruption from the current County practice model.

Section 12 of this report recommends a senior management structure of:

- 1 x Director of Children's Services - (Statutory DCS),
- 1 x Assistant Director – Education,
- 1 x Assistant Director - Children's Care & Support,
- 1 x Assistant Director - Young People & Partnerships.

This would result in 2 senior management posts needing to be recruited to across the 2 new Unitary Councils.

In relation to the wider Children's services management structures:

- 4 x additional Head of Service roles would be needed in the new structures.
- 33 x less Team Manager/Locality Lead roles would potentially be required.
- 2 x Other Manager/Lead roles would be needed in the new structures.

Therefore, depending on more detailed analysis of role functions and responsibilities, there are potentially a significant number of posts that would no longer be required or could be repositioned as required. The proposals outlined will require further consideration and discussion with those that know these services well, as nuances and issues may not be obvious from a desk top analysis.

I believe that the proposals within this report meet the government expectations of:

- The delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
- Demonstrate how new structures will improve local government and service delivery and avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.
- Create opportunities to deliver public service reform, including where they will lead to better value for money.
- Consider and address the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, and SEND.

The anticipated effect on costs or the financial sustainability of children's services, notwithstanding the current financial pressures for all councils in relation to the demand and cost of care placements and SEND services, will need to be given further consideration in the planning and financial forecasting as part of the LGR process one final decisions have been made.

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Appendix 5b

Lincolnshire Future Unitary Modelling of Adult's Social Care for South Kesteven, North Kesteven & South Holland

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2. Executive Summary

This Adult Social Care (ASC) report has been commissioned by South Kesteven District Council to inform future delivery models under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It provides a comprehensive analysis of the ASC landscape across Lincolnshire with a focus on what the ASC delivery model would be for the proposed future unitary comprising of South Kesteven, North Kesteven and South Holland.

The report draws on the Lincolnshire ASC Insights Report (which can be found in the appendices), this report integrates insights from deprivation indices, population data, ASC performance metrics, and workforce data. This document aims to support strategic planning by identifying service pressures, workforce challenges, and opportunities for transformation.

Key objectives include:

- Evaluating ASC performance and demand across the new proposed unitary.
- Assessing delivery model options.
- Mapping workforce structures and estimating future costs.
- Identifying priority areas for targeted commissioning and service redesign.
- Aligning ASC transformation with broader LGR milestones and governance reform.

Three delivery models were initially considered:

1. **Hub-and-Spoke** – centralised specialist hubs with satellite teams.
2. **Centralised Unitary** – fully unified delivery across the footprint.
3. **Integrated Locality** – multi-disciplinary teams aligned to local geographies.

Following comparative assessment using criteria such as integration, responsiveness, cost-efficiency, and alignment with LGR, the **Integrated Locality model** emerged as the preferred option. This model was then refined to explore how locality boundaries could be defined, whether by district, shared geography, or need, and how workforce and commissioning structures could be aligned to support it.

The result is a locality-based framework that:

- Enables place-based delivery tailored to geographic and demographic variation.
- Supports targeted resource deployment in high-need LSOAs.
- Aligns with strategic commissioning and pooled budgets.
- Facilitates integration with NHS, VCSE, and other partners.
- Provides a scalable governance model for future unitary operations.

This report sets out the evidence base, modelling rationale, and implementation considerations to support the adoption of the Integrated Locality model for ASC delivery in the new unitary.

2.1. Key Insights from Lincolnshire

- **Deprivation Hotspots**: South Holland and South Kesteven contain LSOAs in the lowest IMD deciles, particularly in their most rural areas. These correlate with poorer ASC outcomes and higher service demand.
- **Ageing Population**: All four districts show significant projected growth in the 65+ and 85+ cohorts. South Kesteven and North Kesteven are experiencing rapid ageing due to housing development being occupied by older adults relocating for retirement or downsizing and in-migration from urban centres.
- **Service Performance (ASCOF)**: Lincolnshire performs slightly above the national average overall, but South Holland shows lower satisfaction and quality of life scores. North Kesteven leads in reablement success.
- **Workforce Structure**: The ASC workforce is concentrated in practitioner roles (G7–G9), with limited specialist capacity. Recruitment and retention are challenging in rural areas, particularly South Holland.
- **Provider Landscape**: South Kesteven, North Kesteven and South Holland hosts 108 registered ASC providers, with most rated 'Good' by CQC. However, small providers in deprived areas face fragility risks.

2.2. Strategic Modelling Considerations

- **Priority Zones**: LSOAs with overlapping deprivation, ageing, and poor performance have been mapped for targeted commissioning and workforce deployment.
- **Delivery Model Fit**: The Integrated Locality model is best suited to the future unitary's geography, enabling multi-disciplinary teams to operate within defined localities while reporting into a central ASC directorate.
- **Workforce Planning**: Future modelling must account for rurality, travel time, and vacancy rates. Proxy mapping of workforce to locality is recommended using establishment data and service footprints.
- **Commissioning Strategy**: A hybrid approach is advised, strategic commissioning at the unitary level, tactical commissioning at locality level, with pooled budgets and shared market development.
- **Partnerships**: Integration with NHS, VCSE, and police is essential. Lessons from East Sussex's Integrated Community Teams and Financial Inclusion Programme offer valuable templates.

Although this report focuses on the southern unitary configuration, the principles and modelling approach are equally applicable to the central unitary. In particular, the central unitary will need to balance the coastal ribbon (e.g. East Lindsey, Boston) with the urban centre of Lincoln, requiring a flexible locality model that can accommodate both dispersed rural communities and concentrated urban demand.

3. Population and Demographic Analysis Summary

3.1. Current Population Overview

The future unitary area comprises a combined population of approximately **260,000**, with notable variation across districts:

- **South Kesteven**: 145,000
- **North Kesteven**: 120,000
- **South Holland**: 95,000

- The proportion of residents aged **65+** ranges from **24% in South Kesteven** to **27% in South Holland**, exceeding national averages.
- The **85+ cohort**, most likely to require intensive ASC support, is growing fastest in **South Kesteven**

The map below visualises the **percentage of residents aged 65+ by LSOA**, highlighting areas where older adults are expected to comprise **20% or more** of the local population. These high-density ageing zones are particularly concentrated in rural fringes and market towns, reinforcing the need for **localised planning**, **targeted commissioning**, and **workforce alignment**.

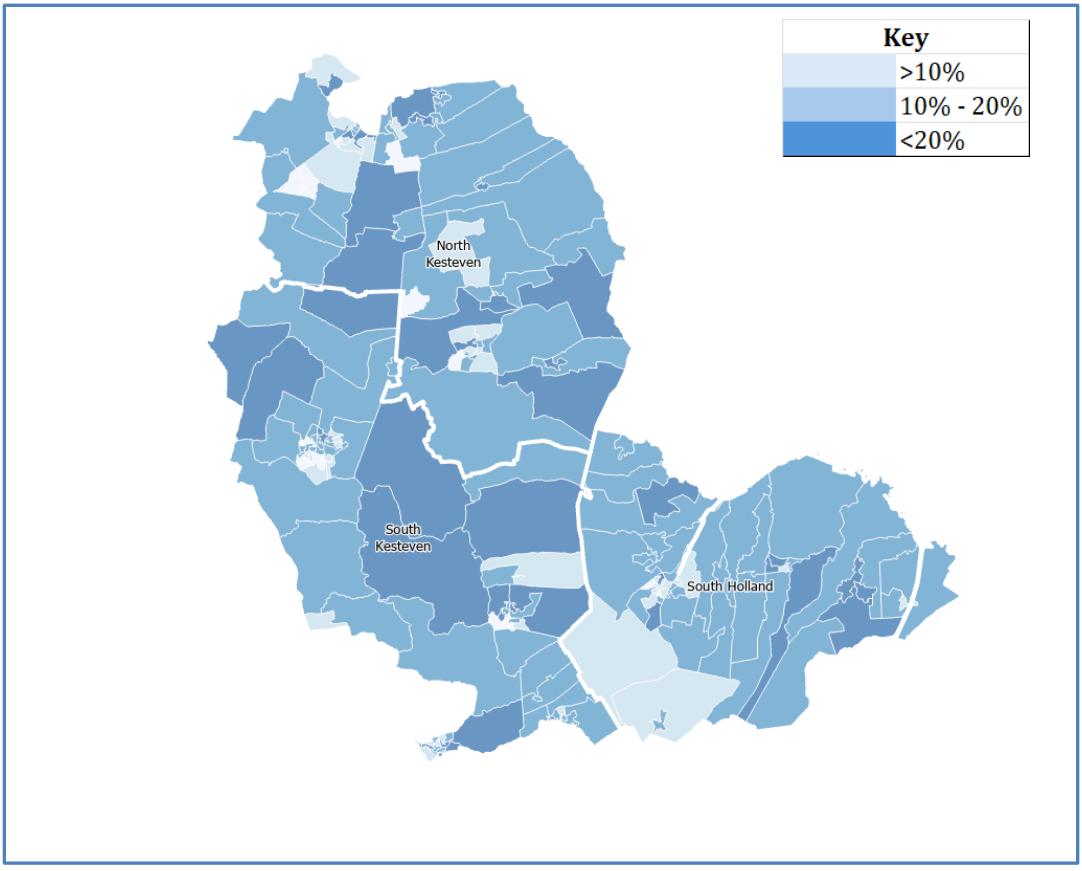


Figure 1 Percentage of Population Aged 65+ by LSOA

3.2. Population Projections

By **2040**, the population aged **65 and over** across the future unitary area (South Kesteven, North Kesteven, and South Holland) is projected to increase by **35–45%**, with the most significant growth expected in **South Kesteven** and **North Kesteven**. The **85+ population**, which typically requires the most intensive forms of Adult Social Care (ASC), is expected to **double** over the same period.

This demographic shift will place substantial pressure on ASC services, particularly in areas already experiencing workforce shortages or limited provider coverage. The projected growth will drive increased demand for:

- **Reablement services** to support recovery and independence after hospital discharge.
- **Residential and nursing care**, especially for those with complex needs.
- **Carer support and community-based provision**, including day services, respite, and preventative interventions.

3.3. LSOA-Level Insights

Detailed LSOA mapping of each of the constituent areas of the future unitary shows clusters of older adults in:

- **Stamford and Bourne (South Kesteven)**
- **Spalding and Holbeach (South Holland)**

These areas also show **limited provider coverage** and **higher travel times**, indicating potential service pressure zones. LSOAs with high older adult density often overlap with **lower IMD deciles**, compounding vulnerability.

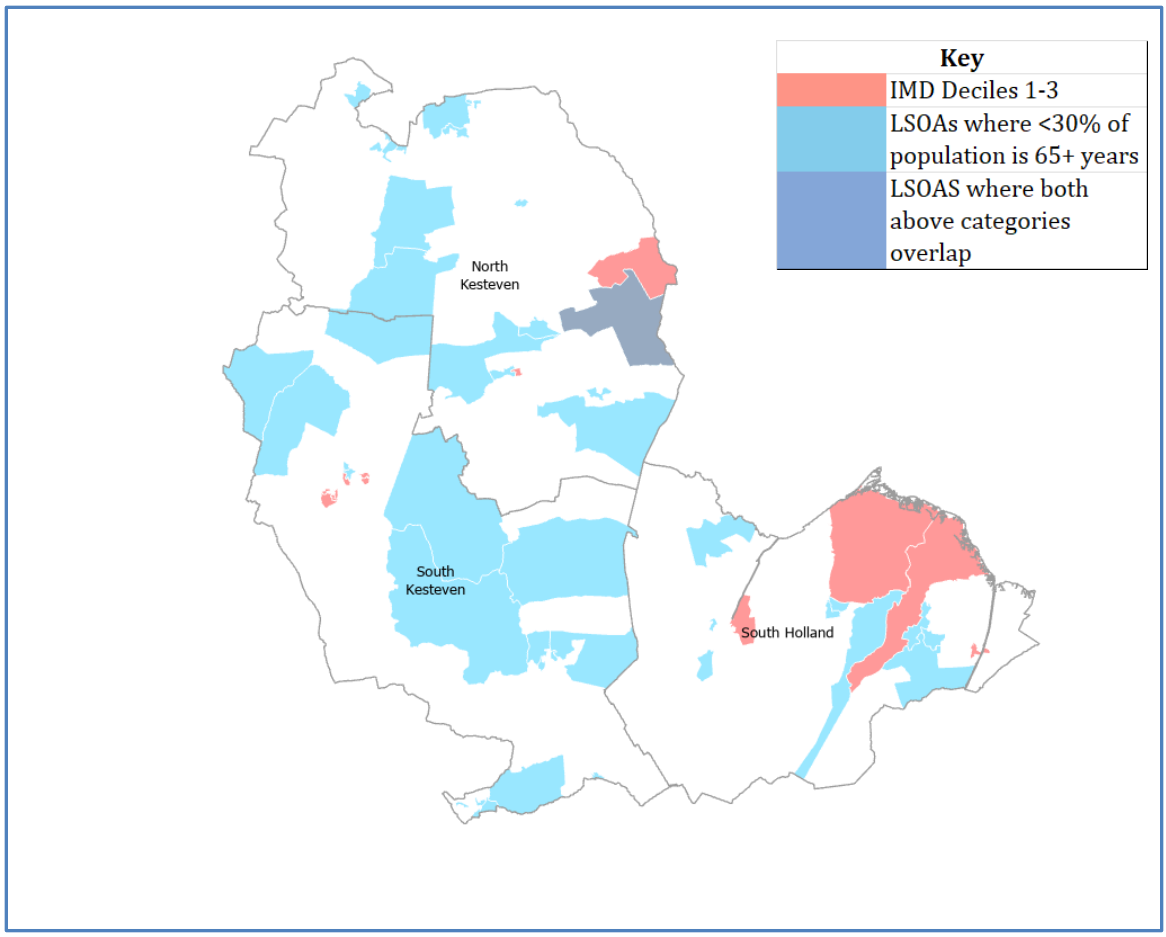


Figure 2 Areas of Ageing Population Overlaid with Areas of Deprivation

The map above overlays LSOAs where 30% or more of the projected population are 65+ years old with LSOAS that are in IMD deciles 1-3, highlighting priority zones where ageing and deprivation intersect. These areas, particularly in Spalding, Holbeach, and rural South Kesteven, are likely to experience compounded demand for ASC services.

3.4. Migration and Settlement Patterns

The future unitary is experiencing **inward migration of older adults**, particularly into **South Kesteven**, driven by retirement relocation and new housing developments targeting downsizers.

This trend is increasing demand in areas not traditionally resourced for high ASC need.

3.5. Dependency Ratios and Carer Availability

The **dependency ratio** (non-working age vs working age) is rising, especially in **South Holland**. Informal carer availability is constrained by:

- Outmigration of younger adults
- Rural isolation
- Limited VCSE infrastructure in some LSOAs

3.6. Asset Provision and Infrastructure

Across the future unitary footprint, there are **operational ASC assets** distributed as follows:

- **South Kesteven**: Strong provision of **day care and residential services**
- **South Holland**: Fewer assets, with gaps in **community-based provision**
- **North Kesteven**: Moderate provision, but with rural access challenges

The map below visualises Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings for registered ASC providers across the three districts. Each provider is represented by a circle, with the size indicating maximum service capacity.

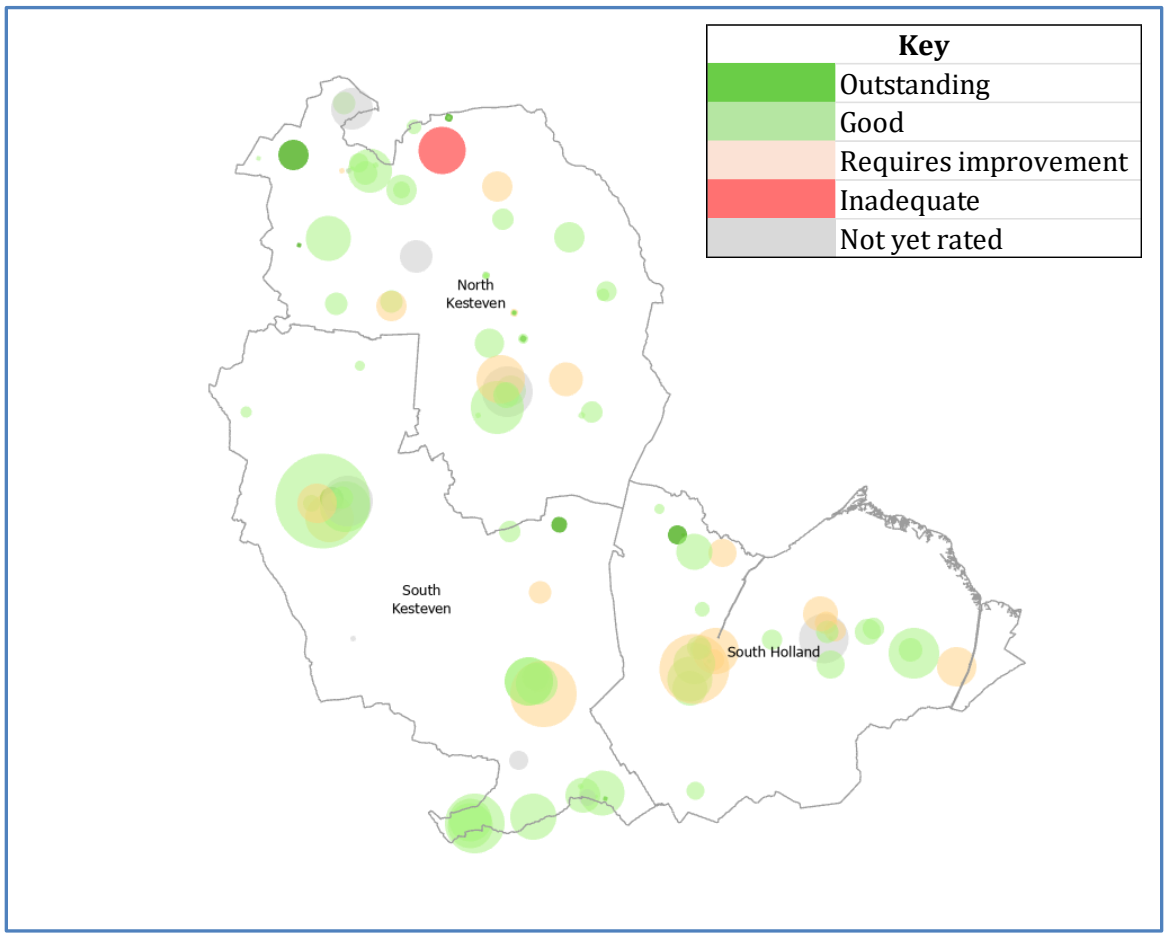


Figure 3 CQC Ratings and Capacity of ASC Providers

This visual illustrates the uneven distribution and quality of ASC assets across the future unitary, highlighting the importance of locality-based planning and targeted investment in areas where service capacity or quality may need to be strengthened.

3.7. Service Pressure Zones

The map below shows LSOAs where 30% or more of the population are 65+ years old, overlaid with provider capacity. Green clusters show the approximate locations of providers, with nearby providers combined into the same cluste'. The size of the circles is linked to the 'maximum service capacity' of a cluster, which is the value shown in the circle. Notably, several high-density areas coincide with limited provider coverage, suggesting potential service pressure zones in the coming decade.

