

Summary and analysis of consultation responses and summary of representations from named consultees

Background

1. A statutory consultation on proposals for unitary local government in Leicestershire was opened on 5 February and closed on 26 March 2026. We received a total of **6,615** responses.
2. The 3 proposals being consulted on were made by councils and submitted to the Government on 28 November 2025.
3. This document provides a summary of the **6,615** responses received to the Government's consultation on the proposals for future unitary local government in the **Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland** area.
4. The Government announced to Parliament in July 2026 that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, **the 2 Unitary Councils** submitted by **Leicester City Council**. In implementing this option, the Secretary of State will exercise the power to modify the proposal to achieve the boundary changes requested by the Leicester City Council (excluding the part parishes). These new councils will comprise of the following areas (please note the names of the following areas are as outlined in the original proposal. The legal names of new councils will be confirmed in the Structural Changes Order):
 - a. **Expanded City**: Leicester City Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, plus 16 parishes from Blaby District Council, 11 parishes from Charnwood Borough Council and seven parishes from Harborough District Council (referred to in the proposal as 'Leicester Council')
 - b. **Leicestershire and Rutland**: Blaby District Council less 16 parishes, Charnwood Borough Council less 11 parishes, Harborough District Council less seven parishes, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Melton Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and Rutland County Council (referred to in the proposal as 'Leicestershire & Rutland')
5. From here, this is referred to as the '**2 Unitary City**'
6. **The consultation also invited views on the proposal submitted by Leicestershire County Council proposed 2 unitary councils:**
 - a. **Leicestershire**: Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire, Oadby and Wigston, and Rutland
 - b. **Leicester City** to remain unchanged

7. From here, this is referred to as the '**2 Unitary County**.'
8. **The consultation also invited views on the proposal submitted by the seven District and Borough Councils and Rutland proposed 3 Unitary Councils:**
 - a. **North:** Charnwood, North West Leicestershire, Melton, Rutland
 - b. **South:** Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Oadby and Wigston
 - c. **Leicester City:** to remain unchanged
9. From here, this is referred to as the '**3 Unitary**'
10. The consultation on these proposals has informed an assessment of the merits of each proposal. All the proposals have been considered carefully, alongside the responses received to this consultation, representations and any other relevant information, in assessing the proposals against the criteria before a judgement was taken on which proposal to implement.
11. The criteria by which proposals for local government reorganisation have been assessed are set out in the [letter of invitation](#), sent to councils in area on 5 February 2025. The consultation asked questions relating to the criteria for each of the above proposals.
12. This consultation relates to the structure of local government in **Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland**. These proposals relate to England only.

Methodology

13. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 states that the Secretary of State may not implement a proposal unless they have consulted with every authority affected by the proposal and other such other persons as they consider appropriate. Those councils and persons considered appropriate are hereafter referred to as 'named consultees'.
14. The list of named consultees is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
15. In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (the Ministry) welcomed the views of any other persons or bodies interested in these proposals, including local residents, town and parish councils, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.
16. The Ministry used Citizen Space, a third-party consultation programme to collect responses. Citizen Space was open to both named consultees and all other interested parties. Further information on the statutory basis for, and methodology of, the consultation is provided on the [publication page](#).
17. Responses to the consultation were also received by email and letter.
18. The Ministry used a tool named Consult AI to assist in the analysis of responses. The AI tool identified themes present in the responses, which

MHCLG officials have checked for accuracy. The tool did not have access to any personal data. All responses from named consultees were read by Ministry staff.

19. The department has conducted an evaluation of the Consult tool and concluded that Consult's theme mappings are consistent with human reviewers' assessments. For this consultation, human reviewers independently checked the theme assignments Consult had produced and likewise found that Consult's theme mappings were broadly consistent with the human reviewers.

Consultation Questions

20. Respondents answered the questions below using a five-point agree–disagree scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree,' with an additional 'don't know' option.
21. The questions were as follows:
 - a) **Question 1:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?
 - b) **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?
 - c) **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?
 - d) **Question 4:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?
 - e) **Question 5:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?
 - f) **Question 6:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?
 - g) **Question 7:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?
 - h) **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 this proposal.
 - i) **Question 9:** This proposal is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary changes. To what extent do you agree or disagree

that the proposal sets out a strong public services and financial sustainability justification for boundary change?

