

County Council
Thursday, 20th March, 2025

AGENDA

6. Questions from Members of the Council (Pages 1 - 2)

Answers to questions from Members of the Council pursuant to Standing Order 17 noting that Standing Order 17(2) highlights the requirement for questions to be related to the matter being discussed at the meeting.



QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Thursday 20 March 2025

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WHITTON

Re: Involvement of Boundary Commission for proposed unitary authority

Can the Leader explain his understanding of whether or not the boundary commission would be involved if the geography for a proposed Unitary Authority area was based on ward boundaries instead of District boundaries?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

My understanding from the current legislation and guidance is that any proposed change in boundaries would require the boundary commission to consider such proposals and follow the normal statutory process. Furthermore this point is not clear and we have sought further guidance from Ministers. The Chief Executive in an e-mailed communication to MHCLG on 7 March (copied to all Group Leaders) sought clarity on this matter and has not yet received a reply.

2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ADAMS

Re: Wording in report on Local Government Reorganisation

On page 32 of the DCC report paragraph 2.5 it states: "The Government has indicated that unitary councils should ideally serve a population of at least 500,000 to ensure viability." The letter from the Minister clearly states: "For most areas this will mean creating councils of 500,000 or more. However, there may be exceptions to ensure the new structures make sense for any area, including on devolution." Can you explain why you have changed the wording from the minister and especially why you have included "at least" in the wording of the DCC report?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

We have provided the original guidance and full text in appendix 1, which can be found at page 15 of the report. In the interim plan at 2.5 the guidance has been para phrased and we have not repeated governments own guidance and provided a summary.

Agenda Item 6.