Part I – Release to Press

Agenda item: ##

Meeting	Special Council and Special Cabinet
Portfolio Area	Leader of the Council: Local Government Reorganisation and English Devolution
Date	Monday 17 November 2025 and Tuesday 18 November 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN HERTFORDSHIRE -SUBMISSION OF FINAL PROPOSAL

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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KEY DECISION

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To approve The Council's proposed response to the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution's formal invitation to develop proposals for a single tier of local government in Hertfordshire.

1.2 This report sets out the proposed submission to Government, developed by all eleven Hertfordshire local authorities and the Police and Crime Commissioner, for the future organisation of Local Government in Hertfordshire. Due to the importance, this report is first being presented to Full Council to facilitate a debate and to generate an indicative vote only on the options, prior to Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 18 November 2025 at which the decision will be taken as to which option is preferred.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Full Council Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Full Council:

Indicates its support for Cabinet to agree one of the following as the preferred option, either:

A. Submit proposal and identify the two unitary (2UA) option as preferred;

B. Submit proposal and identify modified three unitary option (3UA modified) as preferred and request that Secretary of State formally modify the proposal by agreeing boundary changes, as set out in the proposal; or

C. Submit proposal and identify the modified four unitary option (4UA modified) as preferred and request that the SoS formally modify the proposal by boundary changes as set out in the proposal.

Cabinet Recommendations

2.2 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the indicative resolution of Full Council and agrees the following:

2.3. Cabinet agrees to agree one of the following as the preferred option, either:

A. Submit proposal and identify the two unitary (2UA) option as preferred;

B. Submit proposal and identify modified three unitary option (3UA modified) as preferred and request that SoS formally modify the proposal by agreeing boundary changes as set out in the proposal; or

C. Submit proposal and identify the modified four unitary option (4UA modified) as preferred and request that the SoS formally modify the proposal by boundary changes as set out in the proposal.

2.4 Endorses the report and delegates authority to the Chief Executive, having consulted with the Leader of the Council, to work with Hertfordshire County Council and District and Borough Councils to finalise and submit Hertfordshire's proposals for Local Government Reorganisation to Government by 28 November 2025.

3 SUMMARY

3.1 The English Devolution White Paper, published on 16 December 2024, set out the government's plans to devolve greater power and funding to local areas and to deliver local government reorganisation in all 'two tier' areas.

3.2 On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution wrote to all leaders of two-tier councils to formally invite them to develop proposals for a single tier of local government in their counties. Following the submission of an interim plan in March 2025, two-tier areas were required to submit final proposals by 28 November 2025.

3.3 Following the submission of the Interim Plan, a Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme team was established in Hertfordshire. The development of the proposal has been overseen by Hertfordshire's Leaders Group. Lead Officers from across the county and district and borough councils have worked with the consultants, IMPOWER, to produce the required full submission.

3.4 This submission, which is at Appendix A, outlines three unitary authority options that remain under consideration: two, three and four unitary councils for Hertfordshire. When submitted, the submission will indicate which option each council supports.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 The English Devolution White Paper was published on 16 December 2024. This set out the government's plans to deliver local government reorganisation in 'two tier' areas.

4.2 On 5 February 2025, the then Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon, wrote to all leaders of two-tier councils to formally invite them to develop proposals for a single tier of local government in their counties.

4.3 A formal statutory invitation, included as an appendix to the letter, set out the government's expectations including the criteria against which proposals will be assessed:

a) ***Proposals should seek to establish a single tier of local government.*** Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.

b) ***Proposed unitary councils must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.*** New councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more (although it is recognised there may be certain scenarios where a lower figure could be considered).

c) ***Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.*** Proposals should show how new structures will improve service delivery and avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.

d) ***Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view.*** Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance and include evidence of local engagement.

e) ***New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.***

f) ***New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment***

4.4 The Minister indicated he expected 'local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area … rather than developing competing proposals'.

4.5 Two tier areas were required to submit an interim plan by 21 March 2025, setting out progress on developing proposals, before full proposals are submitted no later than 28 November 2025.

