



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

## **Cabinet**

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

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

# **MHCLG Statutory Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire: Response by South Kesteven District Council**

## **Report Author**

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## **Purpose of Report**

To seek a delegation to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Executive, to respond on behalf of South Kesteven District Council to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government ('MHCLG') Statutory Consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation ('LGR') in Greater Lincolnshire.

## **Recommendations**

**Cabinet is recommended to:**

- 1. Delegate authority to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to determine the form and content of, and to submit, South Kesteven District Council's response to the Government's statutory consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire.**
- 2. Approve publication of the Council's response to the statutory consultation following the conclusion of the consultation period.**

## Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes – this report could not be added to the Cabinet Forward Plan in time to give 28 days’ notice. A General Exception Notice (contain a waiver from call-in) is available online. The link is in section 7 below.
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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

### 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 There are no direct finance implications associated with this report.

*Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer.*

#### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 The submission of a response to a Government consultation is not a function reserved to Full Council under the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and therefore falls to be exercised as an executive function under the Council’s executive arrangements established pursuant to the Local Government Act 2000. Cabinet is therefore the appropriate decision-making body to consider and determine the Council’s participation in the consultation process.
- 1.3 Delegation to the Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive, ensures the Council can respond within Government timescales whilst maintaining appropriate governance and officer oversight.
- 1.4 In formulating its response, the Council must act in accordance with public law principles, including taking account of relevant considerations and acting reasonably, and must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under

the Equality Act 2010. The Council should also ensure it remains compliant with the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity.

- 1.5 Publication of the response following the consultation period supports transparency and accountability whilst avoiding potential influence on other consultees during the statutory consultation.

*Completed by: Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)*

## **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. On 28 November 2025, four separate proposals for reorganisation were submitted by the authorities of the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area (IA) to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).
  - South Kesteven District Council and North Kesteven District Council have proposed four unitary councils: a north/south division of the Lincolnshire county area and the status quo for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
  - Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council and South Holland have District proposed two unitary councils: a unitary combining City of Lincoln and West Lindsey with North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire, and a unitary for the remaining Lincolnshire county area.
  - City of Lincoln Council has proposed four unitary councils: an expanded city through the inclusion of twelve North Kesteven wards and seven West Lindsey wards, a unitary for the remaining Lincolnshire county area, and the status quo for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.
  - Lincolnshire County Council (supported by North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire) has proposed three unitary councils: a single unitary on the current county footprint for Lincolnshire and the status quo for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.
- 2.3 On 5 February 2026, MHCLG announced that it would undertake a process of statutory consultation on the four proposals. The statutory consultation commenced that day and will run for seven weeks closing on 26 March 2026.
- 2.4 As an existing authority, South Kesteven District Council was invited to submit comments on the four proposals for Greater Lincolnshire as part of the statutory consultation process.
- 2.5 South Kesteven DC was also invited to participate in the statutory consultation for directly geographically adjacent Invitation Areas, for example the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough IA. A policy of neutrality and non-participation is being pursued in respect to neighbouring Invitation Areas.

- 2.6 In a letter to Greater Lincolnshire leaders to launch the consultation on 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness Alison McGovern MP reminded local authorities to take particular care in ensuring compliance with the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity during the statutory consultation process. This means that local authorities cannot campaign for a preferred proposal or be perceived to be.
- 2.7 Therefore, to ensure compliance with the Code and the integrity of the consultation, it is understood that across Greater Lincolnshire, consultation responses will be submitted by Executives and published after the consultation has closed.
- 2.8 The Council's Constitution (Part 3b Executive Functions) includes a delegation to *Each individual Cabinet Member in respect of matters within their respective Portfolios: To respond to consultations by the Government, Government agencies and other Local Authorities on draft guidance, policies or regulations, or similar documents.* Given the extraordinary nature of issue under consultation, a confirming delegation is sought from Cabinet to enable the Leader of the Council to submit a response to Government.
- 2.9 The response will be aligned with North Kesteven DC, whom the Council partnered with to develop the LGR proposal. The proposal endorsed by Full Council on 20 November 2025 included a full options appraisal. That appraisal will provide the basis for the consultation response.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1. The Government has invited the Council to participate in the statutory consultation for LGR in Greater Lincolnshire.
- 3.2. To ensure compliance with the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity, it is understood that across Greater Lincolnshire consultation responses will be submitted by Executives and published after the consultation has closed.
- 3.3. A delegation is sought from Cabinet to enable the Leader of the Council to draft and submit a response to Government within the prescribed timeline.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 The Council is under no obligation to submit a consultation response. However, the statutory consultation will be used to inform the final government decision on LGR. Therefore, if the Council does not submit a response, it will lose an opportunity to influence the government on LGR.

## **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1. The Government has invited the Council to participate in the statutory consultation for LGR in Greater Lincolnshire. The statutory consultation will be used to inform the final government decision.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1. On 20 November 2025, Full Council endorsed the Kesteven LGR proposal. The submission was the product of extensive engagement and included a full options appraisal. That appraisal will provide the basis for the consultation response.

## **7. Call-in waiver**

- 7.1 <https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13929>