

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD AT CIVIC SUITE, BROCKS HILL COUNCIL OFFICES, WASHBROOK LANE, OADBY, LEICESTER, LE2 5JJ ON WEDNESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.33 PM

PRESENT

J K Chohan Mayor



Meeting ID: 3019

COUNCILLORS

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| N Alam | Leader of the Opposition |
| S S Athwal | |
| L A Bentley | Deputy Leader of the Council |
| G A Boulter | |
| M H Charlesworth | |
| M L Darr | |
| F S Ghattoraya | |
| C S Gore | |
| S Z Haq | Leader of the Council |
| J Kaufman | |
| C D Kozlowski | |
| K J Loydall | |
| C J R Martin | |
| R E R Morris | |
| I K Ridley | |

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

| | |
|-------------|--|
| S J Ball | Legal & Democratic Services Manager / Monitoring Officer (Solicitor) |
| A E Court | Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service |
| T Neal | Strategic Director / Deputy Monitoring Officer |
| C Warren | Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer |
| S Wheeliker | Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer |

48. CALLING TO ORDER OF THE MEETING

The meeting of the Council was called to order to receive Her Worship The Mayor.

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors R H Adams, F S Broadley, L M Broadley, H E Darling, J K Ford, D A Gamble, G G Hunt, P Joshi, R V Joshi and C A M Walter.

It was moved by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor M H Charlesworth and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor C D Kozlowski be appointed as an Assistant to the Mayor for the duration of this meeting only.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Full Council

Wednesday, 19 November 2025, 7.30 pm

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and Wigston Borough Council, Brocks Hill Council
Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JJ
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None.

51. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - FINAL PROPOSAL FOR LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND (NOVEMBER 2025)

Council gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 3 – 160 of the agenda reports pack and pages 3 – 11 of the agenda update) which sought approval for the final proposal.

In light of the technical difficulties Councillor I K Ridley queried how the meeting would be recorded. The Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer advised that a fuller version of the minutes would be produced.

The Chief Executive Officer presented the report, highlighting the fact the draft proposal was approved unanimously at the meeting on 28 October and summarising the amendments made to the proposal following feedback from each of the involved Councils' meetings, which were agreed by each of the Council's Leaders.

Councillor M H Charlesworth raised queries relating to an economic imbalance between the proposed North and South unitaries and the sustainability of the City unitary, including whether the final document will address the issue of the City's enlargement. Councillor M H Charlesworth stressed that if the issue is not addressed it would be a serious flaw and could affect the government's decision on whether to approve the proposal.

The Chief Executive Officer advised that in terms of the North/South divide, the Council Leaders were satisfied that there is balance in the proposal regarding financial sustainability, geography and partnerships. It was also advised that the issue raised regarding the City was addressed in section 2 of the proposal and the financial sustainability of the City at page 9, which sets out analysis of their finances and funding. The Chief Executive Officer also advised further work was being done to strengthen the proposal regarding the belief that the City would be sustainable.

The Leader of the Council also addressed the points made by Councillor M H Charlesworth, advising that the Section 151 Officers for each Council had done detailed work around the sustainability of all the proposed unitaries and that independent financial advisors had also looked into the issue around the City's sustainability and taking into account the deprivation in the city and the fairer funding formula, as well as the change in formula for the housing targets set out by government that the City will be sustainable. The Leader also reiterated the fact that this local government reorganisation was forced onto the Council, and that while the Council would prefer the status quo, it had a duty to work on creating a proposal that would be the best option for local residents.

The Leader went on to outline the proposal highlighting the fact that the North-City-Couth proposal was the closest to meeting the governments' aims for the reorganisation and that it received strong support from the public with over 6000 responses to the public consultation.

The Leader of the Opposition echoed the Leaders' sentiments and thanked Officers and Members for their hard work, stating that he was pleased with the alignment of all Councillors on this proposal whether Conservatives, Liberal Democrats or Independents. The Leader of the Opposition queried the population densities of the unitaries and whether the arguments against the City's expansion were robust enough to prevent it.

The Leader of the Council advised that the proposal has closely balanced the populations for the unitaries and that with the work of all the Section 151 Officers and independent advisors they were confident that the proposal was sound and that the City unitary was sustainable without expansion. It was also stated that the City Mayor had failed to effectively run the city and that expansion would not fix their problems and that instead they needed to focus on their own finances. It was also stated that the Councils had all met with all the Leicestershire MPs, excluding Neil O'Brien, and that they were all supportive of the proposal. The Leader expressed her disappointment in this constituency's MP and while they had spoken with him and he had expressed support for the proposal, he was still yet to give his official endorsement, so she again wished to urge him to send a letter of endorsement as this would help strengthen the case for this proposal.

The Deputy Leader of the Council echoed the sentiments of the Leader and that while they disagreed with the local government reform, it was not their choice and they had a responsibility to put forward this proposal. The Deputy Leader asked that all Members show unity and advised that it is not for the County to sort out the City's issues.

Both the Chief Executive Officer and the Leader of the Council's full statements are attached.

