

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 Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool was opened on 5 February and closed on 26 March 2026. We received a total of 1,636 responses.
2. The five 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 1,636 responses received to the Government's consultation on the proposals for future unitary local government in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.
4. **The Government announced to Parliament on 16th July 2026 that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the four unitary proposal submitted by Chorley Borough Council, Lancaster City Council, Preston City Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council, South Ribble Borough Council and West Lancashire Borough Council. The new councils will comprise the current areas of:**
 - a. North Lancashire: Lancaster, Preston, Ribble Valley
 - b. South Lancashire: Chorley, South Ribble, West Lancashire
 - c. Pennine Lancashire: Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Rossendale
 - d. Fylde Coast: Blackpool, Fylde, Wyre
5. From here, this is referred to as the 4 unitary proposal.
6. **The consultation also invited views on the proposal submitted by:**
7. **Lancashire County Council proposed 2 unitary councils across the whole area of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool, comprising the areas of:**
 - a. North Lancashire: Blackpool, Fylde, Lancaster, Preston, Ribble Valley, Wyre
 - b. South Lancashire: Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Chorley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire.
8. From here, this is referred to as the 2 unitary proposal.
9. **Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Fylde Borough Council, Hyndburn Borough Council, Rossendale Borough Council and Wyre Borough Council proposed 3 unitary councils across the whole area of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool, comprising the areas of:**
 - a. Coastal Lancashire (North): Blackpool, Fylde, Lancaster, Wyre

- b. Central Lancashire (Central): Chorley, Preston, South Ribble, West Lancashire
 - c. Pennine Lancashire (East): Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley, Rossendale
- 10. From here, this is referred to as the 3 unitary proposal.
- 11. **Blackpool Council proposed 4 unitary councils across the whole area of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:**
 - a. Northern: Lancaster City, 8 wards from Wyre, 10 wards from Ribble Valley
 - b. Eastern: Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn, Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, 16 wards from Ribble Valley
 - c. Southern: West Lancashire, Chorley, South Ribble
 - d. Western: Blackpool, Fylde, Preston, 16 wards from Wyre
- 12. From here, this is referred to as the alternative 4 unitary proposal.
- 13. **Burnley Borough Council and Pendle Borough Council proposed 5 unitary councils across the whole area of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool, comprising the areas of:**
 - a. **East:** Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale
 - b. **Middle:** Ribble Valley, Hyndburn, Blackburn with Darwen
 - c. **North:** Lancaster, Wyre
 - d. **West:** Blackpool, Fylde, Preston
 - e. **South:** South Ribble, Chorley, West Lancashire
- 14. From here, this is referred to as the 5 unitary proposal.
- 15. 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.
- 16. 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.
- 17. This consultation relates to the structure of local government in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. These proposals relate to England only.

Methodology

18. 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'.
19. The list of named consultees is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).
20. 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.
21. 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](#).
22. Responses to the consultation were also received by email and letter.
23. 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 Ministry 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.
24. 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

25. 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.
26. 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) **Question3:** 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

27. There were 1,636 responses to this consultation, 34 from named consultees and 1,603 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.

Responses from named consultees

Named Consultee respondents	Number of Responses
Principal councils	14
Neighbouring councils	0
Strategic Authority	1
Health Bodies	1
Police and Fire	1
Education Bodies	5
Other Public Sector	5
Voluntary and Community Sector	5
Business Organisations	0
National Bodies	1
Other named consultees	1
Total named consultees	34

Reponses from other respondents

<i>Other respondents</i>	Number of Responses
Individuals living in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool	1503
Individuals not living in affected area or did not specify their location	42
Organisation	58
Total other respondents	1603
Total responses (Including named consultees)	1637

Summary of findings

28. Tables in this report included numbers rounded to the nearest whole number, and as such, not all cumulative scores will equal 100%.
29. Respondents were invited to respond to 7 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 agreed/agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, somewhat disagreed/disagreed, strongly disagreed, or did not know when responding to a statement.
30. For the purposes of this document we have classified positive responses as strongly agree, somewhat agree and negative responses as somewhat disagree and strongly disagree.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. 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.

34. 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	10116	15%	76%	7%	2%
3 unitary	9321	43%	48%	8%	1%
4 unitary	9319	45%	44%	10%	2%
Alternative 4 unitary	9905	19%	67%	11%	2%
5 unitary	9144	32%	56%	10%	2%

35. Overall, the responses demonstrate a marginal preference for the 4 unitary proposal. 45 % of respondents to the 4 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 44% of respondents provided negative responses. 12% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference in order is for 4 unitary, 3 unitary, 5 unitary, alternative 4 unitary, 2 unitary.

