

Toft Newton Parish Council

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Monday, 16th of March 2026

LGR Consultation – Greater Lincolnshire
Fry Building 2NE
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

LGR Consultation – Greater Lincolnshire

Dear Sir or Madam,

Following the recent meeting of Toft Newton Parish Council, please find attached our submission to the current Local Government Reorganisation consultation for Greater Lincolnshire.

Councillors have agreed the following submission.

In responses to the questions you ask at the beginning of the feedback form:

1. Toft Newton Parish Council is based in Dunholme and Welton ward of West Lindsey, in the Lincolnshire County Council area, despite my home-office being across the border in North Lincolnshire.
2. Toft Newton Parish Council are not a named consultee, we are however, a parish council that will be impacted by the change in our principal authority.

Please consider our feedback as part of the final response, it is important that the residents of small parishes are not forgotten in these changes, we need democracy and accountability to be as local as possible, so that local issues can be resolved by local councils, not large councils that have no idea of what happens in a particular village community.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Lewis

Michael Lewis, Dip Psy (ICS), CertHE (Glouc), MIOEE
Parish Council Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer
(enc.)

Proposal: South Holland District Council, Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council

South Holland District Council, Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council have submitted a proposal known as A Greater Lincolnshire For All.

This would see two new unitary councils being created.

Northern Lincolnshire Unitary Council would be made up of North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, the City of Lincoln Council and West Lindsey District Council.

Southern Lincolnshire Unitary Council comprising Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council, South Holland District Council, North Kesteven District Council and South Kesteven District Council.

Lincolnshire County Council would be abolished by this proposal.

https://b7eb1918-01e9-4b0a-bd07-f56eb093df62.filesusr.com/ugd/6d167d_a44c791463204cb499d4f9c7bdde97f1.pdf

<https://www.greaterlincolnshireforall.org/>

Consultation Response:

Question 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 4

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 5

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 6

To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 7

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 8

If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-7 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Where a proposal includes a request that the Secretary of State modifies a proposal to achieve boundary change, or the proposal affects wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, you will be asked an additional question:

Toft Newton Parish Council supports the principle of keeping local governance as local as possible, while this proposal would see the entire West Lindsey District being in a new Unitary Authority with the neighbouring authorities of North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and the City of Lincoln Council, we believe this would make it challenging for electors to hold local politicians' accountable.

We also believe that the rural issues of our parish, as a former RAF community, are vastly different from those of a historic cathedral city (Lincoln), an industrial garden town (Scunthorpe), and a tourists / seaside location (Cleethorpes). While large parts of Greater Lincolnshire are indeed rural, we are acutely aware that under the existing structures, small rural communities are always last on the list for repairs to infrastructure, or development of new services, if however, we are to become just another rural community in a unitary authority covering a much bigger area, we may experience further delays to infrastructure repairs and be overlooked even more for the development and provision of services.

Criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of tier of local government.

This proposal seeks to provide unitary council structures for the whole of the Greater Lincolnshire area, as aligned with the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority area.

Criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

Toft Newton Parish Council would prefer decisions to be made as local as possible; of the 20+ proposals that have been being discussed for the Greater Lincolnshire area at various stages since 2016, this proposal has too few unitary authorities to keep decision making local, and would see services being delivered by offices that are a drive of an hour or more from our parish.

Criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

Toft Newton Parish Council, already believe a town centric approach applies to local governance, this will only be worse when the Toft Newton parish is being managed by a much larger authority, especially one that includes a city and 18 towns rather than just four.

We do, however, believe that all services must be of high quality, well managed, responsive to needs and sustainable both in terms of finances, but also from an environmental perspective; the new unitary authorities must be committed to achieving net zero as a priority.

Criteria 4: How councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs.

We are disappointed that West Lindsey District Council decided not to endorse a proposal submitted by other Greater Lincolnshire area councils, however, we acknowledge that this proposal saw Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council working together on this plan.

West Lindsey District Council did however send a letter and the Council's principles for Local Government Re-organisation to the Secretary of State in November 2025 <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/council-democracy/local-government-reorganisation/response-statutory-invitation-our-principles-local-government-reorganisation>. As a parish council in the West Lindsey district, we broadly support the principles as set out by West Lindsey District Council in relation to achieving the correct balance for the residents of our parish.

Criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

Toft Newton Parish Council believes that Greater Lincolnshire Devolution must align all public services in the area with the boundaries of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority.