It was moved by the Leader of the Council, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council and

RESOLVED THAT:

- i) The final proposal for a three unitary model for local government reorganisation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (North, City, South) attached at Appendix 2 be endorsed; and**
- ii) The authority to consider and agree any amendments to the final proposal prior to submission to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government by 28 November 2025 be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader.**

For 13
Against 0
Abstentions 1

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.59 pm

Minute Item 51

Statement from the Chief Executive Officer on agenda item 4: "Local Government Reorganisation - Final Proposal for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (November 2025)"

The body of the report before you is the same as that considered at the Council Meeting on 28 October, giving you the opportunity to have an initial consideration of the 3 unitary North-City-South proposal, and asking you to note the report which was unanimously resolved.

The proposal at Appendix 2 has also not changed to that which was published on 20 October and attached to the report of 28 October, nor the accompanying appendices to the proposal.

Since publication of the final draft proposal on 20 October the other seven districts/boroughs & Rutland Councils have been going through the same process of reports to their Scrutiny and Council meetings for initial consideration before seeking sign off by Cabinet ahead of submission on 28 November (as for the other eight with Leader/Cabinet, the sign off is an executive decision, not Council).

The feedback/questions raised from each Council's meetings were collated for consideration and Officers proposed some changes which were put to Leaders at their meeting last Wednesday, and they agreed informally to support changes to the proposals.

This was after the publication of the report before you, so the changes are set out in Appendix 5 circulated as an agenda update, by way of a summary setting out the general position and direction following feedback. These changes are currently being drafted into the proposal document but due to the short turnarounds from the Scrutiny and Council meetings across the eight Councils they have not been finalised.

I do not intend to go through each as the majority are about enhancing existing documents to continue to strengthen our submission.

The financial model assumptions are having some updates following feedback, and further review by the Section 151 Officers and external consultants, which for the short-term the bottom line is pretty much unchanged, but the medium-term position is improved by around £10 million from 2 baseline changes:

1. Council Tax - we have increased our assumptions on council tax increases to add £15 million to baseline income – based on maximising council tax to April 2028.
2. Disaggregation - to increase the costs attributed to the costs of disaggregation based on further discussions with independent experts and other Councils who have gone through this process. Added £5 million to the base in recognition of the permanent impact of disaggregation.

So, the £15 million increase of council tax income and the increase in cost of disaggregation of £5 million results in around a £10 million improvement on the medium-term position.

The recommendations in the report before you are:

- a) Council to endorse the final proposal for a 3 unitary model for Local Government Reorganisation in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (North-City-South) which is attached at Appendix 2; and
- b) Council delegates to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, the authority to consider and agree any amendments to the final proposal prior to submission to the Secretary of state for Housing, Communities and Local Government by 28 November 2025.

Appendix 7

Statement from the Leader of the Council on agenda item 4: "Local Government Reorganisation - Final Proposal for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (November 2025)"

Tonight we consider our Local Government Reorganisation draft plan. North, City, South is a bold and ambitious proposal to reset and reimagine local government across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

This is not simply a cost-cutting exercise—it is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver services differently, achieve better outcomes for our communities, unlock economic growth, and accelerate devolution.

The plan sets out a clear vision: three equally sized unitary councils, each responsible for all local services for a similar number of residents. Alongside this, a strategic mayoral authority would be created, with elections proposed for May 2027—bringing new powers and investment to our region quickly.

What would our North, City, South proposal deliver?

- Over £44 million in annual savings through streamlined services and efficiencies
- A prevention-focused approach to improve lives and reduce demand on social care
- Neighbourhood Partnerships to keep councils connected to local communities
- The potential to support 219,000 new jobs and generate £8 billion for the public purse by 2050.

Importantly, our proposal retains Leicester's current city boundary - avoiding costly and deeply unpopular changes. Our summer engagement activities drew over 6,000 responses, showing strong support for the three-unitary model and clear opposition to expanding Leicester's boundary.

Yes, there are alternative proposals. Both the City and County Councils are working on two-unitary models. But these would create councils that are too large to serve residents effectively and efficiently.

These two-unitary models - Leicester City and a single county authority - present serious challenges. It creates a major population imbalance leading to unequal resources and demand pressures, and risks duplication and conflict with any new mayoral authority. A single county unitary would struggle to serve such a vast and diverse geography, likely adopting a one-size-fits-all approach that stifles local economic growth and responsiveness.

Financially, the risks outweigh the benefits: high transition costs, uncertain savings, and evidence of diseconomies of scale in very large councils. Service delivery could become less tailored and more remote, weakening community engagement and local identity. While implementation may seem simpler due to unchanged boundaries, this option risks creating councils that are too large, too distant, and too inflexible to meet local needs effectively.

Leicester City's proposal seeks to balance population figures in a two-unitary proposal by extending its boundary against the clear wishes of residents across the county, especially those in places like Oadby & Wigston that would be swallowed up by the city. This is nothing short of a land grab, and we strongly oppose this unwanted takeover that would bring the City's challenges to Oadby & Wigston.

Tonight, I ask for your support in endorsing the North, City, South proposal. Once approved by all eight partner councils, it will be submitted to Government by the 28th November deadline. From that point, the decision will be in their hands.

Let's seize this opportunity to put forward a strong, united case for North, City, South.