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	141	13%	70%	18%	0%
3 unitary	144	50%	17%	33%	0%
4 unitary	166	55%	27%	17%	0%
Alternative 4 unitary	175	10%	58%	31%	2%
5 Unitary	138	14%	61%	25%	0%

36. The responses from named consultees demonstrate a preference for the 4 unitary proposal. 55% of respondents to the 4 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 27% of respondents provided negative responses. 17% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference in order is for 4 unitary, 3 unitary, 5 unitary, 2 unitary, alternative 4 unitary.

Individuals living in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool

<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	9479	15%	76%	7%	2%

3 unitary	8688	42%	49%	7%	2%
4 unitary	8670	45%	44%	9%	2%
Alternative 4 unitary	9178	19%	68%	11%	2%
5 Unitary proposal	8517	33%	56%	9%	2%

37. The responses from individuals living in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool demonstrate a preference for the 4 unitary proposal, 45% of respondents to the 4 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 44% of respondents provided negative responses. 11% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference in order is for 4 unitary, 3 unitary, 5 unitary, alternative 4 unitary, 2 unitary.

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	265	9%	80%	9%	1%
3 unitary	265	49%	42%	8%	1%
4 unitary	252	49%	35%	15%	1%
Alternative 4 unitary	296	19%	70%	10%	1%
5 unitary	273	34%	57%	9%	0%

38. The responses from individuals living outside Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool demonstrate a preference for both the 3 unitary and the 4 unitary proposals. 49% of respondents to the both the 3 unitary proposal and the 4 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 42% of respondents to the 3 unitary proposal and 35% of respondents to the 4 unitary proposal provided negative responses. 9% for the 3 unitary proposal and 16% for the 4 unitary proposal were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference in order is for 3 unitary and the 4 unitary proposals equally, then 5 unitary, alternative 4 unitary, 2 unitary.

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	231	13%	71%	16%	0%
3 unitary	224	46%	36%	17%	1%
4 unitary	231	40%	44%	14%	2%
Alternative 4 unitary	256	16%	68%	15%	1%
5 unitary	216	25%	58%	15%	1%

39. The responses from organisations demonstrate a preference for the 3 unitary proposal. 46% of respondents to the 3 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 36% of respondents provided negative responses. 18% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference in order is for 3 unitary, 4 unitary, 5 unitary, alternative 4 unitary and 2 unitary.

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>
<i>Principal Councils 2 unitary</i>	10	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 3 unitary</i>	9	67%	11%	22%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 4 unitary</i>	11	55%	36%	9%	0%
<i>Principal Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 5 unitary</i>	9	11%	89%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 2 unitary</i>	0	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 3 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 5 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

3 unitary					
Strategic Authority 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 2 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 2 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 3 unitary	3	33%	33%	33%	0%
Education Bodies 4 unitary	4	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies	2	0%	50%	50%	0%

Alternative 4 unitary					
Education Bodies 5 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Other Public Sector 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 2 unitary	4	0%	75%	25%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 unitary	5	80%	0%	20%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector Alternative 4 unitary	5	0%	60%	40%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
Business Bodies 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>National Bodies 2 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 3 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 3 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 unitary	20	20%	65%	15%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 unitary	21	67%	10%	24%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	24	58%	29%	13%	0%
Total Named Consultees Alternative 4 unitary	22	9%	68%	23	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary	20	10%	75%	15%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

Respondent type/Proposal	No. of responses	Positive	Negative	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Don't know
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<i>Individual living in affected area 2 unitary</i>	1359	20%	76%	3%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 unitary</i>	1241	49%	46%	4%	0%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 unitary</i>	1240	50%	43%	6%	0%
<i>Individual living in affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1152	23%	68%	9%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	1219	38%	56%	6%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 unitary</i>	37	11%	86%	3%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 3 unitary</i>	38	55%	42%	3%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	36	64%	25%	11%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	37	27%	73%	0%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary</i>	39	44%	51%	5%	0%
<i>Organisations 2 unitary</i>	33	12%	76%	12%	0%
<i>Organisations 3 unitary</i>	32	50%	31%	19%	0%
<i>Organisation 4 unitary</i>	33	48%	42%	9%	0%
<i>Organisations Alternative 4 Unitary</i>	32	16%	72%	13%	0%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary</i>	31	23%	61%	16%	0%

Total Responses Question

Respondent type/Proposal	No. of responses	Positive	Negative	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Don't know
Total all responses 2 unitary	1449	20%	76%	4%	0%
Total all responses 3 unitary	1332	50%	45%	5%	0%
Total all responses 4 unitary	1333	51%	43%	7%	0%
Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary	1243	23%	68%	9%	1%
Total all responses 5 unitary	1309	37%	56%	6%	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