- j) **Question 10:** If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 9.

Summary of responses

22. There were 6,615 responses to this consultation, 25 from named consultees and 6,590 by other respondents. Not all respondents provided an answer to each question. Please see the analysis of responses by question below for individual response data.

23. Responses from named consultees

Named Consultee respondents	Number of Responses
Principal councils	10
Neighbouring councils	1
Strategic Authorities	0
Health Bodies	1
Police and Fire	1
Education Bodies	6
Other Public Sector	1
Voluntary and Community Sector	1
Business Organisations	0
National Bodies	2
Other named consultees	2
Total named consultees	25

Responses from other respondents

<i>Other respondents</i>	Number of Responses
Individual living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland	6,387
Individual not living in affected area or who did not specify their location	121
Organisation	82
Total other respondents	6,590
Total responses (Including named consultees)	6,615

Summary of findings

24. Tables in this report included numbers rounded to the nearest whole number, and as such, not all cumulative scores will equal 100%.
25. Respondents were invited to respond to 8 multiple choice questions per proposal and could provide a rationale for their answers in a free text box.

Where a proposal included boundary change, respondents were invited to answer an additional question and provide an additional free text response. The multiple-choice questions invited respondents to state whether they strongly agreed, somewhat agree/agree, neither agreed nor disagreed, somewhat disagree/disagree, strongly disagreed, or did not know when responding to a statement.

26. For the purposes of this document we have classified positive responses as strongly agree, somewhat agree/ agree and negative responses as somewhat disagree/ disagree and strongly disagree.
27. Quantitative scoring against specific questions was applied to responses submitted by email and post only where respondents provided explicit answers based on the scale provided. No assumptions or inferred positions were applied to submissions that did not directly address those questions.
28. Responses received by email and post are not included in the respondent count for questions 8 and 10. A summary of the relevant views expressed in those responses against each criterion is included within the summary of free text responses for each respondent type.
29. In addition to this round of consultation, the Government undertook consultation on 6 other local government reorganisation areas between 19 November 2025 and 11 January 2026. One response received as part of that consultation is relevant to all local government reorganisation areas, including those in this round of consultation. A summary of the relevant views expressed in that response against each criterion is included within the summary of free text responses for that respondent type.
30. The table below takes the average response across the multiple-choice questions to provide an overall view of whether all respondents viewed a proposal positively or negatively.

All respondents

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
2 Unitary City	47023	7%	87	4%	1%
2 Unitary County	32992	35%	54%	10%	1%
3 Unitary	41851	70%	21%	8%	1%

31. Overall, the responses demonstrate a preference for the **3 Unitary** proposal. 70 % of respondents to the 3 Unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 21% of respondents provided negative responses. 9% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The **2 Unitary County** proposal received the second highest proportion of positive responses at

35%, followed by the least popular **2 Unitary City** proposal with 7% positive responses.

Named consultees

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
2 Unitary City	151	23%	64%	14%	0%
2 Unitary County	140	23%	66%	11%	0%
3 Unitary	133	62%	23%	14%	0%

32. Overall, the responses from the named consultees demonstrate a preference for the **3 Unitary** proposal. 62% of respondents to the 3 Unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 23% of respondents provided negative responses. 14% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The **2 Unitary City** proposal and the **2 Unitary County** both received 23% of positive responses with a higher percentage of negative responses.

Individuals living in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
2 Unitary City	45480	7%	88%	4%	1%
2 Unitary County	38646	35%	54%	10%	1%
3 Unitary	40515	70%	21%	8%	1%

33. Overall, the responses from the individuals living in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland area demonstrate a preference for the **3 Unitary** proposal. 70% of respondents to the 3 Unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 21% of respondents provided negative responses. 9% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The **2 Unitary** county proposal received 35% of respondents providing a positive response. The **2 Unitary City** proposal was the least popular with 7% of respondents providing a positive responses with a higher percentage of negative responses.

