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Date: 14th October 2025

Dear Cllr Matthews

Subject: Letter of Support for 'Your Lincolnshire', Lincolnshire County Council's Local Government Reorganisation Proposal.

As the Executive Director of Children's Services in Lincolnshire, I am writing to express my full support for 'Your Lincolnshire', the proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) model that seeks to maintain the integrity and unity of Lincolnshire as a single, cohesive area.

I am proud to lead an outstanding Children's Services, across the entire county of Lincolnshire, delivering universal, targeted and specialist services and support to our children, young people and their families.

From a leadership perspective, splitting Lincolnshire into multiple authorities could result in several Directors of Children's Services (DCS) or interim appointments, diluting statutory accountability and weakening leadership at a time when safeguarding needs are high. Inconsistent leadership approaches between new authorities may hinder the development and enforcement of coherent safeguarding strategies, undermining efforts to protect children from harm.

In addition to the above, the transitional period could create workforce instability, leading to staff shortages, loss of experienced professionals, and disruption to training and development programmes. These factors impair the ability of safeguarding teams to respond promptly and effectively to cases of abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding thresholds and child protection arrangements may vary significantly across new authorities, leading to inconsistent decision-making. A child at risk in one area might not

receive the same intervention in another, risking vulnerable children being left exposed and reducing public confidence in the system.

In Lincolnshire we have a long history of strong and robust partnership working. Disaggregation could disrupt established working relationships, complicate information sharing, and hinder joint decision-making among agencies (local authorities, health, police, education, voluntary sector). Any fragmentation risks delaying crucial investigations and interventions, which are often time-sensitive and essential to preventing harm.

The disaggregation of Children's Services threatens the consistent and equitable delivery of education services, including school improvement, admissions, and SEND provision. There is a risk of inefficiencies, inconsistent intervention strategies, and gaps in provision, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are especially vulnerable during reorganisation. Ensuring continuity in Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) and aligned support services requires seamless coordination. Fragmentation risks delays in assessments and support provision, with long-term negative consequences for these children.

In Lincolnshire we are excited at the prospect of a unitary authority and the opportunities that brings for our children, young people and their families. A unitary authority enables integrated working across housing, education, health, and social care, which will further improve the joined-up approach that is essential for supporting our children in care, ensuring coordinated multi-agency responses and reducing fragmentation and duplication.

I strongly believe that breaking up Lincolnshire's unified structure would introduce multiple risks to children's services, including leadership dilution, inconsistent protection standards, disrupted partnerships, workforce instability, and particular dangers for children with complex needs and those requiring SEND support. The recommendation is to maintain a unified authority to uphold high safeguarding standards and effective multi-agency collaboration.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further information or wish to discuss our support in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Sandy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather Sandy
Executive Director of Children's Services