Respondent type/Proposal	No. of responses	Positive	Negative	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Don't know
Principal Councils 2 unitary	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
Principal Councils 3 unitary	9	56%	33%	11%	0%
Principal Councils 4 unitary	11	55%	36%	9%	0%
Principal Councils Alternative 4 unitary	10	10%	70%	10%	10%
Principal Councils 5 unitary	9	11%	89%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Alternative 4 unitary					
Neighbouring Councils 5 unitary	0	0%	100%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 2 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

Education Bodies 2 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 3 unitary	3	33%	33%	33%	0%
Education Bodies 4 unitary	4	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 5 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Other Public Sector 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 2 unitary	4	0%	75%	25%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 unitary	5	80%	0%	20%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector Alternative 4 unitary	5	0%	60%	40%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
Business Bodies 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Business Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies proposal 5 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 2 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 3 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 3 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 unitary	20	10%	70%	20%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 unitary	20	55%	25%	20%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	24	54%	33%	13%	0%
Total Named Consultees Alternative 4 unitary	22	9%	64%	23%	5%
Total Named Consultees	20	10%	70%	20%	0%

5 Unitary					
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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>
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 unitary</i>	1354	16%	76%	7%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 unitary</i>	1242	44%	48%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 unitary</i>	1239	46%	44%	9%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1148	20%	66%	11%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	1219	33%	57%	8%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 unitary</i>	38	11%	79%	11%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 3 unitary</i>	38	53%	37%	11%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	36	50%	28%	22%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	37	24%	62%	14%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary</i>	39	31%	59%	10%	0%
<i>Organisations 2 unitary</i>	33	9%	73%	18%	0%
<i>Organisations 3 unitary</i>	32	50%	34%	16%	0%
<i>Organisation 4 unitary</i>	33	39%	48%	12%	0%

<i>Organisations Alternative 4 unitary</i>	32	19%	63%	19%	0%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary</i>	31	29%	58%	13%	0%

Total Responses Question

<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>
<i>Total all responses 2 unitary</i>	1445	15%	76%	8%	1%
<i>Total all responses 3 unitary</i>	1332	45%	47%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses 4 unitary</i>	1332	46%	43%	9%	1%
<i>Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1239	20%	66%	12%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary</i>	1309	33%	57%	8%	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>
<i>Principal Councils 2 unitary</i>	10	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 3 unitary</i>	9	44%	11%	44%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 4 unitary</i>	10	60%	40%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	10	10%	80%	10%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 5 unitary</i>	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Neighbouring Councils 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 2 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Education Bodies 2 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 3 unitary	3	33%	33%	33%	0%
Education Bodies 4 unitary	4	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 5 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Other Public Sector 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 2 unitary	4	0%	75%	25%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 unitary	4	75%	0%	25%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector	5	20%	60%	20%	0%

Alternative 4 unitary					
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary	5	0%	80%	20%	0%
Business Bodies 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
National Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
National Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
National Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
National Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 2 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other named consultees 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Named consultees 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 unitary	20	20	65%	15%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 unitary	20	45%	15%	40%	0%

Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	23	57%	35%	9%	0%
Total Named Consultees Alternative 4 unitary	22	18%	59	23%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary	21	5%	65%	15%	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>
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 unitary</i>	1352	18%	74%	7%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 unitary</i>	1241	45%	47%	7%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 unitary</i>	1239	45%	46%	8%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1148	21%	66%	8%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	1217	31%	60%	8%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 unitary</i>	38	11%	79%	11%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 3 unitary</i>	38	55%	42%	3%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	36	44%	39%	17%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	37	22%	68%	8%	3%

<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> <i>5 unitary</i>	39	28%	64%	8%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> <i>2 unitary</i>	33	18%	76%	6%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> <i>3 unitary</i>	32	47%	41%	13%	0%
<i>Organisation</i> <i>4 unitary</i>	33	45%	42%	12%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> <i>Alternative 4 unitary</i>	32	16%	69%	16%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> <i>5 unitary</i>	31	23%	68%	10%	0%

Total Responses Question

<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>
<i>Total all responses</i> <i>2 unitary</i>	1443	18%	74%	7%	2%
<i>Total all responses</i> <i>3 unitary</i>	1331	45%	46%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses</i> <i>4 unitary</i>	1331	45%	46%	8%	1%
<i>Total all responses</i> <i>Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1239	21%	66%	11%	2%
<i>Total all responses</i> <i>5 unitary</i>	1308	30%	61%	8%	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>
<i>Principal Councils</i> <i>2 unitary</i>	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils</i> <i>3 unitary</i>	9	44%	33%	22%	0%

