Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	31st July 2025
Subject:	Local Government Re-organisation – support for 'A Greater Lincolnshire for All'
Purpose:	To confirm support for 'A Greater Lincolnshire for All' Local Government Re-organisation proposal.
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Dale Broughton, Leader of the Council
Report Of:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Report Author:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Ward(s) Affected:	All
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

Greater Lincolnshire is one of several areas in England that was invited by the Minister for Local Government to submit a proposal for Local Government Re-organisation.

Our Partners, East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council, submitted a joint interim proposal (Appendix A) to Government on 21 March, 2025. At that time Boston Borough Council took the decision not to submit an interim proposal but instead to secure an understanding of all interim proposals being put forward before looking at how best to progress.

On 10th July, East Lindsey and South Holland Councils announced they were commencing the development of their final proposal to Government - 'A Greater Lincolnshire For All' (www.greaterlincolnshireforall.org).

The final proposal by our partners is for 2 Unitary Councils in Greater Lincolnshire, as set out below:

1. Northern Unitary - City of Lincoln, West Lindsey, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire.

2. Southern Unitary – Boston Borough, East Lindsey, South Holland, South Kesteven and North Kesteven.

The Leaders of East Lindsey and South Holland Councils have invited Boston Borough Council to become a partner in the development of their proposal and to have the opportunity to shape and develop that proposal with their Councils over the coming months.

This report recommends this Council becomes a formal partner in the development of 'A Greater Lincolnshire for All'.

To support the proposal, an allocation of up to £42,000 would be made available from the Funding Volatility reserve.

The proposal must be submitted by 28 November, 2025. Greater Lincolnshire is earmarked by Government to go live with its new arrangements in April 2028.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet agrees to become a partner in the 'A Greater Lincolnshire For All' proposal for Local Government reorganisation; and

2. That Cabinet makes available a sum of up to £42,000 to support the development of the proposal.

Reasons for Recommendations

- To enable the Council to influence Local Government Re-organisation in Great Lincolnshire by being actively engaged in the development of a proposal in such a way that the opportunities for the community in Boston can be maximised.

- To ensure that a sum of money is available to contribute to the proposal's development, such as communications and engagement and expert advice and support.

Other Options Considered

- Not to support a proposal – this is possible but given the significance of Local Government Re-organisation in Greater Lincolnshire it would be a missed opportunity for this Council if it did not seek to influence the outcome.

- To develop its own proposal – given the Council didn't submit an interim proposal, this wouldn't be advised. However, this is possible but would require a much higher budget allocation. Timescales are also very tight given the 28th November deadline for submission to Government for proposals.

- To support another proposal – this was discounted in recognition that this Council has a long and established Partnership with East Lindsey and South Holland Councils.

1. Background

1.1. On 5 February, 2025, Minister McMahon wrote to all Council Leaders in Greater Lincolnshire. This letter, which was shared with all Councillors, confirmed the Government's ambition to create "simpler, more sustainable local government structures" and formally invited the Leaders in Greater Lincolnshire to collaborate on developing a proposal for Local Government Re-organisation based on the following criteria:

- A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of Local Government.
- Unitary Local Government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
- Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
- Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
- New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.
- New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

1.2. The letter, with detailed criteria, is included at Appendix B.

1.3. Following the submission of interim proposals to Government in March, 2025, the feedback at Appendix C was provided back to Greater Lincolnshire in June by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

1.4. It should be noted that the Minister has made it clear that the Government expects areas to collaborate and jointly develop a single proposal for unitary Local Government, where possible. The method of collaboration is left to the discretion of the local area. Joint efforts are expected to address local identity and concerns.

1.5. Since the start of 2025, Councils in Greater Lincolnshire have been working closely together to share data and information to support each other in developing their proposals.

1.6. At present, based on recent conversations, it is believed there will be four final proposals submitted for Local Government Reorganisation from Councils in Greater Lincolnshire, as set out below. Councils are at present working on the detail of the proposals.

Councils developing proposal	**Proposed geography**
East Lindsey and South Holland	2 Unitary Councils: • Southern Unitary – Boston Borough, East Lindsey, South Holland, South Kesteven and North Kesteven.

'A Greater Lincolnshire for All'	• Northern Unitary - City of Lincoln, West Lindsey, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire.
Lincolnshire County Council	2 Unitary Councils: • One for the footprint of the existing County Council area. • One combining the existing two Northern Unitary Councils.
City of Lincoln Council	3 Unitary Councils: • Expanded City of Lincoln. • The other two with geographies to be determined.
North Kesteven / South Kesteven (we believe this could be a joint proposal to Government)	3 Unitary Councils. • North Kesteven, South Kesteven, South Holland and Rutland. • West Lindsey, East Lindsey, Lincoln and Boston. • North and North East Lincolnshire.

1.7. Given recent positive discussions with the Leaders at East Lindsey and South Holland District Councils and the invitation that those Councils have extended to Boston Borough Council to be an equal partner in their emerging proposal to Government, this report proposes the Borough Council formally works with East Lindsey and South Holland District Councils to support the development of 'A Greater Lincolnshire For All'.

1.8. It was clearly evidenced in the Partnership's Business Case in 2021 that it made sense for the areas of Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland to work together due to the many common challenges the areas faced. A key aspiration in that Business Case was also that the three Councils would work together for Local Government Reorganisation.