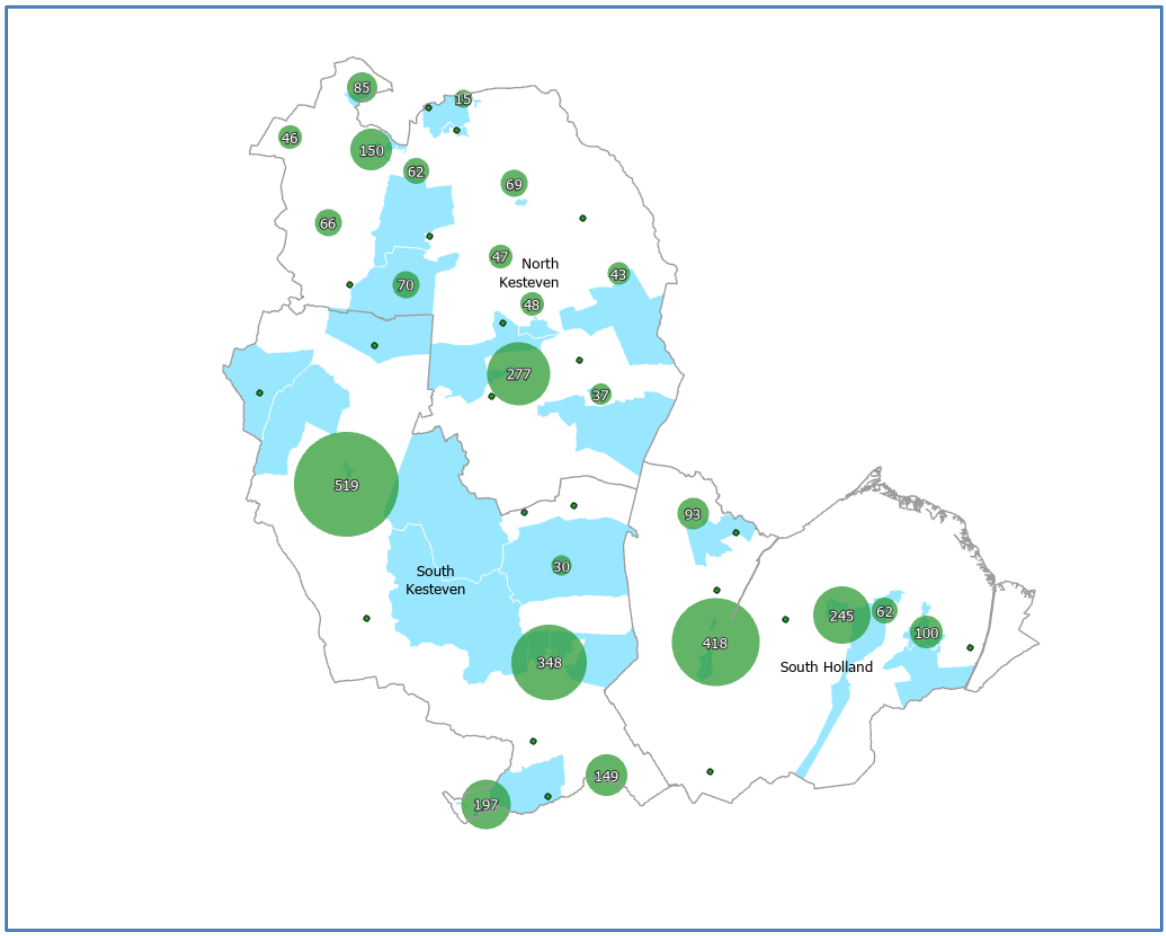


Figure 4 Areas of Ageing Population Overlaid with Provider Capacity

4. Assessment of Delivery Models

This section explores three strategic models for structuring ASC delivery under the future unitary. Each model is assessed for its suitability in the context of LGR, rurality, workforce constraints, and the need for responsive, equitable services.

Model	Description	Strengths	Challenges
Integrated Locality	Services delivered through defined localities with integrated teams and budgets	• High responsiveness to local need • Strong community integration • Aligns with LGR	• Requires robust locality governance • Risk of duplication without coordination
Hub-and-Spoke	Central hubs deliver specialist services, supported by satellite local teams	• Economies of scale • Easier central workforce management	• Reduced local responsiveness • Travel/access issues in rural areas
Centralised	Services managed and delivered from a single central structure	• Simplified governance • Easier to standardise systems	• Poor fit for rural areas • Limited tailoring to local needs

While both the Integrated Locality and Hub-and-Spoke models involve a central structure, the key distinction lies in how services are organised and delivered:

- The Hub-and-Spoke model centralises specialist functions in a hub, with satellite teams delivering generalist services. It is more hierarchical and suited to economies of scale but may reduce responsiveness in rural areas.
- The Integrated Locality model embeds multi-disciplinary teams within defined geographies, with each locality having autonomy over delivery, commissioning, and performance. These teams report into a central directorate but retain operational flexibility. This model allows for local ownership, tailored service delivery, and stronger community integration, while still enabling central coordination of strategic functions such as commissioning, safeguarding, and performance oversight.

4.1. Comparative Scoring Matrix of Delivery Models

To support strategic decision-making around ASC delivery under Local Government Reorganisation, a comparative scoring matrix has been developed to evaluate the three potential delivery models: Integrated Locality, Hub-and-Spoke, and Centralised. Each model is assessed against key criteria including responsiveness to need, cost efficiency, rural suitability, and alignment with LGR principles. The scoring provides a structured basis for selecting the most appropriate model for the future unitary, balancing strategic ambition with operational feasibility.

Criteria	Integrated Locality	Hub-and-Spoke	Centralised
Responsiveness to Need - ability to tailor services to local population characteristics and emerging demand	3	2	1
Cost Efficiency - potential to deliver services within budget constraints while maintaining quality	2	3	3
Workforce Alignment - fit with current and projected workforce availability, recruitment, and retention	3	2	2
Rural Suitability - effectiveness in serving dispersed and isolated communities with access challenges	3	2	1
VCSE Integration - ability to work in partnership with voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations	3	2	1
LGR Compatibility - alignment with the principles and governance structures emerging from Local Government Reorganisation	3	2	1
Total	**17**	**13**	**9**

Based on strategic fit, responsiveness to need, and alignment with Local Government Reorganisation principles, the **Integrated Locality Model** is recommended as the preferred approach for ASC delivery in the future unitary.

This model offers the most balanced and future-proof structure, particularly in the context of a geographically dispersed and demographically ageing population. It enables:

- **Local Accountability** - each locality can take ownership of service delivery, performance, and community engagement. This supports transparent governance and allows for tailored responses to local challenges.
- **Service Equity** - by aligning resources with need at the locality level, the model helps reduce inequalities in access and outcomes. It enables targeted investment in high-demand or high-deprivation areas, ensuring no community is left behind.
- **Workforce Sustainability** - locality-based teams can be built around existing workforce strengths, reducing travel burdens and improving retention. It also allows for more flexible staffing models that reflect rurality, vacancy rates, and training capacity.
- **Community Integration** - the model supports deeper collaboration with VCSE organisations, informal carers, and community assets. This strengthens preventative approaches and builds resilience, particularly in areas with limited formal provision.

In contrast, the hub-and-spoke and centralised models score lower on responsiveness, rural suitability, and community integration. While they offer efficiencies, they risk undermining the place-based ethos required for effective ASC transformation under LGR.

5. Locality Modelling Options

This section explores how ASC services could be geographically structured within the future unitary, building on the preferred Integrated Locality Model. It evaluates three locality structuring approaches, each designed to balance need, geography, and operational feasibility.

5.1. Option A: Place-Based Localities (Aligned to Districts)

Structure: Four localities matching the existing district boundaries of the future unitary: South Kesteven, North Kesteven, South Holland.

Strategic Fit:

- Aligns with current political and operational boundaries.
- Supports continuity and ease of transition during LGR.

Operational Implications:

- Existing teams and commissioning arrangements can be adapted with minimal disruption.
- Risk of maintaining legacy inequities if boundaries do not reflect demand hotspots.

Advantages:

- Familiar governance and identity
- Easier transition from current structures
- Clear accountability and existing leadership structures

Limitations:

- May not reflect demand hotspots or deprivation clusters

- Risk of uneven resource allocation and service pressure in high-need LSOAs

5.2. Option B: Clustered Localities (Shared Geography/Demographics)

Structure: Group LSOAs with similar characteristics (e.g. rural isolation, high older adult density)

Strategic Fit:

- Enables targeted responses to shared challenges (e.g. transport, workforce, isolation)
- Supports thematic commissioning and shared service models

Operational Implications:

- Requires new governance arrangements and cross-district collaboration
- May improve efficiency in rural service delivery and workforce deployment

Advantages:

- Responsive to shared challenges
- Enables targeted commissioning and resource pooling
- Supports innovation in rural service models

Limitations:

- Less alignment with existing boundaries
- May require bespoke governance and data-sharing agreements

5.3. Option C: Need-Based Localities (Deprivation and Demand)

Structure: Localities defined by IMD deciles and ASC demand

Example: Spalding and Grantham as high-need zones

Strategic Fit:

- Strong alignment with equity and outcome-based commissioning
- Prioritises investment in areas with greatest need

Operational Implications:

- Requires robust data infrastructure and dynamic resource allocation
- May challenge traditional governance and community identity

Advantages:

- Prioritises equity and outcomes
- Supports targeted investment and performance improvement
- Aligns with national ASC reform priorities

Limitations:

- Complex to operationalise and communicate
- May lack community cohesion and identity
- Governance and leadership structures may be harder to define

5.4. Comparison Table: Locality Structuring Options

This table presents a comparative assessment of three locality structuring options: Place-Based, Clustered, and Need-Based; using criteria that reflect both strategic and operational considerations. These include governance and fit, community identity, equity, and responsiveness to local need. The scoring framework enables a transparent evaluation of each option's strengths and limitations, supporting the recommendation of a preferred locality configuration for ASC delivery within the future unitary.

Criteria	Place-Based	Clustered	Need-Based
Strategic Alignment - fit with LGR goals and existing governance structures	3	2	3
Operational Simplicity - ease of implementation and transition	3	2	1
Responsiveness to Need - ability to reflect local demand, demographics, and service pressure	2	3	3
Equity & Outcomes - potential to reduce inequalities and improve ASC outcomes	2	2	3
Governance Fit - clarity and feasibility of leadership and accountability arrangements	3	2	1
Community Identity - alignment with local identity and cohesion	3	2	1
Total Score	**16**	**13**	**12**

Following this comparative assessment of locality structuring options**, Option A: Place-Based Localities is recommended as the preferred model for the future unitary**.

This approach offers the strongest alignment with existing governance structures, enabling a smoother transition during LGR. It builds on familiar district boundaries, which supports

continuity, stakeholder engagement, and operational clarity. While it may not fully reflect demand hotspots or deprivation clusters, these limitations can be mitigated through targeted commissioning and performance monitoring within each locality.

This model provides a stable foundation for integrated locality working, while allowing flexibility to evolve service models and resource allocation as data maturity and digital infrastructure improve.

While Option A, is recommended for initial implementation due to its alignment with existing governance and ease of transition, it is anticipated that the unitary will evolve operationally. Over time, there may be a shift toward Option B (Clustered) or Option C (Need-Based) models, particularly as data maturity improves and commissioning becomes more targeted. This phased approach supports both continuity and innovation.

This model is recommended as the basis for detailed design, with scope to incorporate elements of clustering or need-based targeting within each locality as part of commissioning and delivery planning.

6. Workforce Modelling

This section outlines indicative workforce structures and associated costs for Adult Social Care (ASC) across the proposed future unitary area comprising South Kesteven, North Kesteven and South Holland The aim is to provide a baseline understanding of workforce requirements and financial implications to inform future service design and integration planning as part of LGR.

6.1. Data Constraints and Assumptions

A key constraint in this phase is the **absence of geo-coded workforce data**. Without granular information on where staff are currently deployed or where future demand will be concentrated, it is not possible to model locality-based workforce deployment with precision. As a result, the following assumptions have been made:

- **Vacancy rates** and **rurality factors** have been applied to base FTEs to estimate adjusted workforce needs.
- **Standardised pay bands** have been used across localities for consistency.
- The modelling is limited to **Level 3 workforce design** — i.e., indicative structures by role and locality. **Detailed design** (Level 4 and beyond) will require geo-based data and service mapping in the next phase.

6.2. Approach and Methodology

The modelling approach involved the following steps:

1. **Baseline FTEs** were sourced from existing service data provided by Lincolnshire County Council.
2. **Vacancy rates** were applied to reflect current recruitment challenges.
3. A **rurality factor** was introduced to adjust for service delivery complexity in dispersed geographies.
4. **Adjusted FTEs** were calculated to reflect realistic workforce needs.
5. **Role-based costings** were applied using standard pay bands.
6. A **central senior management structure** was modelled separately to reflect strategic leadership and commissioning functions.

6.3. Adjusted FTE Estimates

The vacancy rates in the workforce modelling below were applied using the following formula:

Adjusted FTE = Base FTE × (1+Vacancy Rate) × Rurality

This means each locality's base staffing level was first increased to account for vacancies, and then further adjusted to reflect rurality-related service delivery complexity.

Locality	Base FTE	Vacancy Rate	Rurality Factor	Adjusted FTE
South Kesteven	120	12%	1.05	141
North Kesteven	100	10%	1.10	121
South Holland	90	15%	1.15	119

These figures provide a locality-level estimate of workforce requirements, adjusted for recruitment and delivery context.

6.4. Workforce Cost Estimates

6.4.1. Local Delivery Roles

Locality	Role	Estimated FTE	Standardised Salary (£)	Estimated Cost (£)
South Kesteven	Care Worker	113	22,000	2,486,000
	Senior Care Worker	14	26,000	364,000

	Team Leader	10	32,000	320,000
	Manager	4	45,000	180,000
North Kesteven	Care Worker	97	22,000	2,134,000
	Senior Care Worker	12	26,000	312,000
	Team Leader	8	32,000	256,000
	Manager	4	45,000	180,000
South Holland	Care Worker	95	22,000	2,090,000
	Senior Care Worker	12	26,000	312,000
	Team Leader	8	32,000	256,000
	Manager	4	45,000	180,000

6.4.2. Total Estimated Local Delivery Costs

Locality	Total Estimated Cost (£)
South Kesteven	3,350,000
North Kesteven	2,882,000
South Holland	2,838,000
Total Local Delivery Costs	**9,070,000**

6.4.3. Central Senior Management Structure

The below structure reflects the strategic leadership required to oversee integrated ASC delivery across the future unitary.

Role	FTE	Pay Band (£)	Total Cost (£)
Director of Adult Services	1	95,000	95,000
Assistant Director	2	80,000	160,000
Strategic Commissioning Lead	2	70,000	140,000

Total Central Management Cost	**395,000**

7. Operational Considerations

7.1. Purpose

This section outlines operational considerations for the future unitary ASC workforce, building on the Level 3 workforce modelling. It aims to identify key factors that will influence service delivery, workforce deployment, and management efficiency across the localities.

7.2. Scope and Constraints

Operational modelling is constrained by the absence of geo-coded workforce deployment data, which limits the ability to assess travel time, caseload distribution, and supervision structures at a granular level. Assumptions have therefore been made based on indicative FTEs and standard delivery models.

7.3. Key Themes

7.3.1. Locality vs Centralisation

- The future unitary must balance **local responsiveness** with **economies of scale**.
- Locality-based teams may be preferable for reablement, safeguarding, and community support.
- Centralised functions (e.g. commissioning, brokerage) can drive consistency and efficiency.

7.3.2. Supervision Ratios

Indicative modelling assumes:

- 1 Manager per 25–30 staff
- 1 Team Leader per 10–12 staff

These ratios will need to be validated against service complexity and geography.

7.3.3. Shift Patterns and Coverage

Care delivery requires 7-day coverage, with peak demand in mornings and evenings. Modelling assumes standard full-time equivalents, but future design must incorporate:

- Part-time and flexible contracts
- Night and weekend shifts
- On-call arrangements

7.3.4. Digital Enablement

A digital maturity review has not been completed as part of the scope of this report however mobile working, scheduling tools, and digital case management will be critical for future delivery. Investment in digital infrastructure will be a key opportunity to reduce travel time and improve productivity.

7.3.5. Travel Time and Rurality

Rurality factors have been applied to FTE estimates, but actual travel time modelling is needed. South Holland may require additional staffing or flexible deployment models.

7.4. Implications

- Workforce deployment must be tailored to geography, demand, and service type.
- Management structures must support supervision, escalation, and quality assurance.
- Operational resilience will depend on flexible staffing, digital tools, and locality intelligence.

7.5. Recommendations

- Undertake geo-coded workforce mapping in the next phase to provide greater granular modelling.
- Model caseloads and travel time using GIS and service data.
- Engage operational leads to co-design shift patterns, team structures, and deployment models.
- Pilot digital enablement tools to assess impact on productivity and service quality.

8. Strategic Considerations

This section outlines the strategic enablers and partnerships required to support a sustainable and integrated ASC system across the future unitary authority. It focuses on commissioning, partnerships, and digital infrastructure which are all critical to shaping future delivery models and aligning with wider system reform.

8.1. Commissioning

8.1.1. Strategic vs Tactical Commissioning

The future unitary presents an opportunity to shift from fragmented, tactical commissioning to a strategic commissioning model that aligns with population needs and long-term outcomes at a more localised level than the current provision, whilst supporting integrated pathways across health and care.

8.1.2. Pooled Budgets

To enable integrated commissioning, the future unitary should explore pooled budgets with NHS partners, particularly for discharge pathways, community health and reablement, and

mental health and learning disability services. This would support joint accountability and reduce duplication across systems.

8.1.3. Market Development

The care market across Lincolnshire is fragmented and fragile, with rurality and workforce pressures impacting sustainability. Strategic commissioning must develop local provider capacity, especially in rural areas; support VCSE sector growth and innovation; use block contracts or alliance models where appropriate to stabilise provision.

8.2. Partnerships

8.2.1. Police and Safeguarding

Effective safeguarding requires strong operational and strategic links with Lincolnshire Police. The unitary should:

- Review and update multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH).
- Align thresholds and escalation protocols.
- Share data securely across agencies.

8.2.2. VCSE Sector Integration

The VCSE sector plays a vital role in prevention, wellbeing, and community support. Strategic partnerships should:

- Formalise VCSE involvement in commissioning and delivery.
- Provide core funding and capacity-building support.
- Embed VCSE organisations in locality teams and discharge pathways.

8.2.3. NHS / ICB Alignment

Alignment with the Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board is essential. Priorities include:

- Joint planning for community health services.
- Integrated discharge pathways and reablement.
- Shared workforce planning and digital infrastructure.

The unitary should co-develop place-based plans and participate in ICB governance structures to ensure ASC is embedded in system-wide transformation.

8.3. Housing Integration

The formation of the future unitary authority presents a unique opportunity to align housing services and ASC within a single system framework. The merger of three Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) will consolidate housing stock, repairs, and tenancy management functions, creating the conditions for joined-up service delivery that supports independence, wellbeing, and prevention.

8.3.1. Strategic Opportunity

Housing is a key determinant of health and social care outcomes. Poor housing conditions, insecure tenancies, and delayed repairs can exacerbate physical and mental health issues, increase care needs, and hinder hospital discharge. Conversely, well-managed housing services can:

- Enable safe discharge from hospital into suitable accommodation.
- Support reablement and recovery through adaptations and responsive repairs.
- Reduce demand for residential care by enabling independent living.
- Improve carer sustainability through housing-based respite and support.

8.3.2. Locality-Based Integration

As ASC locality teams are established, there is a strategic opportunity to co-locate or align them with housing officers, repairs teams, and voids management functions. This could include:

- Joint case management for individuals with complex needs.
- Shared digital systems for tracking housing and care interventions.
- Coordinated responses to safeguarding, hoarding, or tenancy breakdown.
- Integrated planning for supported housing, extra care, and adaptations.