Principal Councils 4 unitary	11	55%	36%	9%	0%
Principal Councils Alternative 4 unitary	10	10%	80%	10%	0%
Principal Councils 5 unitary	9	11%	89%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Cou ncils 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Neighbouring Councils 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority Proposal 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strategic Authority 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 5 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

2 unitary					
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 2 unitary	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 3 unitary	3	33%	0%	67%	0%
Education Bodies 4 unitary	4	75%	0%	25%	0%
Education Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 5 unitary	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 2 unitary	4	0%	75%	25%	0%

Voluntary and Community Sector 3 unitary	4	75%	0%	25%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector Alternative 4 unitary	5	20%	60%	40%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
Business Bodies 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 2 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other named consultees 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

Alternative 4 unitary					
Other Named consultees 5 unitary	1	0%	100	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 unitary	20	10%	70%	20%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 unitary	20	45%	20%	35%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	24	50%	33%	17%	0%
Total Named Consultees Alternative 4 unitary	22	9%	64%	27%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary	20	15%	65%	20%	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	1352	15%	76%	7%	2%
Individual living in affected area 3 unitary	1241	41%	48%	9%	2%
Individual living in affected area 4 unitary	1237	43%	44%	11%	2%
Individual living in affected area Alternative 4 unitary	1145	19%	67%	11%	2%
Individual living in affected area 5 unitary	1217	32%	56%	10%	2%
Individual living outside affected area 2 unitary	38	11%	79%	8%	3%
Individual living outside affected area 3 unitary	38	47%	42%	11%	0%

Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary	36	50%	36%	14%	0%
Individual living outside affected area Alternative 4 unitary	37	19%	57%	22%	3%
Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary	39	28%	56%	15%	0%
Organisations 2 unitary	33	18%	70%	12%	0%
Organisations 3 unitary	32	47%	38%	16%	0%
Organisation 4 unitary	33	42%	42%	15%	0%
Organisations Alternative 4 unitary	32	19%	66%	16%	0%
Organisations 5 unitary	31	32%	58%	10%	0%

Total Responses Question

<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	1445	10%	81%	7%	2%
Total all responses 3 unitary	1331	36%	52%	10%	2%
Total all responses 4 unitary	1330	41%	47%	9%	2%
Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary	1240	15%	71%	12%	3%
Total all responses 5 Unitary	1302	31%	56%	11%	2%

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>
<i>Principal Councils 2 unitary</i>	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 3 unitary</i>	10	40%	20%	40%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 4 unitary</i>	11	64%	18%	18%	0%
<i>Principal Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	10	10%	80%	10%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 5 unitary</i>	8	13%	50%	38%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 3 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 5 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 3 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 5 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 3 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Health Bodies</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

Alternative 4 unitary					
Health Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary (Chorley)	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 2 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 3 unitary	3	33%	0%	67%	0%
Education Bodies 4 unitary	4	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 5 unitary	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

Other Public Sector 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 2 unitary	4	0%	75%	25%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 unitary	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary	5	20%	40%	40%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector Alternative 4 unitary (Blackpool)	5	0%	40%	60%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary	5	0%	40%	60%	0%
Business Bodies 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 2 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees 3 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Other named consultees	1	100%	0%	0%	0%

4 unitary					
Other Named consultees Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other Named consultees 5 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 unitary	20	10%	70%	20%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 unitary	21	33%	24%	43%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	24	54%	21%	25%	0%
Total Named Consultees Alternative 4 unitary	22	5%	59%	36%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary	19	5%	42%	53%	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	1354	10%	82%	6%	2%
Individual living in affected area 3 unitary	1241	36%	53%	9%	2%
Individual living in affected area 4 unitary	1237	41%	48%	9%	2%
Individual living in affected area Alternative 4 unitary	1149	15%	71%	11%	3%
Individual living in affected area 5 unitary	1213	32%	56%	10%	2%
Individual living outside affected area 2 unitary	38	5%	87%	8%	0%

Individual living outside affected area 3 unitary	37	38%	54%	8%	0%
Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary	36	42%	47%	8%	3%
Individual living outside affected area Alternative 4 unitary	37	14%	81%	5%	0%
Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary	39	31%	59%	10%	0%
Organisations 2 unitary	33	3%	70%	24%	3%
Organisations 3 unitary	32	41%	34%	22%	3%
Organisations 4 unitary	33	30%	45%	18%	6%
Organisations Alternative 4 unitary	32	9%	72%	16%	3%
Organisations 5 unitary	31	23%	52%	19%	6%