1.9. East Lindsey and South Holland Councils have already commissioned external expert support to develop their final proposal and are entering a period of community and stakeholder engagement.

1.10. Final proposals must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025. From a Governance viewpoint, once a final proposal is developed, it will be for Cabinet to approve that submission to Government.

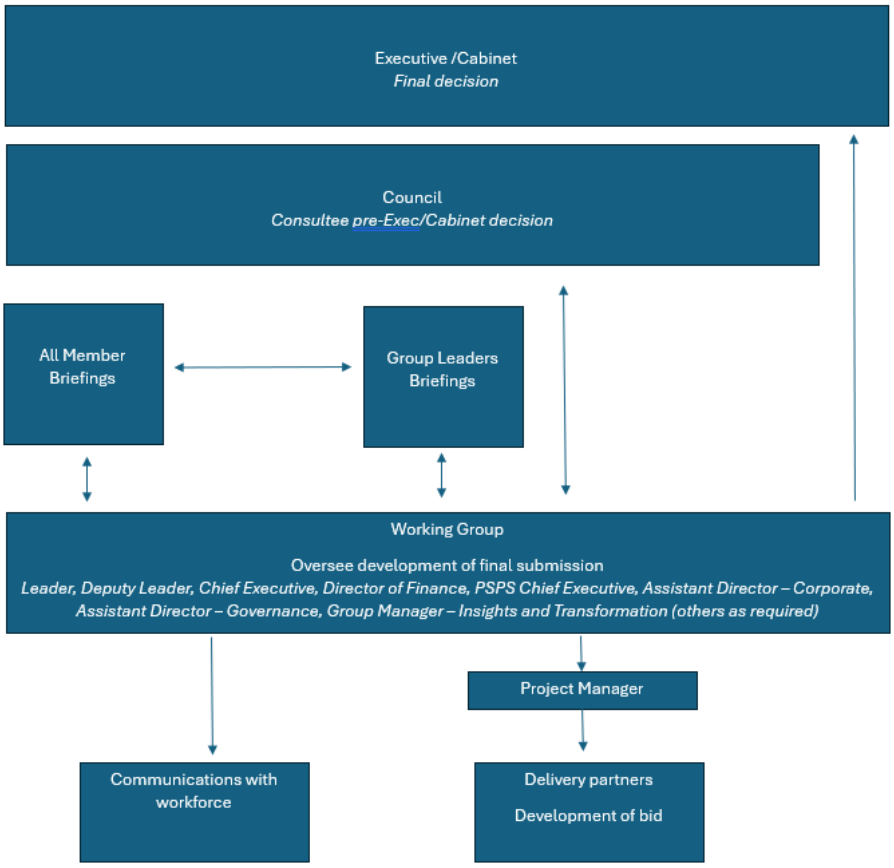
1.11. Recognising those Councils have already committed financially to the development of the final proposal, it is suggested this Council contributes up to £42,000 to support any additional work that might emerge as a result of the Council joining their proposal. This would be funded from the Funding Volatility reserve.

2. Governance

2.1. East Lindsey and South Holland Councils have established a clear governance structure (as set out in the diagram below) to oversee the proposal's development.

2.2. Should Cabinet choose to work with East Lindsey and South Holland Councils, this Council would be fully integrated into the governance arrangements, with regular Councillor engagement sessions, attendance at stakeholder engagement events,

and the Leader and Deputy Leader having a place on the Working Group alongside the Partnership's shared officers.



3. Conclusion

3.1. That working with East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council to develop a robust final proposal to Government in respect of Local Government Re-organisation allows the Council the opportunity to positively influence the future of Local Government Re-organisation.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

If the Council proceeds in becoming a partner in developing a final proposal on the geography within the interim plan, this builds on the existing South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership sub-regional model.

Corporate Priorities

The Council has a Partnership priority focused on being efficient and effective.

Staffing

Local Government Re-organisation will have an impact on the workforce as it progresses and the Council is committed to ensuring colleagues organisation-wide are kept fully informed, along with Trade Unions.

Workforce Capacity Implications

As this proposal is already being developed by East Lindsey and South Holland Councils, Boston Borough Council becoming a partner isn't expected to have any implications on the workforce.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

This decision is an Executive decision.

Data Protection

None

Financial

The proposal will enable Greater Lincolnshire Councils to deliver in a more financially efficient model.

Risk Management

The Government has stated its intention to reorganise all two-tier local authority areas within this Parliament. In preparing for this, Councils are expected to work together to develop the best local government structure for the area. The report seeks to ensure the Council is able, should it choose to do so, to work with partners to submit a high-quality proposal to Government on 28th November 2025.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

There will be a requirement for a detailed programme of engagement/consultation with the community and wider stakeholders to inform the final submission to Government. East Lindsey and South Holland Councils have already published a detailed engagement programme with the community and key stakeholders. If the Council joins the Working Group it will be able to support the development of the engagement programme.

Reputation

None

Contracts

There are contracts in place for external expertise to support the final proposal's development and these contracts are held by East Lindsey and South Holland Councils.

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None

Acronyms

None

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix A	Local Government Re-organisation – Interim Plan
Appendix B	Local Government Re-organisation – letter from Minister for Local Government
Appendix C	Feedback to Greater Lincolnshire

Background Papers

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	**Where the document can be viewed**
English Devolution White Paper	www.gov.uk

Chronological History of this Report

None

Report Approval

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