Individuals living outside of the affected area

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
2 Unitary City	840	16%	78%	5%	2%
2 Unitary County	686	23%	69%	7%	1%
3 Unitary	755	53%	37%	8%	2%

34. Overall, the responses from the individuals living outside Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area demonstrate a preference for the **3 Unitary** proposal. 53% of respondents to the 3 Unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 37% of respondents provided negative responses. 10% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The **2 Unitary County** proposal received 23% of respondents providing a positive response. The **2 Unitary City** proposal was the least popular with 16% of respondents providing a positive response, with a higher percentage of negative responses.

Organisations

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
2 Unitary City	552	19%	63%	14%	3%
2 Unitary County	454	16%	65%	16%	4%
3 Unitary	448	58%	22%	17%	3%

35. Overall, the responses from organisations demonstrate a preference for the **3 Unitary** proposal. 58% of respondents to the 3 Unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 22% of respondents provided negative responses. 20% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The **2 Unitary City** proposal received 19% of respondents providing a positive response. The **2 Unitary County** proposal was the least popular with 16% of respondents providing a positive response, with a higher percentage of negative responses.

Analysis of responses by question

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal council - 2 Unitary City	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 2 Unitary County	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 3 Unitary	10	80%	20%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council - 2 unitary county	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 unitary county	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 2 Unitary County	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies- 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary City	4	75%	0%	25%	0%

Education Bodies - 2 Unitary County	4	25%	75%	0%	0%
Education Bodies - 3 Unitary	4	25%	75%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary City	19	26%	58%	16%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary County	20	25%	70%	5%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 3 Unitary	19	63%	32%	5%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary City	5739	8%	89%	2%	0%
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary County	5488	40%	53%	7%	0%
Individual living in affected area - 3 Unitary	5770	76%	19%	4%	0%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary City	105	19%	77%	4%	0%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary County	98	23%	70%	6%	0%
Individual living outside affected area - 3 Unitary	108	58%	36%	6%	0%
Organisations Authority- 2 Unitary City	69	19%	68%	10%	3%
Organisations - 2 Unitary County	65	18%	66%	12%	3%
Organisation - 3 Unitary	64	61%	25%	13%	2%

Total Responses Question 1

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	5932	9%	89%	2%	0%
Total all responses - 2 Unitary County	5671	39%	53%	7%	0%
Total all responses - 3 Unitary	5961	75%	20%	4%	0%

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?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal council- 2 Unitary City	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 2 Unitary County	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 3 Unitary	10	80%	20%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 2 Unitary County	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies- 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary City	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary County	4	25%	50%	25%	0%

Education Bodies - 3 Unitary	4	25%	75%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary City	19	32%	63%	5%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary County	20	25%	65%	10%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 3 Unitary	19	63%	26%	11%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary City	5642	7%	89%	3%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary County	5580	36%	53%	10%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 3 Unitary	5766	73%	20%	6%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary City	5642	7%	89%	3%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary County	98	26%	69%	4%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 3 Unitary	108	56%	38%	6%	1%
Organisations - 2 Unitary City	69	20%	68%	10%	1%
Organisations - 2 Unitary County	65	17%	65%	17%	2%
Organisation - 3 Unitary	64	59%	22%	16%	3%

Total Responses Question 2

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	5835	7%	89%	3%	1%
Total all responses - 2 Unitary County	5763	36%	53%	10%	1%
Total all responses - 3 Unitary	5957	72%	21%	6%	1%

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?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal council- 2 Unitary City	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 2 Unitary County	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 3 Unitary	10	80%	20%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 2 Unitary County	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies- 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary City	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary County	4	25%	75%	0%	0%

Education Bodies - 3 Unitary	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary City	19	32%	63%	5%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary County	20	25%	70%	5%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 3 Unitary	19	63%	26%	11%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary City	5733	8%	85%	6%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary County	5480	36%	55%	8%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 3 Unitary	5851	71%	20%	7%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary City	105	17%	77%	4%	2%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary County	98	26%	66%	7%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 3 Unitary	108	56%	36%	6%	2%
Organisations - 2 Unitary City	69	20%	64%	13%	3%
Organisations - 2 Unitary County	65	14%	65%	17%	5%
Organisation - 3 Unitary	64	61%	23%	13%	3%

