

REPORT TITLE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION: FINAL PROPOSAL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION IN HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT

24 SEPTEMBER 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.

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 considered by this Council in March 2025 and final proposals to be submitted by 26 September 2025.

Following the final submission, all proposals that meet the prescribed criteria will be subject to public consultation by the Government. Ministers will then 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.

The Cabinet report presents the final proposal 'close enough to be local, big enough to stay strong' prepared by 12 local authorities in Hampshire and Isle of Wight. This report asks Council to consider the proposal and make any comments to Cabinet to consider at their meeting when they will determine whether to submit the plan to Government.

In addition, Council are note that an updated final submission is under preparation and asked to agree that in the event of minor changes being necessary to the submission, if they are agreed by all 12 councils, that the Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive is authorised to agree such amendments on behalf of Winchester City Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Full Council is asked to:

1. Consider the Cabinet report of 25 September 2025 attached and make any comments for Cabinet to consider
2. Note that Cabinet is asked to approve the full proposal to the Government of the proposals for local government reorganisation in Hampshire and Isle of Wight at their meeting on 25 September 2025 and in doing so, pending consideration of the views of council, indicates this councils support for Option 2 of the proposed new unitary authority geographies for Hampshire and Isle of Wight.
3. Note that a final version of the proposal is under preparation following external legal advice which details that Option 3 will be referred to as Option 1A. Option 1A is Option 1 as the core option but this is wholly conditional upon a formal request to Government as part of the Council's submission to undertake a modification to permit Option 1A as outlined in the proposal documents.
4. Agree that in the event of minor changes being necessary to the submission, if they are agreed by all 12 councils, that the Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive is authorised to agree such amendments on behalf of Winchester City Council.