8.3.3. Operational Implications

- Locality alignment of housing and ASC teams will require joint workforce planning, shared training, and clear governance.
- Digital interoperability between housing and ASC systems will be essential to enable real-time coordination.
- Asset planning should consider the role of housing stock in delivering care (e.g. step-down beds, supported living units).

8.3.4. Next Phase Considerations

- Map housing assets and tenancy data against ASC demand hotspots.
- Pilot integrated housing–ASC locality teams in areas with high need.
- Explore joint commissioning of housing-related support services.
- Engage tenants and service users in co-designing holistic support pathways.

9. Conclusion

The analysis presented in this Discovery report reinforces the strategic case for a **locality-based model** of Adult Social Care delivery across the future unitary area of South Kesteven, North Kesteven and South Holland. This model is not only responsive to the distinct demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic profiles of each locality, but also aligns with national policy direction toward integrated, place-based care.

The locality model offers a compelling framework for:

- **Tailored service delivery** that reflects local needs, deprivation levels, and population projections.
- **Operational resilience**, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas, through adjusted workforce deployment and flexible staffing.
- **Partnership integration**, enabling closer alignment with NHS, VCSE, and safeguarding partners at the place level.
- **Strategic commissioning**, with the potential to move beyond fragmented, tactical approaches toward pooled budgets, market shaping, and outcome-based contracts.
- **Digital transformation**, through interoperable systems, mobile working, and performance dashboards that support real-time decision-making and accountability.

The workforce modelling undertaken in this phase provides a robust Level 3 foundation, estimating adjusted FTEs and costs across localities and roles. It highlights the scale and complexity of ASC delivery in a unitary context, and the need for strategic investment in workforce planning, digital infrastructure, and commissioning capability.

However, the absence of geo-coded workforce and service deployment data remains a critical constraint. Without this, it is not possible to fully model travel time, caseload distribution, or locality-based supervision structures. Addressing this gap will be essential in the next phase of design.

The strategic considerations explored — from commissioning reform and partnership alignment to digital enablement — underscore the importance of a whole-system approach. The future unitary must not only consolidate structures, but also reimagine how care is planned, delivered, and experienced across communities.

This report sets the stage for a transformation programme that is ambitious, evidence-led, and grounded in the realities of local delivery. It provides a clear rationale for change and a practical framework for moving from discovery to design and implementation.

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Cratus group



APPENDIX 6
Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Engagement Report on behalf of North Kesteven and South Kesteven District Councils

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Executive Summary

The autumn 2025 public engagement exercise on local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire, undertaken on behalf of North and South Kesteven District Councils, generated a total of 5,576 survey responses between 15 September and 15 October 2025.

The survey achieved broad regional participation, with approximately two-thirds of responses coming from residents of North Kesteven (3,012 participants), while South Kesteven contributed 816 responses and Rutland 446. Smaller, but still meaningful numbers were received from Lincoln, South Holland and West Lindsey. This strong overall response demonstrates a significant local interest in how future council arrangements could affect people particularly relating to representation, service delivery, and community identity in Lincolnshire.

The engagement sought to understand residents and local stakeholders' priorities, values, and perceptions of local identity, accessibility, and service quality, and to provide a robust evidence base to inform future consideration of local government structures. It combined a range of engagement techniques, including a digital survey, focus groups to dive deeper into public sentiment, and a series of in-person engagement events, with key stakeholders within the community also invited to share their views.

Overall, the findings reveal communities that are deeply proud of where they live and that place strong emphasis on local connection, responsiveness, and the quality of everyday public services. Across the districts, residents expressed clear expectations that local government should be straightforward, visible, and transparent in how it communicates and delivers. While some participants mentioned that reform could improve coordination and efficiency, others expressed concerns about the potential loss of local voice, representation, and accountability. The responses reveal a balance between openness to improvement and caution about changes that might create distance between councils and the people they serve.

A. Top resident priorities

Reliable frontline services

Residents consistently emphasised the importance of dependable, everyday services that directly affect quality of life. When asked which areas councils should prioritise, the most frequently selected were:

- Roads and pavements (1,644 responses)
- Local economic growth (1,334 responses)
- The environment (1,303 responses)
- Adult and children's social care (874 responses)
- Waste and recycling (778 responses)
- Housing (534 responses)
- Leisure, arts and wellbeing (376 responses)
- Community activities (178 responses)

The immediate and reliable delivery of infrastructure maintenance, particularly roads and pavements, was rated as the highest priority, reflecting residents' focus on tangible improvements that demonstrate effective local management.

At the same time, many participants identified local economic growth as a critical longer-term priority, viewing it as the main driver of employment, prosperity, and community wellbeing. The environment also featured prominently, reflecting widespread interest in green spaces, climate action, and the sustainability of future development.

Local identity and voice

Respondents rated the importance of feeling that their council is local to their area at an average of 83 out of 100, showing a strong sense of attachment to place. Participants often described "local" as meaning accessible, accountable, and visible rather than simply geographical. For many, the idea of "local government" is defined by familiarity, responsiveness, and community presence.

Residents repeatedly emphasised that:

- Decision-making should remain close to the communities it affects.
- Councils should maintain a visible and approachable presence within their local areas.
- Ward-level representation, local forums & Parish Councils play an important role in ensuring accountability and preserving voice.

This feedback reflects a strong belief that democratic representation should remain personal, grounded, and connected to the everyday experience of residents. Maintaining proximity in decision-making is seen as essential to public trust and confidence in local government.

Clarity and accountability

There was strong support for structures that are simpler and easier to navigate, alongside improved communication about who delivers specific services. Respondents consistently called for:

- Clearer lines of responsibility and service ownership.
- More transparent decision-making and spending.
- Better public information on how to access the right service at the right time.

The desire for greater clarity reflects residents' emphasis on practicality and openness. Many expressed the view that being able to understand how decisions are made is as important as the decisions themselves.

Access and wellbeing

When asked what qualities they most value in councils, respondents most often highlighted the importance of having a local voice for residents and accountability and did not see a council's key role as being to support wellbeing.

B. Broader themes

Strong local attachment

Residents expressed pride in their communities and appreciation for their local environments, amenities, and social connections, which reflect the rural nature of the area. People valued the distinctive character of their towns and villages and want those identities to remain visible and protected in any future changes.

Concerns about scale and centralisation

Many participants voiced apprehension about decision-making becoming more distant under larger structures. Mentions of Lincoln often reflected perceptions that resources and attention could become concentrated in a single area, potentially at the expense of smaller or rural communities.

Mixed views on reorganisation

While some respondents acknowledged that a streamlined structure might reduce duplication and improve efficiency, others were unconvinced that these benefits would be realised in practice. Many wanted to understand how reorganisation would work day-to-day, how services would be delivered, and how local representation would be maintained through councillors and town & parish councils.

Community priorities and daily experience

Across open-text responses, residents repeatedly made very tangible and specific comments around roads, waste and recycling, social care, and council tax. This points towards a need to ensure the basic services and daily touchpoints local people have with local authorities are maintained and re-assured under any new governance model.

C. Challenges and opportunities

The engagement identified a number of issues that would need to be addressed in any future consideration of Local Government Reform:

- **Representation:** Residents want reassurance that local voices will continue to be heard, particularly those from smaller and rural communities.
- **Fairness:** Some participants expressed concern about unequal investment across Lincolnshire, with perceptions that certain areas may receive disproportionate attention or funding.
- **Understanding:** A recurring theme was confusion about how reorganisation might affect taxation, service delivery, or accountability. Clearer information and evidence will be needed to build understanding and trust.
- **Trust:** A degree of scepticism remains about whether structural reform automatically leads to better services or financial savings. Building confidence will require transparency, honest communication, and a realistic discussion of both the benefits and limits of reform in terms local people can understand.

In summary, the engagement presents a consistent picture of residents who value dependable services, open communication, and councils that remain close and responsive to their communities. People are open to the idea of improving coordination and efficiency but want clear reassurance that any future arrangements will protect local character, accessibility, and representation.

The findings provide a comprehensive evidence base to inform future discussions about local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire. They show that any proposed model must balance the practical need for effective service delivery with the emotional and cultural importance of local identity and trust, ensuring that reform strengthens rather than distances the connection between councils and the people they serve.

Introduction

In response to the Government's February 2025 request for councils to submit proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), North and South Kesteven District Councils have worked collaboratively to develop a joint approach for the Greater Lincolnshire LGR invitation area and neighbouring Rutland.

This follows the Government's announcement of a nationwide programme to replace two-tier county and district councils, with fewer, larger unitary authorities each ideally serving populations of at least 500,000.

To inform their final proposal (due 28 November 2025) the two councils commissioned Cratus Group to support a joint public engagement exercise, including a short anonymous survey, to gather views from residents and businesses across the region.

This engagement programme aimed to understand what people value most about their communities, the importance of local identity in council structures, and priorities for future council functions. It complemented face-to-face engagements by the council at a range of events over the summer, and was designed to be inclusive, accessible and easy to engage with.

The engagement process did not ask participants to select a preferred model of reorganisation, in line with Government guidance. Instead, it focused on understanding community priorities, values, and concerns, and how these relate to policy themes underpinning LGR and devolution. The feedback gathered will form part of the essential evidence base for the councils' submission, alongside demographic data and strategic analysis.

Potential options under consideration include the creation of one large unitary council for Lincolnshire, the expansion of Lincoln City, or the formation of two or three new councils, possibly involving mergers between North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland, and Rutland. The final decision will be made by the Government, with outcomes expected in Summer 2026.

Methodology

A hybrid engagement approach was adopted, combining digital and in-person activity to ensure the survey reached a broad cross-section of residents, businesses, and community stakeholders across North and South Kesteven and the wider Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland area. In line with the principle of "meeting people where they are," the engagement process was designed to be inclusive, accessible, and transparent, offering both online and face-to-face opportunities for participation.

The engagement ran from 15 September to 15 October 2025, following early outreach activity during the summer. The survey and engagement materials were produced jointly by North Kesteven and South Kesteven District Councils, supported by Cratus Group, and hosted on the Give My View platform as the main digital tool to conduct the survey.

Events and engagement

To complement the online engagement and ensure the survey reached a wide and representative audience, a programme of in-person events and local briefings was undertaken across the two districts. These were held at accessible, high-footfall locations and designed to encourage informal, open conversations with residents about the future of local government in Lincolnshire.

Engagement activity began in July at the Heckington Show, the largest village show in England, attracting more than 30,000 visitors. The councils hosted an engagement stand throughout the two-day event, which provided an opportunity to raise early awareness of the engagement and discuss the LGR process directly with residents. Feedback from the show helped inform the tone and focus of later engagement, particularly the emphasis on local identity and service accessibility.

During the formal engagement period in autumn 2025, several community engagement sessions were delivered across South Kesteven:

- 24 September 2025 – Deepings Community Centre – approximately 15 conversations
- 26 September 2025 – Stamford Market – approximately 90 conversations
- 29 September 2025 – Grantham (SK House) – approximately 5 conversations.
- 2 October 2025 – Bourne Market – approximately 50 conversations.
- 6 October 2025 – Stamford Arts Centre - approximately 20 conversations.
- 11 October 2025 – Grantham Market – approximately 60 conversations.

Key outcomes from events:

- Direct face-to-face engagement with circa 250 residents across North and South Kesteven.
- Feedback gathered at each session informed later communication and targeting activity.

Parish Councils

Both councils engaged extensively with parish and town councils. A series of briefings were held for local representatives, while individual district councillors also discussed reorganisation at their own local parish meetings.

In addition, North and South Kesteven jointly promoted the public engagement on LGR at the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) Conference, held at the Lincolnshire Showground on 16 July 2025. Officers held detailed discussions with a wide range of parish clerks and councillors, reinforcing the importance of local voice in any future governance model.

Student Councils

To capture younger perspectives, both councils hosted LGR sessions with their respective Student Councils, attended by young people from local secondary schools and sixth forms. The discussions explored what young residents value most about their communities and what they expect from local government in the future.

This engagement provided valuable insight into the views of a demographic often underrepresented in traditional consultations, highlighting the importance of accessibility, fairness, and environmental sustainability in shaping future council structures.

Community and partner engagement

The councils also engaged with key local networks through the North Kesteven District Council Community Development Partnership. A dedicated LGR engagement session was held on 16 July 2025, attended by representatives from major local institutions and organisations, including:

- Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
- Robert Carre Trust (local secondary schools' Academy Trust)
- The Hub (formerly the National Centre for Craft & Design)
- Lincolnshire Police (local division)
- We Are Bridge
- Hill Holt Wood
- Lincolnshire Community Foundation
- Alive Church
- Grantham College
- Voluntary Centre Services
- Citizen's Advice Mid-Lincs
- Lincs YMCA
- New Life Church
- Lincolnshire Co-op

This event enabled the councils to hear directly from community, education, business, faith, and voluntary sector partners. Conversations centred on the importance of maintaining local representation, ensuring equitable access to services, and protecting community partnerships during any potential reorganisation process.

Outreach and engagement also took place with all local councils, MPs, businesses, schools, NHS, policing bodies, RAF sites, Anglian Water, faith groups and charities.

Focus groups

Two focus group discussions were held with residents from across Lincolnshire and Rutland to explore awareness, priorities, and opinions regarding the potential reorganisation of local government. Using a professional recruitment company, six participants were selected for each group. The groups were designed to have people from different districts across the area and to have a mix of demographics in terms of age, employment type, household income, and to come from a mix of urban and rural parts of the county.

The discussion guide is provided in Appendix A.

Survey

The primary mechanism for engagement was an online survey, open between 15 September and 15 October 2025, hosted on the Give My View platform. The survey included a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, enabling participants to provide both quantitative and qualitative feedback on priorities, values, and perceptions of local government.

Questions explored local identity, service priorities, accountability, and perceptions of what it means for a council to feel "local". Demographic and location-based questions, including full postcodes, enabled detailed geographic analysis of responses across both districts and the wider area.

To ensure strong participation across all communities, a coordinated promotional strategy was implemented:

- **Targeted social media advertising** directed respondents to the survey, with live adjustments in focus of marketing budgets to boost participation in lower-responding areas.
- **Council websites, press releases, and newsletters** provided background information and linked directly to the online platform.
- **Local and stakeholder networks**—including parish councils, community groups, and local businesses—were used to share the survey and encourage participation.

By the close of the survey 5,556 responses had been received, demonstrating a high level of engagement for a district-level exercise.

The survey was also published on both websites for North and South Kesteven respectively, with an accompanying press release to provide context to residents.

Data collection

Data was securely stored and analysed, with weekly snapshot reports provided throughout the engagement process and a comprehensive final report delivered in October 2025. All this data has been considered in the conclusions of this report.

Questions

The survey featured a blend of question styles to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights. It began with simple location-based questions to establish where respondents live and work, followed by postcode entry to link answers to specific areas.

Multiple-choice and image-based questions explored feelings of belonging and local connection, while a slider scale measured how important it is for residents that their council feels local. Ranking and average-scoring questions assessed the perceived importance of different council functions and services, helping to identify overall priorities.

Open-ended questions invited respondents to describe what they value about their area, suggest additional service priorities, and provide broader reflections on local government reorganisation in their own words.

The questions are available at Appendix B.

Cratus group



Focus Group Findings

Key Themes

Awareness and local identity

Most participants admitted limited understanding of how local government is structured or which council serves them. People tended to identify more with their immediate town or village than with the county or district but mentioned travelling across district and county boundaries a lot for leisure or work:

- *"I wouldn't say that I even know where any of the county boundaries are – it all feels kind of as one."*
- *"I've lived here 40 years, but I still identify more as a Yorkshire person."*
- *"I love the countryside and the sense of community."*
- *"It feels very rural, but I can get to London in an hour"*

However, there was a clear sense of community pride and attachment to local surroundings, particularly among those in smaller or rural areas.

Experiences with councils

Participants' direct experiences of councils varied widely. Parish or town councillors were often praised for visibility and responsiveness, while district and county-level services felt more distant:

- *"Our parish councillor is brilliant – he's really active on social media so we always know what's going on."*
- *"I report fly-tipping all the time. To their credit, the council are very good at clearing it."*
- *"I was quite impressed with the County Council when we needed support for an elderly family member."*
- *"The local tip is really well run; the staff are friendly and helpful."*

Positive experiences were most common where residents could see prompt, visible outcomes.

Service priorities

When asked to choose two priorities from a list of eight key services, residents most frequently highlighted. Adult and children's social care, Roads, transport, and infrastructure, Environmental protection and Local economic growth

- *"Adult social care is something everybody will rely on at some point."*
- *"We should be investing more in local people who want to start their own businesses."*
- *"There's been so much road work done recently, really improving the area."*
- *"You can see grants being given to local shops to make them look better, that's positive."*

One person raised the point that some services that were previously council-run were no longer such as community libraries. The groups then had a chance to add items to the list of things councils should prioritise. Specific access to services in rural areas and a decline in public transport links were raised, as was an increase in policing.

Council tax and value for money

Most residents said they would accept modest increases in Council Tax if spending were transparent and fair. Several criticised perceived inequalities between regions and outdated property banding:

- *"Happy to pay more if it's fair and efficiently spent."*
- *"It feels like the system hasn't moved with the modern world. We're paying the same as people in central London."*

Some acknowledged improvements or fairness in particular services, while others questioned why rural areas pay the same or more yet receive fewer services. One said that some elements seen as essential would be worth extra funding such as policing or waste collection, but leisure and arts were not essential and would not be worth spending extra on. (ACKNOWLEDGE THIS WERE VIEWS FROM ONE PARTICIPANT FROM FOCUS GROUP)

Views on reorganisation

The proposed creation of a single county-wide council was met with some scepticism. Participants feared that local voices would be lost, rural areas overlooked, and costs would outweigh benefits.

A few saw potential advantages in simplicity and reduced duplication, but most doubted real savings would be achieved.

- *"Having one council might make it clearer who to contact, one place to go rather than several."*
- *"It potentially could save money."*
- *"If they can make it simpler and still keep it local, that would be a good thing."*
- *"It's a terrible idea; Lincolnshire is too big and too different."*
- *"All the money would end up in Lincoln; everywhere else would lose out."*
- *"My concern was the cost of changing all of this"*

A representative from Rutland said they leaned towards Rutland joining a South Lincolnshire grouping rather than a wider Lincolnshire group.

Alternative proposals for smaller unitary councils were met with a better reception, albeit with continued scepticism about any reorganisation at all. There were concerns about smaller councils meaning disruption to existing county council services.

- "*We are the biggest county. It probably would make sense to split it into two to make it more manageable."*
- *"It will lead to service disruption and fragmentation of the existing services like adult and children's services, education."*
- *"There probably would be some short-term disruption, but at the end of the day, it might be less than the problems caused by having one enormous council."*

Communication and Trust

Residents emphasised poor communication from councils and indicated a low trust in both local and national decision-making.

- *"If communication is poor now, how will it work on a bigger scale?"*

- *"I'd like the council to really slow down and involve residents properly before making any big decisions."*
- *"It's nice to actually be asked, usually we just hear about it after it's decided."*
- *"I'm a bit of a cynic and I have the feeling that nothing that we say is going to make an awful lot of difference"*

Some stressed the need for resident involvement and expressed cynicism about whether public views would influence the outcome at all.

Overall Summary

While not particularly invested in their individual councils, participants were wary of the reorganisation, especially seeing Lincolnshire as too big an area to be effective. This was raised with concern over a rural urban divide.

They prioritised visible, everyday service delivery over efficiency and money saving. They called for clearer information, transparency in spending, and genuine opportunities to shape future decisions.

Cratus group



Survey Results

Demographics

The opening questions of the survey were designed to build up a basic demographic profile of respondents, with questions on geography and connection to the area through work or residency.