Total Responses Question 3

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	5926	8%	85%	6%	1%
Total all responses - 2 Unitary County	5663	36%	55%	8%	1%
Total all responses - 3 Unitary	6042	71%	21%	7%	1%

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal council- 2 Unitary City	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 2 Unitary County	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 3 Unitary	10	80%	20%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 2 Unitary County	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies- 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary City	4	50%	25%	25%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary County	4	0%	75%	25%	0%

Education Bodies - 3 Unitary	4	0%	50%	50%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary City	19	21%	63%	16%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary County	20	20%	70%	10%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 3 Unitary	19	58%	21%	21%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary City	5645	6%	89%	4%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary County	5569	34%	54%	11%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 3 Unitary	5851	68%	21%	10%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary City	105	15%	80%	4%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary County	98	19%	68%	11%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 3 Unitary	107	52%	39%	7%	1%
Organisations - 2 Unitary City	69	16%	59%	20%	4%
Organisations - 2 Unitary County	65	11%	65%	18%	6%
Organisation - 3 Unitary	64	52%	20%	22%	6%

Total Responses Question 4

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	5838	7%	88%	4%	1%
Total all responses - 2 Unitary County	5752	34%	54%	11%	1%
Total all responses - 3 Unitary	6041	68%	21%	10%	1%

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal council- 2 Unitary City	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 2 Unitary County	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 3 Unitary	10	80%	0%	20%	0%
Neighbouring council - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 2 Unitary County	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies- 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary City	4	0%	25%	75%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary County	4	25%	0%	75%	0%

Education Bodies - 3 Unitary	4	50%	0%	50%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary City	19	5%	74%	21%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary County	20	20%	55%	25%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 3 Unitary	19	63%	11%	26%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary City	5635	5%	91%	3%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary County	5570	33%	56%	11%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 3 Unitary	5755	69%	23%	7%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary City	105	12%	82%	4%	2%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary County	98	19%	72%	8%	0%
Individual living outside affected area - 3 Unitary	108	52%	36%	11%	1%
Organisations - 2 Unitary City	69	16%	68%	12%	4%
Organisations - 2 Unitary County	65	12%	68%	15%	5%
Organisation - 3 Unitary	64	56%	20%	20%	3%

Total Responses Question 5

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	5828	5%	91%	3%	1%
Total all responses - 2 Unitary County	5753	32%	56%	11%	1%
Total all responses - 3 Unitary	5946	68%	23%	8%	1%

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal council- 2 Unitary City	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 2 Unitary County	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 3 Unitary	10	80%	20%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 2 Unitary County	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies- 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary City	3	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary County	4	25%	75%	0%	0%

Education Bodies - 3 Unitary	4	25%	75%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary City	18	33%	61%	6%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary County	20	25%	70%	5%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 3 Unitary	19	58%	32%	11%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary City	5730	7%	78%	10%	5%
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary County	5481	34%	48%	13%	5%
Individual living in affected area - 3 Unitary	5758	65%	19%	12%	4%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary City	105	16%	65%	10%	9%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary County	98	23%	65%	7%	4%
Individual living outside affected area - 3 Unitary	108	45%	37%	12%	6%
Organisations - 2 Unitary City	69	23%	57%	17%	3%
Organisations - 2 Unitary County	64	16%	61%	17%	6%
Organisation 3 Unitary	64	55%	22%	19%	5%

Total Responses Question 6

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	5922	8%	77%	11%	5%
Total all responses - 2 Unitary County	5663	33%	49%	13%	5%
Total all responses - 3 Unitary	5949	64%	20%	12%	4%

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal council- 2 Unitary City	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal council - 2 Unitary County	10	10%	80%	10%	0%
Principal council - 3 Unitary	10	80%	0%	20%	0%
Neighbouring council - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring council- 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Neighbouring council- 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 2 Unitary County	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies- 3 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 3 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary City	4	25%	0%	75%	0%
Education Bodies - 2 Unitary County	4	25%	50%	25%	0%