While Local Government Reorganisation has the potential to make services more responsive, and accountable to local people, devolution must not just stop at local councils. The wider public sector must serve the same boundaries.

It is important that services delivered in Greater Lincolnshire are delivered by organisations that do not cover large, multi-county regions.

Therefore, work still needs to be done to align all public services, such as uniting the multiple NHS Foundation Trusts and Integrated Care Boards covering the combined county area, aligning the Police and Fire and Rescue Services with the Greater Lincolnshire boundaries.

Criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

This proposal would strip away current structures that support Local Governance and community engagement as it would make smaller communities become insignificant, effectively legislating to ignore the hamlets and smaller villages within Greater Lincolnshire.

Conclusion:

Therefore, we do not believe that this proposal would meet all of the six criteria as set out by the government and still keep a link between the residents of the parish of Toft Newton, local issues, services that are responsive to local demands, accountable politicians and provide value for money, while withstanding financial shocks.

It is for the politicians within Lincolnshire to comment on whether or not there are political benefits, but from the point of view of a Parish Council that delivers frontline services, we anticipate that these changes will bring about negative consequences for the residents of our parish.

Proposal: City of Lincoln Council

The City of Lincoln Council proposal would see parts of the West Lindsey district and the North Kesteven district merging with the City of Lincoln to create a Greater Lincoln Council, the rest of the county would merge to create a Rural Lincolnshire Council, leaving North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council as they are.

<https://democratic.lincoln.gov.uk/documents/s77588/Appendix%20B%20-%20Proposal.pdf>

Consultation Response:

Question 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Somewhat agree

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Somewhat agree

Question 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Somewhat agree

Question 4

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Somewhat agree

Question 5

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Somewhat agree

Question 6

To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Somewhat agree

Question 7

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Somewhat agree

Question 8

If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-7 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Where a proposal includes a request that the Secretary of State modifies a proposal to achieve boundary change, or the proposal affects wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, you will be asked an additional question:

Toft Newton Parish Council supports the principle of keeping local governance as local as possible, this proposal would see the West Lindsey District being broken up, and parts, including the Toft Newton parish being subsumed into an enhanced City of Lincoln, along with parts of North Kesteven.

This proposal would create two new unitary authorities covering the current Lincolnshire County Council area, while leaving both North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council as they are; we believe this proposal would make it easier for electors to hold local politicians' accountable in three out of the four unitary councils; these being North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and the new, enhanced City of Lincoln Council, while depriving neighbouring citizens of the same rights to hold their elected Councillors to account.

*We believe that the rural issues of our parish, as a former RAF community, are vastly different from those of a historic cathedral city (Lincoln), **however, the residents of Toft Newton have an affinity with Lincoln, many residents work or shop in Lincoln.** We would welcome the proposed Neighbourhood Area Committees and would look forward to being involved in the local committee that covers our area.*

However, large parts of Greater Lincolnshire are rural, and are already acutely aware that under the existing structures, small rural communities are always last on the list for repairs to infrastructure, or development of new services, we do not want to become just another rural community in a unitary authority covering a much bigger, more urban area.

Criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of tier of local government.

This proposal seeks to provide unitary council structures for the whole of the Greater Lincolnshire area, as aligned with the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority area.

Criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

Toft Newton Parish Council would prefer decisions to be made as local as possible; of the 20+ proposals that have been being discussed for the Greater Lincolnshire area at various stages since 2016, this proposal has a balance of unitary authorities that is about right, it would keep decision making local, and would see services being delivered by offices that are reasonably local to our parish, however, the proposed Rural Lincolnshire unitary authority will not be able to say the same, with decisions about services in Gainsborough and Boston being made too far away from the people that the councils are supposed to serve.

Criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

Toft Newton Parish Council, already believe a town centric approach applies to local governance, this will only be worse when the Toft Newton parish is being managed by a larger authority, however, this proposal would see four unitary authorities rather than just two like some of the other proposals being consulted upon, and with only parts of West Lindsey and North Kesteven being amalgamated

into an enhanced City of Lincoln, we have to assume that would be better than multiple areas being lumped together.

We do, however, believe that all services must be of high quality, well managed, responsive to needs and sustainable both in terms of finances, but also from an environmental perspective; the new unitary authorities must be committed to achieving net zero as a priority.

Criteria 4: How councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs.

