

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

Introduction

1. A statutory consultation on proposals for unitary local government in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton was opened on 19 November 2025 and closed on 11 January 2026. We received a total of 5,163 responses.
2. The 4 proposals being consulted on were made by councils and submitted to the government on 26 September 2025.
3. This document provides a summary of the 5,163 responses received to the government's consultation on the proposals for future unitary local government in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

The government announced to Parliament in March 2026 that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the 5 unitary option 1A submitted by Eastleigh Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, Hart District Council, Havant Borough Council, Portsmouth City Council, Rushmoor Borough Council and Southampton City Council.

4. The consultation invited views on the proposals submitted by:
5. **Hampshire County Council & East Hampshire District Council proposed 4 unitary councils across the whole of the area of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton comprising the current areas of:**
 - **Mid North:** Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire, Hart, Rushmoor, Winchester.
 - **West:** Eastleigh, New Forest, Southampton, Test Valley.
 - **South East:** Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth.
 - **Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight to remain unchanged.

From here this is referred to as the 4 unitary option.

6. **Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, New Forest District Council and Test Valley Borough Council proposed 5 unitary councils across the whole of the area of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton comprising the current areas of:**
 - **North:** Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor.
 - **Mid:** East Hampshire, New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester.
 - **South East:** Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth.
 - **South West:** Eastleigh, Southampton.
 - **Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight to remain unchanged.

From here this is referred to as the 5 unitary option 1.

7. **Eastleigh Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, Hart District Council, Havant Borough Council, Portsmouth City Council, Rushmoor Borough Council and Southampton City Council proposed 5 unitary councils across the whole of the area of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. This includes a request to split existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the areas of:**
- **North:** Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor (North).
 - **Mid:** East Hampshire, New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester, (less 11 parishes from all four areas).
 - **South East:** Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth, (plus 3 parishes of East Hampshire and 1 parish of Winchester).
 - **South West:** Eastleigh, Southampton (plus 4 parishes from New Forest and 3 parishes from Test Valley).
 - **Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight to remain unchanged.

From here this is referred to as the 5 unitary option 1A.

8. **Winchester City Council proposed 5 unitary councils across the whole of the area of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. These would comprise the current areas of:**
- **North:** Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor.
 - **Mid:** East Hampshire, Test Valley, Winchester.
 - **South East:** Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth.
 - **South West:** Eastleigh, New Forest, Southampton.
 - **Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight to remain unchanged.

From here this is referred to as the 5 unitary option 2.

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.

The criteria by which proposals for local government reorganisation have been assessed are set out in the letter of invitation, sent to councils in the area on 5 February 2025. The consultation asked questions relating to the criteria for each of the above proposals.

9. This consultation relates to the structure of local government in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. These proposals relate to England only.

Methodology

10. 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'.

11. The list of [named consultees](#) is available on gov.uk.

In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (the department) 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.

The department 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.

12. Responses to the consultation were also received by email and letter.

The department 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 department staff.

To evaluate Consult's performance, human reviewers independently checked the theme assignments Consult had produced, and these were compared against Consult's original outputs using an F1 score—a standard measure that penalises both over- and under-assignment of themes. Consult's theme mappings were broadly consistent with the human reviewers' assessments.

Consultation Questions

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.

13. The questions were as follows:

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

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?

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?

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

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area are in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support?

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements, for example, the establishment of a strategic authority?

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Question 9: If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1–8, 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.

Question 10: 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?

Question 11: If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 10.

Summary of responses

There were 5,163 responses to this consultation, 47 from named consultees and 5,116 from other respondents. Seven respondents sent in replies relevant to all six invitation areas. 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	13
Neighbouring councils	4

Health Bodies	7
Police and Fire	2
Education Bodies	2
Other Public Sector	4
Voluntary and Community Sector	7
Business Organisations	3
National Bodies	3
Other named consultees	2
Total named consultees	47

Responses from other respondents

Other respondents	Number of responses
Individuals living in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton	4742
Individuals not living in the affected area	219
Organisations	155
Total other respondents	5116
Total responses (including named consultees)	5163

Summary of findings

Tables in this report include numbers rounded to the nearest whole number; as such, not all cumulative scores will equal 100%.