Do you live in Greater Lincolnshire or Rutland?

Total responses: 5,575

- **Yes:** 5,117
- **No:** 458

This question aimed to qualify whether respondents lived within the Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland area, helping to verify the geographical focus of the engagement and ensure that local voices were well represented in the findings.

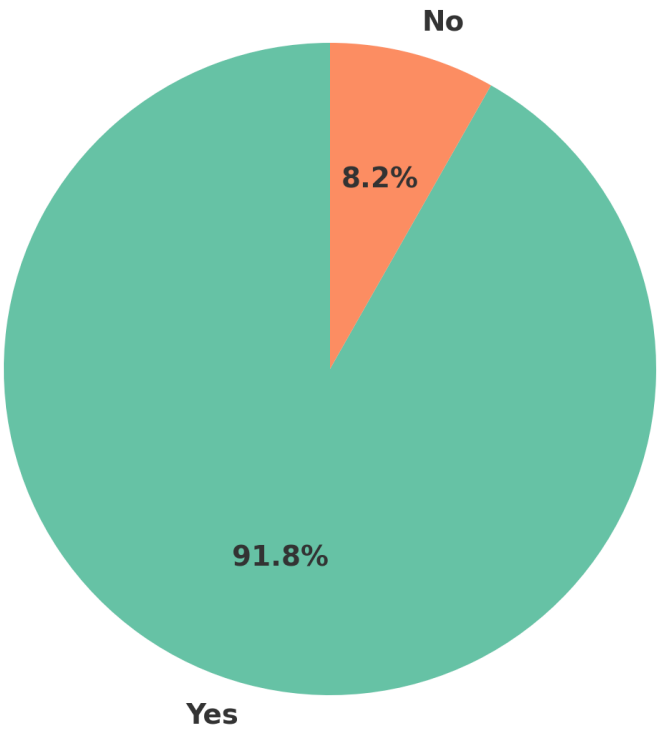


Figure 1

This demonstrates that the engagement successfully reached its target audience and that the results largely reflect the views of residents who are directly affected by potential local government reorganisation.

Do you work in Greater Lincolnshire or Rutland?

The second demographic question was asked to qualify whether a participant who didn't live in the area worked there instead. This helped to validate their stake within the region and unlock the remainder of the survey, ensuring that responses represented people with a genuine local connection.

A total of 443 responses were recorded for this question. Of these, 24.8% (110 people) reported that they work within Greater Lincolnshire or Rutland, while 75.2% (333 people) said they do not.

The lower number of responses reflects the survey's design, where only those who lived outside the area were shown this question. This means the results represent a smaller subset of participants with employment or professional links to the region, complementing the much larger group of resident respondents.

Together, these questions confirm that the engagement reached a predominantly local audience, with most participants living in the Greater Lincolnshire or Rutland area and a smaller, relevant group contributing from a workplace or professional connection within the region.

What is your full postcode?

As a final demographic capture, we collected postcode data to identify where respondents live so that feedback could be accurately linked to specific local areas. Collecting postcode data allowed the analysis to map responses geographically, showing how views and priorities differed across North Kesteven, South Kesteven, and neighbouring districts.

4,556 people shared their postcodes, although not all gave the full postcode and so could not be directly allocated to the individual districts. Below is a breakdown of numbers of postcodes from each area, as best deduced from the information given.

Area	Count
North Kesteven	3012
South Kesteven	816
Rutland	446
South Holland	171
West Lindsey	40
Lincolnshire	25
Lincoln	18
East Lindsey	14
Neighbouring Counties	14
Total	**4556**

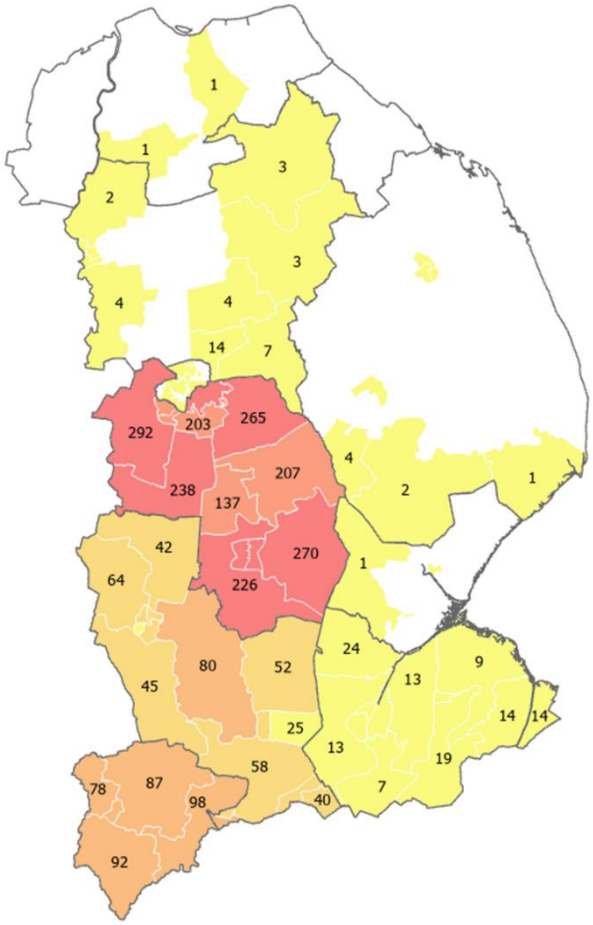


Figure 2

The postcode data shows that participation was concentrated in North Kesteven, which accounted for 3,012 responses (around two-thirds of the total).

South Kesteven provided the second-largest number of responses, with 816 submissions (18%), while Rutland contributed 446 (10%). Smaller numbers came from South Holland (171 responses) and West Lindsey (40), alongside a small number of entries from Lincoln, East Lindsey, and surrounding authorities such as Melton and Harborough.

Overall, the data indicates that the engagement reached a broad geographic spread but was heavily weighted toward the two partner districts North and South Kesteven, which together made up over 80% of all responses. This strong representation from the target areas provides a reliable basis for understanding local priorities while also capturing useful insight from neighbouring districts.

Local area and community

What do you value most about your area?

This open text question sought to understand what residents most appreciate about their local area, revealing the qualities, values, and experiences that define their sense of place and community.



Figure 3

3,662 answered this question, and the most frequently mentioned terms are detailed in the above wordcloud. The feedback from residents clearly highlights the deep connection people feel to their local environment and community.

Countryside, green space and nature was the top highlighted theme (1,645 comments). The most frequently mentioned words countryside, local, community, rural, and quiet show that residents strongly value the natural landscape, open green spaces, and the peaceful, rural character of their area.

A second major theme identified was the importance of community and belonging (784 comments), with words like village, friendly, people, and local indicate that residents appreciate the more rural nature of the area, and sense of neighbourliness and social cohesion within their towns and parishes.

Lesser mentioned but still important points mentioned reliable local services such as shops and councils and good connectivity and access to other areas.

Which of these most make you feel part of your community?

The question aimed to understand what helps residents feel connected to their community by identifying the people, activities, and networks that contribute to a sense of belonging. It explored whether residents find connection mainly through personal relationships and social interaction or through participation in local events, groups, and community life. People had a chance to select two options, and the number of people who chose each option as one of their choices are shown in the figure below.

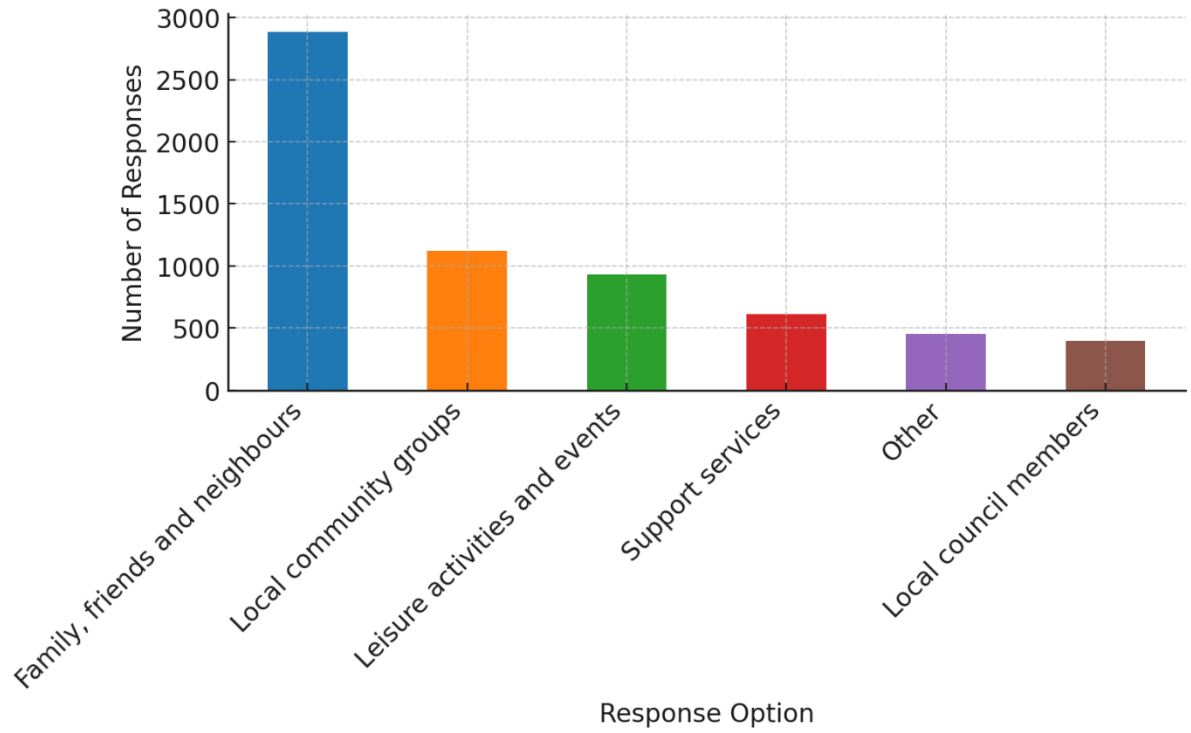


Figure 4

Most residents feel most connected to their community through personal relationships family, friends, and neighbours while community groups and local events also play a significant role in fostering belonging. Engagement through support services and council members is less common, suggesting that formal or institutional ties are secondary to social and community-based connections.

Residents also had the option to select “Other” and describe additional elements that help them feel part of their community which 391 people chose to do. These responses mainly comprised further details on options in the questions, with specific comments on things like neighbours or specific local groups and clubs. Others highlighted factors such as workplace connections, volunteering, local businesses, and informal networks, with a few noting feelings of disconnection or limited sense of community.

This suggests that while most people find belonging through family, friends, and local groups, others draw their sense of community from different social or professional connections within Lincolnshire.

Where do you feel most connected to?

The question was designed to understand the geographical level at which residents feel the strongest sense of identity and belonging. It aimed to reveal whether people identify most with their immediate neighbourhood, their town or village, their wider district, or the county as a whole.

This helps indicate how “local” people’s sense of community truly is, which is particularly relevant when considering the potential impacts of local government reorganisation on representation and identity.

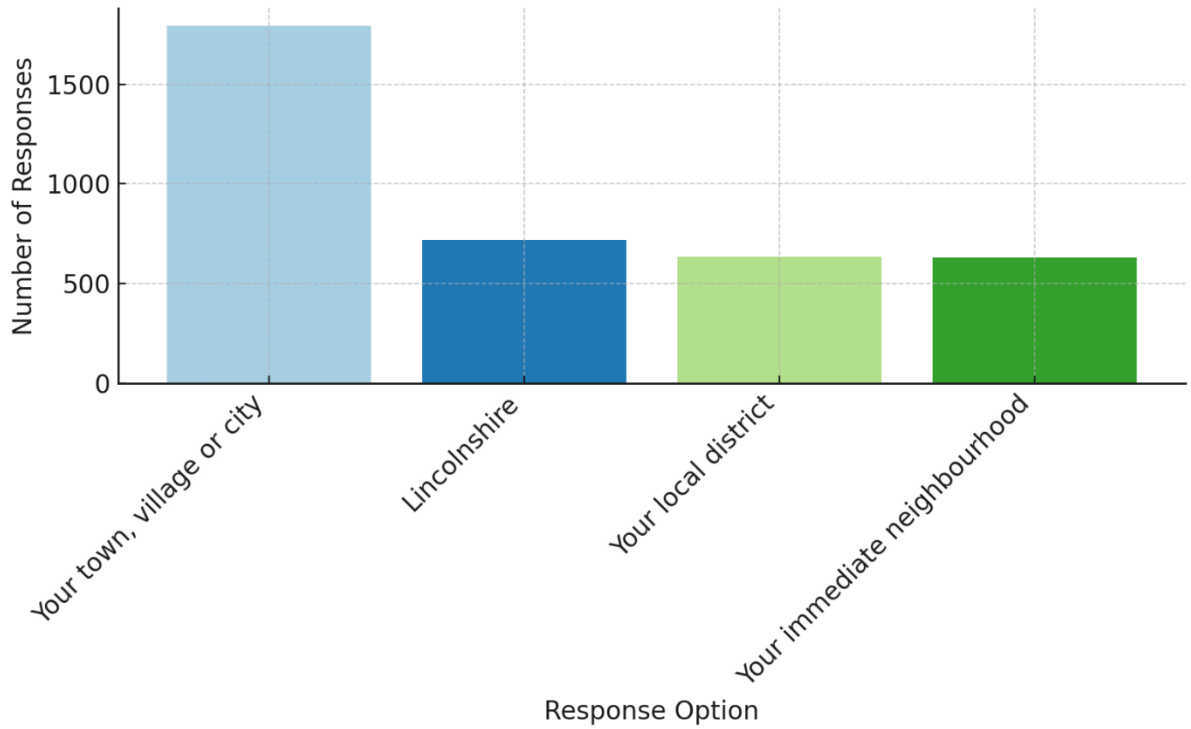


Figure 5

The results show that 1,792 respondents (57%) feel most connected to their town, village, or city, highlighting the importance of place-based identity at a local level. A smaller proportion, 718 people (23%), identify most with Lincolnshire, while 636 (10%) feel most connected to their district, and 632 (10%) to their immediate neighbourhood.

The data points towards a suggests a strong attachment to local places, with many identifying more with their town, village, or parish than within Lincolnshire.

These figures suggest that residents' sense of belonging is strongest within recognisable local communities rather than larger administrative areas. While some connection to the county level exists, most people associate community and identity with the places where they live and interact daily.

Local Councils

How important is it to feel that your council is local to your area?

This question was designed to measure how strongly residents value a sense of locality in their relationship with local government. It aimed to capture the importance people place on having a council that feels close, accessible, and representative of their community.

Participants were met with a sliding scale representing the value 0–100 scale, to provide a clear indication of intensity of feeling, with the numbers of people who selected each bracket shown in the figure below.

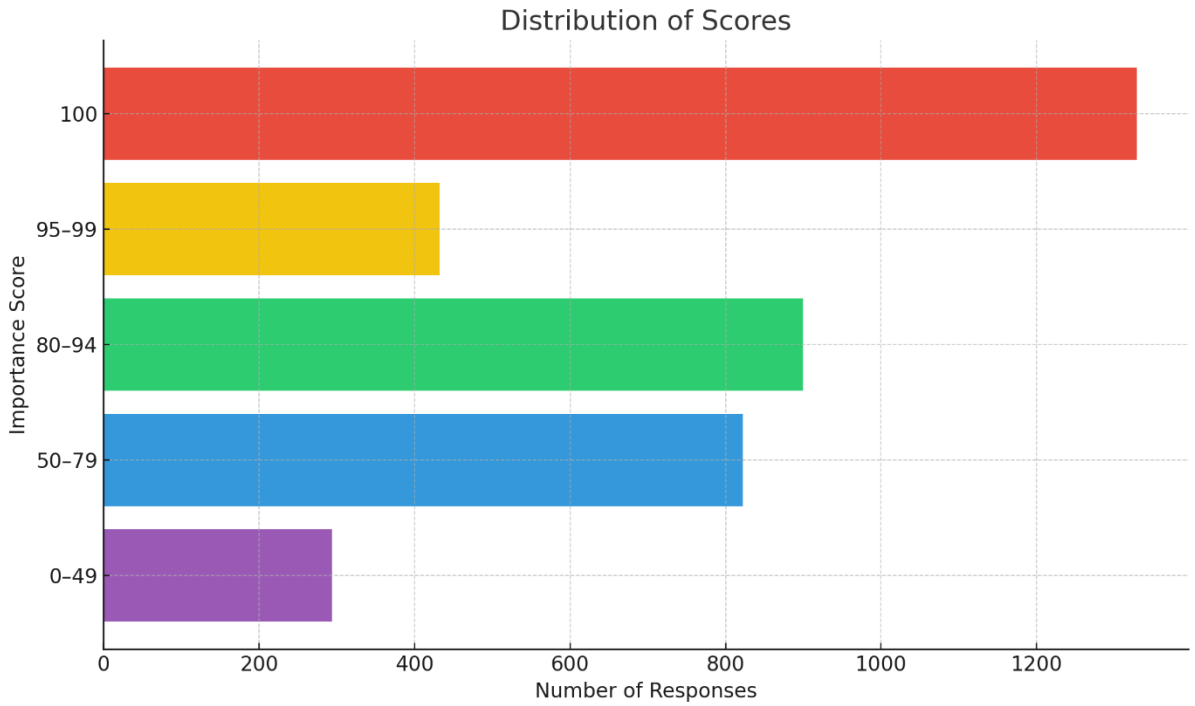


Figure 6

The results show that residents place very high importance on their council feeling local to their area, with an average choice of 83 out of 100 importance. Most responses are clustered at the upper end of the scale, with three-quarters of respondents rating this 75 or above and nearly half giving scores close to 100.

Which do you think are the most and least important elements of local councils?

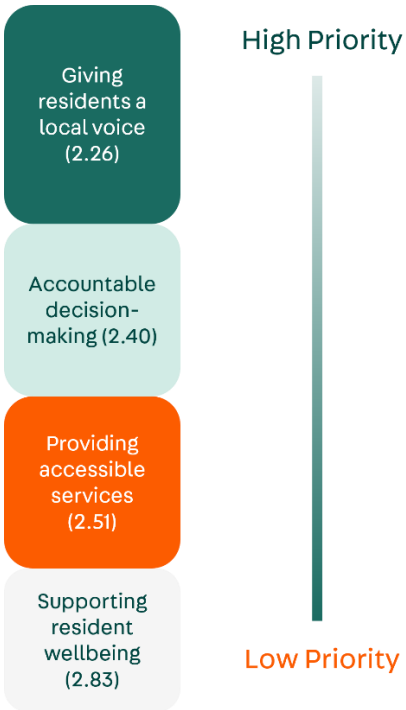


Figure 7

This question was intended to understand which elements of their local council residents consider most important, asking them to rank four options in order of importance.

The overall ratings are shown above, giving each item an average score where the average score given is shown for each choice, where 1 was the highest priority and 4 the lowest. In terms of the top ranking, 1,222 people chose ‘local voice’ closely followed by ‘accountable decision-making’ (1,076) while only 486 chose ‘resident wellbeing.’

This shows residents want strong councils that advocate for them and act with integrity, rather than focusing on caring for residents.

Which services should future councils prioritise most?

This was a multiple-choice question designed to identify which local services residents believe should be the highest priority for future councils. It aimed to understand which services people view as most essential and that councils must be able to show how LGR will tangibly improve or at least maintain existing levels of service.

The top priorities identified are shown in the chart below.