We are disappointed that West Lindsey District Council decided not to endorse a proposal submitted by other Greater Lincolnshire area councils, and we acknowledge that this proposal is a City of Lincoln Council proposal, that came from a political desire not to have the historic city's council abolished.

Additionally, we acknowledge that there has been a range of different options being discussed by the Councils of Greater Lincolnshire over a long period of time and that this latest round of Local Government Reorganisation comes after years of cross Council collaboration, working groups, and longer-term strategic partnerships between the top tier Councils.

West Lindsey District Council did however send a letter and the Council's principles for Local Government Re-organisation to the Secretary of State in November 2025 <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/council-democracy/local-government-reorganisation/response-statutory-invitation-our-principles-local-government-reorganisation>. As a parish council in the West Lindsey district, we broadly support the principles as set out by West Lindsey District Council in relation to achieving the correct balance for the residents of our parish.

Criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

Toft Newton Parish Council believes that Greater Lincolnshire Devolution must align all public services in the area with the boundaries of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority.

While Local Government Reorganisation has the potential to make services more responsive, and accountable to local people, devolution must not just stop at local councils. The wider public sector must serve the same boundaries.

It is important that services delivered in Greater Lincolnshire are delivered by organisations that do not cover large, multi-county regions.

Therefore, work still needs to be done to align all public services, such as uniting the multiple NHS Foundation Trusts and Integrated Care Boards covering the combined county area, aligning the Police and Fire and Rescue Services with the Greater Lincolnshire boundaries.

Criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

This proposal would change the current structures that support Local Governance and community engagement however, the establishment of Neighbourhood Committees within the Greater Lincolnshire unitary authorities may very well enhance the opportunities for residents and Town and Parish Councils to be involved in neighbourhood empowerment, especially in the Neighbourhood Committees are underpinned by the Gunning Principles, <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The%20Gunning%20Principles.pdf>.

Question 9

This is a proposal that is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary change or that affects wider public services. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal sets out a strong public services and financial sustainability justification for boundary change?

Somewhat agree

Question 10

If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 9.

*The proposal to absorb the West Lindsey wards of Bardney, Cherry Willingham, **Dunholme and Welton**, Nettleham, Saxilby, Scampton and Sudbrooke along with the North Kesteven wards of Bassingham Rural, Bracebridge Heath, Branston, Heighington and Washingborough, Hykeham Central, Hykeham Fosse, Hykeham Memorial, Metherringham Rural, Navenby and Brant Broughton, Skellingthorpe and Eagle, Waddington Rural and Witham St Hughes and Swinderby into the existing City boundaries, along with the other changes proposed would see the largest Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire since the Local Government Act of 1894, therefore, it is essential that proper consideration and full consultation be undertaken on these proposed electoral ward changes.*

Conclusion:

Therefore, we do not believe that this proposal would meet all of the six criteria as set out by the government and still keep a link between the residents of the parish of Toft Newton, local issues, services that are responsive to local demands, accountable politicians and provide value for money, while withstanding financial shocks.

It is for the politicians within Lincolnshire to comment on whether or not there are political benefits, but from the point of view of a Parish Council that delivers frontline services, we anticipate that these changes will bring about negative consequences for the residents of our parish.

Proposal: Lincolnshire County Council (supported by North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council).

The three top-tier Councils submitted proposals that aligned with each other's. These proposals would see North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council remain as standalone unitary authorities. All of the Council's in the Lincolnshire County Council area would be merged to form one large unitary authority.

This would result in the abolition of Boston Borough Council, City of Lincoln Council, East Lindsey District Council, North Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council, South Kesteven District Council and West Lindsey District Council, with all services being provided by replacement unitary council.

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/10590/local-government-reorganisation-proposal-your-lincolnshire->

<https://northlincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s25443/North%20Lincolnshire%20Council%20Local%20Government%20Reorganisation%20Submission.pdf>

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2025/11/NELC-LGR-Proposal-November-2025.pdf>

Consultation Response:

Question 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Somewhat agree

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Somewhat disagree

Question 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Somewhat disagree

Question 4

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Somewhat agree

Question 5

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Somewhat agree

Question 6

To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 7

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Somewhat disagree

Question 8

If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-7 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Where a proposal includes a request that the Secretary of State modifies a proposal to achieve boundary change, or the proposal affects wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, you will be asked an additional question:

Toft Newton Parish Council supports the principle of keeping local governance as local as possible, this proposal would see all of the Lincolnshire councils' being merged into one large unitary authority, while leaving both North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council as they are; we believe this proposal would make it more difficult for electors in the Toft Newton parish to hold local politicians' accountable in the unacceptably large Lincolnshire unitary authority.

