

Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Joel - Chair

Councillor Batool
Councillor Kitterick
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Waddington

Councillor Dave
Councillor March
Councillor Rae Bhatia
Councillor Zaman

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166. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

167. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to disclose any pecuniary or other interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

Nothing was declared.

168. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION FOR LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND

A report was submitted on the progress of the Council's Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) submission, for consideration of the OSC Commission. Noting this was an evolving process, a presentation was given by the City Mayor, as attached.

Feedback from the meeting would be considered when shaping the final proposed submission, due to be reported to Full Council for a decision on Wednesday 20th November. The final submission being required to be made to Government by 28th November 2025.

Key points raised in addition to the presentation were as follows:

- Questions regarding the £46m annual savings figure for the council's preferred proposal and how this is derived from

efficiencies. The removal of a layer of government was noted alongside efficiencies achieved through organisational and service redesign.

- Concerns were expressed over the level of public opposition to city expansion and the challenge of bringing people on board with the new proposed councils. It was noted this was a common issue with reorganisation which will need to be addressed through the transition process.
- Questions were asked regarding the base proposal and how the districts were chosen. The Government's required legal process was explained. The base proposal was described as the best fit to build the preferred proposal on but had significant drawbacks.
- It was noted that a significant proportion of land suitable for housing delivery was currently beyond the city boundaries.
- Travel patterns were discussed, noting that whilst people move in and out of the city the dominant movement was to city facilities. It was noted that people recognised the different issues facing urban and rural areas and travel patterns within them.
- Clarity was requested on the City Mayor role under the proposals. It was noted that Government rules require a return to a cabinet and leader model as part of local government reorganisation.
- It was noted that the delineation of the current city boundaries was irregular and that the preferred option would provide a more coherent arrangement.
- Questions were raised about the role and establishment of a strategic authority. It was noted that LGR and devolution are separate processes and that the council will have the opportunity to influence devolution when proposals are sought by Government at a future stage. There has been general agreement across all councils that a Mayoral Strategic Authority is the preferred devolution model on the LLR footprint.
- Commission members noted that central government had established the pathway for LGR.
- It was noted that extending the boundary would create a new authority.
- The timetable for LGR was noted and that the final submission will be circulated for consideration at Full Council on 20th November.

AGREED:

- That progress on the council's proposal be noted.
- That member comments be noted.
- For the Commission to note that a report with the draft proposals would be circulated for consideration at Full Council on 20th November.
- For the Commission to note that the final proposal would be submitted to Government by the deadline of 28th November.

Cllr Dave arrived during the consideration of this item.