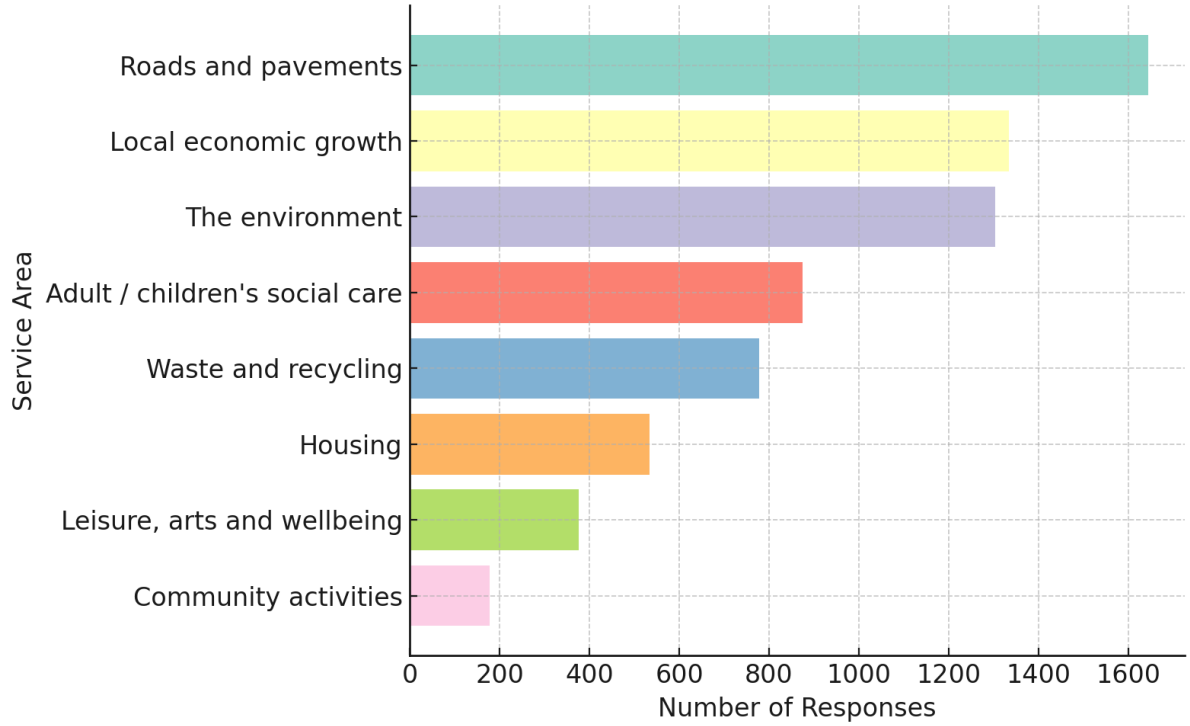


Figure 8

The immediate and visible delivery of services such as roads and pavements was rated as the highest priority, reflecting residents’ desire for dependable maintenance and infrastructure that directly supports daily life.

At the same time, local economic growth was recognised a strong driver of long-term wellbeing, underpinning employment, prosperity, and the resilience of local communities being top of council priorities.

The environment also scored very highly in responses, reflecting the importance of the county's rural setting which came up frequently in qualitative responses in other questions.

Are there any other services you feel should be prioritised?

The next question gave participants the opportunity to identify other service areas which they felt should form a priority.

This analysis is from the open-ended question and brings together all mentions of services which residents brought up in their answers. Many of these related to services mentioned in the previous multiple-choice question, showing that these are important enough to residents to warrant extra detail and emphasis.

The findings reflect a strong focus on essential everyday services alongside wider social and environmental concerns.

Health and social care (1,181 mentions) came up, with specific mentions of local access to GPs and hospitals, and the need for support for older people:

- *"Localised health & social care"*
- *"Doctors and well being for older residents"*

Public Transport was the next most mentioned topic (827 mentions), despite neither bus nor rail being council-led services in Lincolnshire, which shows how residents are not fully aware of where responsibilities lie:

- *"Improved transport links for rural areas"*
- *"If the Mayor goes ahead with her stated aim of bringing in Bus Franchising, I think Local Councils should be involved in this helping to coordinate and facilitate services."*

Leisure and Culture (800 mentions) had people mentioning leisure centres closing down and called for protection of local heritage sites and more community hubs:

- *"Community facilities, such as libraries and leisure centres."*
- *"Leisure, arts, & culture to ensure fair non-commercialised provision"*

Roads and Transport Infrastructure (563 mentions) came up, with road maintenance and potholes, speed limits and traffic safety, parking and congestion and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists:

- *"Making sure traffic keeps to the speed limits in village and town areas"*
- *"Pot holes!!!!!!!!"*

Planning and Development was a new topic (548 mentions), with discussions on housing growth and design quality, the need for infrastructure to support development, affordable housing and all needing to bear in mind protecting local character and identity. There were some who said they felt there should not be any more housing built.

- *"Ensuring that there is housing to suit all needs"*
- *"Infrastructure of a village following housing developments"*

Another fully new topic was education (451 mentions), with people discussing school funding and capacity, youth services and training opportunities and rural access to schools:

- *"Education - equality of opportunity especially at secondary school level"*

Despite police not being a council-led service, crime and safety was raised as a priority (333 mentions), with issues from speeding and road safety, anti-social behaviour, to the general need for more visible policing and community reassurance being raised:

- "Police presence in residential areas"

Across all responses, residents consistently highlighted the importance of reliable, visible, and practical local services such as health, roads, waste, and transport.

Many of the themes identified extend beyond the direct responsibilities of a future unitary authority. Issues such as healthcare, policing, and some aspects of transport fall under other organisations. This is not uncommon when conducting an engagement on local authorities and highlights a gap in general knowledge of what councils do and don't deliver.

Future communications about any new model of local government will therefore need to clearly explain which services a unitary council would control, and how it would work in partnership with other bodies to deliver on wider community priorities.

Feedback on Local Government Reorganisation

Would you like to share any other thoughts about Local Government Reorganisation?

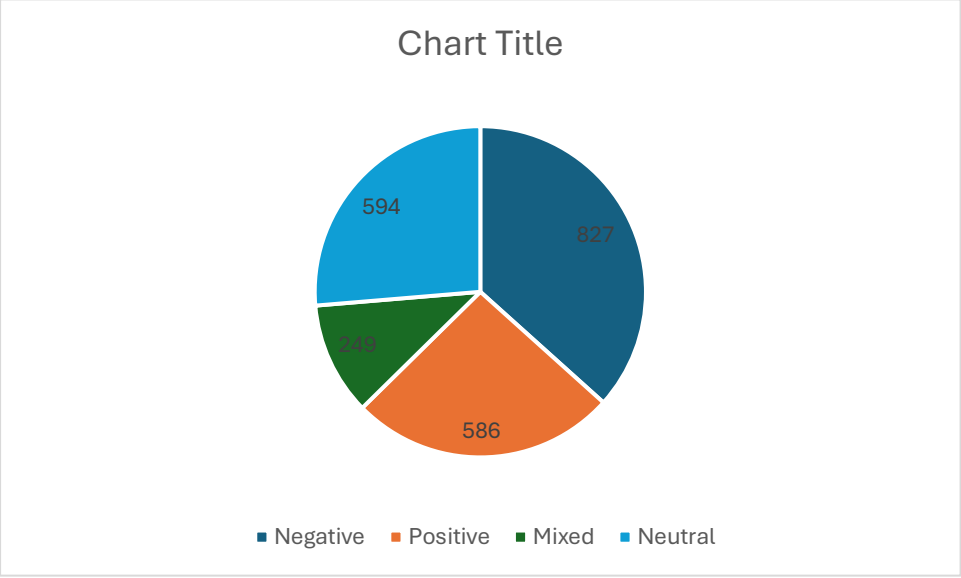


Figure 9

The final question of the survey was an opportunity to give residents a place to express their personal views, concerns, and expectations in their own words, which 2,250 took. Unlike structured survey questions, this free-text prompt aimed to capture the nuances of public feeling, including the reasons behind their support or opposition to change. This has been analysed according to the general sentiment of the comments, organised into negative, positive, neutral and mixed, with the distributions shown below.

Negative sentiment was most common across the responses (37%). Residents expressed concerns about how reorganisation might affect their connection to local decision-making and service quality, and mentioned fear of losing local identity and representation, with decisions being made by a centralised authority with no local knowledge.

There were also doubts about whether reorganisation would genuinely result in the saving money or improved efficiencies, with people saying they are happy with the current system and expressing concern that services might decline or become harder to access:

- *"I think the whole thing is completely misplaced and ultimately will not save money. It simply will not work. The current structure in South Kesteven is GOOD."*
- *"I remain unconvinced about the benefits and concerned about the potential cost in both financial and loss of focus during a transition."*
- *"Lincolnshire is far too big a geographic area for decisions to be made locally and in an accountable way"*

Neutral sentiment (26% of comments) typically reflected uncertainty or a desire for more information. People were not sure what reorganisation would actually involve and gave a general sense that some residents wanted to understand the practical outcomes before forming an opinion. Others mentioned wider considerations such as town or parish councils, or discussed potential ways they felt the councils should be structured. Feelings were mixed on Rutland's role in LGR, with many saying it felt like a natural fit with North and South Kesteven, and others saying it did not belong with Lincolnshire:

- *"More targeted surveys on each option for reform"*
- *"Rutland and South Kesteven are complementary cultures and economies"*
- *"Concern about the future role of Parish Councils"*
- *"I don't think I fully understand what one council would look and feel like"*

Positive sentiment (also 26% of comments) focused on the potential benefits of reform. Respondents highlighted possible improvements to efficiency and coordination and expressed optimism about the opportunity to modernise local government, reduce duplication and make it more cost-effective. People also felt it would create more equal services across an area:

- *"I consider the unitary model to be far more efficient and effective in decision making and reduces bureaucracy."*
- *"Hopefully one big service will be better value than a number of small ones."*
- *"I hope one of the priorities of the reorganisation will be to improve efficiency, cut out duplication and costs."*
- *"Think it's a good idea silly having one council responsibility for one road and not another."*

Mixed sentiment often combined support for the principle of change with reservations about how it would be implemented, with people saying reorganisation could bring benefits if done carefully and transparently, and if there is still a way for local representation and to keep local identity.

- *"Potentially an exciting opportunity so long as decisions made now are for the long term benefits of the 'new world', and not just short term gains"*
- *"I favour the creation of smaller authorities which can adequately address local issues."*

- *"Whilst they can deliver cost savings, local representation must be paramount, along with ensuring there is not a mass cull of jobs for those employed in providing local services."*
- *"One point of contact for all services does make sense, but taking away decision making from local areas and putting it into the hands of people who may not fully understand those areas feels like a real risk"*

The responses demonstrate a broad range of views on local government reorganisation but lean predominantly toward caution and scepticism. This is reflective of sentiment across the country and within other LGR programmes.

Conclusions

This engagement exercise has given North and South Kesteven District Councils a stronger understanding of the priorities of people in their local area, giving a baseline from which to finalise plans for LGR.

Similar themes emerged from both the survey and the in-person or focus group discussions, from a sense of community and connection to a rural identity, to the desire for councils that deliver good day-to-day services, and a level of scepticism over LGR.

The engagement revealed that infrastructure (particularly roads) and local economic growth are the highest priorities for residents, and so if new systems can demonstrate how they will maintain or improve these areas they're more likely to be viewed positively.

Another theme throughout was how residents are not sure which organisations are responsible for which services, with requests for improved bus, trains and policing.

Residents value the rural environment, community connection, and dependable local services. Any new council structure would need to remain visible and accessible while preserving the distinctive character and sense of belonging that define their communities.

The rural nature of much of Lincolnshire was a constant presence in all elements of discussions, with residents appreciating it currently and hoping that future councils will celebrate this and not allow cities to overshadow rural areas.

Many residents associate good local government with visibility, accessibility, and local accountability, and have fears that these could diminish under a larger authority model.

However, there is also an underlying openness to improvement, particularly if changes can demonstrate clear benefits, efficiency, and fairness. Future communications should therefore focus on clarity, transparency, and reassurance, explaining which functions a new council would oversee, how local voices would be preserved, and how any transition would deliver tangible service improvements for residents.

Cratus group



Appendices

Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. Introduction

Let's start by introducing ourselves. Could you tell us your first name, where you live, and one thing you most value about living in your local area?

2. Your local area and council

- When you think about your local community - the place you consider "home" - what does that mean to you? Is it your immediate neighbourhood, your local town, or the wider Lincolnshire area? And what makes it feel like your community, is it the people, the local groups, the local council?
- Thinking about day-to-day life: where do you usually go for things like food shopping, healthcare, leisure, or work? Do you tend to stay local, or travel around Lincolnshire or into nearby counties?
- Now let's think about your local councils: what comes to mind when you think about "the council" where you live? Do you know which council provides your bin collection, schools, or roads? Are you aware that Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council, and North East Lincolnshire Council are currently separate? Is it clear who does what, or does it sometimes get confusing?
- Have you ever had to contact your local council? How easy or difficult was that? What would make dealing with the council simpler?

3. Local services and priorities

Looking at this list which two services do you think councils should prioritise and why?

1. Roads and pavements
2. Local economic growth
3. The environment
4. Adult / children's social care
5. Waste and recycling
6. Housing
7. Leisure, arts and wellbeing
8. Community activities

- Which of these services work well locally? Are there any that need more attention or improvement?
- If councils had to make difficult choices, which services should be protected or prioritised most?
- Are there any services not on this list that feel particularly important where you live?
- If keeping services high quality meant paying slightly more in council tax - or vice versa - how would you feel about that?

4. Reorganisation and future structures

One option is creating one single council for Lincolnshire. One Lincolnshire would mean combining all seven districts.

- What's your initial reaction to that idea?
- What might be the benefits of having one council across the whole area?
- What might be the drawbacks or risks?
- Do you think one council would make things simpler for residents?
- Would you expect services to improve, stay the same, or get worse?
- How important is it that local decisions are made by people who understand your community?
- How could a single council make sure local voices are still heard?

Other options on the table are to have two or three smaller (but still larger than the existing borough councils) councils covering the same area.

- Do you think this is a better or a worse idea than one large council?

Appendix B: Survey questions

Do you live in Greater Lincolnshire or Rutland?

- Yes
- No

Do you work in Greater Lincolnshire or Rutland?

- Yes
- No

What is your full postcode?

Open text

What do you value most about your area?

Open text

Which of these most make you feel part of your community?

- Family, friends and neighbours
- Local council members
- Support services
- Leisure activities and events
- Local community groups
- Other

Where do you feel most connected to?

- Your immediate neighbourhood
- Your town, village or city
- Your local district
- Lincolnshire

How important is it to feel that your council is local to your area?

Slider 0–100

Which do you think are the most and least important elements of local councils?

Place in order of importance

- Providing accessible services
- Giving residents a local voice
- Supporting resident wellbeing
- Accountable decision making

Which services should future councils prioritise most?

- Housing
- Roads and pavements

- Waste and recycling
- The environment
- Adult / children's social care
- Community activities
- Leisure, arts and wellbeing
- Local economic growth

Are there any other services you feel should be prioritised?

Open text

Would you like to share any more thoughts about Local Government Reorganisation?

Open text

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Best4GreaterLincolnshire

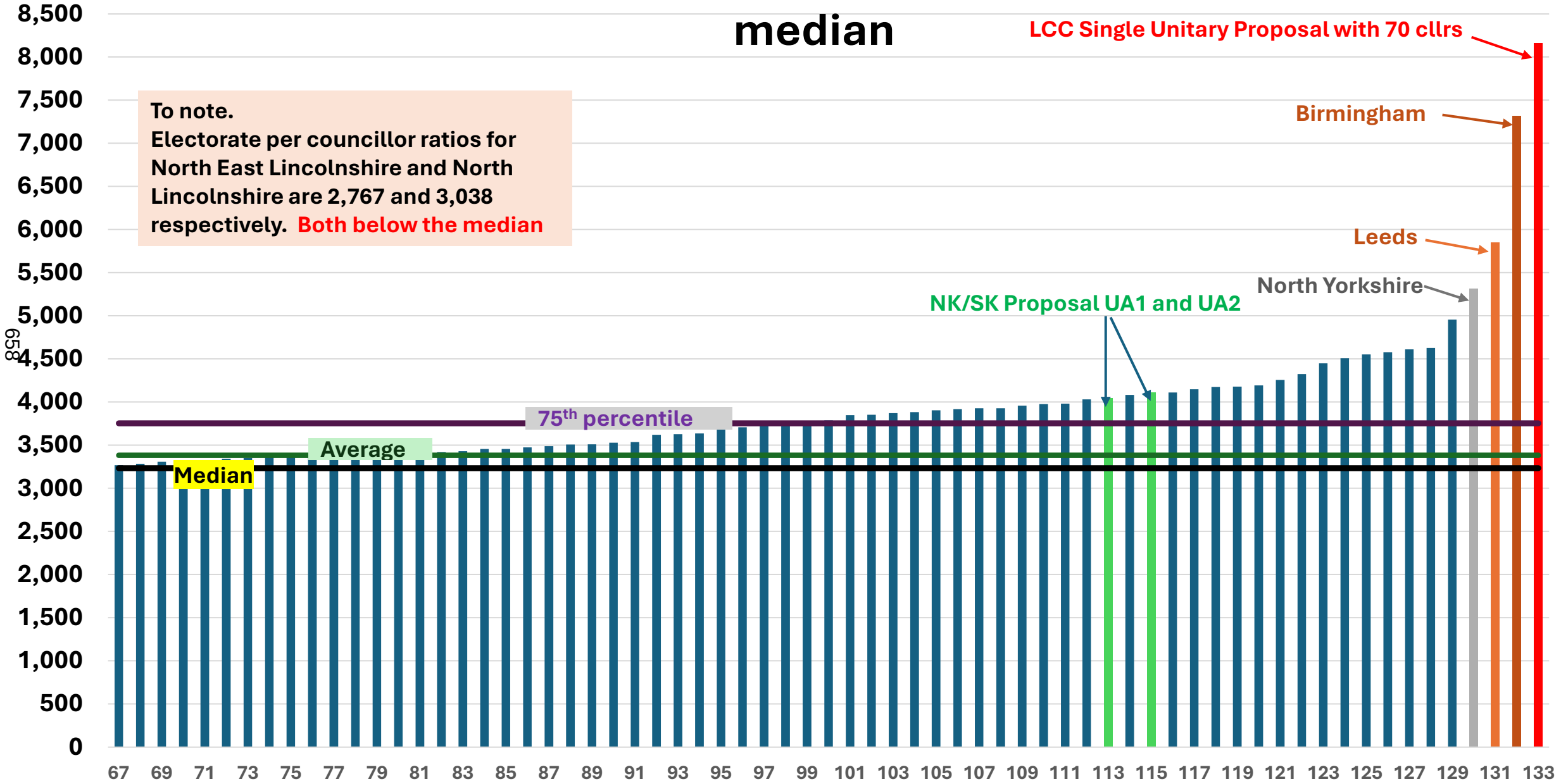
APPENDIX 7

Future Councillor Numbers Background Data

(fully completed and formatted appendix to follow)

November 2025

Electors per Councillor All Single Tier Councils above the median



Councillors: Greater Lincolnshire – Current Structure

The table below sets out the current numbers for councillors at county, district and unitary level across Greater Lincolnshire.