4.6 It is anticipated that the Government will conduct a formal public consultation on reorganisation proposals for Hertfordshire early in 2026. Should Government follow the most ambitious timeline for local government reorganisation, the Secretary of State's decision on which option is to be implemented in Hertfordshire would then be anticipated in summer 2026.

4.7 Under the same timeline, the Government's expectation is that new unitary authorities will then take effect in April 2028, with shadow elections for the new unitary authorities taking place in May 2027

Stevenage and wider Hertfordshire response

4.8 Hertfordshire councils, with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, jointly submitted to Government its Interim Plan on 20 March 2025. This indicated that four options were being developed:

- A single unitary for Hertfordshire
- Two unitaries for Hertfordshire
- Three unitaries for Hertfordshire
- Four unitaries for Hertfordshire

4.9 Government feedback on this plan was received on 15 May 2025. This feedback did not seek to approve or discount any option put forward. Key areas covered included:

- Each council must commit to a clear single option and geography for Hertfordshire as a whole in its final proposal.
- Proposals must address the Government's criteria and be supported by data and evidence. Councils were encouraged to collaborate on a consistent evidence base and financial analysis.
- Having unitary councils of a population size of 500,000 or more was referred to as a guiding principle, not a hard target.
- Councils should prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens and communities above all other issues.
- Engagement with those who may be affected by the disaggregation of services is encouraged. Final proposals should demonstrate how local ideas and views have been incorporated.
- New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

4.10 On 12 June 2025, the Leaders of Hertfordshire's 11 councils agreed to rule out the option of a single unitary authority for the county. This reflected a shared view that a single unitary council covering Hertfordshire's 1.2 million residents would be too remote from the county's diverse communities.

Development of the full submission

4.11 Following the submission of the Interim Plan, a Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme team was established in Hertfordshire. This work has been led by the Hertfordshire Chief Executives Co-ordinating Group, with strategic oversight provided by the Hertfordshire Leaders Group (HLG).

4.12 Leads and support from across the county and district and borough councils have worked with the consultants, IMPOWER, to produce the required full business case for submission on 28 November. Significant work has been undertaken to develop a shared evidence base to enable a robust of potential options for the county. Work on transition planning is also underway with a series of service design teams being set up to model proposals for disaggregation and merging of services as required.

4.13 Reflecting this work, a joint submission from the 11 Hertfordshire councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire has been prepared. This submission, which is at Appendix A, outlines their shared commitment to reshaping local government to deliver simpler, more accountable and more sustainable services for Hertfordshire's 1.2 million residents.

4.14 The submission comprises of a 'spine' document with sets out in overall terms how the county's proposals meet the government's LGR criteria (as set out in paragraph 4.3 above) alongside specific proposals for each of the different unitary options being considered.

Strategic Vision and Ambitions

4.15 The submission sets out a high level strategic vision and ambitions for the county, recognising that local government reorganisation presents a once in a generation opportunity to rethink how services are delivered, making them more connected, more responsive and more focused on what matters most to people.

COMMUNITIES	**PLACE**	**SERVICES**
Empowered, connected and inclusive	Unlocking growth and opportunity	Integrated, efficient and people-centred
A STRONGER, SMARTER, MORE SUSTAINABLE HERTFORDSHIRE THROUGH DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION		

4.16 Key to this these ambitions is the desire to deliver devolution alongside local government reorganisation to maximise benefits for residents and businesses in Hertfordshire.

4.17 The collective proposal for Hertfordshire includes the ambition to secure a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) for Hertfordshire at the earliest opportunity. Following consideration of options, the proposition for devolution is for a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Hertfordshire. While the population size (1.3m) is below the target size of a population for an MSA (1.5m), Hertfordshire has a substantial economy and would be larger than many existing and planned devolution arrangements. By forming an MSA, the proposal focussed on Hertfordshire can ensure that critical decisions about its economy, infrastructure, and public services are made locally, closer to the communities it will serve and therefore able to deliver better outcomes for its residents. Government invited upper tier authorities to indicate their views and preferences for the formation of a Strategic Authority. The Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, with the support of the Hertfordshire Growth Board, wrote to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 4 November 2025 to outline the county's desire to form an MSA by 2028.

