



**Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council**

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

EXECUTIVE 1 AUGUST 2018

ALL WARDS

**Recent announcement by Leicestershire County Council on its intention
to develop proposals for Unitary Government in Leicestershire and
an East Midlands Strategic Alliance**

Report of Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To briefly report on the recent announcement by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) regarding its decision to develop proposals for a unitary structure of local government in Leicestershire and for the creation of a East Midlands Strategic Alliance.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Executive considers its initial views on the public announcement by LCC and agrees formal reporting on this matter.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

3.1 Members may be aware that on 6 July 2018 LCC Cabinet met to consider a report on its proposals for local government reform in Leicestershire and to the development of a Strategic Alliance for the East Midlands, linked to a proposal devolution agreement with the Government. A press statement was issued by the Leader of LCC on 29 June 2018.

The following timetable was agreed by LCC in respect of reporting its work on these matters.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| LCC Cabinet | : | 16 October - to consider outline proposals to agree to engage with stakeholders on options |
| LCC Scrutiny Commission | : | 14 November - to comment on the outline proposals |
| LCC Cabinet | : | 23 November - to consider the outcome of stakeholder engagement and the way forward |
| County Council | : | 5 December - to debate the proposal way forward recommended by its Cabinet |

3.2 Initial Response

On 29 June the Leader of this Council issued a press statement which stated:

“The proposals for a single unitary Council for Leicestershire by Leicestershire County Council is a county view on how to improve local government. This proposal will, however, be of concern to HBBC employees as well as residents of Hinckley and Bosworth and I believe this is the wrong option for our area..... Councillors are also proud to work with their local communities and know that they can try to resolve residents’ issues with a small and dedicated team, who know their local area and want to help. It will be a concern to some that this local provision of services could be lost.....”

“As Leader at HBBC I have worked hard with all councillors, officers and partner agencies to balance the needs of the community with the ability of the Council to deliver.....For me a strong Borough Council should continue to be at the heart of delivering and improving the services we provide.....”

On the issue of proposals for the East Midlands Alliance the press statement said:

“It is a concern that this discussion for an East Midlands Combined Authority has not so far included District Leaders in Leicestershire....”

3.3 Public Sector Reform

There are a range of different models operating within the UK ranging from traditional two-tier County and District and single unitary models to more innovative and collaborative district and unitary models.

The All Party Parliamentary Group’s (APPG) recent inquiry for District Councils into collaboration and devolution demonstrated that “collaboration is part of the District Council’s DNA it is a long standing feature of the way districts transfer public services and reduce costs”.

At a House of Commons debate on district council collaborative and devolution in England in November last year, Jake Berry MP said “we have made it absolutely clear that devolution must be locally led. We are seeking agreement between local partners and where such agreement exists – whether it is district councils, unitaries or county councils – the government are happy to meet local partners to discuss their ambition, through devolution, to boost growth and productivity”. He indicated that the Government were proposing to provide clarity on how best district councils and other councils can take forward their devolution ambitions. At the time of writing, the government framework on this matter is still to be published.

At the LGA conference in July 2018, James Brokenshire, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government made a clear statement that proposals for local government reform must have clear local agreement, as without this the proposals would not be supported.

The above provides some context within which the Executive will wish to discuss this issue.

3.4 HBBC Executive Position

In order to inform the position this Council takes in response to LCCs announcements, Executive are asked to consider its initial views on the proposed reforms pending a further report that will be presented through the Council's governance processes in September and October.

4. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

4.1 The report to be taken in open session.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [AW]

5.1 Local government reorganisation can incur significant costs. At this stage, these costs are not yet quantifiable as the details and timing of any potential reorganisation are unknown.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [AR]

6.1 The process for the creation of a unitary authority is set out in Sections 1-7 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as now to be read with section 15 Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016.

6.2 This process sets out that the Secretary of State can 'invite' a proposal. In making any such proposal, the proposing authority or authorities must take into consideration the guidance from the Secretary of State as to what a proposal should seek to achieve and the matters that should be taken into account in formulating a proposal (Section 3(4)).

6.3 Once a submission is received by the Secretary of State, the procedures under the 2007 Act say that the Secretary of State may seek the advice of the Local Government Boundary Commission on any matter relating to the proposal. The procedures also require that the Secretary of State may not make an order implementing a proposal unless he/she has consulted every local authority and such other persons as he considers appropriate.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Council's Corporate Plan will need to be reviewed at the appropriate time to reflect any outcomes from proposals to reform local Government in Leicestershire.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation with local communities and stakeholders will be an important part of any process of local government reform that inputs on this area.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

- 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision/project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 9.3 The following significant risks and mitigation have been identified in respect of this report:

| Management of significant (Net Red) Risks | | |
|--|--|-------|
| Risk Description | Mitigating actions | Owner |
| Implications on local community | It will be essential to consult with our residents and stakeholders on their views. | SLT |
| Impact on staff morale | Effective communication via staff briefings, Chief Executive Briefings and staff newsletter and liaison with the unions. | SLT |
| Impact on town and parish councils | Consultation and engagement with town and parish councils to understand their views and concerns. | SLT |
| Impact of not effectively engaging or responding to the LCCs proposals | Plan of engagement collectively with neighbouring districts and individually in respect of any potential future reform. | SLT |

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY - EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The implications of local government reform in the area could impact on the role and responsibilities of local town and parish councils which will need to be considered as part of any review. It may also impact on the type and level of local services provided which will also need to be considered.

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the need to assess the corporate impact on the organisation.

Contact Officer: Bill Cullen, Chief Executive
 Executive Member: Councillor Mike Hall