Education Bodies - 3 Unitary	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary County	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 3 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary County	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 3 Unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary City	19	11%	63%	26%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary County	20	20%	65%	15%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 Unitary	19	68%	16%	16%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary City	5640	5%	91%	3%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary County	5478	32%	58%	9%	1%
Individual living in affected area - 3 Unitary	5764	69%	22%	9%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary City	105	15%	84%	1%	0%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary County	98	21%	72%	6%	0%
Individual living outside affected area - 3 Unitary	108	52%	38%	9%	1%
Organisations - 2 Unitary City	69	19%	62%	16%	3%
Organisations - 2 Unitary County	65	22%	65%	12%	2%
Organisation 3 Unitary	64	64%	20%	14%	2%

Total Responses Question 7

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	5833	6%	90%	3%	1%
Total all responses - 2 Unitary County	5661	32%	59%	9%	1%
Total all responses - 3 Unitary	5955	68%	22%	9%	1%

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 this proposal.

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>Total Named consultees</i>	<i>Total Individuals living in area</i>	<i>Total individuals not in area</i>	<i>Total Organisation</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	16	3296	59	56
Total all responses - 2 Unitary County	17	2695	49	49
Total all responses - 3 Unitary	16	3210	57	51

We also received 316 responses by email and post. 9 were from named consultees, 259 were from individuals living in area, 36 were from individuals not in area or who did not specify their location, 12 were from organisations. A summary of the views shared in these responses is included within the summaries below.

Summary of named consultee responses

Principal Councils

36. Principal councils supported those proposals that they had put forward. Principal councils who challenged other proposals raised concerns over issues such as service delivery, fragmentation and neighbourhood empowerment.

Neighbouring councils

37. One neighbouring council responded and expressed a preference for the 3 Unitary proposal as they felt the proposal would keep local government as close to communities as possible and protect local identities.

Health Bodies

38. One health body responded and didn't express a preference for a particular proposal, instead highlighting the need to safeguard health protection functions and budgets held by upper-tier local authorities as well as the significance of changes to Integrated Care Boards in the area.

Education Bodies

39. Six education bodies responded. Two did not express a preference for a particular proposal. One supported the 2 Unitary City and 2 Unitary County proposals, feeling they would accelerate the creation of a Strategic Authority for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Two supported the 2 Unitary City proposal, noting benefits in service capacity and collaboration. One supported the 3 Unitary proposal.

Voluntary and Community Sector

40. General feedback from voluntary organisations was they saw merit in all proposals but raised concerns over how local communities and voluntary organisations across the region will be involved in changes, outlining that they have not been involved in any real engagement to date.

Police and Fire Bodies

41. One police and fire body responded and supported the City and County proposals, noting that they felt the 2 Unitary City proposal was most likely to protect community services and minimise disaggregation impacts.

Other named consultees

42. Five organisations responded, with three not expressing a preference for a particular proposal. One supported the County proposal, arguing that it would avoid the need to significantly disaggregate services and would aim to empower communities. One supported the 3 Unitary proposal, believing it to be the best of the proposals available for Rutland.

Comments against the criteria

43. **For criterion 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government:**
Respondents raised concerns regarding all proposals over their respective boundaries/geographies – with concerns raised over deliverability, financial sustainability and weak operational and financial planning. Some felt the 2 Unitary County proposal would create a highly imbalanced structure with a very large Leicestershire and Rutland unitary alongside a much smaller Leicester City authority. Across all three proposals, supporters considered that their preferred option would create coherent unitary structures aligned to local communities and economic geographies. Supporters of the 2 Unitary City proposal emphasised addressing existing boundary constraints and reflecting urban and rural communities. Supporters of the 2 Unitary County proposal emphasised retaining existing boundaries and minimising transition risks. Supporters of the 3 Unitary proposal emphasised balanced council sizes, recognised local geographies and maintaining local identity.
44. **For criterion 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks:**
Respondents raised for all three proposals questioned the methodology and assumptions used for the financial estimates in all proposals. Supporters of all three proposals considered their preferred model would create unitary councils of an appropriate scale to improve efficiency, capacity and financial resilience. Supporters of the 2 Unitary City proposal emphasised the benefits of two balanced councils meeting the Government's population guideline and delivering significant efficiencies. Supporters of the 2 Unitary County proposal emphasised the advantages of scale, service aggregation and reduced duplication. Supporters of the 3 Unitary proposal emphasised balancing efficiency and financial sustainability with local responsiveness.

