



SUMMARY DOCUMENT

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North, City, South: Big enough to deliver, close enough to respond

Summary of the North, City, South Proposal

North, City, South is a bold vision to reset, reimagine and reinvigorate local government in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Developed by the Leicestershire district and borough councils and Rutland County Council, the draft plan proposes sustainable and simpler council structures designed to deliver services that local people and businesses need and deserve.

The model proposes three unitary councils:

- North Leicestershire and Rutland (416k)
- South Leicestershire (403k)
- Leicester City (404k)

The proposal is in response to the Government's instruction to reduce councils in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area and create a mayoral-led strategic authority as part of its devolution agenda to give power and funding to the regions.

The eight councils submitted an interim plan to Government in March and have now published a more detailed draft.

Each district council and Rutland County Council will now consider the proposal, and further amendments will be made ahead of the Government's final proposal deadline of 28 November 2025.

This summary document aims to help residents, businesses and stakeholders understand some key elements:

Three equally sized councils

Well balanced, with similar populations

Delivering devolution at pace

Aim to create a mayoral strategic authority in 2027 to unlock investment

Accelerate economic growth

Three-unitary approach has the potential to stimulate significant growth.

Prevention-focused services

Neighbourhood Partnerships would bring public services closer together to tackle problems early, improve lives and reduce demand

Saves £44 million a year

Creating strong, sustainable unitary councils

Connected to communities

Councils at the right size to remain close to residents

Retain Leicester's existing boundary

Avoids complex, costly and unpopular changes to city boundary



Driving devolution and economic growth

The North, City, South plan calls for mayoral elections in May 2027 to bring powers and funding to the area as soon as possible, something local businesses have told us needs to happen.

The plan says three well-balanced unitary councils better fit the mayoral strategic authority model and would offer clear division between strategic oversight and service delivery.

Economic modelling shows the three unitary council approach would:



have the potential to deliver significant **growth**



support the creation of **219,000 jobs** by 2050



generate **£8 billion** to the public purse thanks to business growth

Neighbourhood Partnerships and the prevention agenda

The North, City, South model outlines how core council services such as social care and housing could work more closely alongside the NHS, police and the voluntary and charity sector, as part of Neighbourhood Partnerships.

The partnerships would:



comprise local ward members, parish councils, service teams, and partners (health, police, fire, VCS, businesses, town/parish councils) – supported by a Neighbourhood Co-ordination Team



identify local priorities and draw up Neighbourhood and Community Plans to tackle them



support healthier, independent lives and also reduce demand and support financially sustainable councils

The model envisages nine or 10 partnerships in the north and south, with fewer in the city.

Sustainable, viable councils and services

The North, City, South model aims to make initial savings but also deliver long term financially sustainable councils.

The plan would deliver over **£44 million of savings a year** by measures including:

-  a reduction in staffing costs
-  procurement efficiencies
-  rationalisation of some assets or properties

The plan's 10-year financial strategy aims to turn the 10 councils' £100 million collective budget gap into a budget surplus..

The financial modelling has been tested by eight council finance teams plus independent financial experts.

Service delivery and transformation

To reduce 10 councils to three, some services will need to be merged to cover new areas, such as north and south Leicestershire. This will allow them to share resource, reduce duplication and increase resilience. These services could include housing, waste collection, planning, and customer services.

Other services which cover the county of Leicestershire, such as social care and highways, would need to be separated. Merging and separating services presents challenges, but experience from other places shows it can be done safely, and the North, City, South model offers an opportunity to transform them and bring improvements.

By working as part of Neighbourhood Partnerships, public services can be aligned and tailored to meet the needs of local communities.

The Leaders of the eight councils recognise

existing employees will form the backbone of the new councils and have pledged to support them positively through this period of change, outlining a commitment to:

- Avoid compulsory redundancies where possible
- Provide support and wellbeing resources for affected staff
- Use redeployment, trial periods, and pay protection to ease transitions
- Follow a fair, transparent, and inclusive process for any restructuring

Social care

Social care services provide support for both adults and children and look after some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

These services do incredible work under huge pressure and represent one of the biggest challenges for councils that are striving to provide the best possible care in the most sustainable and cost-effective way.

The plan builds on existing delivery while focusing on early intervention in neighbourhood areas to meet local needs – providing people with the right support at the right time, before their needs escalate.

This prevention focus is not just about improving lives, but the financial case is also important as it reduces future demand.

It is well evidenced that for every £1 invested in earlier preventative support, councils can **save £3.17** in future social care costs.



Governance

Communities will continue to have a strong voice through their local unitary councillor, with the three councils being of a size to enable them to remain close to residents.

There would be 196 unitary councillors across the three councils, reduced from the current 384 across the 10 councils. They would represent communities alongside town and parish councils and new Neighbourhood Partnerships would also support local accountability and governance.

The proposed even spread of councillors is set out here:

North Leicestershire and Rutland:



72 councillors (Ratio 4,036 electors per councillor)

Leicester City



54 councillors (Ratio 4,742 electors per councillor)

South Leicestershire



70 councillors (Ratio 4,152 electors per councillor)

Strong support for North, City, South

The eight councils held a significant engagement exercise between June and July 2025 with over 6,400 people sharing their views. The independent process ensured transparency and fairness.

It showed strong support for the three-unitary model. In the open questionnaire:

- **56%** backed the idea of creating three unitary councils
- **61%** agreed with the proposed North, City, South boundaries

Opposition to expanding city boundary

The engagement exercise showed there was strong opposition to the city council's proposed boundary extension. Around 40% of open-text comments specifically expressed disagreement with any form of boundary expansion, highlighting deep concerns about the impact on local communities.

The North, City, South draft proposal concludes the city council's proposal to expand the city boundary would:

- be expensive and complex to implement
- not significantly improve the city council finances
- be hugely unpopular with communities

Appraising options

The North, City, South proposal examined five options for future council structures and considered a range of factors including population balance, economic growth, financial efficiency and place identity.

It concludes North, City, South as the recommended model. It discounted creating a single unitary council for Leicestershire and Rutland as it would have a significant population imbalance, not fit as well with the mayoral strategic authority, and could be slow to respond to the needs of communities.

Find out more and read the full draft proposal, and our FAQs, at www.northcitysouth.co.uk/draft-proposal



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