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I was there attending this very important meeting on Friday afternoon at Fenland Hall March. (Most not all Whittlesey/FDC Councillors were present) and YES I did have my say and input.

The related documents for those who have an interest have already been published on this web-blog on the 05th November.

Probably one of the best every debates I have attended at FDC / Robust and open.



Agenda Item 3

Agenda Item No:	3
Committee:	Council
Date:	7 November 2025
Report Title:	Local Government Reorganisation – Submission to Government



The Government have given all two tier councils (like Fenland) until 28th November to submit a proposal of their choice.

Many argue that there is little choice for those who live in rural communities similar to ours.

There have been many meetings within Cambridgeshire of Chief Executives/Leaders and Officers to see what options are available and best suited (if any).

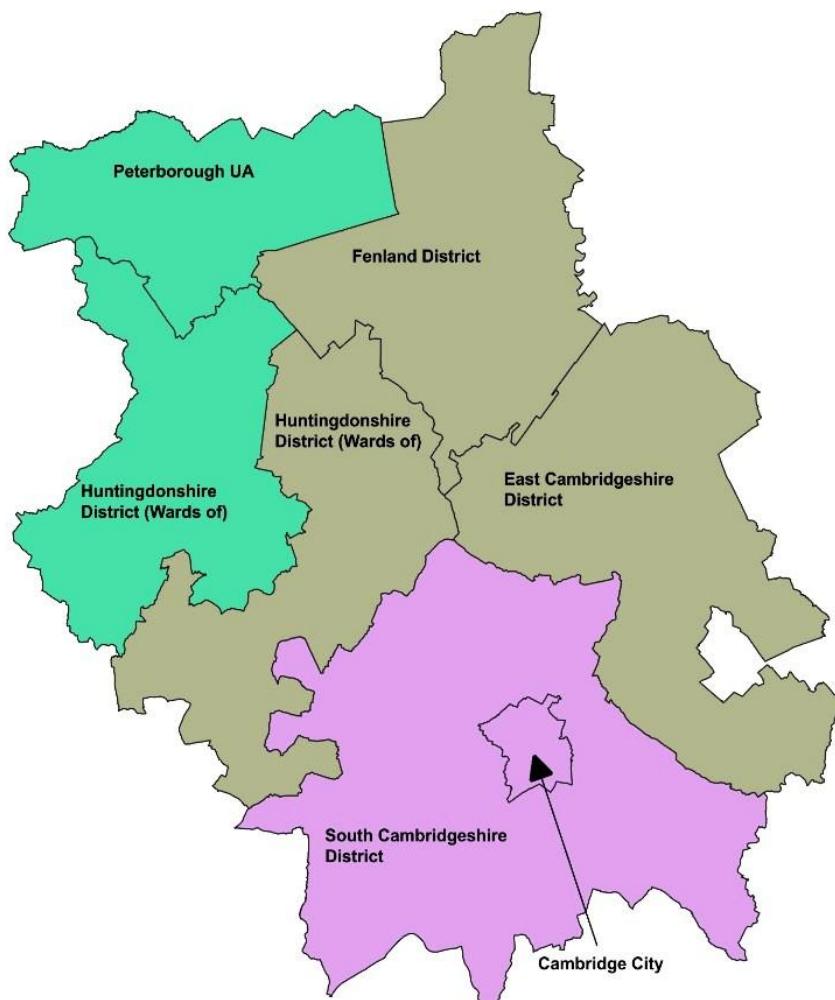
Ultimately 'we' were given 5 choices, which whittled down to 2 of the (least) best option(s).

The other alternative proposed by **Cllr Steve Tierney** (picture above/ 2nd from right/bottom row) was to not give any proposal and he made a very good case.

However leader **Cllr Chris Boden** countered the argument in that a No proposal would allow the Government to make the decision (which they may do anyway) – however by submitting a chosen

proposal – if the Government made a different proposal - Fenland Councillors would have done their best to make a case.

Option 'D' was voted though by a majority (Cllr Tierney did have support for his No proposal)



Option 'D' Cambridgeshire Fens Unitary Authority: comprising Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Eastern and Southern Huntingdonshire District Councils

The other options all included including the already Peterborough Unitary Authority.

In my 1 minute presentation, where I highlighted our already – demographic alignment to Peterborough already in the respect of:-

- A) Our major health services are based in Peterborough.**
- B) Our further education services are based in Peterborough.**
- C) Our retail/shopping is primarily in Peterborough.**
- D) Our transport 'hub' is primarily in Peterborough.**

I did say that all these facilities would still be there irrespective of we opting to go with a non-Peterborough option.

You can watch the presentation and debate by going to FDC's YouTube Channel the link is above this report.

Cllr Bodens draft letter is below....

Appendix 3 – Draft Proposal from the Leader

"Fenland District Council recognises that there are significant inefficiencies in the current structures both of Local Government and of local delivery of public services by National Government. Reform is desirable.

However, the reorganisation process initiated by Government in December 2024 is fundamentally flawed, failing as it does to permit the scope of reform which is needed whilst, at the same time, requiring change which will be both prohibitively expensive and, in many respects, counterproductive.

Government has completely failed to understand that many local services, to be truly local in their design and delivery, need to be provided by authorities (especially in more rural areas) which need to serve smaller populations than the Government's proposed 500,000 lower limit (or 300,000 in 'exceptional circumstances').

Government also has failed in this process to recognise that many strategic services (including ones currently controlled centrally by Government) could and should be provided by authorities with at least as large a population footprint as current Upper Tier authorities.

The Government's current reorganisation process would leave local government in England in the perverse position that urban, relatively compact, councils in London and the ex-metropolitan county areas would on average serve significantly smaller populations than in more rural, non-metropolitan areas, where the problems of rurality would be exacerbated by having to serve much larger populations than most of the metropolitan councils.

Local Government re-organisation is an expensive process - for it to be justifiable to the taxpayer, it must be effected competently. The approach of Government incurs all of the costs of reform but with far too few of the potential benefits. If the current local government reform process is allowed to proceed, the whole system will rapidly fail and will need again to be reformed, incurring substantial otherwise unnecessary additional expense.

Fenland District Council therefore calls on the Government to halt the current, fundamentally flawed, local government reorganisation process and to establish a Royal Commission (as has preceded previous, more rational, local government reform exercises) to consider all possible reforms, without the artificial constraints imposed by the Government in the current process.

If Government refuses to put a halt to the current local government reform process, despite the obvious flaws it contains, then there is no good option on the table for the residents of Fenland. All options will be worse than current arrangements.

Fenland District Council is aware that Government has advised that existing Councils, if they are to have any voice at all in the boundaries of any new Unitary Authority, must express a preference for a scheme of proposed new Unitary local authorities in their area.

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Having full regard to the Government's flawed criteria, Fenland District Council supports Option D as the least bad option. Option D comprises three Unitary Authorities in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Area:

Greater Peterborough Unitary Authority: comprising Peterborough City Council and Northern Huntingdonshire District Council

Cambridgeshire Fens Unitary Authority: comprising Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Eastern and Southern Huntingdonshire District Councils.

Greater Cambridge Unitary Authority; comprising South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council."

[full maps and boundaries to be detailed in a separate appendix, together with proposed electoral arrangements]