We believe that the rural issues of our parish, as a former RAF community, are vastly different from those of a historic cathedral city (Lincoln), and the many towns of Lincolnshire, we therefore feel that we would be classed as just another rural community.

We would, however, welcome the proposed Neighbourhood Area Committees and would look forward to being involved in the local committee that covers our area.

Criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of tier of local government.

This proposal seeks to provide unitary council structures for the whole of the Greater Lincolnshire area, as aligned with the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority area.

Criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

Toft Newton Parish Council would prefer decisions to be made as local as possible; of the 20+ proposals that have been being discussed for the Greater Lincolnshire area at various stages since 2016, this proposal however, would see one large authority responsible for mostly rural county, which has poor infrastructure, and a significant lack of investment. Removing the borough, city and district councils will result in less political advocates for the rural areas of the county, and therefore the current disparity in services between towns and villages will only worsen.

Adjustments to the Barnett formula could lessen the financial shock to residents by boosting support for rural communities, especially in this large unitary authority.

Criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

Toft Newton Parish Council, already believe a town centric approach applies to local governance, this will only be worse when the Toft Newton parish is being managed by a larger authority.

We do, however, believe that all services must be of high quality, well managed, responsive to needs and sustainable both in terms of finances, but also from an environmental perspective; the new unitary authorities must be committed to achieving net zero as a priority.

Criteria 4: How councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs.

We are disappointed that West Lindsey District Council decided not to endorse a proposal submitted by other Greater Lincolnshire area councils, and we acknowledge that this proposal is a City of Lincoln Council proposal, that came from a political desire not to have the historic city's council abolished.

Additionally, we acknowledge that there has been a range of different options being discussed by the Councils of Greater Lincolnshire over a long period of time and that this latest round of Local Government Reorganisation comes after years of cross Council collaboration, working groups, and longer-term strategic partnerships between the top tier Councils.

West Lindsey District Council did however send a letter and the Council's principles for Local Government Re-organisation to the Secretary of State in November 2025 <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/council-democracy/local-government-reorganisation/response-statutory-invitation-our-principles-local-government-reorganisation>. As a parish council in the West Lindsey district, we broadly support the principles as set out by West Lindsey District Council in relation to achieving the correct balance for the residents of our parish.

Criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

Toft Newton Parish Council believes that Greater Lincolnshire Devolution must align all public services in the area with the boundaries of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority.

While Local Government Reorganisation has the potential to make services more responsive, and accountable to local people, devolution must not just stop at local councils. The wider public sector must serve the same boundaries.

It is important that services delivered in Greater Lincolnshire are delivered by organisations that do not cover large, multi-county regions.

Therefore, work still needs to be done to align all public services, such as uniting the multiple NHS Foundation Trusts and Integrated Care Boards covering the combined county area, aligning the Police and Fire and Rescue Services with the Greater Lincolnshire boundaries.

Criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

This proposal would change the current structures that support Local Governance and community engagement however, the establishment of Neighbourhood Area Committees within the Greater Lincolnshire unitary authority may very well enhance the opportunities for residents and Town and Parish Councils to be involved in neighbourhood empowerment, especially in the Neighbourhood Committees are underpinned by the Gunning Principles, <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The%20Gunning%20Principles.pdf>.

Conclusion:

Therefore, we do not believe that this proposal would meet all of the six criteria as set out by the government and still keep a link between the residents of the parish of Toft Newton, local issues, services that are responsive to local demands, accountable politicians and provide value for money, while withstanding financial shocks.

It is for the politicians within Lincolnshire to comment on whether or not there are political benefits, but from the point of view of a Parish Council that delivers frontline services, we anticipate that these changes will bring about negative consequences for the residents of our parish.

Proposal: North Kesteven District Council and South Kesteven District Council

North Kesteven District Council and South Kesteven District Council have submitted a proposal that would see the Kesteven councils merging to become one unitary council. The remaining borough, city and district councils would merge with Lincolnshire County Council to become a new unitary council. North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council would remain as they are.