45. **For criterion 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens:** Respondents raised concerns regarding all three proposals over their ability to deliver services and the size and structure of their respective unitaries. Questions were raised about whether the proposals would undermine effective service delivery and fail to reflect how communities' function. Many state the proposals underestimate integration and disaggregation costs, rely on unrealistic savings assumptions, and fail to address growing service demand. Supporters of all three proposals considered their preferred model would improve the quality and sustainability of public services. Supporters of the 2 Unitary City proposal emphasised reducing fragmentation and better aligning services to urban and rural needs. Supporters of the 2 Unitary County proposal emphasised service continuity, integration and a lower-risk transition. Those in support of the 3 Unitary proposal emphasised prevention, place-based working and services tailored to local communities.
46. **For criterion 4: Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views:** Respondents raised concerns about the level of public opposition to proposals, particularly with regard to the 2 Unitary City and 2 Unitary County proposals. Some respondents acknowledged local engagement within the 3 Unitary proposal but view it as insufficient to resolve current issues, while devolution was thought to be weakened by the boundaries and constrained city growth. Supporters of all three proposals considered their preferred model reflected local needs and local views. Supporters of the 2 Unitary City proposal emphasised functional communities and differing urban and rural needs. Supporters of the 2 Unitary County proposal emphasised retaining existing boundaries and local identity. Those in support of the 3 Unitary proposal emphasised extensive engagement and collaborative development across councils, communities and stakeholders
47. **For criterion 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements:** Some flagged that the imbalance in size and population between the two proposed authorities within the 2 Unitary County proposal could hinder effective devolution, suggesting that unequal authorities may reduce fairness in representation and weaken inclusive engagement in decision-making. Some felt the 3 Unitary proposal would not accelerate the creation of a Strategic Authority for the region as much as the other proposals. Supporters of all three proposals considered their preferred model would support devolution arrangements and provide an effective foundation for a Strategic Authority. Supporters of the 2 Unitary City proposal emphasised the benefits of two balanced councils supporting strategic planning and economic growth. Supporters of the 2 Unitary County proposal emphasised providing the most efficient and least disruptive route to devolution while maintaining existing strategic partnerships and functions. Those in support of the 3 Unitary proposal emphasised three balanced councils, with clear separation between strategic and local responsibilities, supporting accountability and effective decision-making.

48. **For criterion 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment:** Respondents raised concerns regarding all three proposals over their ability to enable stronger community engagement, with concerns being raised for all three proposals over how meaningful local participation in neighbourhood governance structures and responsive place-based governance would be maintained. Supporters of all three proposals considered their preferred model would strengthen local engagement and neighbourhood empowerment. Supporters of the 2 Unitary City proposal emphasised neighbourhood committees and local representation, supporters of the 2 Unitary County proposal emphasised local decision-making and parish councils, and those who supported the 3 Unitary proposal emphasised neighbourhood partnerships, place-based working and stronger community involvement.

The themes identified by the AI tool were as follows:

Risks to local identity, representation, and effective local governance across diverse areas.

49. Respondents expressed the view that maintaining distinct local, rural, and community identities and effective representation is crucial, with concerns that larger or more centralised authorities could erode community character, reduce democratic accountability, and disconnect decision-making from residents. Respondents highlighted the importance of governance arrangements that reflect differing urban and rural needs with many expressing a preference for preserving autonomy for areas such as Rutland and Leicester City.

Preference for retaining existing structures or adopting smaller, localised governance models

50. There was a preference among many respondents for retaining current council arrangements or adopting alternative governance models that are smaller or more locally focused. These approaches were viewed as better reflecting local needs, identities, and community priorities, and as avoiding the disruption and risks associated with large-scale reorganisation or expansion.

Support for a three-unitary authority model as a balanced and locally representative option.

51. Those in favour of the three-unitary authority model viewed it as a balanced and practical approach that preserves local identity, supports effective governance, and minimises disruption. It is considered by some respondents to provide an appropriate level of local representation while maintaining manageable administrative structures.

Concerns about service delivery, infrastructure pressure, and disruption from reorganisation.

