

CABINET	CLLR GARETH WILLIAMS LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
16 SEPTEMBER 2025	
KEY DECISION: NO	ADDENDUM TO REPORT NO: ED2507

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Reason for Addendum

There has been ongoing engagement with MHCLG 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.

Legal advice received since the circulation of Report ED2507 indicates that the wording to describe such options needs to be specific to align with the original invitation from the Secretary of State's invitation to submit options for LGR.

The draft proposal contains 3 options. Options involving a boundary change are considered as amendments or, more specifically, 'modifications' of options developed by combining existing entire local authority areas.

The Council's preference for the Borough of Rushmoor is a unitary council based on the whole areas of Rushmoor, Hart and Basingstoke & Deane Councils and this remains the same across all 3 of the options in the draft proposal.

The preferred option currently recommended for submission to the Secretary of State in Report ED2507, Option 3, contains some proposed boundary changes to Council areas in the South of Hampshire. This is because a number of the authorities affected feel that this option creates stronger, more balanced unitary authorities that are better set up to drive economic growth across the region than other options.

Legal advice has recommended that any proposal requiring a modification should be seen as being derived from an option created from a combination of complete authority areas. Option 3 has been derived from Option 1. The advice also suggests that this should be made clear in any submission. The 12 authorities (including Rushmoor) who developed the proposal have all therefore agreed that Option 3 should be renamed Option 1A to reflect this and the proposal document is currently being amended accordingly. The documents and version of the proposal that will be made available to Council will reflect this change.

Revised Recommendation

The recommendation from Cabinet to Council should reflect the documentation that will be submitted and therefore the proposed recommendation in the report requires replacing with the following;

RECOMMENDATIONS (AMENDED)

That the Council be RECOMMENDED to approve the proposal 'Close Enough to be Local, Big Enough to Stay Strong' for submission to government by the 26 September 2025 deadline confirming that;

- (1) a five-unitary Council structure, with four new mainland unitary councils plus the Isle of Wight would best meet the Government's criteria and provide the most effective solution for local government reorganisation in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
- (2) a unitary council based on the areas of Rushmoor, Hart and Basingstoke & Deane is the recommended option for Rushmoor as, in line with the assessment criteria, it represents the best balance of a council large enough to deliver high quality services and value for money, but small enough to be connected the place and the needs of the people the council serves.
- (3) the Council's preferred option that brings together entire existing Council areas is Option 1. The Council would though request that a modification to that option involving a range of boundary changes as shown in Option 1A be made using the modification powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as this represents a stronger case for change.

15 September 2025

CONTACT DETAILS:

Karen Edwards, Executive Director