Total Responses Question

<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	1445	10%	81%	7%	2%
Total all responses 3 unitary	1331	36%	52%	10%	2%
Total all responses 4 unitary	1330	41%	47%	9%	2%
Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary	1240	15%	71%	12%	3%
Organisations 5 unitary	1302	31%	56%	11%	2%

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>
<i>Principal Councils 2 unitary</i>	10	10%	90%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 3 unitary</i>	9	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 4 unitary</i>	11	64%	18%	18%	0%
<i>Principal Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	10	10%	40%	50%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 5 unitary</i>	8	13%	75%	13%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 3 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 5 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 3 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 5 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

Health Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 4 unitary (Chorley)	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 2 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 3 unitary	3	67%	0%	33%	0%
Education Bodies 4 unitary	4	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 5 unitary	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
Other Public Sector 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Other Public Sector Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 2 unitary	4	0%	75%	25%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 unitary	4	25%	25%	50%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary	5	20%	40%	40%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector Alternative 4 unitary	5	0%	40%	40%	20%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary	5	0%	60%	40%	0%
Business Bodies 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
National Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
National Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
National Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
National Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Other named consultees 2 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

<i>Other named consultees 3 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 unitary	20	10%	70%	20%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 unitary	20	65%	5%	30%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	24	54%	17%	29%	0%
Total Named Consultees Alternative 4 unitary	22	9%	32%	55%	5%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary	19	11%	53%	37%	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>
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 unitary</i>	1353	17%	66%	12%	5%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 unitary</i>	1241	41%	45%	11%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 unitary</i>	1239	41%	42%	13%	4%
<i>Individual living in affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1146	19%	63%	14%	5%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	1214	28%	55%	13%	4%

Individual living outside affected area 2 unitary	38	13%	63%	18%	5%
Individual living outside affected area 3 unitary	38	53%	32%	11%	5%
Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary	36	26%	59%	13%	3%
Individual living outside affected area Alternative 4 unitary	37	14%	68%	14%	5%
Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary	39	26%	59%	13%	3%
Organisations 2 unitary	33	18%	52%	30%	0%
Organisations 3 unitary	32	44%	34%	19%	3%
Organisation 4 unitary	33	39%	36%	18%	6%
Organisations Alternative 4 unitary	32	16%	66%	19%	0%
Organisations 5 unitary	30	20%	60%	20%	0%

Total Responses Question

<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	1444	17%	66%	12%	5%
Total all responses 3 unitary	1331	42%	44%	11%	3%
Total all responses 4 unitary	1332	41%	41%	14%	4%
Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary	1237	18%	62%	15%	5%

<i>Total all responses 5 unitary</i>	1302	27%	55%	14%	3%
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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>
<i>Principal Councils 2 unitary</i>	14	10%	90%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 3 unitary</i>	14	40%	20%	40%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 4 unitary</i>	14	70%	20%	10%	0%
<i>Principal Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	14	20%	70%	10%	0%
<i>Principal Councils 5 unitary</i>	14	50%	38%	13%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 3 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils 5 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 3 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

Strategic Authority 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 3 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Health Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Health Bodies 5 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 unitary	1	0%	0%	100	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 3 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Education Bodies 2 unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 3 unitary	3	67%	0%	33%	0%
Education Bodies 4 unitary	4	100%	0%	0%	0%
Education Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
Education Bodies 5 unitary	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
Other Public Sector 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

3 unitary					
Other Public Sector 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector Alternative 4 unitary	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Other Public Sector 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 2 unitary	5	0%	80%	20%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 3 unitary	5	20%	40%	40%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary	5	20%	40%	40%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector Alternative 4 unitary	3	0%	0%	100%	0%
Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary	5	40%	40%	20%	0%
Business Bodies 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 3 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business Bodies 5 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 2 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 3 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies Alternative 4 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
National Bodies 5 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Other named consultees 2 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 3 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 unitary	21	10%	76%	14%	0%
Total Named Consultees 3 unitary	22	41%	23%	36%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	23	61%	22%	17%	0%
Total Named Consultees Alternative 4 unitary	20	15%	50%	35%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary	19	42%	32%	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>
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 unitary</i>	1355	11%	82%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 3 unitary</i>	1241	39%	54%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 unitary</i>	1239	46%	44%	9%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1147	20%	68%	11%	2%