NE Lincs 15 wards, North Lincs 19 wards; LCC 70 wards

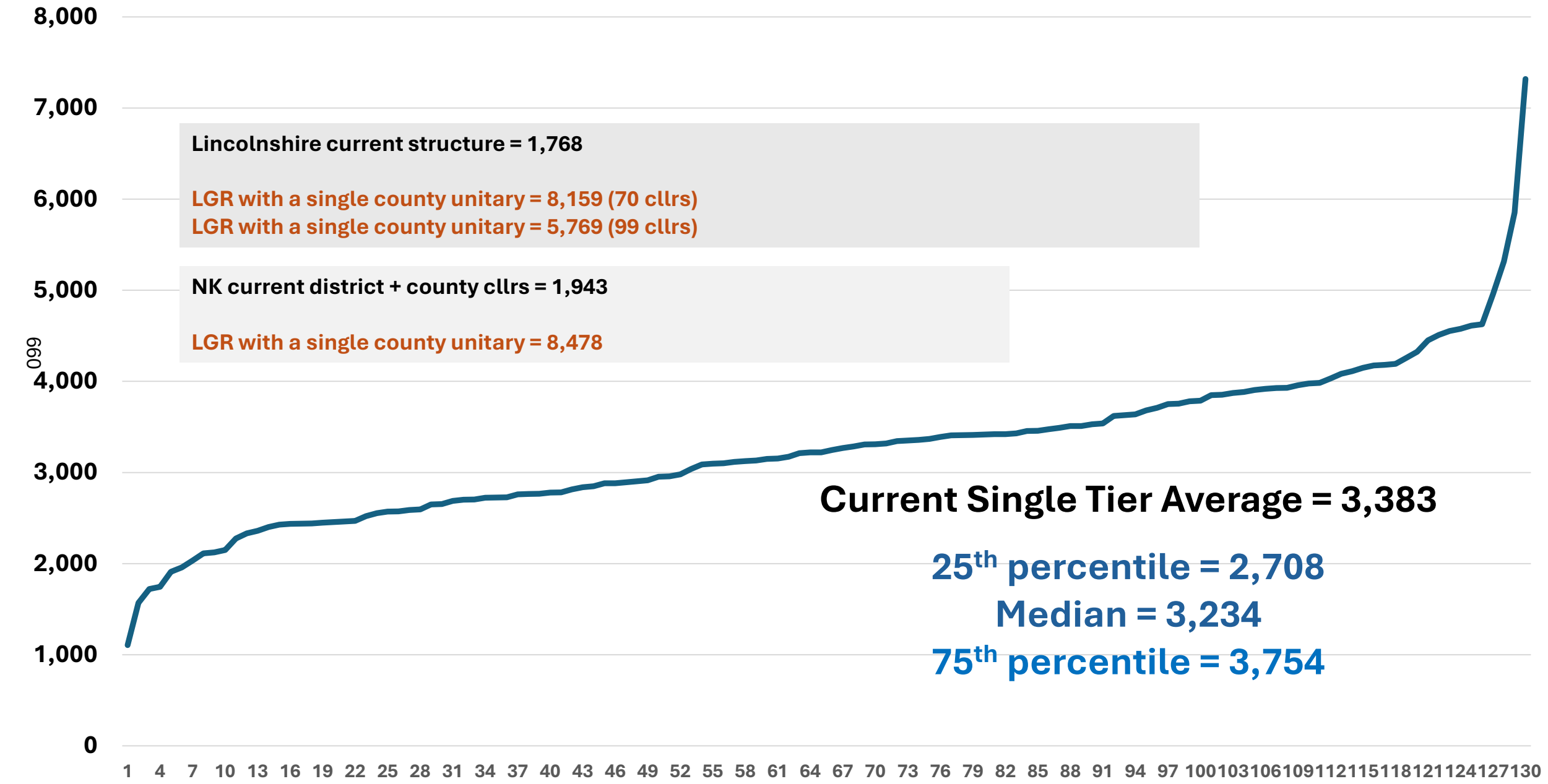
LCC, North Lincs & Rutland – whole elections – next due LCC 2029; North Lincs & Rutland 2027; NE Lincs elects by Thirds

Districts – all whole elections; except Lincoln which elects by Thirds. Next district elections due 2027; next Lincoln due 2026

LA	Unitaries Cllrs	District Cllrs	County Cllrs	Total Seats	LGBCE Electorate	Electorate per Cllr Seat	Area Size	Sq KM per Cllr seat	Population	Population per Seat
Boston		30	6	**36**	48,956	1,360	364	10.1	71,080	1,974
East Lindsey		55	13	**68**	110,820	1,630	1767	26.0	145,183	2,135
Lincoln		33	8	**41**	61,737	1,506	36	0.9	105,114	2,564
North Kesteven		43	11	**54**	93,256	1,727	922	17.1	122,468	2,268
South Holland		37	9	**46**	72,631	1,579	750	16.3	99,298	2,159
South Kesteven		56	14	**70**	109,253	1,561	943	13.5	147,151	2,102
West Lindsey		36	9	**45**	74,419	1,654	1156	25.7	99,208	2,205
LINCOLNSHIRE		**290**	**70**	**360**	**571,072**	**1586**	**5938**	**16.5**	**789,502**	**2,193**
North East Lincolnshire	42			**42**	116,205	2767	193	5	159,911	3,807
North Lincolnshire	43			**43**	130,633	3038	847	20	171,336	3,985
NEL and NL TOTAL	**85**	**0**	**0**	**85**	**246,838**	**2904**	**1040**	**12**	**331,247**	**3,897**
GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE	**85**	**290**	**70**	**445**	**817,910**	**1838**	**6978**	**16**	**1,120,749**	**2,519**

Sources: LGBCE electorate numbers; ONS population and area, MYE2024

Electors per Councillor All Single Tier Councils



Applying electorate ratios for Current Single Tier Councils										
		median	average	90th percentile	95th percentile	Cornwall	N.Yorks	adjust to 99 max	LCC option based on 70 Cllrs	Current Wards
Proposal	**New Unitaries**	**3234**	**3383**	**4181**	**4566**	**4956**	**5316**	**5768**	**8158**	**2 cllrs per ward**
NKSK	**U1 NK, SH, SK**	85	81	66	60	56	52			**68**
	U2 BOS, LIN, EL, WL	92	87	71	65	60	56			**72**
	U3 NEL, NL	76	73	59	54	50	46			
	TOTAL	**253**	**242**	**196**	**179**	**165**	**154**			
LCC	**U1 BOS, EL, LIN, NK, SH, SK, WL**	177	169	137	125	115	107	99	70	N/A
	U2 NEL, NL	76	73	59	54	50	46	43	30	
	TOTAL	**253**	**242**	**196**	**179**	**165**	**154**	**142**	**100**	
SELP	**U1 BOS,EL,NK,SH,SK**	134	129	104	95	88	82			
	U2 LIN,NEL,NL,WL	118	113	92	84	77	72			
	TOTAL	**253**	**242**	**196**	**179**	**165**	**154**			
CoL	**U1 CoL, Part NK, Part WL**	44	42	34	31	28	27			36
	U2 Part NK, Part WL, BOS,EL,SH,SK	133	127	103	94	87	81			N/A
	U3 NEL+NL	76	73	59	54	50	46			
	TOTAL	**253**	**242**	**196**	**179**	**165**	**154**			

Unitary	County Name	District Name	Division Name	Councillors	Electorate	Proposed Unitary Electo	Division Elector Ratio	Current % V	new % var
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Bassingham Welbourn	2	9527	4066	4764	**17.2%**	17.2%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Eagle & Hykeham West	2	8562	4066	4281	5.0%	5.3%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Heckington	2	9585	4066	4793	**17.6%**	17.9%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Hykeham Forum	2	7755	4066	3878	-4.9%	-4.6%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Metheringham Rural	2	7645	4066	3823	-6.2%	-6.0%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Potterhanworth & Coleby	2	8546	4066	4273	4.8%	5.1%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Ruskington	2	8352	4066	4176	2.4%	2.7%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Sleaford	2	8805	4066	4403	8.0%	8.3%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Sleaford Rural	2	8051	4066	4026	-1.3%	-1.0%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Waddington & Hykeham Eas	2	8426	4066	4213	3.3%	3.6%
1	Lincolnshire	North Kesteven	Washingborough	2	8002	4066	4001	-1.9%	-1.6%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Bourne North And Morton	2	7005	4066	3503	-14.1%	-13.9%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Bourne South And Thurlby	2	9987	4066	4994	**22.5%**	22.8%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Colsterworth Rural	2	7295	4066	3648	-10.5%	-10.3%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Deepings East	2	8056	4066	4028	-1.2%	-0.9%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Deepings West And Rural	2	7942	4066	3971	-2.6%	-2.3%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Folkingham Rural	2	7740	4066	3870	-5.1%	-4.8%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Grantham Barrowby	2	8161	4066	4081	0.1%	0.4%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Grantham East	2	7079	4066	3540	-13.2%	-12.9%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Grantham North	2	8261	4066	4131	1.3%	1.6%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Grantham South	2	7974	4066	3987	-2.2%	-1.9%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Grantham West	2	6012	4066	3006	-26.3%	-26.1%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Hough	2	8041	4066	4021	-1.4%	-1.1%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Stamford East	2	7815	4066	3908	-4.1%	-3.9%
1	Lincolnshire	South Kesteven	Stamford West	2	7500	4066	3750	-8.0%	-7.8%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Crowland	2	9370	4066	4685	**14.9%**	15.2%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Donington Rural	2	7540	4066	3770	-7.5%	-7.3%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Holbeach	2	8433	4066	4217	3.4%	3.7%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Holbeach Rural	2	8724	4066	4362	7.0%	7.3%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Spalding East	2	7680	4066	3840	-5.8%	-5.6%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Spalding Elloe	2	7339	4066	3670	-10.0%	-9.8%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Spalding South	2	7839	4066	3920	-3.9%	-3.6%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	Spalding West	2	7824	4066	3912	-4.0%	-3.8%
1	Lincolnshire	South Holland	The Suttons	2	7609	4066	3805	-6.7%	-6.4%

Unitary	County Name	District Name	Division Name	Councillors	Electorate	Proposed Unitary Electo	Division Elector Ratio	Current % V	new % var
2	Lincolnshire	Boston	Boston Coastal	2	8375	4110	4188	2.7%	1.9%
2	Lincolnshire	Boston	Boston North	2	7900	4110	3950	-3.1%	-3.9%
2	Lincolnshire	Boston	Boston Rural	2	9157	4110	4579	**12.3%**	11.4%
2	Lincolnshire	Boston	Boston Skirbeck	2	8183	4110	4092	0.4%	-0.5%
2	Lincolnshire	Boston	Boston South	2	8352	4110	4176	2.4%	1.6%
2	Lincolnshire	Boston	Boston West	2	7124	4110	3562	-12.6%	-13.3%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Alford & Sutton	2	7991	4110	3996	-2.0%	-2.8%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Horncastle & The Keals	2	9033	4110	4517	**10.8%**	9.9%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Ingoldmells Rural	2	7777	4110	3889	-4.6%	-5.4%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Louth North	2	8538	4110	4269	4.7%	3.9%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Louth South	2	8033	4110	4017	-1.5%	-2.3%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Louth Wolds	2	8779	4110	4390	7.7%	6.8%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Mablethorpe	2	7953	4110	3977	-2.5%	-3.2%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Saltfleet & The Cotes	2	7890	4110	3945	-3.2%	-4.0%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Skegness North	2	9079	4110	4540	**11.4%**	10.5%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Skegness South	2	8761	4110	4381	7.5%	6.6%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Tattershall Castle	2	8934	4110	4467	9.6%	8.7%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Wainfleet	2	9472	4110	4736	**16.2%**	15.2%
2	Lincolnshire	East Lindsey	Woodhall Spa & Wragby	2	8741	4110	4371	7.2%	6.3%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Bardney & Cherry Willinghar	2	8508	4110	4254	4.4%	3.5%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Gainsborough Hill	2	7056	4110	3528	-13.5%	-14.2%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Gainsborough Rural South	2	8261	4110	4131	1.3%	0.5%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Gainsborough Trent	2	7242	4110	3621	-11.2%	-11.9%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Market Rasen Wolds	2	8985	4110	4493	**10.2%**	9.3%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Nettleham & Saxilby	2	8608	4110	4304	5.6%	4.7%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	North Wolds	2	8516	4110	4258	4.5%	3.6%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Scotter Rural	2	8157	4110	4079	0.0%	-0.8%
2	Lincolnshire	West Lindsey	Welton Rural	2	9084	4110	4542	**11.4%**	10.5%
2	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	Birchwood	2	7483	4110	3742	-8.2%	-9.0%
2	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	Boultham	2	6585	4110	3293	-19.2%	-19.9%
2	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	Carholme	2	7094	4110	3547	-13.0%	-13.7%
2	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	Ermine And Cathedral	2	8544	4110	4272	4.8%	3.9%
2	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	Hartsholm	2	8138	4110	4069	-0.2%	-1.0%
2	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	Park	2	8102	4110	4051	-0.6%	-1.4%
2	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	St Giles	2	7799	4110	3900	-4.3%	-5.1%
2	Lincolnshire	Lincoln	Swallow Beck And Witham	2	7993	4110	3997	-2.0%	-2.8%

North-East Lincolnshire

15 wards

42 cllrs

Cllrs per ward

- 3 x 3 wards
- 2 x 12 wards
- 1 x 0 wards

LGBCE data

Electorate 116,840
Elector ratio 2782

Impact new ratios

- 3234 = 36 cllrs
- 4181 = 28 cllrs

Elections : thirds

Next election May 2026 – all wards, 1 cllr to elect per ward

Ward 2023 Name	POP	cllrs
Croft Baker	11,311	3
East Marsh	10,672	3
Freshney	9,319	3
Haverstoe	9,518	3
Heneage	11,431	3
Humberston and New Waltham	11,992	3
Immingham	11,719	3
Park	11,809	3
Scartho	11,347	3
Sidney Sussex	11,884	3
South	12,304	3
Waltham	6,804	2
West Marsh	7,601	2
Wolds	7,787	2
Yarborough	11,690	3

Ward pops mid 2021 based
Total pop = 157,188

Latest mid 2024 based NEL overall pop = 159,911



North Lincolnshire

19 wards

43 cllrs

Cllrs per ward

- 3 x 7 wards
- 2 x 10 wards
- 1 x 2 wards

LGBCE data

Electorate 130,239
Elector ratio 3029

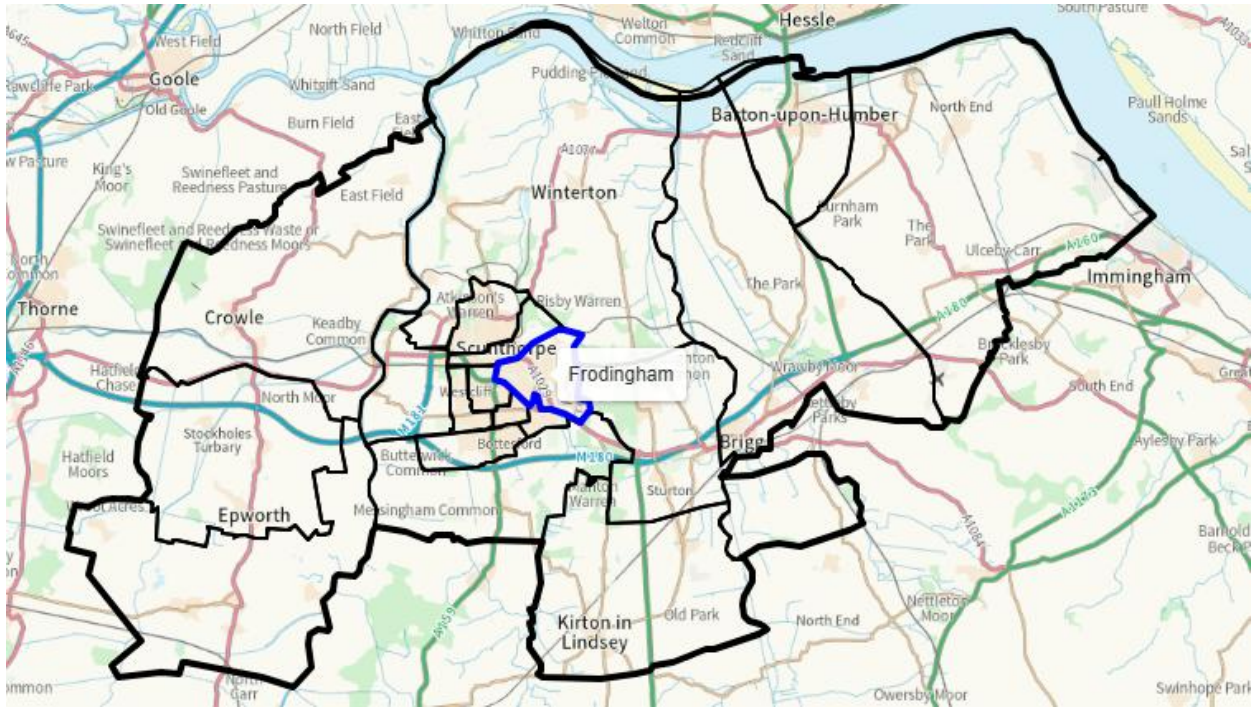
Impact new ratios

- 3234 = 40 cllrs
- 4181 = 31 cllrs

Elections : whole

Last election May 2023

Ward 2023 Name	POP	cllrs
Ashby Central	8,219	2
Ashby Lakeside	7,791	2
Axholme Central	7,568	2
Axholme North	8,261	2
Axholme South	7,039	2
Barton	11,989	3
Bottesford	10,661	3
Brigg & Wolds	12,058	3
Broughton & Scawby	7,610	2
Brumby	11,837	3
Burringham & Gunness	3,742	1
Burton upon Stather & Winterton	12,221	3
Crosby & Park	14,208	3
Ferry	11,365	3
Frodingham	8,246	2
Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens	8,435	2
Messingham	3,787	1
Ridge	6,273	2
Town	8,619	2



Ward pops mid 2021 based
Total pop = 169,929

Latest mid 2024 based NL overall pop = 171,336

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Appendix 8

South Kesteven DC & North Kesteven DC LGR Proposal

The Importance of a Focus on Organisational Culture as Part of the LGR Process

Prepared by:
Kath O'Dwyer

Kath O'Dwyer Consultancy
October 2025

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1. About the Author

Kath has 42 years of experience in local government, including eight years as a Local Authority Chief Executive.

During this time, Kath successfully led the turnaround and improvement of two failing councils that had been subject to concerns from both the Government and the Local Government Association. Each improvement programme placed a strong emphasis on whole organisation culture change. In one case, this involved addressing a negative organisational culture that had arisen due to a lack of focus on this key issue during a previous Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process.

Kath has a well-established regional and national profile, having contributed as a conference and podcast speaker, served as a judge for national awards, and acted as a lead for LGA Peer Reviews and a spokesperson for Solace. She is widely recognised for her authentic and effective leadership and currently chairs the SOLACE Group Board.

Kath has a proven track record of integrity, honesty and a clear moral principles. She is deeply passionate about public service, particularly local government, and is committed to improving service delivery to achieve sustainable progress across organisations, services, teams and leadership.

2. The Commission

To provide a summary of research, analysis and learning, together with key considerations and recommendations for the management and development of an effective Organisational Culture Programme for the new Unitary Authorities within Greater Lincolnshire, as part of LGR considerations.

The commission is focused on 3 aspects:

- Why Organisational Culture considerations are important in LGR,
- What can happen if Organisational Culture is overlooked in LGR - learning from others,
- Key considerations / recommendations for action.

3. The Context - LGR Proposals

On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon MP, issued statutory invitations to all Councils in two-tier areas and small neighbouring unitary authorities to work together to develop unitary proposals.

The MHCLG guidance states that this can include:

- A single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned (Type A),
- A single tier of local authority covering an area that is currently a district, or two or more districts (Type B),
- A single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned, or one or more districts in the county; and one or more relevant adjoining areas (Type C),
- A combined proposal – a proposal that consists of two or more Type B proposals, two or more Type C proposals, or one or more Type B proposals and one or more Type C proposals.

