

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.