

South Lakeland District Council
Cabinet
Tuesday, 23 March 2021
Local Government Reform - Consultation Responses

Portfolio: Leader of the Council
Report from: Chief Executive
Report Author: David Sykes – Director of Strategy, Innovation and Resources
Wards: (All Wards);
Forward Plan: Not applicable

1.0 Expected Outcome

1.1 Further to the decision of Council on 9 December 2020, along with Barrow Borough and Lancaster City Councils, to submit a full proposal for a Bay area unitary authority, this report updates Members on the consultation process. Endorsement of the principles of the Council's response will enable responses to be submitted by the 19th April 2021.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet :-

- (1) Receive the update on the consultation process following submission of the Bay Unitary Proposal;**
- (2) Endorse the approach of the Council to the consultation responses as outlined in the report and appendix 1;**
- (3) Endorse the approach to submitting additional commentary on The Bay and North Cumbria proposal as outlined in Appendix 2; and**
- (5) Authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader to finalise the response to the consultation for submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the 19 April 2021 deadline.**

2.2 It is recommended that Council endorses the Cabinet resolution.

3.0 Background and Proposals

3.1 At the meetings on 8 December Executive Committee and full Council approved the full proposal for a unitary council for the Bay area for submission to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The proposal was also agreed by Lancaster City and Barrow Borough Councils, and submitted by the required deadline of 9 December 2020.

3.2 Following submission and correspondence with the Ministry further work was undertaken to update the impact assessment on the subsequent impact on local police force and fire and rescue service areas.

- 3.3 The Government has now confirmed that it is consulting on our proposal, and is seeking views on the locally-led proposals that the Secretary of State has received following his invitation to councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset to submit proposals for local government reorganisation.
- 3.4 Government is consulting on each of the proposals for local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria. A link to the consultation is in the background documents.
- The Bay and North Cumbria
 - Two unitary in Cumbria –
 - Eden, Carlisle and Allerdale / Copeland Barrow and South Lakeland – as proposed by Carlisle and Eden Councils ‘North and South unitaries’
and
 - Carlisle, Allerdale and Copeland / Barrow, South Lakeland and Eden - as proposed by Allerdale and Copeland Councils - ‘East and West unitaries’
 - Single unitary for Cumbria – as proposed by Cumbria County Council
- 3.5 Further, this Council is also being consulted on proposals for local government reorganisation in North Yorkshire. The Chief Executive will consider any response to this in consultation with the Leader.
- 3.6 The consultation will run to midnight on the 19th April 2021, and is hosted on the Government’s online platform Citizen Space. The Government is consulting with a range of stakeholders. The consultation is open to any person or organisation wishing to express a view on local government reorganisation.
- 3.7 The three councils are making all of our local stakeholders and communities aware and encourage their participation in the consultation. We encourage Ward Councillors to encourage their local residents and communities to respond to the consultation. The Government is accepting responses through its consultation portal or by e mail.
- 3.8 Appendix 1 describes the approach the Councils are proposing to take in responding to the consultation. It provides a series of points in respect of each proposal submitted by other Councils. Appendix 2 sets out points for inclusion in additional commentary to be provided on The Bay and North Cumbria proposal. Appendix 3 sets out a content for the Council to submit correspondence with regard to the proposals in North Yorkshire. Subject to Cabinet resolution and endorsement by Council they will, together with use of information in the Council’s full proposal, be used to develop a series of full responses, to be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader for submission to Government.
- 3.9 The Secretary of State’s has made an Order to postpone local elections to the Principal Authorities. By- elections to the Principal Councils, elections for the PCC and Town and Parish Councils will continue.
- 3.10 Members are asked to consider the approach and points in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 as the framework for the Council’s responses to the consultations and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to finalise the Council’s response by 19 April 2021 deadline.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 The Council is responding to a consultation process and is making all local stakeholders and residents aware and encouraging that they respond to the consultation through the appropriate channels.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 There is an option not to submit a response. The Council's full proposal indicates the benefits and opportunities which could be realised for residents and businesses by a Bay Unitary. By not submitting a response to consultation on the proposals submitted, the Council would significantly reduce its influence in the reorganisation of local government. This option is not recommended.

6.0 Links to Council Priorities

6.1 A key requirement of the Bay proposal is that it demonstrates improvement to local government and service delivery, and provides stronger strategic and local leadership across the area of the proposal. The full proposal indicates the benefits it seeks to realise for the health, social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area.

6.2 The proposal considers the benefits a change to local government could deliver. Supporting our economy to thrive and benefit all our residents. It supports the outcome that the District will have a strategic role within Cumbria and as part of the Lancaster and South Cumbria City Region. A unitary authority will support improving all outcomes for the District.

7.0 Implications

Financial, Resources and Procurement

7.1.1 There are no financial, resource or procurement implications in this report which is to consider a consultation response. Previous reports to Council on the Council's proposal have set out the implications as they are currently.

Human Resources

7.2.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Legal

7.3.1 There are no legal issues to raise in this report which is a consultation response.

Health, Social, Economic and Environmental

7.4 Have you completed a Health, Social, Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment? No

7.5 If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons: The assessment was considered by the Council report of the 8th December 2020

Equality and Diversity

7.7 Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis? No

7.8 If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons: The approach to Equality and Diversity was considered by the Council report of the 8th December 2020.

Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Proposal does not meet the criteria set by Government for LGR proposals	The proposal could be dismissed by Government or challenged by other bodies	Ensure compliance with criteria and where there may be doubt, present compelling case for consideration as exception
Proposal does not gain support of local bodies and other public sector organisations	The proposal could be dismissed by Government	Position the proposal with local communities, bodies and organisations and gather expressed support

Contact Officers

Lawrence Conway – Chief Executive

David Sykes – Director Strategy Innovation and Resources

Appendices Attached to this Report

Appendix No.	Name of Appendix
1	Principle points proposed to form the basis of the Council's responses to the Government's consultation. (To follow)
2	Principle points proposed to form the basis of additional commentary to be submitted on the Bay and North Cumbria proposal. (To follow)

Background Documents Available

Name of Background document	Where it is available
Report to Council 06/10/20	https://democracy.southlakeland.gov.uk/documents/s30169/Exploration%20of%20Local%20Government%20Reform%20and%20Devolution.pdf
Report to Cabinet and Council 5/11/20	https://democracy.southlakeland.gov.uk/documents/s30449/Local%20Government%20Reform%20Proposals%20for%20Bay%20Area.pdf
Report to Cabinet and Council 8/12/20	https://democracy.southlakeland.gov.uk/documents/s30811/Local%20Government%20Reform%20Proposals%20for%20Bay%20Area.pdf
Link to Council webpage on The Bay and consultation process	https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/your-council/council-business/the-bay-unitary-proposal/#gsc.tab=0
Link to the proposals for Cumbria	https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-for-locally-led-reorganisation-of-local-government-in-cumbria-north-yorkshire-and-somerset/consultation-on-proposals-for-locally-led-reorganisation-of-local-government-in-cumbria-north-yorkshire-and-somerset

Tracking Information

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Legal Services	08/03/21	15/03/21

Section 151 Officer	08/03/21	15/03/21
Monitoring Officer	08/03/21	15/03/21
CMT	11/03/21	11/03/21

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	N/A
Human Resources Lead Specialist	N/A
Communications Team	N/A
Leader	08/03/21
Committee Chairman	N/A
Portfolio Holder	N/A
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	23/03/21
Council	23/03/21