Proposed options

4.18 Whilst there is a common ambition for change, different partners currently hold different views on the best delivery model. The final business case outlines three unitary authority options that remain under consideration. These options are for two, three and four unitary councils for the county. When submitted, the business case will indicate which options are supported by which councils in the county.

4.19 The submission provides an options appraisal of the three shortlisted models which seeks to provide Government with a shared, objective and evidence-led comparison of the proposed options. The case for each of the three options, and how they meet the Government's criteria, are outlined further in individual sections of the submission.

Boundary Review

4.20 There has been ongoing engagement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as part of the LGR proposal development process. One element of that engagement has been seeking clarity on options that involve changes to existing local authority boundaries. In June 2025, further clarification was issued to Councils considering boundary review as follows:

4.21 *"Some councils have submitted proposals that would necessitate changes to existing council boundaries. Where this is the case, we have highlighted, as the invitation sets out, that "existing district areas should be considered the building blocks for proposals, but where there is a strong justification more*

complex boundary changes will be considered". We have clarified that if a decision is taken to implement a proposal, boundary changes can be achieved alongside structural change. Alternatively, areas could make a proposal for unitary local government using existing district building blocks and consider requesting a Principal Area Boundary Review (PABR) later. Such reviews have been used for minor amendments to a boundary where both councils have requested a review – such as the recent Sheffield/Barnsley boundary adjustment for a new housing estate. PABRs are the responsibility of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England who will consider such requests case-by-case. We have asked for final proposals that include a boundary change to include a clear rationale for this and to specify the area for any new unitary council(s). This could be identified by a parish or ward boundary, or if creating new boundaries, by attaching a map to final proposals"

4.22 Legal advice has been sought from King's Counsel in respect of the proposal to change boundaries. This advice is addressed within the legal implications section of the report.

4.23 Options involving a boundary change are considered as amendments or, more specifically, 'modifications' of options developed by combining existing entire local authority areas.

4.24 Within the submission options for the three unitary authority and four unitary authority models specifically propose boundary modifications. Using the four unitary example, the proposal is based on current district and borough wards. The proposal seeks to modify boundaries, by moving a small number of current wards in North Hertfordshire District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council into the new Eastern Unitary Council, while the majority of wards of those two council areas would be in the Central Unitary.

4.25 These modifications are proposed because a number of the authorities affected believe that this option creates stronger, more balanced unitary authorities, offer better alignment to the places people live, work and move around the county and provide better equivalence in the population size in each new unitary authority.

4.26 For the avoidance of doubt both the three unitary authority and four unitary authority models are based upon modifications of options using existing district and borough boundaries, which meet the governments criteria. However, the view from Herts Leaders Group and the Chief Executive Co-ordinating group is that the proposals presented with modified boundaries not only better fit the criteria but will result in better more effective services for our residents and therefore the submission primarily uses the modified boundaries

Stakeholder and public consultation

4.27 To ensure the county's proposals are informed as much as possible by stakeholder and residents views, the following process of engagement has been undertaken.

4.28 ***Phase 1: Engagement on principles and opportunities (July-August 2025):*** This phase focused on establishing trust and shared understanding among key stakeholders and exploring the principles and opportunities for Hertfordshire's future governance. Engagement activity included roundtables with NHS, police, education leaders and businesses and webinars and meetings with voluntary groups, parish councils, and major employers.

4.29 The Consultation and Engagement section of the submission provides an overview of the feedback received. Overarching messages were retain what works, simplify governance and ensure change leads to better services and increased public confidence. Transformation was viewed as an opportunity to modernise, while remaining firmly rooted in local responsiveness and partnership working.

4.30 ***Phase 2: Engagement on proposals (September 2025):*** building on from Phase 1, this phase extended participation in order to test the emerging models with a wider range of stakeholders and the public. Public events were held across the county alongside and online survey. A dedicated Hertfordshire -wide microsite was set up hosting all relevant LGR information: https://www.hertfordshire-lgr.co.uk/. By the end of the engagement period, over 7,400 people had completed the survey.

