



Press Release

21 March 2025

Fenland District Council leader issues letter on Local Government Reorganisation

Fenland District Council Leader, Cllr Chris Boden, has today (Friday 21 March) written to the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, outlining the Council's position on plans to move towards a new system of local government.

The letter is in response to proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), as set out in the Government's [English Devolution White Paper](#) published on 16 December 2024.

The Government invited every council leader from two-tier areas of local government and neighbouring unitary authorities to submit their interim plans for local government reorganisation on or before 21 March 2025.

In his letter to the Minister today, Cllr Boden accepts the desirability of LGR and affirms the Council's commitment to working together with the Government and other local authorities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to achieve the best possible outcome for the area and all of its communities.

However, it also expresses concerns about the way in which the Government is undertaking the LGR process, and the timescales involved. Some of the concerns include:

- **Financial uncertainties**, particularly funding risks in relation to special educational needs (high needs block statutory override), business rates, and the Fair Funding review.
- **Challenges in the region**, such as infrastructure gaps, housing demand, and deprivation in some areas.
- **Opposition to certain LGR proposals**, specifically the idea of a single unitary authority for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough or one based on the county council's footprint, citing a lack of community cohesion.
- **Concerns about democratic accountability**, particularly the reduction in leadership roles under the new structure.
- **Uncertainties about financial savings**, stating that anticipated cost savings may not materialise as expected.

The letter states: "Fenland District Council accepts the desirability of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). However, we have substantial concerns about the way in which

Government is undertaking this process, and the timescales involved. We do not believe that optimal solutions for LGR will be produced by the current process. Nevertheless, we recognise Government's right to pursue this matter as it sees fit, and we will co-operate fully both with Government and with our nearby local authorities in seeking the best available outcome for our area.

"We are entering into LGR with an open mind and spirit of wanting the best for all our residents and for the local area as a whole. Not all of us would have chosen this path but we accept that it is the path we are on.

"Currently leaders are considering different unitary scenarios. However, further work will be required following local elections to reach a shared understanding of how best to progress these to the next stage/business case. These scenarios will take account of historic community identities, the interests of residents, economic geographies, and local politics.

"We will be spending the next few months considering the options, using data to inform our thinking, and using the LGR structures at officer and political level that have been put in place to enable a collaborative approach based on a jointly developed evidence base. We are focused on ensuring that any proposals ensure that future unitarities are financially sound – this is a shared principle amongst all leaders.

"We welcome a further meeting with MLCHG where we can work through the areas where we would appreciate more support."

Cllr Boden's full letter is available to view [here](#).

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Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: communications@fenland.gov.uk