The model that South Kesteven DC and North Kesteven DC have proposed is for the creation of two new unitary authorities from the current County Council footprint, as part of a wider set of Greater Lincolnshire proposals.

Unitary 1	Unitary 2	Unitary 3	Unitary 4
South Kesteven DC North Kesteven DC South Holland DC	Boston BC, City of Lincoln C East Lindsey DC West Lindsey DC	North East Lincolnshire (Unitary)	North Lincolnshire (Unitary)

North and North East Lincs are remaining separate for legal compliance with a view to merge in future.

4. Why Organisational Culture is Important in LGR

LGR is not just a merger of existing District Councils and the disaggregation of a County Council. In every respect LGR is the creation of new organisations where the scale of change is significant and all encompassing. The disaggregation of a County Council through LGR is not a situation where the county models can just continue in another form. The change required as part of LGR includes changes to structures, governance, and finances. However, all too often this is the focus, without the necessary concentration and planning required to establish the new organisations culture, expectations and 'rules'.

The creation of entirely new organisations offers an opportunity not only to implement change within existing structures, but also to establish fresh entities with a distinct identity, brand and associated culture. The mindset of creating totally new organisations is essential for the future high performance of the new unitary councils.

What is Organisational Culture?

Organisational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes, behaviours, and actions of employees, which, in turn, affects the alignment of individual and collective efforts with the strategic objectives. The presence of a culture that emphasises adaptability, innovation, and a customer-centric approach has been associated with a higher likelihood of successful strategic plan implementation (Maleka, 2023).

While many factors influence organisational culture, three fundamental components underpin it: how employees behave in the workplace, the attitudes and unity of staff, and the vision and values embraced by both staff and leaders. Organisational culture consists of values, ideals, attitudes and goals that characterise an organisation (Heinz, 2023).

Organisational culture is the underlying beliefs, norms, customs, values, attitudes, and practices of the organisation. It is the established framework that guides workplace behaviour, shaping experiences in the workplace.

Having a healthy and productive organisational culture is important because it:

- Boosts the organisation's long-term objectives,
- Unites members of the organisation by instilling a sense of identity and belonging,
- Gives employees a sense of direction,
- Increases employee satisfaction and engagement levels,
- Guides decision-making processes, reduces disagreements and animosity between team members,
- Helps attract the right employees who are committed and productive,
- Influences organisational effectiveness and success,
- Facilitates open communication, mutual trust, and shared understanding,
- Differentiates one organisation from another,
- Instructs the organisation on how things are done,
- Influences innovation (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023).

Public service leaders and managers must recognise the pivotal role of culture in strategic planning and take proactive steps to foster a culture that supports the effective execution of strategic plans. The influence of organisational culture on the successful implementation of strategic plans in public service organisations cannot be overstated (Maleka, 2023).

Organisational Culture refers to shared values, beliefs, behaviours, and norms that shape the working and interaction of employees within an organisation. It influences everything from decision-making and effective communication, to how success is defined and celebrated. A strong culture creates a clear sense of identity and purpose for everyone involved. Core values are the foundation of an organisation's identity, guiding employee behaviour and decision-making. Organisational culture shapes how the organisation lives its purpose and delivers on its promises (The Knowledge Academy, 2025).

By focusing on organisational culture with intention, the organisation will be well-positioned to thrive in an increasingly complex environment. Organisations that invest in resilient, adaptable cultures will be the ones best equipped to navigate change (Lawrence, 2025).

What the Research Tells Us

Below are extracts from a range of published articles, hypothesis and views:

West Midlands Employers state that:

LGR challenges councils to lead through complexity, not just restructure. By investing in people, behaviours, and shared values from day one, councils can turn disruption into opportunity. With the right support, LGR becomes a catalyst for leadership growth, stronger teams, and a more resilient organisation ready to thrive beyond transition.

LGR is not simply a technical or administrative challenge. It is a deeply human one. It tests leadership under pressure, uncovers the cracks in organisational culture, and puts the spotlight on how well-prepared a council is to adapt, not just structurally, but behaviourally. What's often overlooked in these moments is that LGR isn't a one-time event. It is a period of prolonged transition. The question that matters most is how do we sustain our people, our leaders, our teams, and our culture through that uncertainty?

There's a prevailing myth in transformation programmes that if you get the structure right, everything else will follow. But structure alone doesn't change how people behave, how they show up, or how they lead others. We need to think of leadership as infrastructure. Not a role or title, but a capability that, when strengthened, multiplies the organisation's ability to navigate disruption. In the context of LGR, that means investing in the mindset, confidence, and psychological readiness of leaders, not just their ability to follow a plan.

Reorganisations often result in councils with new names, new structures and new reporting lines. But people don't change culture because the org chart does. They change when they feel seen, understood, and part of shaping the future. That's why cultural alignment must be a deliberate priority during LGR. If leaders aren't equipped to nurture a shared sense of purpose, if behaviours and values aren't discussed and agreed, then you don't just risk confusion, you risk fragmentation. Culture work can't wait until things "settle". It must begin alongside structural change and be championed by those with the most influence.

When LGR is done with people at the centre:

- Leaders feel resourced, not burdened,
- Culture becomes a foundation, not a friction point,
- Teams stay engaged and hopeful,
- The new organisation feels coherent, not just combined.

Both the Grant Thornton report and the PPMA/IDeA guidance remind us that managing people and leadership well through major transitions isn't just about preserving morale, it is a fundamental driver of outcomes. Councils that invested in cultural clarity, leadership capability, and robust programme governance emerged stronger and more cohesive; those that didn't often found that 'safe and legal on day one' wasn't enough to deliver real transformation (Hotten, 2025).

The LGA suggest that:

Culture and integration are crucial - bringing together different councils or services doesn't mean their cultures will automatically align. Culture must be intentionally shaped to support the new organisation and communicated using vision and values. Prioritise transparent leadership, shared values, and cross-organisational team building before and after vesting day (LGA, 2025).

Trueman Change proposed that:

For the councils affected, LGR is a daunting prospect. Whether it's unitarisation, mergers, or a wider reform agenda, the thought of redrawing organisational maps, redefining roles, and rethinking delivery models is enough to send even the most seasoned leader reaching for the comfort of the status quo.

But while structures and services dominate the headlines, it's culture, quietly and invisibly, that will determine whether the new council lands smoothly or flounders under the weight of confusion, resistance, and competing priorities.

The challenge with any reorganisation is that the most important change is the least visible. Systems and governance can be rewritten, but shared values, staff engagement, and organisational identity can't be created overnight. Yet too often, culture is left as an afterthought, something to fix "once the dust has settled" – but by then, it's too late. Culture isn't a final phase of the project, it's the foundation. The way people communicate, collaborate, and respond to change will either accelerate or obstruct your progress. If you wait to address it until your new council is up and running, you'll find yourself playing catch-up at the very moment you need to hit the ground running.

<u>Three things to understand before LGR</u>

1. *You already have multiple cultures - don't assume they'll blend*
   Every council involved in a reorganisation brings its own way of working: values, norms, decision-making styles. When you merge authorities, you don't start from a blank page, you inherit differences. Without early intervention, these differences can turn into tension. Taking the time now to map organisational cultures, identify potential friction points, and co-create shared values will save months, if not years, of confusion and misalignment later.

2. *Staff uncertainty is unavoidable - but it can be managed*
   People want clarity. They want to know where they'll sit, what their job will be, and who they'll report to. But during LGR, certainty is in short supply. While you can't provide all the answers up front, you can provide a process. A transparent change roadmap, consistent internal communications, and regular staff engagement all help build trust. So even when things feel uncertain, people feel informed and valued.

3. *Leadership behaviours matter more than job titles*
   In a time of transition, people look to leaders not just for decisions but for emotional cues. Do you model openness, respect, collaboration? Or are you broadcasting messages from above and hoping they land? LGR needs visible, values-led leadership at all levels. A change management

approach helps develop leadership alignment, giving senior teams a shared understanding of their role - not just in governance, but in culture.

Reorganisation is always going to be complex - but it doesn't have to be chaotic. If you start from a place of culture, clarity and communication, you won't need to retrofit a change strategy after the fact. You'll build your new council on solid ground, not shaky assumptions. Let's stop scrambling to fix culture after the reorganisation. Let's build it in from the start (Trueman Change, 2025).

Trueman Change also suggests that:

Far more than just an admin exercise, LGR is probably the largest transformation an authority will go through - full of difficult decisions, emotional strain, and competing priorities. But on the flip side, it also brings an abundance of opportunities. At the heart of LGR are three distinct stages and the key to thriving throughout (and beyond) the changes, is understanding them. The impact on people in each of those three stages is different.

- Stage 1: The Political Battleground

  The first stage of LGR is dominated by politics. This is the phase where key decisions are debated and finalised. Boundaries, responsibilities, and the overarching structural framework of the new arrangements are determined.

- Stage 2: The Task-Driven Sprint

  After the key decisions of Stage 1 are made, the focus shifts to implementation. This stage is task-heavy, with teams working on achieving a smooth transition. The process requires lots of effort, meticulous planning, and high-pressure project management.

- Stage 3: The Aftermath and Real Work

  The final stage begins after the reorganisation goes live. While reaching this point is a significant milestone, the challenges aren't over just yet. Instead, we start to see hidden issues and where long-term adjustments are needed. By now, individuals and teams may be running on empty, having poured their energy into the previous stages. This depletion can exacerbate the challenges of reconciling differences in organisational culture, values, and identity. There may also be a feeling of "them-and-us" among teams, particularly if one council feels its ways of working are being favoured. Although challenging, this phase presents an opportunity for organisations to rebuild cohesion, promote collaboration, and realign around shared goals and aspirations. Key Characteristics of Stage 3 include cultural reconciliation and realignment of teams take priority as teams must rebuild trust, bridge cultural divides, and establish a sense of unity.

The key to supporting your teams throughout LGR is focusing on the human impact. While organisational targets are important, your people must be your priority and being able to anticipate and address the effect change can will have on them is crucial. Each stage needs a different approach:

- During Stage 1: Open and transparent communication is essential. Regular updates help reduce speculation and build trust, even in the face of uncertainty.

- During Stage 2: Leaders should support staff well-being and mental health. Recognising the heavy workload and encouraging collaboration can alleviate some of that pressure.

- During Stage 3: Cultural challenges must be addressed directly. Encouraging dialogue about values, rebuilding trust, and providing platforms for raising concerns are critical steps in uniting teams (Trueman Change, 2025).

In addition, Local Partnerships propose that:

The phrase ‘culture eats strategy for breakfast', attributed to management guru Peter Drucker, stresses the importance of organisational culture in achieving strategic goals. As England embarks on significant local government reform, this adage is particularly relevant. The reform aims to streamline local government structures, enhance accountability and improve service delivery. However, the success of these reforms hinges not just on strategic planning but on cultivating and maintaining a positive organisational culture — a critical but often overlooked element in any successful LGR programme.

Effective leadership is crucial. LGR and leadership go hand in hand. Leaders must articulate a sharp vision for the reform and inspire confidence among employees. This involves transparent communication about the goals, benefits and challenges of the reform process. Style and substance are needed in equal measure, and personality and dynamism really matters.

Engaging employees at all levels throughout the LGR transition lifecycle is essential. This can be achieved through regular consultations, feedback mechanisms and involving staff in decision making processes. When employees feel valued and heard, they are more likely to embrace change - a cornerstone of successful organisational change in local government.

Mode matters: mix digital engagement with in-person activity. Ensure all employees are aware of the engagement plan, and select key people from all parts of the organisation to co-create the plan. Organisation-wide buy-in is key, as is having key employee champions of change.

Reform brings change, and inevitably will also bring uncertainty. Offering relevant training helps staff navigate this with confidence and gives them the tools to adapt and shape the journey, making training for LGR transition a vital part of the process.

Reform lives or dies in the day to day. So build your strategy but feed the culture. A strong organisational culture is the glue that holds the local authority transformation journey together. Without it, even the best-laid plans can falter (Gritten, 2025).

An LGIU article by Jane Eaton, Chief Executive at Horsham District Council, suggests that:

If we’re trying to change culture, we must give people as much choice as possible and reduce the impact on them personally, because my organisational culture, despite our shared basic assumptions, isn’t theirs. Let the professional teams from across the new organisation write the procedures for their service, I’d let them design the layout of our new headquarters and local offices where most of them will work, I’ll tell them lots of positive stories about their new colleagues, and I’d even let them choose the name of the new organisation (Eaton, 2025).

An article produced by The Truth about Local Government proposes that:

While legal compliance is essential, successful LGR demands a broader strategic approach to workforce planning. Key considerations include:

- Talent retention: How do you retain high-performing staff amid uncertainty?
- Culture integration: How do you merge different organisational cultures into a cohesive whole?
- Leadership development: How do you equip new leaders to manage change and deliver transformation?
- Communication and engagement: How do you keep staff informed, motivated, and involved?
  Ultimately, LGR is not just a structural exercise it's a human one. The success of any reorganisation will depend on how well councils manage the transition for their people.
- Establishing the senior management team early is critical. These leaders will shape the new organisational culture and lead change management efforts.

Ultimately, the human dimension of LGR is not just a technical exercise it is central to the long-term success of any new unitary authority. Investing in people, communicating clearly, and leading with empathy will be critical to building resilient, high-performing councils that are fit for the future (Truth about Local Government, 2025).

Summary & view

It is clear from the research and publications identified and discussed above, that the LGR process needs to consider not just structures, finances and governance, but the people who will form part of the new organisations. LGR is not simply a technical or administrative challenge.

Every council involved in a reorganisation brings its own way of working: values, norms, decision-making styles. When you merge authorities, you don't start from a blank page, you inherit differences, so there needs to be a focus on establishing a new organisational culture for, and with, the new organisation.

Trueman Change suggests that work on the organisational culture should commence once the organisation is live – '*this phase presents an opportunity for organisations to rebuild cohesion, promote collaboration, and realign around shared goals and aspirations. Key Characteristics of Stage 3 include cultural reconciliation and realignment of teams'* (Trueman Change, 2025).

I would disagree, and as others have suggested, the creation of the new organisational culture must begin alongside structural change and be championed by those with the most influence. Culture isn't a final phase of the project, it's the foundation, and culture must be intentionally shaped to support the new organisation and communicated using vision and values.

Key to this is the workforce involvement and engagement in creating the new organisation. This should include encouraging early dialogue about values and behaviours, building trust and creating the identity of the new Unitary Authority.

The success of these reforms hinges not just on strategic planning but on cultivating and maintaining a positive organisational culture.

5. Learning from others

Westmorland & Furness

The learning from Westmorland & Furness and their focus on organisational culture as part of the organisation's creation in LGR, offers the following advice:

Pre-LGR: Getting started

- Build a strong communications team with a **"One Team"** ethos ,
- Connect early with new leaders – they are critical to internal communications success ,
- Develop a clear pre- and post-LGR internal communications and employee engagement strategy, and adapt it based on feedback ,
- Establish organisational building blocks, including core values.

Post LGR: Year 1

Focus on creating a robust communications framework:

- Solid strategy,
- Strong brand identity,
- Tried and tested channels,
- Data and insight-led approach (e.g., surveys, pulse checks),
- Clear narrative: *Together We Are…,*
- Prioritise winning hearts and minds,
- Be bold and innovative.

Post LGR: Year 2, Refresh and Mature

Refresh internal communications and engagement strategy based on feedback. For W&F, this included:

- A subtle narrative shift: *Doing it the W&F Way,*
- Reaffirmed values and operating model.
- Additional focus areas:
    - Building a sense of belonging,
    - Strengthening connections.

Communication and Engagement Principles

Aligned with organisational values:

- Visible leadership – Actively present and value-driven,
- Strategic communications – Supporting key priorities,
- Storytelling – Authentic and consistent narrative,
- Lived experience – Real stories from real staff,
- Culture building – Driving transformation,
- Timely & relevant – Two-way, engaging communication,
- Recognition – Celebrate best practice,
- Employee engagement – Involve colleagues in shaping the future,
- Employee voice – *"You said, we did",*
- Effective member communications – No surprises, constituency-first,
- Belonging and connection – Foster meaningful relationships,

- Internal networks – Strengthen collaboration.

Staff Conference and Expo

Purpose: Build connection and embed culture
Objectives:

- Bring all employees together within a limited budget,
- Enable staff to learn about the new council and its services,
- Familiarise staff with office buildings and organisational footprint.

Key outcomes:

- Support engagement and leadership visibility,
- Address hybrid working challenges (e.g., isolation, loneliness),
- Complement internal communications strategies,
- Reflect innovation, creativity, and strategic commitment,
- Enhance understanding of organisational footprint.

Core activities:

- Deliver a cost-effective, face-to-face event,
- Engage the workforce in new ways,
- Showcase best practice across the organisation,
- Build a sense of belonging – *One Team, One Culture,*
- Visibly demonstrate the desired organisational culture,
- Embed *Doing it the W&F Way* – a new way of working for a new council.

Do what's right for your organisation

- Feel the heartbeat of your workforce (and your organisation),
- Walk in their shoes,
- Listen to what staff have to say.

Be creative. Be bold. Trust your judgement.

(Local Government Association, 2025).

Summary & view

The learning and reflections from Westmorland & Furness acknowledge the importance of focussing on organisational culture, but I would suggest it should have been earlier in the process.

They describe the Pre LGR period as including having a clear pre and post internal communications and employee engagement strategy, getting the organisational building blocks in place – including the values.

However, they left it until Year 1 to focus on a strong brand identity, and winning hearts and minds.

They left it until Year 2 to introduce 'Doing it the W&F way' and reaffirming values and operating model. And it was only at this stage that they identified some extra additional areas of focus for the organisation, building a sense of belonging and connections. However, they do describe their communication and engagement principles as including culture building; involving colleagues in shaping the future; a "You said, we did" approach; building a sense of belonging – one team – one culture; supporting and visibly

demonstrating the culture they aspired to and the mantra of 'doing it the W&F way – a new way of working for a new council'.

I would suggest that organisational culture is something to focus upon in the shadow year before vesting day and continue to build upon and reinforce once the new organisation 'goes live'.

What can happen if this is overlooked

There is also valuable learning in the local government sector from organisations who failed to give due attention or invest in organisational culture as part of an LGR process:

Cheshire East Council

CEC - Local Government Association Culture Review January 2018

A number of people agreed that, from its inception the Council faced two related but separate major challenges with regards to its organisational culture; the first was to bring together the existing cultures from the legacy councils, no small challenge in itself, and the second was to define and shape a new organisational culture for Cheshire East Council. Whilst some progress may have been made on the first challenge there was a shared view amongst many I spoke to that an opportunity was missed at the inception of Cheshire East Council to define a new organisational culture.

The history of Cheshire East since its inception in 2009, suggests that an opportunity was missed at that time to define and establish a positive and respectful organisational culture enjoyed by all. This created a vacuum which was filled by the behaviours of some individuals with power which has resulted in organisational confusion and very different experiences across the workforce some of which can be described as bullying or inappropriate behaviour.

In the absence of a clearly defined organisational culture, agreed ways of working and clarity about the behaviours expected of everyone, the culture has been shaped to some extent by the behaviours of individuals. This is predominantly true of individuals with power (Local Government Association, 2018).

Report in the Public Interest on the impact of the Council's culture and governance arrangements during 2014 – 2018

It stands as a cautionary example of the way in which a profoundly difficult range of factors can give rise to serious distortions as to proper governance at a local authority. Ultimately, this report is about the culture at the Council. Cheshire East Council is a relatively new Unitary Authority created in January 2009. It is a large complex local authority. Whilst this report is essentially concerned with events that took place during 2014 - 2018, and at the time it faced a profound range of difficulties some referable to the fact that it was newly created. In the absence of a clearly defined organisational culture, with a lack of agreed ways of working and clarity as to behaviours expected, the ground was laid for what became a dysfunctional culture. (Cheshire East Council, 2023).