4.31 The residents' survey and local engagement events provided valuable insight into public attitudes towards local government reorganisation. While views were mixed, residents engaged thoughtfully with the principles of change, identifying clear priorities for local services, accountability, representation and hopes for greater value, accountability, and coordination.

4.32 The Stakeholder feedback section of the submission provides an overview of the feedback received. Overall, the views expressed by residents present a clear and consistent picture. People wanted local government that delivers the basics well, spends public money wisely, and makes it easy to understand who is responsible for what. They saw real opportunity in more joined-up services, clearer accountability, and better coordination across the county, provided this does not come at the expense of local connection or community identity. These insights provided a strong foundation for shaping future work, ensuring that future proposals reflect residents' priorities and the values they most associate with effective local government.

4.33 There was no clear consensus on a preferred structure, however, the four unitary authority received the highest number of positive comments. While survey responses showed a higher number of positive comments for four unitary councils, the two- and three-unitary models also received significant support. Each option attracted backing for distinct reasons:

- *Two-unitary model:* favoured for efficiency, scale, and strategic coordination; viewed as simple and cost-effective.

- *Three-unitary model:* seen by some as offering a balanced approach, avoiding both excessive scale and over-fragmentation. Attracted positive comments on the geography.
- *Four-unitary model:* preferred by those emphasising local identity and representation, with smaller councils viewed as closer and more accountable to communities.

Transition

4.34 Transition to new unitary councils entails significant and far-reaching organisational change across 11 organisations. It will need to be managed in a way that ensures organisations are safe and legal from day one, but also in a way that lays the foundations for public sector reorganisation, innovation, better services and outcomes in the years ahead.

4.35 County council services will need to be disaggregated and reestablished across new unitary footprints, while district and borough services will be re-shaped over wider areas. This will involve creating new statutory roles and governance structures, transferring thousands of staff, migrating complex IT and case management systems, and re-letting or novating hundreds of contracts. The risks, costs and complexities will be significant, especially in relation to critical services such as adult social care, children's social care, education and SEND, and housing and homelessness; and in the continued delivery of vital frontline services to residents from waste and recycling, to highways, antisocial behaviour, planning and more.

4.36 The LGR programme represents significant change and will require robust plans to manage a complex transition. The document included a proposed summary plan for delivering this transition is set out in the 'our Commitment to Transition' section of the proposal. This anticipates delivering the new unitary authorities for Hertfordshire through three phases of activity. An initial Preparation phase is already underway to ensure a smooth step up of activity into the Transition phase in early 2026. This phase will primarily focus on developing safe and legal new councils. A more wide-reaching Transformation will be mobilised after vesting day.

4.37 It is anticipated that this implementation work is overseen by a Member-led Board, with representatives from each authority, ensuring political leadership and inclusive decision making throughout. A central Programme Management Office (PMO) will lead the delivery and be responsible for ensuring that the overall progress is made against the agreed timescales. A Programme Board made up of all Chief Executives, will oversee the work of the PMO to provide strategic direction and managing cross-organisational risks.

4.38 A full and detailed risk assessment has been undertaken and is being reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis as work is planned and delivered. The submission outlines current strategic transition risks and planned mitigation.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has allocated Hertfordshire councils £387,077 to support the development and delivery of the county's final business case. External consultants, IMPOWER and Connect PA, have been commissioned using this funding to support the 11 councils in the development of the proposals for Hertfordshire.

Financial modelling

5.1.2 The proposed unitary options being considered have been assessed using a modelling approach developed collaboratively with Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) from all 11 councils with an external consultancy to develop a shared financial model and set of assumptions. The proposal highlights the modelling approach taken, the assumptions made, and exclusions to the model.

5.1.3 All modelling assumptions have been accepted by all of the eleven councils CFOs and chief executives. This includes the use of higher and lower cost ranges in two key areas:

a) the recurring costs from duplication of social care management teams within the new councils; and

b) the one-off costs from disaggregation of the county council's ICT estate and ongoing running costs.

