

Present: Councillor Alan Briggs (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Debbie Armiger, Councillor Biff Bean,
Councillor James Brown, Councillor Chris Burke,
Councillor Natasha Chapman, Councillor Annie Currier,
Councillor Laura Danese, Councillor Thomas Dyer,
Councillor Gary Hewson, Councillor
Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Bill Mara, Councillor
Adrianna McNulty, Councillor Neil Murray, Councillor
Lucinda Preston, Councillor Callum Roper, Councillor
Anita Pritchard, Councillor Clare Smalley, Councillor
Hilton Spratt, Councillor Dylan Stothard, Councillor
Naomi Tweddle, Councillor Calum Watt, Councillor
Joshua Wells and Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Bob Bushell, Councillor Liz Bushell, Councillor
Martin Christopher, Councillor Donald Nannestad,
Councillor Rachel Storer, Councillor Pat Vaughan,
Councillor Aiden Wells and Councillor Emily Wood

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Anita Pritchard declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Local Government Reorganisation'.

Reason: She was employed by Lincolnshire County Council.

Councillor Clare Smalley declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Local Government Reorganisation'.

Reason: She was employed by Lincolnshire County Council.

Councillor Hilton Spratt declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Local Government Reorganisation'.

Reason: He was an Elected Member at Lincolnshire County Council.

Councillor Lucinda Preston declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Local Government Reorganisation'.

Reason: She was employed by Lincolnshire County Council.

2. Local Government Reorganisation

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Leader of the Council, presented the 'Local Government Reorganisation: City of Lincoln Proposal March 2025' to allow members the opportunity to contribute to the debate on local government reorganisation in response to the Government's invitation to submit details of proposed unitary authorities, as per section 2 of the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

She explained that Council had no decision-making role as far as devolution and local government reorganisation were concerned since this was an Executive function, however as this was a subject matter of significant public interest, it was considered important to give all councillors the ability to consider and debate the matter.

The City of Lincoln Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation recommended a three unitary model for Greater Lincolnshire. This included a larger Lincoln Unitary Council, which grew the city's boundary based on the current Lincoln Strategy Area in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, making the city and surrounding areas sustainable and focusing on a functioning economy and housing growth.

The proposed geographical boundary for a new larger Lincoln authority had a population of 207,000 based on mid 2022 population estimates and was expected to grow to approximately 246,500 by 2038 and 276,000 by 2050. The proposal considered the city's unique identity and heritage and the opportunity an expanded city had for improving outcomes and providing the right services locally, to meet the needs of the city and neighbouring villages now and in future.

A larger Lincoln unitary authority based on its economic functional area allowed for a focus on growth areas for both the economy and housing, maximised opportunities for investment and would deliver local services well, based on the needs of its residents and community and was best placed to be a strong and effective partner across Lincolnshire.

The Leader highlighted the following points:

- This was a historic day for the City of Lincoln and its future.
- Thanks were given to officers for all their hard work putting together the City of Lincoln Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation within such a short time deadline.
- The proposed Lincoln Strategy Area was already defined in the Local Plan in recognition of its geographical/placemaking area.
- The proposal preserved Lincoln's historical importance. This Chamber where we met this evening was a unique example of a long-standing tradition of self-governance in the City and its importance since Roman times. We must now expand these historical boundaries set 50 years ago.
- The proposal represented a sense of the City and being part of it.
- Lincoln had outgrown its boundaries due to it being so successful.
- It was important to recognise the economic, social and cultural powerhouse it had become.

Councillors commented on the content of the City of Lincoln Council's 'Local Government Reorganisation: City of Lincoln Proposal March 2025', covering the following main points:

- People living in the surrounding areas/villages felt an affinity and identity of belonging with the City.
- Local government should be local and Lincoln should be a Unitary Council.
- We would build on our thriving City and University and its wider area to bond with villages surrounding the City.
- Villages would still have their Parish Councils and keep their individual identity.
- It was important to be inspirational but realistic.
- The proposal was the most sensible way of governing and running the City and it was strongly felt that the public would support it.
- It was not too large an authority.
- The City of Lincoln Council may find it useful to talk to other cities of similar size to Lincoln e.g. Norwich with similar aspirations for devolution.

- When approached by their Ward Councillor, constituents in Hartsholme Ward had expressed their support for the City of Lincoln Council's proposals.
- One Councillor was not in agreement with a proposed larger Lincoln Unitary Council based on the Lincoln Strategy Area. The councillor strongly felt that the boundary should not be changed, instead, an Authority should be introduced which incorporated the City and surrounding areas. The existing proposal carried significant costs/complexity, in effect consisting of a larger district Council rather than a Unitary Authority, moving power from local councillors to a Combined Mayoral Authority.

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Leader of the Council responded:

- By thanking members in general for their support. It
- It was important people had the chance to have their say and this was the first step in a long process.
- She hoped the City of Lincoln Council's proposal was chosen, however, these statutory changes would go ahead regardless and the authority would not shut its eyes to other ideas.
- Villages had their own identity; and the City of Lincoln Council's proposal did not want to undermine that fact.. All Parish Councils had received a letter inviting them to have their say.
- The Lincoln Strategy Area was a well-defined zone and part of Lincoln's strategy for new housing provision in the area. To have extended the area further would not be financially sustainable, whereas the City of Lincoln Council's proposal was.
- The proposal for certain services, such as Adult Care and Children Services, to be passported out to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority, was also an option. This was an opportunity for change.
- Lincoln would be more strategic and achieve a great deal more over a wider area.
- Lincoln was the economic powerhouse it was only correct that this should be reflected within any proposal.

Councillors asked whether public responses to the proposal for Local Government Reorganisation would be sought.

Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Leader of the Council emphasised that public consultation included everyone. It was expected that other local authorities would act in the same way and make public any responses received.

The content of the City of Lincoln Council's 'Local Government Reorganisation: City of Lincoln Proposal March 2025' as set out at Appendix A to the report was noted.