Summary & view

It is clear from the views expressed by both the External Auditors and the LGA Peer Review in 2018, that more should have been done to proactively focus upon creating a new organisational culture for the new Unitary authority, back in 2009.

This was a situation where the County Council was split into two new Unitary Councils, encompassing the existing district councils – very similar to the proposals for the creation of two of the new Unitary Councils in the Greater Lincolnshire proposals.

This lack of focus on creating an organisational culture for the new authority is believed to have been a key factor in the extreme difficulties that the council experienced some years later, which included the suspension of the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, and a 3.5 year police investigation into the inappropriate conduct of the Council Leader in council procurement and other matters.

This lack of focus, and lack of actions to create an appropriate organisational culture at the time of LGR is believed to have *'created a vacuum which was filled by .. bullying or inappropriate behaviour'*. In addition, it is proposed that *'the absence of a clearly defined organisational culture, with a lack of agreed ways of working and clarity as to behaviours expected, the ground was laid for what became a dysfunctional culture'.* Clearly this learning and warning should be heeded as we enter a further phase of LGR.

The components of an effective organisational culture – CPC Findings

Despite the difficulties this unitary council experienced, due to a lack of initial focus on creating an appropriate organisational culture as part of LGR, there is real learning for the sector in what actions they took to 'start again' and ensure a proactive approach to creating or resetting a positive organisational culture.

Below is the commentary from the LGA Peer Review undertaken in 2020.

The Peer Team recognise the progress that has been made by the council in addressing historic issues and improving the culture of the organisation. Cheshire East council has made significant improvements in recent years to address issues of misconduct and to transform the culture of the organisation.

The team received a broad range of feedback and were struck by the positivity of the staff working for the organisation, and the remarkable progress that has been made in improving workforce culture in a relatively short space of time. The importance of this work was illustrated by clear leadership and commitment,

These messages were received from multiple levels within the organisation and this improvement has been embedded across multiple teams and locations. These improvements in culture have also supported the council to advance their internal assurance, with officers stating their comfort to 'call out' and 'professionally challenge' practice when appropriate. Alongside this cultural shift, the Team recognised the practical actions that have been taken, including improved management oversight and the development of supporting assurance frameworks and action plans.

These improvements in workforce culture are also reflected in improved relationships between councillors and officers.

Cheshire East has a track record of delivering behaviour and culture change. This has been evidenced through the cultural transformation at the council, and the progress of the Brighter Futures Programme. The network of officers that have been created through the Brighter Futures Champions is a valuable resource, these officers have developed their skills and confidence, and are 'bought-in' to the organisation. This network provides an important tool as capacity for future work in this area.

The transformation of the organisational culture within Cheshire East has been profound. When the LGA undertook a workforce review in 2017 it was clear that there were several staff who had experienced or witnessed bullying, felt unsupported by their line manager, or were fearful of the impact of change. This culminated in an unhealthy working environment, and in some cases, staff saying that they were 'ashamed' to admit they worked for the council.

The challenge of changing an organisational culture cannot be overstated. This process can often be simplified to communication campaigns, relaunched values or training courses. But it is about changing the emotional relationship between the employee and employer, for example how staff feel when they enter the office, their relationship with their manager, and their wider psychological contract. This emotional relationship does not change easily or quickly.

Cheshire East Council understood this and put in place the key ingredients for success by having visible leadership at the top of the organisation modelling the behaviours that they wanted to embed. By encouraging and facilitating people to talk openly and honestly with each other, and equipping managers with the skills and confidence to manage people well, changing policies and procedures to ensure they are fair and easily understood. By seeking feedback and acting on what people say. The views of staff two years later illustrated that they had experienced and felt the difference (Local Government Association, 2020).

Summary & view

The findings of the LGA Peer Review some 2.5 years later described the ingredients of the cultural transformation work undertaken in the council and some of its impacts. This provides valuable learning for the sector.

Ingredients

- Clear leadership and commitment,
- Embedding across multiple teams and locations,
- Management oversight,
- The development of supporting assurance frameworks and action plans,
- Brighter Futures Champions - a network of officers as a valuable resource,
- Visible leadership at the top of the organisation,
- Leaders modelling the behaviours that they wanted to embed,
- Encouraging and facilitating people to talk openly and honestly with each other,
- Equipping managers with the skills and confidence to manage people well,
- Changing policies and procedures to ensure they are fair and easily understood,
- Seeking feedback and acting on what people say.

Impacts

- The positivity of staff working for the organisation,
- Advances in internal assurance,
- Officers stating their comfort to 'call out' and 'professionally challenge' practice when appropriate.

I believe it is important to heed the words of the Peer Review Team….

- *The challenge of changing an organisational culture cannot be overstated.*
- *This process can often be simplified to communication campaigns, relaunched values or training.*

- *But it is about changing the emotional relationship between the employee and employer, for example how staff feel when they enter the office, their relationship with their manager, and their wider psychological contract.*
- *This emotional relationship does not change easily or quickly.*

Other examples:

There are other examples of Councils that have worked hard to create an effective and positive organisational culture.

St Helens Council

Creating our culture together

We are passionate about working together and ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to get involved and have their say. That's why we have co-designed a clear vision for workplace culture and worked together with employees to identify values and behaviours for everyone.

These values are at the core of how we work together to deliver our services whilst supporting a culture of continuous improvement and guiding our ways of working. This is what makes us TICK at St Helens Borough Council:

- *Trust*
- *Integrity*
- *Collaborating*
- *Keep Innovating!*

Employee engagement is at the heart of shaping our culture. 150 staff across the organisation volunteer to be part of the Culture Champion community, in addition to their regular role. They support the organisation to effectively communicate, share information and ideas, and seek feedback (St Helens Borough Council, 2025).

Our Cultural Transformation programme was based on the Vision, Values and Behaviours and how all staff can feed into and influence the programme through becoming cultural champions. This project has increased trust in the organisation as staff have seen how they can shape and influence the direction of the organisation. Over 130 staff have volunteered to become Cultural Champions and have started working with their teams to revise the vision, values and behaviours of the organisation. A new BAME staff group has been set up to order staff from these groups have a direct influence on ensuring a fair and equal organisation.

Staff have increased their trust in the organisation and are having a greater level of involvement – for example a recent Wellbeing Pulse survey achieved a response from 636 people (20% of the workforce) within a week. Staff have created "A Day in the Life of " case studies for over 30 different roles in the council to increase understanding of the roles within the council both internally and externally.

Staff engagement has been conducted in a range of formats including digital surveys, team meeting toolkits, "Chat with" sessions with the Chief Executive, and "Let's brew" sessions.

A key lesson has been to listen to staff feedback and be willing to change and adapt plans based on staff feedback. For example, the original plans for the agile hub had no team areas the idea was that the bookable spaces would be meeting rooms, collaboration spaces and individual desks. However the feedback from staff was that they highly valued time within their teams to work alongside each other. This led to the development of the staff villages, which are dedicated team spaces (iNetwork, 2025).

LGA Peer Review feedback & findings

The organisational values ('TICK': Trust, Integrity, Collaboration, Keep Innovating), which were clearly evident, are underpinning behaviours and attitudes, making for a positive and productive culture.

We experienced a positive organisational culture, where staff feel engaged and talked positively about their senior leaders, particularly chief executive, being highly visible and accessible.

A key part of the WoW programme was building an organisational culture with staff and the establishment of a Culture Champions Network. This group of over 150 employees acts as a forum for engagement, information sharing, providing feedback on a range of topics, and providing the role of a critical friend of the organisation. The Network is a great example of the workforce being involved, engaged, included and listened to, and should be something the council continues to nurture and support.

The peer team experienced a positive organisational culture at St Helens. We met with staff who felt informed and engaged.

The 'TICK' values (Trust, Integrity, Collaboration, Keep Innovating) have been co-produced with staff, and set out behaviours and bonds (a set of employer and employee expectations). The Values, along with the establishment of a Culture Champions Network are a tangible demonstration of building an organisational culture that is inclusive, transparent and supportive (Local Government Association, 2025).

Summary & view

This example further reinforces the key ingredients and positive impact of establishing a positive organisational culture.

Ingredients

- A co-designed vision for workplace culture.
- Working together with employees to identify values and behaviours for everyone.
- A Cultural Transformation programme based on the Vision, Values and Behaviours and how all staff can feed into and influence the programme through becoming cultural champions.
- Organisational values which underpin behaviours and attitudes.
- These values are at the core of how staff work together to deliver services.
- Employee engagement is at the heart of shaping our culture.
- 150 staff across the organisation volunteer to be part of the Culture Champion community, in addition to their regular role. They support the organisation to effectively communicate, share information and ideas, and seek feedback.
- Cultural Champions worked with their teams to revise the vision, values and behaviours of the organisation.
- The Cultural Champions became a forum for engagement, information sharing, providing feedback on a range of topics, and providing the role of a critical friend of the organisation.
- The Cultural Champions Network is a great example of the workforce being involved, engaged, included and listened to.
- Staff engagement in a range of formats including digital surveys, team meeting toolkits, "Chat with" sessions with the Chief Executive, and "Let's brew" sessions.
- The values set out behaviours and bonds (a set of employer and employee expectations).
- A key lesson has been to listen to staff feedback and be willing to change and adapt plans based on staff feedback.

Impact

- A positive and productive organisational culture.
- Increased trust in leadership and the organisation.
- Staff feel engaged and speak positively about senior leaders.
- A culture that is inclusive, transparent, and supportive.

6. Key Considerations

The development of organisational culture for each new unitary council created through the LGR process must be deliberate and well-structured. It should be carefully designed, programme-managed, and driven by senior leadership. Adequate resources must be allocated, and cultural planning should form an integral part of the shadow arrangements and the overall LGR implementation work plan.

Key activity stages

- Begin planning as soon as new unitary footprints are confirmed.
- Develop the creation and implementation plan ahead of shadow arrangements.
- Co-create the plan during the shadow arrangements period, ensuring broad engagement.
- Put mechanisms, building blocks, and foundations in place for vesting day.
- Maintain an ongoing engagement, review, and check-in process for at least the first three years of the new authority.

Preparation activity

- **Cultural Assessment:** Understand existing cultures within merging or disaggregating organisations.
- **Budget:** Allocate resources for cultural programme development, implementation, and supporting materials.
- **Capacity:** Establish a dedicated team and identify cultural champions across the workforce.
- **Engagement:** Design a plan to identify future managers and staff, and outline how to engage and co-produce with them before go-live.

Developing a clear Organisational Culture Plan

- Create the plan collaboratively through communication, engagement, and co-production with the future workforce.
- Base the plan on cultural assessment findings, validated by workforce representatives.
- Ensure clarity on:
    - What
    - Why (objectives)
    - How
    - Who
    - When
    - Success criteria
    - Engagement activity
    - Communications plan
    - Review process
    - Regular check-ins

Key Components of Organisational Culture

- Vision,
- Core values,
- Behaviours.

Additional Organisational Considerations

- Influence on decision-making and communication.
- How success is defined and celebrated.
- Investing in leadership readiness, beyond following a plan.
- Mechanisms for staff to feel seen, understood, and involved in shaping the future.
- Regular consultations, feedback loops, and inclusive decision-making.
- Employee engagement plan with representatives from all areas of the organisation.
- Training and development opportunities during transition to support role adaptation.
- Helping employees understand strategic rationale, cultural importance, and individual contribution to organisational goals.

Post LGR Implementation

There needs to be an ongoing plan of engagement, review and check-ins over, at least, the first 3 years of the new unitary authority.

It is important to establish mechanisms to seek regular feedback from employees and stakeholders:

- Engagement activity,
- Communications plan,
- Review process,
- Regular check-in processes.

It will be prudent to provide support and resources to employees as they transition to the new culture. This may include training on the new values and norms, as well as support in designing processes and practices that align with the new culture.

Additionally, in order to successfully navigate an organisational culture change, it is important to reward employees who adopt the new culture. This sends a clear message that the organisation is committed to the change and that employees who embrace the new culture will be rewarded e.g. staff awards based on those who model the values and behaviours

Public service leaders and managers must continue to take proactive steps to both model and foster the agreed core values, beliefs and behaviours, and to call out and challenge those that do not.

Wider Issues which Support a Positive Organisational Culture

The following are the wider key issues for consideration in supporting the implementation of a new Organisational Culture:

Organisational identity

- Select a new organisational name and engage staff in the process.
- Decide on HQ and locality office locations, involving staff in layout design.
- Plan and budget for new signage across the unitary footprint.
- Issue new lanyards for all staff.
- Develop new letterheads and templates.
- Launch a new website.
- Create new social media accounts.

Strategy, Policy & Procedures

- Develop a new Council Plan.
- Draft a new Constitution.
- Create a suite of new council strategies.
- Establish new procedures and policies for all aspects of service delivery.
    - Review documents from constituent councils, compare and contrast, and use these to engage professional teams in writing procedures for the new unitary authority.

Communications

- Ensure transparent communication about the goals, benefits, and challenges of the reform process.
- Develop an Internal Communications Plan covering pre-vesting day, first month, and first six months.
- Develop an External Communications Plan for the same timeframes.

By considering the issues outlined above and taking these steps, the new unitary councils can successfully design, implement, navigate and embed a positive organisational culture.

7. Summary and Conclusions

LGR aims to streamline local government structures, enhance accountability and improve service delivery. However, the success of these reforms hinges not just on strategic planning but on cultivating and maintaining a positive organisational culture — a critical but often overlooked element in any successful LGR programme.

The success of these reforms hinges not just on strategic planning but on cultivating and maintaining a positive organisational culture. When LGR is done with people at the centre:

- Leaders feel resourced, not burdened,
- Culture becomes a foundation, not a friction point,
- Teams stay engaged and hopeful,
- The new organisation feels coherent, not just combined.

Core values are the foundation of an organisation's identity, guiding employee behaviour and decision-making. Organisational culture shapes how the organisation lives its purpose and delivers on its promises. By focussing on organisational culture with intention, the organisation will be well-positioned to thrive in an increasingly complex environment. Councils that invested in cultural clarity, leadership capability, and robust programme governance emerged stronger and more cohesive; those that didn't often find that 'safe and legal on day one' was enough to deliver real transformation. Organisations that invest in resilient, adaptable cultures will be the ones best equipped to navigate change.

A positive organisational culture:

- Unites members of the organisation by instilling a sense of identity and belonging,
- Gives employees a sense of direction,
- Increases employee satisfaction and engagement levels,
- Guides decision-making processes and reduces disagreements and animosity between team members,
- Helps attract the right employees who are committed and productive,
- Influences organisational effectiveness and success,
- Facilitates open communication, mutual trust, and shared understanding,
- Differentiates one organisation from another,
- Instructs the organisation on how things are done.

The challenge of changing an organisational culture cannot be overstated. This process can often be simplified to communication campaigns, relaunched values or training. But it is about changing the emotional relationship between the employee and employer, for example how staff feel when they enter the office, their relationship with their manager, and their wider psychological contract.

This emotional relationship does not change easily or quickly.

A strong organisational culture is the glue that holds the local authority transformation journey together and culture must be intentionally shaped to support the new organisation and communicated using vision and values.

It is culture, quietly and invisibly, that will determine whether the new council lands smoothly or flounders under the weight of confusion, resistance, and competing priorities.

Culture isn't a final phase of the project, it's the foundation.

8. Recommendations for action

LGR aims to streamline local government structures, enhance accountability and improve service delivery.

However, the success of these reforms hinges not just on strategic planning but on cultivating and maintaining a positive organisational culture — a critical but often overlooked element in any successful LGR programme.

The creation of the new organisational culture must begin alongside structural change and be championed by those with the most influence.

Culture isn't a final phase of the project, it's the foundation, and culture must be intentionally shaped to support the new organisation and communicated using vision and values.

Recommendations:

During the shadow year, within the LGR process:

a) **Establish a plan, and associated resources, to coproduce and deliver an Organisational Culture Programme.**
b) **Create a project team, the budget and a network of champions from across the (to be) workforce.**
c) **Undertake a cultural assessment of the councils who will form part of the new Unitary Council**
d) **Develop an internal communications and engagement plan.**
e) **Develop a co-produced Organisational Culture Strategy which incorporates a vision, values and behaviours.**
f) **Build these into the new Unitary Council Constitution, Strategies, Policies and Procedures.**
g) **Consider the wider issues in Section 6 of this report, to support a positive organisational culture and identity.**
h) **Develop a plan of further staff engagement, development and review, for post Vesting Day.**

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Appendix 9 – Partnership Working with Lincolnshire Police

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On 11 November 2025, Lincolnshire Police circulated seven universal principles to all authorities in Greater Lincolnshire, to ensure that the policing impact of LGR is understood, and to support partnership working going forward. We asked Kath O'Dwyer to give consideration the Lincolnshire Police's principles, building on her prior consideration of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and partnership working in relation to Children's Services in Appendix 5.

Lincolnshire Police Principle		**Kesteven Proposal Consideration**
1	*Lincolnshire Police have good working relationships with Humberside, and other neighbouring forces. However, local governments may experience differing levels of police service depending on each force's unique funding position.*	Our two proposed new unitaries are both within the Lincolnshire Police Force Area. Therefore differing levels of police service for the two new Lincolnshire unitaries are not expected.
2	*Any proposed restructure would benefit from considering the police and partnership demand which could be created if there were different processes for different areas of the county. A consistent set of processes for referrals, and access to support (whether via a single organization, or harmonized processes across different local governments) would be preferable for policing.*	We recognise that effective safeguarding requires strong operational and strategic links with Lincolnshire Police and as such there will be a need to: - Review and update multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH). - Align thresholds and escalation protocols. - Share data securely across agencies. This would create the opportunity to ensure a consistent set of processes for referrals, and access to support or harmonized processes across the 2 x different councils. Kath O'Dwyer's report suggests the opportunity for a shared LCSP, as a shared service across both new Unitary Councils hosted by one of the authorities. Nationally, it is not uncommon for arrangements that can
3	*An area of particular focus for this would be the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements for adults and children. The introduction of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT) would benefit from consistency of governance, assurance and systems, to best support children in need of protection, and to reduce duplication.*	

Lincolnshire Police Principle		Kesteven Proposal Consideration
		cover two or more local authority boundaries by agreement and where this is in place local authorities can agree to delegate their safeguarding duties to a single authority.
4	*It will be important during any potential transition period, to ensure there is clarity in responsibilities for key areas such as community safety, safeguarding and emergency planning*	We recognise that it will be essential for there to be clarity in responsibilities, where services are separated, who in each new council will be the point of contact, or if services are to be shared who the single point of contact will be.
5	*It is likely that priorities would be redefined with the creation of any new unitary authorities. The Force would be keen to work closely to ensure policing needs are reflected in this.*	We agree that Police colleagues should be integral to the planning discussions following the government's LGR decision for Greater Lincolnshire.
6	*Another area of where strong consistency across local governments would be important, is the area of Local Resilience Forums. Working across different LRFs would need high levels of consistency to ensure that a high-quality consistent emergency response could be provided to residents, as well as not increasing workloads of blue light responders and other partners.*	Our two proposed new unitaries are both within the Lincolnshire LRF area.
7	*Any changes to local government boundaries are likely to result in some modest delays in data availability, as new performance dashboards and datasets are created and collated. We would ask for patience during this time, and ask that data requests be standardized across local government(s).*	We recognise and accept that LGR will disrupt the data reporting landscape in any configuration. Current data requests would need to be considered as to whether they meet the needs of the new Unitary authorities.