<i>Individual living in affected area</i> 5 unitary	1218	37%	52%	10%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 2 unitary	38	5%	87%	8%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 3 unitary	38	42%	47%	11%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 4 unitary	36	53%	39%	8%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> Alternative 4 unitary	37	22%	70%	8%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> 5 unitary	39	49%	49%	3%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> 2 unitary	33	9%	79%	12%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> 3 unitary	32	44%	38%	19%	0%
<i>Organisation</i> 4 unitary	33	36%	52%	12%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> Alternative 4 unitary	32	22%	66%	13%	0%
<i>Organisations</i> 5 unitary	31	29%	52%	16%	3%

Total Responses Question

<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>
<i>Total all responses</i> 2 unitary	1477	11%	82%	6%	1%
<i>Total all responses</i> 3 unitary	1333	39%	53%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses</i> 4 unitary	1331	46%	44%	9%	1%

<i>Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1236	20%	67%	11%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary</i>	1307	37%	52%	10%	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>
<i>Total all responses 2 unitary</i>	18	857	23	27
<i>Total all responses 3 unitary</i>	19	742	22	31
<i>Total all responses 4 unitary</i>	20	710	21	29
<i>Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary</i>	18	638	19	27
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary</i>	18	709	24	28

40. We also received 73 responses by email and post. 16 were from named consultees, 33 were from individuals living in area, 1 was from an individual not in area or who did not specify their location, 13 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

41. Responses from principal councils supported the proposals that they put forward. Some councils noted a second preference.

Neighbouring Principal Councils

42. There were no responses to the consultation from neighbouring councils.

Strategic Authorities

43. Feedback received highlighted a neutral position.

Health Bodies

44. Health partners did not express a preference for a specific proposal. Their responses highlighted that each of the proposed unitary authority configurations would bring different opportunities and challenges.

Other Public Sector

45. Responses from other public sector bodies did not show support for any specific proposal but questioned the level of supporting evidence for the 4 unitary (Blackpool) boundary change. Their responses also highlighted the importance of town and parish councils as the community tier of local government.

Education Bodies

46. Five responses were received with one supporting the 4 unitary (Blackpool) proposal. Four did not express a preference.

Voluntary and Community Sector

47. Five responses were received with two showing a preference for the 3 Unitary proposal, both put forward the view that it offers the most sensible geographical options in terms of business and labour market connectivity and functioning economic areas. Other responses questioned the boundary change aspect of the alternative 4 unitary proposal, that the proposal splits existing districts, creating disjointed and unwieldy infrastructure support, with no clear natural linkages.

Business Bodies

48. We did not receive responses from these named consultees.

Comments against the criteria

49. **For criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.**
Concerns were raised that the 2 unitary proposal is too large to stay connected to communities and offers limited financial benefit. There were concerns that the 3 unitary proposal creates uneven areas. Concerns were raised that the 4 unitary proposal exacerbates financial issues and reduces coordination across the county. Concerns were raised that the alternative 4 unitary proposal risks disrupting partnerships and may not deliver expected efficiencies. Concerns were also raised that the 5 unitary proposal is lacking the scale and resources needed for long-term sustainability

50. **For criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.** There were concerns that the 2 unitary proposal may not deliver efficiencies due to scale. Concerns were also raised that the 3 unitary could misalign economic areas and complicate governance for devolution. Concerns were raised that the 4 unitary proposal risked service continuity and coordination. Concerns were raised that the alternative 4 unitary proposal may weaken local identity and increase complexity and costs. Concerns were also raised that the 5 unitary proposal was too small overly fragmented and would lack financial resilience.
51. **For criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.** Concerns were raised that the 2 unitary proposal could disrupt service continuity, as it may lead to losing current leadership and expertise and create capacity issues across two large areas. Concerns were raised that the 3-unitary proposal was seen to combine areas with different needs, cultures, and economies, which could weaken governance and community cohesion. Concerns were raised that the 4 unitary proposal may struggle to provide consistent and sustainable services, especially where councils are smaller or face different levels of need. Concerns were raised that the alternative 4 unitary proposal adds complexity and will affect service delivery, system integration, and partnerships during the transition. Concerns were also raised that the 5 unitary proposal risks fragmentation, higher costs, loss of economies of scale, and councils being too small to be financially sustainable or effective.
52. **For criteria 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.** Concerns were raised that the 2 unitary proposal did not reflect local needs, it was viewed as politically driven, lacking transparency and proper public consultation. There were also concerns that both the 3 unitary and 4 unitary proposals lacked clear reasoning, openness, and meaningful engagement with residents, while the alternative 4 unitary option could weaken local identity, split communities, and reduce accountability, especially in rural areas.
53. **For criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.** Concerns were raised that the 2 unitary proposal could concentrate influence and reduce balance within devolution arrangements. Concerns also highlighted that the 3 unitary proposal could weaken local identity, reduce representation and accountability, and centralise decision-making. There were also concerns that the alternative 4 unitary proposal could add complexity through boundary changes and delay effective devolution. Concerns were also raised that the 5 unitary proposal could reduce capacity, making it harder to deliver effective devolution at scale.
54. **For criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.** There were concerns that the 2 unitary proposal could weaken community engagement and local accountability, making decisions feel distant from residents. There were also concerns raised that the 3 unitary proposal may struggle to engage consistently across different communities. There were