Respondents were invited to respond to 9 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.

For the purposes of this document, we have classified positive responses as strongly agree, somewhat agreed or agreed, and negative responses as somewhat disagree or disagree, and strongly disagree.

The tables below take the average response across the 9 multiple choice questions to provide an overall view of whether proposals were viewed positively or negatively.

- For the purposes of the tables in this report, where a joint response from multiple named consultees was received this has been recorded as a separate response from each named consultee who was represented.

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>
<i>4 unitary</i>	33740	17%	72%	9%	3%
<i>5 unitary option 1</i>	34298	63%	25%	9%	2%
<i>5 unitary Option 1A</i>	34404	28%	59%	10%	3%
<i>5 unitary Option 2</i>	29551	32%	54%	11%	3%

Overall, the responses demonstrate a preference for 5 unitary option 1. 63% of respondents to 5 unitary option 1 provided positive responses to the questions and 25% of respondents provided negative responses. 11% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The order of preference was for 5 unitary option 1, 5 unitary option 2, 5 unitary option 1A, and the 4 unitary option.

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>
<i>4 unitary</i>	222	30%	51%	18%	0%
<i>5 unitary Option 1</i>	203	47%	24%	29%	0%
<i>5 unitary Option 1A</i>	237	59%	19%	21%	0%
<i>5 unitary Option 2</i>	187	38%	28%	34%	1%

The responses from named consultees demonstrate a preference for 5 unitary option 1A. 59% of respondents to 5 unitary option 1A provided positive responses to the questions and 19% of respondents provided negative responses. 21% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The order of preference was for 5 unitary option 1A, 5 unitary option 1, 5 unitary option 2, and the 4 unitary option.

Individuals living in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>4 unitary</i>	31295	17%	72%	9%	3%
<i>5 unitary Option 1</i>	31573	63%	26%	9%	3%
<i>5 unitary Option 1A</i>	31914	27%	59%	10%	3%
<i>5 unitary Option 2</i>	27362	32%	54%	11%	3%

Responses from individuals living in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton demonstrate a preference for 5 unitary option 1. 63% of respondents to 5 unitary option 1 provided positive responses to the questions and 26% of respondents provided negative responses. 12% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The order of preference was for 5 unitary option 1, 5 unitary option 2, 5 unitary option 1A, and the 4 unitary option.

Individuals living outside 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>
<i>4 unitary</i>	1351	17%	73%	7%	3%
<i>5 unitary Option 1</i>	1553	66%	27%	6%	1%
<i>5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1379	23%	65%	11%	1%
<i>5 unitary Option 2</i>	1215	24%	63%	11%	2%

The responses from individuals living outside Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton demonstrate a preference for 5 unitary option 1. 66% of respondents to 5 unitary option 1 provided positive responses to the questions and 27% of respondents provided negative responses. 7% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The order of preference was for 5 unitary option 1; 5 unitary option 2 and 5 unitary option 1A performed similarly; and the 4 unitary option.

Organisations

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>4 unitary</i>	872	18%	71%	9%	2%
<i>5 unitary Option 1</i>	969	67%	21%	10%	2%
<i>5 unitary Option 1A</i>	874	33%	53%	10%	4%
<i>5 unitary Option 2</i>	787	41%	45%	12%	2%

Responses from organisations demonstrate a preference for 5 unitary option 1. 67% of respondents to 5 unitary option 1 provided positive responses to the questions and 21% of respondents provided negative responses. 12% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. The order of preference was for 5 unitary option 1, 5 unitary option 2, 5 unitary option 1A, and the 4 unitary option.

