

REPORT TITLE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION IN HAMPSHIRE
AND THE SOLENT – AGREEMENT TO JOINT INTERIM PLAN

19 MARCH 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Martin Tod, Leader of the Council

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

Council are invited to debate the matters within the Cabinet paper and provide comment to Cabinet for their consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

On February 5, 2025, the Government selected Hampshire and the Solent to be part of its Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) to create a Strategic Authority and elected Mayor in 2026.

On the same day, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to request that all principal councils in Hampshire – districts, county and unitaries - bring forward proposals for Local Government re-organisation (LGR) with an interim plan for LGR required by 21 March 2025 and final proposals to be submitted by 26 September 2025 (Appendix 1).

Following the final business case submission, Ministers will decide their preferred option for LGR in Hampshire and Solent, and lay legislation in Parliament with the most ambitious timetable leading to the new Unitary Councils taking legal effect from 1 April 2028.

This report:

- Presents the interim LGR plan that has been developed for Hampshire and Solent (Appendix 2).
- Seeks approval to submit it to Government by 21 March;
- Agrees that if any minor amendments to the proposed interim plan are agreed by the 15 Councils, the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Executive has authority to approve the updated report on behalf of Winchester City Council.
- Seeks delegated authority for the Leader and Chief Executive to negotiate the final proposal, prior to approval by Council and submission to Government later in 2025.

Full Council is asked to:

1. Consider the Cabinet report of 20 March 2025 attached and make any comments for Cabinet to consider
2. Note that Cabinet is asked to approve the submission to the Government of the Interim Plan for local government reorganisation in Hampshire and Solent at their meeting on 20 March 2025

