

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

DECISION

meeting date: TUESDAY, 30 MARCH 2021
title: CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR LOCALLY-LED
REORGANISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CUMBRIA, NORTH
YORKSHIRE AND SOMERSET
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider how to respond to the Government's consultation on locally-led proposals to reorganise local government in Cumbria and North Yorkshire.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives }
 - Corporate Priorities }
 - Other Considerations }
- The consultation has no direct impact on the Council or our residents and businesses.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 We have been invited as a District Council in a neighbouring county to consider whether we wish to respond to the consultation to reorganise local government in Cumbria and North Yorkshire.

2.2 The consultation was launched on 22 February 2021 and will run for 8 weeks to 19 April 2021.

2.3 Following the consultation, the Secretary of State will decide, subject to Parliamentary approval, which, if any, proposals are to be implemented, with or without modification. The full consultation is attached at Annex 1 and explains the process in more detail.

3 PROPOSALS

3.1 The Secretary of State has received proposals for locally-led reorganisation of local government from the following Councils by 9 December 2020.

3.2 Cumbria

- **Allerdale Borough Council and Copeland Borough Council** submitted a joint proposal for two unitary Councils covering the whole of the administrative County of Cumbria.
 - West – comprising the current districts of Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland
 - East – comprising the current districts of Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland
- **Barrow Borough Council and South Lakeland Borough Council** submitted a joint proposal for two unitary Councils covering the whole of the administrative County of Cumbria and the district area of Lancaster City within Lancashire County.

- The Bay – comprising the current districts of Barrow, Lancaster City and South Lakeland
- North Cumbria – comprising the current districts of Allerdale, Carlisle, Copeland and Eden
- **Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council** submitted a joint proposal for two unitary Councils covering the whole of the administrative County of Cumbria.
 - North – comprising the current districts of Allerdale, Carlisle and Eden
 - South – comprising the current districts of Barrow, Copeland and South Lakeland
- **Cumbria County Council** submitted a proposal for a single unitary for the whole of the administrative County of Cumbria.

3.3 North Yorkshire

- **Craven District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council and Selby District Council** submitted a joint proposal for two unitary Councils covering the whole of the administrative county of North Yorkshire and the whole of the administrative area of the City of York.
 - East comprising the current districts of Ryedale, Scarborough, Selby and the current unitary of York
 - West comprising the current districts of Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate and Richmondshire
- **North Yorkshire County Council** submitted a proposal for a single unitary Council for the whole of the county of North Yorkshire with no changes to the existing City or unitary.

4 THE CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government is consulting on these proposals and welcomes views from interested persons, before he makes any assessment of the merits of the proposals or considers them against the criteria set out below.

Criteria

A proposal should seek to achieve for the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government, that is the establishment of one or more unitary authorities:

- a. which are likely to improve local government and service delivery across the area of the proposal, giving greater value for money, generating savings, providing stronger strategic and local leadership, and which are more sustainable structures;
- b. which command a good deal of local support as assessed in the round overall across the whole area of the proposal; and
- c. where the area of each unitary authority is a credible geography consisting of one or more existing local government areas with an aggregate population which is either within the range 300,000 to 600,000, or such other figure that, having regard to the circumstances of the authority, including local identity and geography, could be considered substantial.

The 2007 Act requires that before a proposal for local government reorganisation can be implemented, the Secretary of State must first consult any council affected that has not submitted the proposal, as well as any other persons that he considers appropriate.

Consultation Questions

This consultation seeks views on the Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset councils' proposal and in particular on the following questions in relation to each proposal:

- 1) Is the councils' proposal likely to improve local government and service delivery across each area? Specifically, is it likely to improve council services, give greater value for money, generate savings, provide stronger strategic and local leadership, and create more sustainable structures?
- 2) Where it is proposed that services will be delivered on a different geographic footprint to currently, or through some form of joint arrangements is this likely to improve those services? Such services may for example be children's services, waste collection and disposal, adult health and social care, planning, and transport.
- 3) Is the councils' proposal also likely to impact local public services delivered by others, such as police, fire and rescue, and health services?
- 4) Do you support the proposal from the councils?
- 5) Do the unitary councils proposed by the councils represent a credible geography?
- 6) Do you have any other comments with regards to the proposed reorganisation of local government in each area? Please indicate reasons for your answers.

What happens next?

The consultation will close at 23.59 on 19th April 2021.

The Secretary of State is consulting on these proposals before he has made any assessment of the merits of the proposals. He will consider all of these proposals carefully, the responses he receives to this consultation, all representations he receives and all other relevant information, assessing the proposals against the criteria below before reaching a balanced judgement on which proposals, if any, to implement.

- a. Is it likely to improve local government and service delivery across the area of the proposal, giving greater value for money, generating savings, providing stronger strategic and local leadership, and more sustainable structures;
- b. Does it command a good deal of local support as assessed in the round overall across the whole area of the proposal; and
- c. Is it a credible geography consisting of one or more existing local government areas with an aggregate population which is either within the range 300,000 to 600,000, or such other figure that, having regard to the circumstances of the authority, including local identity and geography, could be considered substantial.

The Secretary of State may decide, subject to Parliamentary approval, to implement a proposal with or without modification, or to not implement any proposal for an area. He may also seek advice from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. If any proposals are to be implemented, we would expect new unitary councils to take on full council role from April 2023, with the transitional arrangements in 2022-23 to support a smooth implementation.

The Secretary of State's decisions will be communicated to the councils as soon as practicable.

5 RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Council can respond to one or both of the proposals for local government reorganisation in our neighbouring county areas.
- 5.2 If you wish to respond we have until 19 April to formulate our answers to the consultation questions.
- 5.3 You may consider the creation of a small working group of Members who can go through the various options in more detail would be useful.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources }
- Technical, Environmental and Legal } There are no direct implications of any of these proposals for the Council.
- Political } However, the outcome may well prove to be a blueprint for more widespread reorganisation of local government in the future.
- Reputation }
- Equality & Diversity }

7 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 7.1 Consider if you wish to respond to the consultation on proposals to reorganise local government in Cumbria and North Yorkshire.
- 7.2 Appoint a small working group of Members to consider the Council's response.
- 7.3 Delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the chairman of this Committee the submission of any response agreed by the working group.

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Marshal Scott, extension 4400