5.1.4 These modelling assumptions have been used to estimate the likely medium-term position of future unitary authorities. It looks at the impact of up-front costs to achieve reorganisation and the ongoing costs and savings from the new structures. It also considers future funding and Council Tax. The financial modelling section of the submission outlines the results of this exercise. Headline findings are as follows:

2 unitary proposal

- Payback period is 4 years (2031/32) in the higher cost scenario and 3 years (2030/31) in the lower cost scenario.
- Total annual recurring savings by year 5 range from £50m from £55m – with a range of £25m to £28m across individual authorities.
- Total cumulative savings after 5 years range from £79m to £113m – with a range of £39m to £57m across individual authorities.
- Total cumulative savings after 10 years range from £366m to £418m – with a range of £182m to £210m across individual authorities.

3 unitary proposal

- Payback period is 6 years (2033/34) in the higher cost scenario and 4 years (2031/32) in the lower cost scenario
- Total annual recurring savings by year 5 range from £30m from £38m – with a range of £8m to £15m across individual authorities.
- Total cumulative savings after 5 years range from a £6m net cost to a £43m saving – with a range of £9m net cost to £22m saving across individual authorities.
- Total cumulative savings after 10 years range from £181m to £258m – with a range of £42m to £107m across individual authorities.

4 unitary proposal

- Payback period is 11 years (2038/39) in the higher cost scenario and 6 years (2033/34) in the lower cost scenario
- Total annual recurring savings by year 5 range from £11m to £23m– with a range of £2m to £7m across individual authorities.
- Total cumulative net costs after year 5 range from £15m to £89m– with a range of £0m to £26m net cost across individual authorities.
- Total cumulative savings after 10 years range from a £1m net cost to a £124m saving– with a range of £11m net cost to £41m saving across individual authorities.

5.1.5 The potential impacts of the Fair Funding Review have not at this stage been included within the financial modelling. Additionally, the model does not account for potential savings that will be achieved by the new authorities or take account of full growth potential for the region.

5.1.6 Over the past decade, the percentage of Council spend on core statutory services - Adult Social Care, Children's Services and SEND Services has continue to increase year on year. Without policy change within the sector this will continue. Current indications from Government are that via mechanisms such as the Casey Review, SEND Review and wider government policy the sector will be reformed and this will impact on the funding models for Councils.

5.1.7 All of the proposals have a significant year one in year costs which need to be funded, the two and three unitary options are better able to fund this from reserves (subject to minimum balances) although require savings to be made in line with the modelling to recover those balances going forward. In the four unitary proposal, reserve balances are not sufficient to fund the one off and transition costs completely and the Unitary Council covering the Central area has a budget gap for seven years which closes gradually but would need some additional interventions. The modelling for the Central Unitary does include a larger share of corporate costs (28%) of which 3% is the equivalent of £5Million if the Corporate and debt costs were split evenly. However that in its self is not sufficient to resolve the budget gap.

5.1.8 At this stage the financial modelling does not consider how up-front costs will be funded. Some of those costs may be incurred when the new Councils are

in their shadow year or there may be the opportunity to capitalise transition costs

5.1.9 In addition to the modelling completed as part of the two, three and four unitary submissions, there are a number of levers which would increase the financial resilience/viability of all unitary options but would improve the viability of the central four unitary option:

(i) Lever one – continue the annual savings programme and the transformation of services including adult social care
(ii) Lever two – Housing Revenue Impact (HRA) (excluded from the modelling)
(iii) Lever three – Business Rates (NNDR) growth excluded from the model
(iv) Lever four – use of Government Funding for one off costs of LGR or Capitalisation Directions to Fund upfront costs and reducing redundancy pressures
(v) Lever five – Fair funding impact projected to be favourable for central unitary
(vi) Lever six – Council tax base growth beyond 0.8% per annum

5.1.10 More detail relating to these levers can be found within the Four Unitary Authority Sub Proposal.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides the legislative framework for local government reorganisation. It is therefore important that any submission is compliant with the requirements of the legislation.

