

Report of the Leader of the Council

Local Government Reorganisation

1. Purpose of Report

To report the latest position on Local Government Reorganisation in accordance with the requirement of Government to submit a final business case for local government reorganisation in Nottinghamshire.

2. Recommendation

The Cabinet is asked NOTE the position on Local Government Reorganisation and RESOLVE to create a sub group of all group leaders to discuss and develop any proposals relating to public engagement should that become necessary in between ordinary scheduled Cabinet meetings.

3. Detail

Councils in Nottinghamshire have received feedback from the Government in the first week in June following the submission of the Council's interim plan. The feedback did not give a definitive steer on which of the three options put forward should be pursued or not pursued. The letter is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The feedback stated that

- The option comprising leaving the City on its existing boundaries and having one unitary council for the remaining authorities should fully justify its rationale, as it falls below the population threshold set out in the Government's criteria.
- The importance of all authorities in an area using the same data on the basis of which to develop and appraise options. In this respect joint working is crucial.
- The importance of the Government's criteria as the main method of weighing alternative models and the importance of evidence-based decision making.
- The Government leaves open the door to additional or alternative models being explored and whilst it has a preference for agreement within an area, individual authorities can put forward one proposal that may be different from one which a majority of other local authorities agree.
- Finally, consultation with all relevant stakeholders is expected before submission of the final proposal in November.

Currently further work is being conducted to validate the financial information on the basis of which the current three options were constructed. Section 151

officers have considered this and are content that the interim plan financial assumptions are reasonable.

Further work has also been commissioned from subject specialist officers on themes of

- Housing
- Economic development and regeneration
- Community safety
- Community engagement
- Homelessness
- Critical services including adult social care, children's services and special educational needs.

This work has then been integrated with the work Price Waterhouse Coopers did to assess and weigh the three options contained in the interim plan.

Preliminary results of this analysis show that the difference between option 1(b) and 1(e) is marginal, but option 1(b) may be judged to be slightly preferable to 1(e) because of factors including

- 1(e) requires a mix of delivery models to service rural and urban communities which is more complex and costly than 1(b)
- 1(b) provides the best opportunity for two viable future authorities
- 1(e) produces some high levels of inequality because of the very different demographic and socioeconomic features which are combined
- There are better chances for successful public sector reform under 1(b)

The work which is referred to above has not yet been considered and discussed by local authority Leaders, so the work cannot yet be shared to be included in this report.

A further complexity is that Rushcliffe Borough Council and the City Council is actively pursuing alternative models than the three which were included in the interim plan.

Concern is mounting that it appears difficult to generate consensus around a single model upon which all can agree, which leaves very little time for reports to be produced which can feed into a full Council meeting in July, and a very difficult contracted period of intense work required to generate a full business plan and complete public engagement by November.

4. Key Decision

This report is not a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and is a decision made or to be made in connection with the discharge of an Executive function which is likely to:

5. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

N/A

6. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

N/A

7. Human Resources Implications

Employees have been briefed on the feedback from the Government.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

Whilst the issue of equality is mentioned in this report no formal impact assessment can yet be completed.

9. Background Papers

Nil.