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 Authority 4 unitary</i>	12	17%	83%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	9	56%	33%	11%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	73%	27%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	9	44%	33%	22%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority 4 unitary</i>	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3	67%	0%	33%	0%

<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3	67%	33%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3	67%	0%	33%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 4 unitary</i>	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	7	43%	57%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	6	83%	17%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	5	40%	60%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total named consultees 4 unitary	28	29%	57%	14%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 1	26	50%	27%	23%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 1A	27	67%	19%	15%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 2	24	46%	25%	29%	0%

Individuals and organisations (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>Individuals living in affected area 4 unitary</i>	3922	23%	73%	4%	1%
<i>Individuals living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3961	70%	25%	4%	1%
<i>Individuals living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3559	34%	59%	6%	1%

<i>Individuals living in affected area 5 unitary option 2</i>	3433	38%	54%	7%	1%
<i>Individuals living outside the affected area 4 unitary</i>	171	20%	75%	4%	1%
<i>Individuals living outside the affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	195	72%	26%	2%	0%
<i>Individuals living outside the affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	155	29%	62%	8%	1%
<i>Individuals living outside the affected area 5 unitary Option 2</i>	153	29%	65%	6%	1%
<i>Organisations 4 unitary</i>	110	21%	72%	6%	1%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	128	71%	22%	5%	2%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary option 1A</i>	100	41%	54%	3%	2%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	101	47%	47%	6%	1%

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>
<i>Total all responses 4 unitary</i>	4231	23%	73%	4%	1%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	4310	70%	25%	4%	1%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3841	34%	58%	6%	1%

<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3711	38%	54%	7%	1%
---	------	-----	-----	----	----

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>
<i>Principal Authority 4 unitary</i>	12	17%	83%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	9	56%	33%	11%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	73%	27%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	9	44%	33%	22%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 4 unitary</i>	4	75%	0%	25%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 4 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary</i>	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	7	43%	43%	14%	0%

<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	6	83%	17%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	5	40%	60%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 5 unitary option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 5 unitary option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 5 unitary option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

Total named consultees 4 unitary	28	32%	46%	21%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 1	25	48%	24%	28%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 1A	26	62%	23%	15%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 2	23	43%	26%	30%	0%

Individuals and organisations (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>Individuals living in the affected area 4 unitary</i>	3915	18%	72%	7%	3%
<i>Individuals living in the affected area 5 unitary option 1</i>	3950	65%	25%	8%	2%
<i>Individuals living in the affected area 5 unitary option 1A</i>	3554	30%	59%	9%	2%
<i>Individuals living in the affected area 5 unitary option 2</i>	3424	33%	54%	10%	3%
<i>Individuals living outside the affected area 4 unitary</i>	168	19%	74%	6%	1%
<i>Individuals living outside the affected area 5 unitary option 1</i>	194	69%	28%	3%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected</i>	153	27%	64%	8%	0%

<i>area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>					
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 2</i>	152	26%	61%	11%	1%
<i>Organisations 4 unitary</i>	109	23%	70%	6%	2%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	119	66%	22%	10%	2%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary option 1A</i>	96	36%	48%	13%	3%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	98	43%	43%	12%	2%

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>
<i>Total all responses 4 unitary</i>	4220	18%	72%	7%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	4288	66%	25%	8%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3829	30%	59%	9%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3697	34%	54%	10%	2%

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 Authority 4 unitary</i>	12	17%	83%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	9	56%	33%	11%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	73%	27%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	9	44%	33%	22%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 4 unitary</i>	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3	33%	0%	67%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3	33%	33%	33%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3	67%	0%	33%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 4 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	7	43%	57%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	6	83%	0%	17%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 5 unitary option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>Business organisations 5 unitary option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business organisations 5 unitary option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total named consultees 4 unitary	28	29%	54%	18%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 1	26	38%	27%	35%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 1A	27	59%	15%	26%	0%
Total named consultees 5 unitary option 2	24	33%	29%	38%	0%