5.2.2 Advice was obtained from King's Counsel on behalf of all the Hertfordshire authorities that confirms that a decision about what full proposal to make to the Secretary of State is an executive decision, and not one for Full Council to take. This is based on a fundamental and established principle that all decisions are executive decisions, unless it is possible to point to some specific provision which makes them otherwise (which does not exist in this context). In the circumstances, King's Counsel has confirmed that Full Council's role is advisory only and non-binding in this regard as they are not the decision maker. Full Council's role is to debate the options and provide a non-binding indicative view to inform Cabinet's decision on 18 November 2025.

5.2.3 Separate legal advice was obtained from another King's Counsel on behalf of all Hertfordshire authorities as to how the proposed boundary modifications within the 3UA and 4UA proposals should be represented. How this issue is addressed within the submission document reflects the advice received and the legal basis is explained further below.

5.2.4 The Local Government and Public Involvement Act 2007 provides that proposals for local government reorganisation should be based upon existing district council boundaries. A proposal that is not based on district council boundaries is likely to be non-compliant and may well be rejected by the Secretary of State on this basis. However, the Secretary of State has also made it clear in the invitation to local authorities to make proposals and associated guidance that he would welcome proposals for unitary government that suggest modified local authority boundaries. The best way to ensure that a proposal is compliant with both invitation and relevant legislation whilst also achieving the Council's desire to make a proposal that involves boundary changes it to adopt a bifurcated approach. The proposal should first set out the base proposal based on existing district council boundaries and briefly explain why such a proposal would meet the various criteria set out in the Secretary of State's invitation and attached guidance. The proposal should then go on to set out a modified proposal that is not based on such boundaries and explain in detail why such a modified proposal is superior to the base proposal and why it better meets the various criteria. Such an approach is the best way to reduce the risk of either the proposal being rejected by the Secretary of State or, if adopted by the Secretary of State, such a decision being successfully challenged by way of judicial review.

5.2.5 The legislation provides that it is for the Secretary of State to determine which proposal to implement, with or without modification. In terms of legal challenge, as with any public body decision, there is a potential for a legal challenge by way of judicial review. To help mitigate the risk, advice has been taken from King's Counsel and has informed the drafting of the submission.

5.2.6 A new authority must be 'safe and legal' on vesting day, which in this context is 1 April 2028. This will be the responsibility of the shadow unitary authority working in conjunction with the existing authorities. This will be an ongoing piece of work and focus after submission.

5.2.7 Following the decision by Cabinet on 18 November 2025, the Hertfordshire Leaders Group will submit the final submission proposals to DLUHC by the deadline of 28 November 2025. Government will then commence a statutory consultation anticipated in early 2026 and a Structural Changes Order will follow thereafter.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.3.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

5.3.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

5.3.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a)eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council also considers Carers and Care Experience as protected characteristics while assessing impacts.

5.3.4 An initial EqIA has been carried out on the implications of LGR for Hertfordshire residents, staff and councillors. This assessment, which is appended to Hertfordshire's submission, has identifies a range of potential impacts and implications that 11 councils will need to take into account as the implementation of the new unitary councils progresses. The principle of equality by design will be used in developing these new councils' service offers to ensure that most vulnerable and underrepresented in our communities are not disadvantaged by these changes.

5.4 Climate Change Implications

5.4.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 requires the UK government to reduce greenhouse gases by 100%, relative to 1990 levels, by 2050. As a local authority, the Council is committed to this target, having declared a climate emergency in 2019.

5.4.2 The Council has chosen to consider sustainability within its decisions, to identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures to address the impacts of climate change where required and practicable in all the circumstances.

5.4.3 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are aware of and have considered the sustainability implications of the decision that they are taking.

Background Documents

1. English Devolution White Paper - English Devolution White Paper
2. Interim Submission - Hertfordshire LGR Submission
3. Government Feedback on the Interim Submission - Government feedback

Appendices

Proposed Options | Local Government Reorganisation | Shaping Hertfordshire's Future

Incorporating:

- Hertfordshire LGR Proposal
- Hertfordshire LGR 2UA Sub-Proposal

- Hertfordshire LGR 3UA Sub-Proposal
- Hertfordshire LGR 4UA Sub-Proposal
- Hertfordshire LGR EQIA