also concerns that the 4 unitary proposal may not reflect local identities where areas have little in common. Concerns were raised that the alternative 4 unitary proposal could weaken community identity and connections due to the proposed boundary changes. Concerns were also raised that the 5 unitary proposal lacked the capacity to support strong local involvement.

The themes identified by the AI tool were as follows:

55. **Loss of local identity & representation.** Concerns were raised that creating larger unitary councils could weaken local identity and reduce democratic representation, making councils feel more remote and less responsive to the needs of different communities, especially true for smaller towns, rural areas and more deprived places. A preference was shown for smaller, more locally focused councils, which were seen as better able to represent communities, protect local identity, and stay closely connected and accountable to residents.
56. **Boundaries & misalignment with communities.** Concerns were raised that the new proposed unitaries do not reflect real communities or natural links between areas. Additional concerns were raised about splitting or merging places in ways that ignore local identities, economies, and service connections. It was highlighted that this will lead to unclear groupings and could result in a fragmented and less effective services, meaning councils will struggle to plan and deliver in a joined-up way. Responses expressed that boundaries should follow genuine geographical, economic, and community ties, and better align with existing public services such as the NHS, police, and local partnerships to improve coordination, representation, and the outcomes for residents.
57. **Financial risks & unfair resource distribution.** Concerns were raised that reorganisation could increase financial risks and lead to unfair distribution of resources. Respondents raised doubts that proposals could deliver the proposed savings or be affordable to implement. There were also concerns that larger councils may prioritise bigger or wealthier areas leaving rural, coastal, smaller or more deprived communities with less funding and poorer services. Further concerns were raised that the changes could worsen existing funding gaps, create imbalance between areas, and add financial pressure during the transition, which could result in inefficiencies, service disruption, and an unequal spread of resources across communities.
58. **Scepticism about efficiency and service improvements.** There were concerns that reorganisation will not deliver the promised efficiencies or service improvements, with respondents highlighting that smaller councils will not be financially viable and could lead to fragmented, less effective services. Concerns were also raised that the changes could add unnecessary complexity, increase bureaucracy, and make decision-making more confusing and costly for residents and businesses. Responses suggested a lack of confidence that savings will be achieved, with many expecting higher costs, disruption during transition, and no clear evidence that services will improve.
59. **Preference for alternative models or maintaining current structures.** Concerns were raised with all proposals, with many respondents expressing a preference for the status quo of alternative approaches. Concerns were raised

that the proposed changes did not best reflect local needs or provide effective governance, with some suggesting keeping the current system or moving to smaller or differently configured councils to better preserve local knowledge, identity, and responsiveness.

Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses

60. Emailed and paper responses included views on the importance of maintaining strong local identity and keeping decision-making close to communities. There were concerns that larger authorities, particularly under the 2 unitary proposal, could feel too remote, and there was a need to balance scale with local responsiveness, with smaller structures seen as improving accountability but potentially creating financial or service fragmentation risks. Respondents also emphasised the need for coherent geographies aligned to economic and travel-to-work areas, raising concerns about splitting communities. Respondents highlighted potential impacts on service delivery (including health, education and social care), alongside issues of transition, capacity, consistency, maintaining specialist expertise, effective partnership working, and safeguarding existing programmes - overall reflecting mixed views with no consistent preference in terms of proposal.

Question 9: One 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 the alternative 4 unitary 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>
<i>Principal Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	11	9%	73%	18%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Councils Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%

<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Education Bodies Alternative 4 unitary</i>	2	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector Alternative 4 unitary</i>	5	0%	40%	40%	20%
<i>Business Bodies Alternative 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees Alternative 4 unitary	23	4%	65%	26%	4%

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>
<i>Individual living in affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1143	15%	72%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area Alternative 4 unitary</i>	37	14%	78%	8%	0%
<i>Organisations</i>	32	13%	72%	13%	3%

<i>Alternative 4 unitary</i>					
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Total Responses Q9

<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>
<i>Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary</i>	1235	15%	72%	10%	3%

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

<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>
<i>Total all responses Alternative 4 unitary</i>	13	477	12	24

61. We also received 73 responses by email and post. 16 were from named consultees, 33 were from individuals living in area, 1 was from an individual not in area or who did not specify their location, 13 were from organisations. A summary of the views relevant to this questions shared in these responses is included within the summaries below.