Individuals and organisations (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 4 unitary</i>	3912	19%	69%	9%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3943	64%	26%	8%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3544	29%	57%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	3420	34%	53%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	169	18%	69%	10%	4%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	194	65%	28%	7%	0%
<i>Individuals living outside the affected area 5 unitary option 1A</i>	154	22%	66%	12%	1%
<i>Individuals living outside the affected area 5 unitary option 2</i>	152	24%	64%	10%	2%
<i>Organisations 4 unitary</i>	109	20%	70%	9%	1%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	124	66%	22%	10%	2%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary option 1A</i>	96	34%	54%	9%	2%

<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	98	41%	45%	13%	1%
---	----	-----	-----	-----	----

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>
<i>Total all responses 4 unitary</i>	4218	19%	68%	10%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	4287	64%	26%	8%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3821	29%	57%	10%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3694	34%	53%	11%	3%

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 Authority 4 unitary</i>	12	17%	83%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	9	44%	44%	11%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	64%	36%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	9	44%	44%	11%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 4 unitary</i>	4	100%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 4 unitary</i>	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%

<i>Other Public Sector 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary</i>	5	0%	60%	40%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	7	43%	43%	14%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	6	83%	17%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	28	25%	50%	25%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1	25	36%	28%	36%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1A	26	50%	23%	27%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 2	23	30%	35%	35%	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 4 unitary</i>	3914	16%	72%	9%	4%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3949	60%	26%	11%	3%

<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3551	26%	59%	11%	4%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	3421	29%	54%	13%	4%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	168	15%	73%	8%	4%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	194	61%	29%	8%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	154	21%	64%	14%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 2</i>	152	21%	64%	13%	3%
<i>Organisations 4 unitary</i>	108	18%	71%	8%	3%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	117	65%	20%	13%	3%
<i>Organisation 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	95	31%	53%	13%	4%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	97	40%	44%	13%	2%

Total Responses Question 4

<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 4 unitary</i>	4218	16%	72%	9%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	4285	60%	26%	11%	3%

Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A	3826	26%	59%	11%	4%
Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2	3693	29%	54%	13%	4%

Question 5: 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</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 Authority 4 unitary</i>	12	17%	83%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	9	56%	33%	11%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	73%	27%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	9	44%	33%	22%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 4 unitary</i>	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 4 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary</i>	5	20%	60%	20%	0%

<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	7	57%	43%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	6	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	28	32%	50%	18%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1	25	44%	24%	32%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1A	26	62%	15%	23%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 2	23	35%	26%	39%	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 4 unitary</i>	3914	15%	72%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3946	60%	26%	11%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3545	27%	58%	12%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	3418	31%	54%	11%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	169	16%	76%	7%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	194	65%	27%	7%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected</i>	153	25%	62%	12%	1%

<i>area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>					
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 2</i>	152	24%	63%	11%	3%
<i>Organisations 4 unitary</i>	111	14%	73%	11%	2%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	124	69%	19%	11%	2%
<i>Organisation 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	98	34%	51%	12%	3%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	100	40%	42%	16%	2%

Total Responses Question 5

<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 4 unitary</i>	4222	15%	72%	10%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	4289	61%	26%	11%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3822	27%	58%	12%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3693	31%	54%	12%	3%

Question 6: 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 Authority 4 unitary</i>	12	17%	83%	0%	0%

<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	9	56%	33%	11%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	73%	27%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	9	56%	33%	11%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 4 unitary</i>	3	67%	0%	0%	33%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	0%	0%	50%	50%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	0%	50%	0%	50%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	0%	0%	50%	50%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Education Bodies 4 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary</i>	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	7	57%	43%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	6	83%	17%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	27	30%	48%	19%	4%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1	25	48%	24%	24%	4%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1A	26	58%	19%	19%	4%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 2	23	35%	30%	30%	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 4 unitary</i>	3912	14%	77%	7%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3944	61%	27%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3542	26%	62%	10%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	3416	29%	57%	11%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	169	16%	76%	6%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	194	68%	26%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	153	24%	67%	8%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 2</i>	152	21%	65%	12%	2%
<i>Organisations 4 unitary</i>	110	14%	76%	6%	4%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	120	65%	23%	9%	3%
<i>Organisation 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	97	27%	58%	11%	4%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	99	36%	51%	9%	4%

Total Responses Question 6

<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 4 unitary</i>	4218	14%	76%	7%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	4283	61%	26%	10%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3818	26%	62%	10%	3%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3690	29%	57%	11%	3%

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements, for example, the establishment of a strategic authority?