<https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-11/NKSK%20LGR%20-%20BEST4GreaterLincolnshire%20Full%20Proposal%2028%20Nov%202025.pdf>

Consultation Response:

Question 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 4

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 5

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 6

To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 7

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Neither agree nor disagree

Question 8

If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-7 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Where a proposal includes a request that the Secretary of State modifies a proposal to achieve boundary change, or the proposal affects wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, you will be asked an additional question:

Toft Newton Parish Council supports the principle of keeping local governance as local as possible, this proposal would see all of the Lincolnshire councils' being merged into two unitary authorities, while leaving both North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council as they are; we believe this proposal would retain the ability for electors in the Toft Newton parish to hold local politicians' accountable in larger Lincolnshire unitary authorities.

We believe that the rural issues of our parish, as a former RAF community, are vastly different from those of a historic cathedral city (Lincoln), and the many towns of Lincolnshire, we therefore feel that we would be classed as just another rural community.

We also believe that the residents of Boston would have a more natural affinity with the likes of Grantham, rather than Gainsborough, so are perplexed as to why it is not included in unitary authority one.

Criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of tier of local government.

This proposal seeks to provide unitary council structures for the whole of the Greater Lincolnshire area, as aligned with the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority area.

Criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

Toft Newton Parish Council would prefer decisions to be made as local as possible; of the 20+ proposals that have been being discussed for the Greater Lincolnshire area at various stages since 2016, this proposal however, would see one two large authorities responsible for mostly rural county, which has poor infrastructure, and a significant lack of investment. Removing the borough, city and district councils will result in fewer political advocates for the rural areas of the county, and therefore the current disparity in services between towns and villages will only worsen.

Criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

Toft Newton Parish Council, already believe a town centric approach applies to local governance, this will only be worse when the Toft Newton parish is being managed by a larger authority.

We do, however, believe that all services must be of high quality, well managed, responsive to needs and sustainable both in terms of finances, but also from an environmental perspective; the new unitary authorities must be committed to achieving net zero as a priority.

Criteria 4: How councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs.

We are disappointed that West Lindsey District Council decided not to endorse a proposal submitted by other Greater Lincolnshire area councils, and we acknowledge that this proposal is a City of Lincoln Council proposal, that came from a political desire not to have the historic city's council abolished.

Additionally, we acknowledge that there has been a range of different options being discussed by the Councils of Greater Lincolnshire over a long period of time and that this latest round of Local Government Reorganisation comes after years of cross Council collaboration, working groups, and longer-term strategic partnerships between the top two-tier Councils.

West Lindsey District Council did however send a letter and the Council's principles for Local Government Re-organisation to the Secretary of State in November 2025 <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/council-democracy/local-government-reorganisation/response-statutory-invitation-our-principles-local-government-reorganisation>. As a parish council in the West Lindsey district, we broadly support the principles as set out by West Lindsey District Council in relation to achieving the correct balance for the residents of our parish.

Criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

Toft Newton Parish Council believes that Greater Lincolnshire Devolution must align all public services in the area with the boundaries of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority.

While Local Government Reorganisation has the potential to make services more responsive, and accountable to local people, devolution must not just stop at local councils. The wider public sector must serve the same boundaries.

It is important that services delivered in Greater Lincolnshire are delivered by organisations that do not cover large, multi-county regions.

Therefore, work still needs to be done to align all public services, such as uniting the multiple NHS Foundation Trusts and Integrated Care Boards covering the combined county area, aligning the Police and Fire and Rescue Services with the Greater Lincolnshire boundaries.

Criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

This proposal would change the current structures that support Local Governance and community engagement however, the establishment of Neighbourhood Area Committees within the Greater Lincolnshire unitary authority may very well enhance the opportunities for residents and Town and Parish Councils to be involved in neighbourhood empowerment, especially in the Neighbourhood Committees are underpinned by the Gunning Principles, <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/The%20Gunning%20Principles.pdf>.

Conclusion:

Therefore, we do not believe that this proposal would meet all of the six criteria as set out by the government and still keep a link between the residents of the parish of Toft Newton, local issues, services that are responsive to local demands, accountable politicians and provide value for money, while withstanding financial shocks.

It is for the politicians within Lincolnshire to comment on whether or not there are political benefits, but from the point of view of a Parish Council that delivers frontline services, we anticipate that these changes will bring about mostly negative consequences for the residents of our parish.