Summary of Local Government Boundary Commission (The Commission) Response

62. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England provided observations on the evidence provided to support the boundary change request within the alternative 4 unitary option, 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 efforts had been made to support the proposals in a general sense, there was little detail to support the specific boundary changes that were put forwarded. It queried the extent to which to which parishes / residents in the Ribble Valley and Wyre areas had been consulted on the proposals.

Summary of named consultee responses

Principal Councils

63. Principal councils supported those proposals that they had put forward. Responses show that the majority of principal councils feel that boundary

change in this case is not justified, that it will increase costs, and the risk and complexity outweigh the claimed benefits put forward in this option.

Neighbouring Principal Councils

64. There were no responses to the consultation from neighbouring councils.

Health Bodies

65. Four responses were received from Health Bodies. Only one specifically mentioned boundary change, stating it did not appear to have sufficient evidence presented to justify its need.

Other public sector

66. Five responses were received though only one response put forward a view on boundary change. Response highlighted a lack of evidence to support boundary change, and that the proposal put forward no justification as to why it would be a better option for the area.

Education Bodies

67. One of the four responses received put forward a view on boundary change stating changes to existing boundaries were not strongly justified, that it would create additional cost and complexity and could delay the realisation of the benefits of reorganisation. The other three did not mention boundary change in their response.

Comments against the criteria

68. **For criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.** Concerns raised by respondents included that boundary change would cause fragmentation, that it would introduce artificial and irrational geographies that do not reflect existing community, economic or civil society connections. Concerns were also raised in relation to meeting the criterion, that it would split existing district councils and fracture community identity. Further concerns highlighted the potential additional administrative complexity and increased risk of public confusion over accountability for local services.
69. **For criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.** Concerns were raised about the financial sustainability, with respondents questioning the proposed benefit of boundary change with the increased costs of putting it in place.
70. **For criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.** Concerns were raised that boundary changes would disrupt established service arrangements, create greater complexity and reduce local knowledge without clear evidence of improved outcomes. There were concerns about transition costs, duplication

and workforce pressures, while the lack of detailed local analysis limits confidence in the proposed resources and distribution of services. Concerns were also raised that the proposed authorities would have limited experience of delivering key unitary services, such as adult social care and SEND, potentially making it a weak option for service delivery and long-term sustainability.

- 71. **For criteria 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.** Concerns were raised about boundary change eroding local identity and reducing local representation. An additional concern was that some areas may be given less investment and attention than others.
- 72. **For criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.** Comments on boundary change did not relate to criterion 5.
- 73. **For criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.** Comments on boundary change did not relate to criterion 6.

The themes identified by the AI tool were as follows:

- 74. **Insufficient evidence for boundary changes.** Concerns raised included that the proposal lacked clear, compelling, and evidence-based justification for altering boundaries. There were also concerns about potential disruption, increased complexity, and costs outweighing unproven benefits to public services or financial sustainability.
- 75. **Objections to specific mergers or groupings.** Objections were raised by some respondents around merging or splitting certain councils or districts. There were further concerns about creating large administrative areas, that they would not meet diverse local needs or ensure effective accountability.
- 76. **Preference for status quo or alternatives.** Some respondents wished to maintain the current arrangements or adopt alternative boundary options to those put forward. They felt alternatives were better at serving communities and would improve public services more than the proposed changes suggested.
- 77. **Support for logical, community-focused boundaries.** Some respondents highlighted that boundary changes can be supported if they are based on logical geography, community needs, natural or economic ties, and financial resilience. Concern were raised that this option was based on arbitrary, outdated lines.
- 78. **Boundary changes threaten community identity.** Concerns were raised that altering boundaries risked undermining established community identities, weakening local ties, reducing accountability, and diminishing representation, especially in rural and smaller communities.

Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses

79. Respondents who commented on boundary change expressed mixed views. Some supported greater alignment to local communities whilst others were concerned about dividing established districts. Key issues raised included the impact of boundary change on community identity, local representation, accountability and service delivery. Many respondents favoured retaining existing district boundaries to reduce complexity and disruption, while some supported targeted boundary revisions where these better reflected economic links, travel patterns or service footprints. Concerns were also raised about combining rural and urban areas with differing needs, increasing travel distances, reducing accessibility to decision makers, and weakening local voice. Some respondents considered that boundary changes could improve service alignment, economic development and representation of shared interests if local identities and neighbourhood engagement were protected. Overall, respondents identified both potential benefits and risks, and views on boundary change were often conditional on the specific geography proposed.