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 Authority 4 unitary</i>	12	17%	83%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	9	56%	33%	11%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	73%	27%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	9	44%	33%	22%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 4 unitary</i>	3	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	50%	0%	0%

<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 4 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary</i>	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	7	43%	43%	14%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	6	83%	0%	17%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	27	33%	48%	19%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1	25	48%	24%	28%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1A	26	65%	15%	19%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 2	23	39%	26%	35%	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 4 unitary</i>	3904	18%	62%	15%	6%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3938	58%	23%	14%	5%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3541	27%	54%	14%	5%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	3412	30%	49%	16%	5%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	169	20%	64%	9%	6%

<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	194	63%	25%	9%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	153	22%	61%	12%	4%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 2</i>	151	24%	58%	13%	5%
<i>Organisations 4 unitary</i>	107	20%	64%	15%	2%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	115	68%	19%	11%	2%
<i>Organisation 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	95	35%	45%	15%	5%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	97	40%	39%	19%	2%

Total Responses Question 7

<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 4 unitary</i>	4207	18%	62%	15%	5%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	4272	59%	23%	14%	5%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3815	27%	54%	14%	5%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3683	30%	49%	16%	5%

Question 8: 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 Authority 4 unitary</i>	12	17%	83%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	9	67%	22%	11%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	73%	27%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	9	44%	33%	22%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 4 unitary</i>	4	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3	67%	0%	33%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3	67%	33%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3	67%	0%	33%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 4 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 4 unitary</i>	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 4 unitary</i>	5	20%	80%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1</i>	7	71%	29%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	6	83%	17%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 2</i>	5	20%	60%	20%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 4 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Named consultees 5 unitary Option 2</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total Named Consultees 4 unitary	28	29%	57%	14%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1	26	62%	15%	23%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1A	27	67%	19%	15%	0%

Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 2	24	42%	25%	33%	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>
<i>Individual living in affected area 4 unitary</i>	3902	14%	77%	7%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	3942	61%	27%	9%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3541	27%	61%	10%	2%
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary</i>	3418	32%	56%	10%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 4 unitary</i>	168	15%	76%	8%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1</i>	194	65%	28%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	152	23%	64%	12%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 2</i>	151	22%	64%	13%	1%
<i>Organisations 4 unitary</i>	108	15%	76%	7%	2%

<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1</i>	122	68%	20%	8%	3%
<i>Organisation 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	95	33%	54%	8%	5%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 2</i>	97	40%	46%	11%	2%

Total Responses Question 8

<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 4 unitary</i>	4206	14%	77%	7%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	4284	62%	27%	9%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3815	27%	61%	10%	2%
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2</i>	3690	32%	56%	11%	2%

Question 9: If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-8 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 4 unitary</i>	25	2306	82	81
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1</i>	19	2196	91	98
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	22	1892	72	66
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 2</i>	16	1745	68	77

Summary of named consultee responses

15. Principal Councils

Principal authorities who submitted proposals reiterated the arguments set out within their proposals, with some highlighting that they would support any of the 5 unitary proposals but not the 4, and others noting general opposition to reorganisation. Some councils who did not submit a proposal did not respond to the consultation.

16. Neighbouring principal councils

80% (4 out of 5) neighbouring authorities identified the 4 unitary proposal as the strongest due to resilience/sustainability, limited disaggregation and that it was geographically credible. Concerns were raised by one respondent that the proposed in the 4 unitary option would be too large. Respondents in this group highlighted that the 5 unitary proposal (option 1A) was overly complex and costly.