52. Many respondents expressed the view that reorganisation is likely to disrupt service delivery and reduce service quality, with additional concerns about potential increased costs, duplication, and pressure on infrastructure. Respondents highlight risks to accessibility of services, potential inefficiencies, and negative impacts on residents, especially during transition periods and for vulnerable groups.

Concerns regarding financial viability, efficiency, and lack of clear evidence for benefits.

53. There is some scepticism about whether reorganisation will deliver anticipated efficiencies or cost savings. Respondents question the economic and strategic justification for the expansion proposed by the City proposal, highlighting uncertainty over financial sustainability and whether the proposals would deliver tangible benefits.

Concerns about the expansion of Leicester City

54. Concerns are raised about Leicester City Council's capacity to manage an expanded authority, with respondents raising concerns about service delivery, fiscal management and efficiency.

Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses.

55. Most respondents who stated a preference favoured the 3 Unitary proposal, citing preservation of local identity and representation, though concerns were raised about delivery risks and complexity. The 2 Unitary County proposal was typically second most supported, with some support for stability and potential efficiencies, but concerns about scale and reduced local representation. The 2 Unitary City proposal was least preferred, facing significant opposition - particularly to boundary expansion - due to perceived impacts on identity, representation, service quality and costs, despite limited support for potential efficiencies.

Question 9: This proposal is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary changes. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal sets out a strong public services and financial sustainability justification for boundary change? This question and question 10 were asked in relation to proposal 1 - 2 Unitary City.

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Principal council -2 Unitary City	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Principal Council- 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

Strategic Authorities - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Education - 2 Unitary City	4	75%	0%	25%	0%
Other Public Sector - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Business Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies - 2 Unitary City	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees - 2 Unitary City	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees - 2 Unitary City	19	21%	63%	16%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Individual living in affected area - 2 Unitary City	5716	7%	89%	3%	1%
Individual living outside affected area - 2 Unitary City	105	15%	78%	5%	2%
Organisations - 2 Unitary City	69	20%	61%	16%	3%

Total Responses Question 9

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Total all responses - 2 Unitary City	5909	7%	88%	4%	1%

Question 10: If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 9.

<i>Respondent type</i>	<i>Total Named consultees</i>	<i>Total Individuals living in area</i>	<i>Total individuals not in area</i>	<i>Total Organisation</i>
Total all responses- 2 Unitary City	14	2194	37	38

We also received 316 responses by email and post. 9 were from named consultees, 259 were from individuals living in area, 36 were from individuals not in area or who did not specify their location, 12 were from organisations. A summary of the views shared in these responses is included within the summaries below.

Summary of Local Government Boundary Commission (The Commission) Response

56. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England provided observations on the evidence provided to support the boundary change request for the 2 Unitary City proposal, drawing on its Principal Area Boundary Review expertise. It considered the evidence in the bid documentation as it related to the identity and interests of local communities, and the promotion of effective and convenient local government. The Commission observed that, while some evidence was provided to support the proposal, it focussed on the strategic case for the expansion of Leicester, with the evidence to support the specific boundaries proposed less clearly articulated. It noted that the proposal would split several parishes, which would need to be addressed to ensure all parishes, whether under existing or revised boundaries, are in a single unitary area.

Summary of named consultee responses

Principal councils

57. Councils opposing the boundary change feel it would divide established parishes and historic communities, undermine rural identity, cohesion, and local representation while increasing urban-centric decision making. Many responses stress that boundary changes would reduce local representation and push decision-making further away, undermining responsiveness to rural and mixed communities, with some suggesting that housing, infrastructure,

and growth pressures can already be managed through existing partnerships and forthcoming Spatial Development strategies without boundary change.

Neighbouring councils

58. One neighbouring council responded and strongly disagreed with the boundary change proposal – stating that the proposal would result in the creation of very large authorities.

Health Bodies

59. One health body responded and didn't agree or disagree with the boundary change but flagged that it may cause disruption to key functions like trading standards and environmental health teams.

Other public sector

60. One police and fire body responded and somewhat disagreed with the boundary change, feeling it would benefit the City unitary in terms of population and finance but create a financial imbalance in the wider county.

Education Bodies

61. Six education bodies responded. Three somewhat or strongly supported the boundary change, feeling it would create greater economies of scale and improve local services. One neither agreed nor disagreed with the boundary change. Two did not offer a view on the boundary change.