17. Health Bodies

NHS and public health partners responses did not favour any proposal. They emphasised the importance of maintaining and strengthening relationships with councils at all levels and that moving to unitary authorities across the region could support more seamless collaboration. They noted risks that more partners could blur accountability or duplicate effort.

18. Other public sector

Responses from police and fire bodies cautioned that both very large geographies and unnecessary splits can complicate local tasking unless offset by robust neighbourhood structures.

Other public sector bodies, including national parks, were either neutral or strongly supportive of 5 unitary option 1. They noted that subsidiarity and resourced localism should be built into any new models.

19. Education Bodies

Respondents either preferred 5 unitary option 1A or took a neutral stance highlighting the importance of ongoing relationships. They noted it was important that councils understood local labour markets and joined-up transport and planning to support educational establishments.

20. Voluntary and Community Sector

Representative groups from the voluntary and community sector were wary of scale. They stressed their desire that reorganisation strengthen co-production, that community capacity during transition is protected and early-help models are locked in.

21. Business Bodies

Business organisations who were named consultees views were mixed with respondents noting that the 4 unitary proposal will reduce fragmentation supporting

business, while others that the 5 unitary option 1A would best support devolution and therefore growth.

Comments against the criteria.

22. **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 4 unitary proposal did not reflect functional economic areas, and that it combined urban areas with rural areas to the detriment of both. Respondents generally thought that 5 unitary option 1 and 5 unitary option 2 better reflected travel to work areas and local economies. Views were mixed on 5 unitary option 1A with concerns raised that the boundary change would split communities and economic areas; and contrasting views that existing boundaries are outdated and need changing to support growth and reflect functional economic areas.
23. **For criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks:** Concerns were raised that the 4 unitary proposal created 'mega' councils that were over the government's 500,000 size guiding principle, too big to enable coherent governance/respond to resident's needs. Supporters of the 5 unitary proposals argued that they were a better size, enabling stronger and more focused decision making. Supporters of the 5 unitary options felt that they would support the current economic centres and best placed for growth. Those who supported the 4 unitary proposal did so based on a sustainable tax base and greater savings that may improve capacity.
24. **For criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens:** Those who supported the 4 unitary proposal noted that it would build from existing unitaries and limit disaggregation, arguing the 5 unitary proposals would be unsound and result in unnecessarily risky disaggregation. Those who supported 5 unitary option 1 and 5 unitary option 2 highlighted that the community-aligned approach means they are better positioned to deliver sustainable services. Those who supported 5 unitary option 1A noted that this would best support growth and so be best in the long term, but raised concerns about complexity and disruption risks to services due to the boundary change modification request.
25. **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 meaningful local engagement on the 4 unitary proposal. It was also noted that the 5 unitary proposals had more local support.
26. **For criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements:** Responses were mixed, with respondents commenting that all proposals would support devolution.

27. **For criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment:** Supporters of the 4 unitary option noted that this proposal would build on existing Neighbourhood Governance. Supporters of the 5 unitary proposals had concerns about mixing rural and urban geographies and undermining community identity. Supporters of the 5 unitary option 1A felt that their community approach was better aligned for success.

The themes identified by the AI tool were as follows:

28. **Impact on Rural Areas:** Concerns were raised about the impracticality and adverse effects of mixing rural and urban areas, specifically that urban areas are unsuitable to manage rural areas due to limited knowledge and representation. Additional concerns were raised about the loss of rural and small market town voices at the strategic level. On a similar note, fears that urban-dominated decision making would be inefficient, and overlook environmental protection issues/ the unique nature, heritage, and lifestyle choices of rural areas like the New Forest.
29. **Support for Maintaining New Forest Autonomy:** There was a strong preference for the New Forest to remain independent and not be grouped with other councils, especially urban areas due to differing needs, demographics, priorities, and the potential for negative impacts on the New Forest.
30. **Geographical Split Does Not Make Sense/ reflect local communities:** There were concerns that the proposal does not reflect how local communities function in practice or the areas with which residents identify. Respondents highlighted that changes to council boundaries could disrupt established school catchment areas, potentially forcing families to move home, with knock-on effects for house prices. It was also noted that bringing together areas with differing political views and local priorities could lead to misunderstandings and tensions, undermining effective local representation and community cohesion.
31. **Financial Stability and Efficiencies of New Unitaries:** Concerns were raised about the increased costs and overall financial viability of the proposed councils, including fears relating to inherited debt, long-term financial sustainability, and whether projected savings would be achievable. Some respondents expressed anxiety that these financial pressures could ultimately lead to serious instability or even financial failure. In addition, it was suggested that merging councils could create conflict, increase bureaucracy, and complicate governance arrangements, with potential consequences including reduced service quality and job losses.
32. **New Councils Too Large:** There was scepticism about whether larger councils would deliver improved services, with concerns that scale could lead to inefficiency, higher costs, and lower service quality, alongside reduced accessibility for the public. Respondents also warned that creating a geographically large authority could encourage centralisation, weaken local

representation, and dilute the effectiveness of local government, increasing the perceived distance between residents and decision-makers and those delivering services.

Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses

33. Responses emphasised keeping coherent places whole and avoiding rural-urban bolt-ons. Respondents also flagged concerns about creating “mega-unitaries” alongside the potential transition complexity and financial risk. Many comments favoured four balanced mainland unitaries with the Isle of Wight unchanged as “close enough to be local” while still resilient.

Question 10: 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 11 were asked in relation to the Eastleigh 5 unitary 1A proposal

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>
<i>Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	11	8	73%	27%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	5	60%	20%	20%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>National Bodies 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total Named Consultees 5 unitary Option 1A	26	42%	27%	31%	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>
<i>Individual living in affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3537	22%	64%	11%	4%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	152	17%	72%	9%	2%
<i>Organisations 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	102	25%	62%	10%	3%

Total Responses Question 10

<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 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	3817	22%	64%	11%	4%

Question 11: If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 10

<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>
<i>Total all responses 5 unitary Option 1A</i>	19	2554	111	98

Summary of Local Government Boundary Commission (The Commission) Response

34. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England provided observations on the evidence provided to support the boundary change request within 5 unitary option 1A, drawing on its Principal Area Boundary Review expertise. It noted the claims of strong economic, social and transport links supporting the proposed South West and South East unitary boundaries, though it considered that the evidence contained in the proposal varied in depth.

Summary of named consultee responses

Principal councils

35. Views from principal councils in relation to boundary change differed. Some viewed proposed boundary change as splitting communities and economic areas with the added complexity risking disruption risks to service delivery. Others claimed that the existing boundaries are outdated, and that boundaries need to change to enable growth and reflect functional economic areas.

Neighbouring Councils

36. Responses from neighbouring councils stressed practicality and service resilience. Most favoured the 4 unitary proposal as geographically credible and less disruptive because it limits disaggregation, while cautioning that the 5 unitary option 1A would add complexity and cost by splitting coherent districts and importing legal/financial risk. One view noted the potential drawback that a 4 unitary footprint could be too large, but the shared emphasis was on maintaining coherent places and avoiding unnecessary boundary change.

Health

37. Health organisations tended not to back a specific proposal but emphasised the need for coterminous footprints with ICB/ICP arrangements, preservation of integrated care pathways, and avoidance of new interfaces that could blur accountability or duplicate effort.

Police and Fire

38. Police and fire responses noted that unnecessary splits can complicate local tasking unless offset by robust neighbourhood structures.

Education

39. Education stakeholders were neutral on proposal but were clear that any boundary change should be evidence-led and only proceed where it strengthens functional economic areas, ensures predictable planning, and keeps councils close to local labour markets with joined-up transport.

Other public sector

40. Other public bodies with statutory environmental roles emphasise keeping coherent rural geographies whole, warning that detaching “waterside” or landscape-linked areas could undermine stewardship, planning coherence and rural economies.

Voluntary and Community Sector

41. The voluntary and community sector was split on boundary changes depending on whether these fix or fragment community networks.

Business

42. Responses from business bodies noted that boundary change was only valuable where benefits clearly outweigh transition cost and complexity.

Comments against the criteria

43. **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:** Broadly responses were more positive about 5 unitary options than the 4 unitary proposal; neighbouring authorities tended to value geographic credibility and lower disruption, warning that boundary changes risk splitting coherent places and raising cost and complexity.
44. **For criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks:** Preference for mid-sized, place-aligned councils seen as big enough for resilience but close enough to place; the four unitary option was frequently criticised as creating over-large “mega-unitaries.”
45. **For criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens:** The five unitary proposals were generally viewed as better positioned to sustain services. Supporters of the four unitary proposal cited the benefits of less disaggregation, while others cautioned that boundary changes add transition and interface risks that could disrupt services unless tightly managed.
46. **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:** Feedback indicated closer alignment to local identity under five unitary configurations, with concerns that very large footprints would dilute local voice. Questions were also raised about meaningful local engagement under the four unitary proposal.
47. **For criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements:** Generally, responses were more positive about the five unitary proposals for enabling devolution though all proposals were viewed as

supportive of devolution. There was a consistent ask from service providers for co-terminosity, clear accountability and minimal new interfaces.

48. **For criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment:** Support was contingent on subsidiarity: clear neighbourhood structures from day one, with caution that mixing distinct rural/urban areas without local platforms could weaken community identity; some saw the five unitary proposals as better set up to empower places.

Themes identified by the AI tool were as follows:

49. **Impact on rural areas:** Strong concerns about mixing rural and urban areas, potential loss of rural voice and focus on environmental stewardship; this was the most frequently raised theme (e.g., ~41% of answers for the 4 unitary proposal and ~43% for 5 unitary option 2 vs ~35% for the other proposals).
50. **Keep the New Forest whole:** Recurrent calls to avoid splitting the New Forest; this was strongest under 5 unitary option 2 (~24%), ~16% under 5 unitary option 1 and 5 unitary option 1A, and 16% under the 4 unitary option.
51. **Geographies don't reflect communities:** Worries that some maps cut across lived geographies (schools, housing markets, travel-to-work areas); theme levels were ~15–16% across the five unitary options and ~20% under the 4 unitary option.
52. **Financial stability and efficiencies:** Concerns about whether new authorities would deliver the savings claimed citing the risks from inherited debt, and the balance between transition costs and ongoing resilience (ranked among the top concerns across options).
53. **New councils too large:** Scepticism about very large footprints leading to centralisation and weaker accessibility; ~21% of answers flagged this under the 4 unitary proposal vs ~13% under 5 unitary option 1A and 5 unitary option 2.
54. **Opposition to boundary changes:** 27% of non-named consultee respondents highlighted opposition to boundary changes as a concern. Responses noted that boundary changes would increase costs, cause disruption, harm rural areas, and lead to a loss of local identity. Comments were received suggesting boundary changes were driven by political goals and ideological bias; that 5 unitary option 1A lacks clear evidence of better outcomes and would introduce complexity, higher costs, service disruption, and existing boundaries should be preserved to avoid unnecessary change and confusion.
55. **Support for boundary changes:** 7% of respondents highlighted support for boundary changes. Responses noted that boundary changes could deliver efficiencies in transport and services, protect rural areas, and better align with community needs. Boundary change was viewed in these responses as logical in terms of geography, demographics, and economic similarities, creating a more financially resilient council and better organising areas around real economic and

geographic connections. These views suggested that current boundaries are outdated and require updates to reflect urban growth and development.

Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses

56. Predominantly opposed to parish transfers and city expansion, citing loss of identity, disruption to school catchments, and extra cost/complexity; opposition was especially strong around the New Forest. A smaller cohort supported tightly targeted fixes where clear functional anomalies exist (e.g., aligning to travel-to-work patterns around Portsmouth and Southampton).