Comments against the criteria

62. **For criterion 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government:**
Some respondents raised concerns over the proposed boundaries within the boundary change option – with concerns raised over deliverability, financial sustainability, and weak operational and financial planning. Some challenged the proposal's disaggregation costs and savings assumptions, with concerns about impacts on statutory services (including adult social care, children's services, SEND and emergency planning). Some felt the boundary change option would create a highly imbalanced structure with a very large Leicestershire and Rutland unitary alongside a much smaller Leicester City authority. However other respondents supported the 2 unitary City which included a boundary change on the basis that it would create more coherent unitary geographies, better reflect how people live, work and access services, address longstanding constraints associated with the current city boundary, and provide clearer urban and rural governance arrangements.
63. **For criterion 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity, and withstand financial shocks:**
Respondents raised questions around the methodology and assumptions used for the financial estimates regarding the potential benefits of the proposed boundary change. Supporters of the 2 Unitary City proposal believe it would create two unitary councils meeting the Government's population guideline, improve financial sustainability, reduce fragmentation and deliver efficiencies through projected savings.

64. **For criterion 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens:** Some respondents raised concerns over the boundary change option's ability to deliver services. Concerns were raised over the size and structure of the proposed unitaries, with suggestions that they would undermine effective service delivery and fail to reflect how communities' function. Some respondents pointed to the proposal underestimates integration and disaggregation costs, relies on unrealistic savings assumptions, and fails to address growing service demand. However, supporters of the 2 Unitary City proposal considered that aligning services within distinct urban and rural geographies would improve service coordination, reduce fragmentation and enable services to be designed more effectively around local needs
65. **For criterion 4: Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views:** Respondents raised concerns about the level of public opposition to the boundary change option. Those who expressed support for the 2 Unitary City proposal highlighted engagement findings which they considered demonstrated support for councils that better reflect travel-to-work patterns, shared local issues and how people access services.
66. **For criterion 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements:** Comments on boundary change did not relate to criterion 5.
67. **For criterion 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment:** Those who expressed support or views on 2 Unitary City proposal considered that neighbourhood governance arrangements, including area committees and parish councils, would support community engagement, local representation and neighbourhood empowerment following reorganisation. Comments on the other 2 proposals on boundary change did not relate to criterion 6.

The themes identified by the AI tool were as follows:

Impact on service delivery, particularly for rural and vulnerable groups

68. Concerns were expressed that boundary changes would reduce service quality, centralise provision, and fail to meet the needs of rural and vulnerable populations. A single authority over a mixed urban and rural area is seen as unable to respond effectively to differing needs of urban and rural communities.

Boundary changes prioritise the needs of the city

69. The proposal is perceived by many as prioritising the needs of the city, leading to concerns about fairness, impartiality and whether outcomes would reflect the interests of the wider area.

Concerns about evidence, justification and value for money

70. Some respondents expressed the view that the proposal lacks sufficient evidence, clear justification and robust assessment of risks. Concerns include that the model would not deliver improved services or financial sustainability. Respondents also highlight likely disruption, complexity and transition costs, raising doubts about overall value for money.

Preference for existing arrangements or alternative models

71. There is a preference among some respondents for retaining current boundaries and existing arrangements, with some suggesting that alternative governance models would better serve local needs and maintain stability.

Loss of local identity and democratic representation

72. Boundary changes are seen by some respondents as risking the erosion of local identity, autonomy and democratic representation, particularly for rural and village communities, with concerns about reduced local accountability.

Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses

73. Most respondents expressed concerns about boundary change and its potential impacts, particularly in relation to loss of community identity, reduced local representation and more centralised decision-making as well as doubts about whether the new boundaries reflect real local connections. Respondents also highlighted the complexity of splitting districts and reorganising services, including risks to delivery, costs and existing partnerships. Some respondents highlighted potential benefits of the proposed boundary changes, particularly where they were seen as addressing the city's constrained boundaries and better reflecting how people live, work and use services. Benefits identified included potential improvements in planning, service coordination and economies of scale, although these are often noted with caution. A small number express mixed or conditional views, and many do not take a clear position.