Local Government Reorganisation

Special OSC

10th November 2025

Minute Item 168

Invitation to all LLR councils to submit proposals for the whole area

Proposals should have regard to criteria including

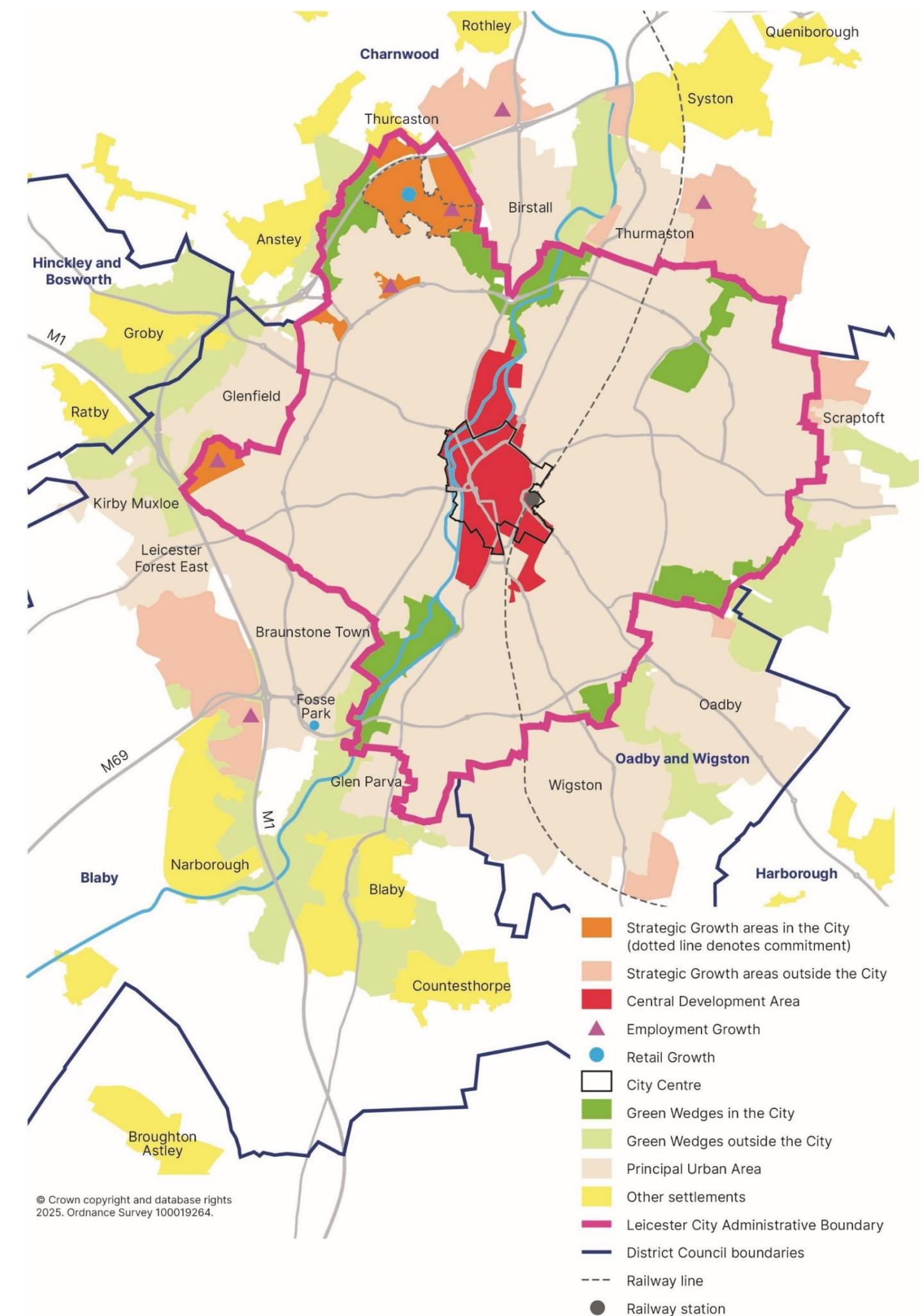
- **Deliver single tier local government**
- **Unitary population of 500,000 +**
- **Sensible geography**
- **Sensible economic areas**
- **Improvement to local services**
- **Efficiency savings**
- **Support for devolution**

What the Government asked for

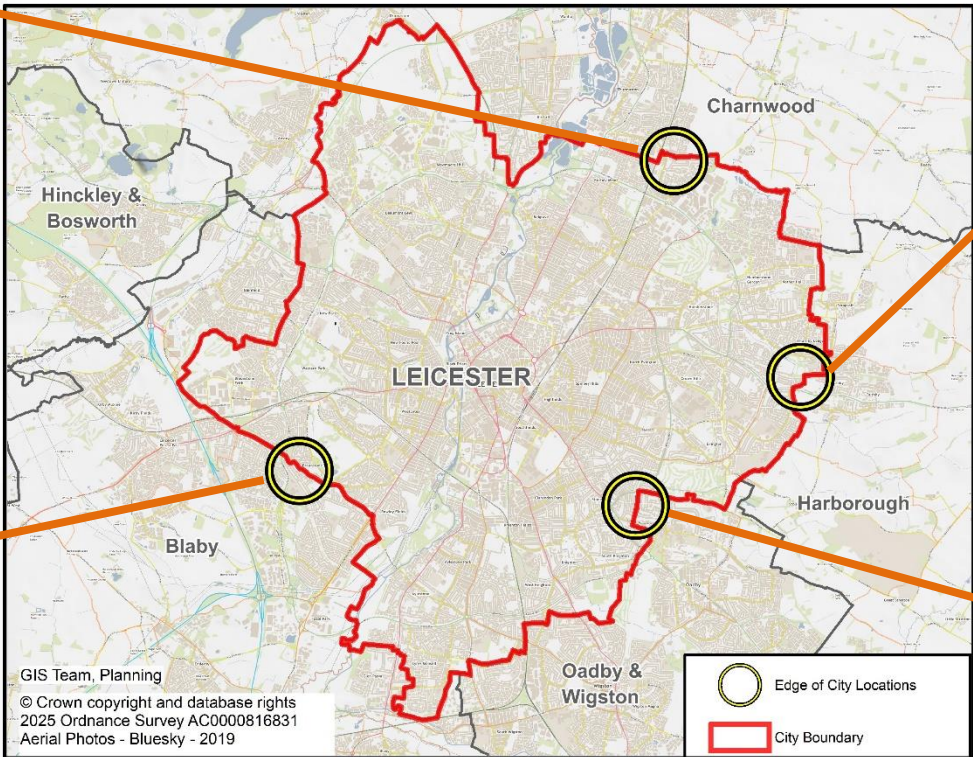
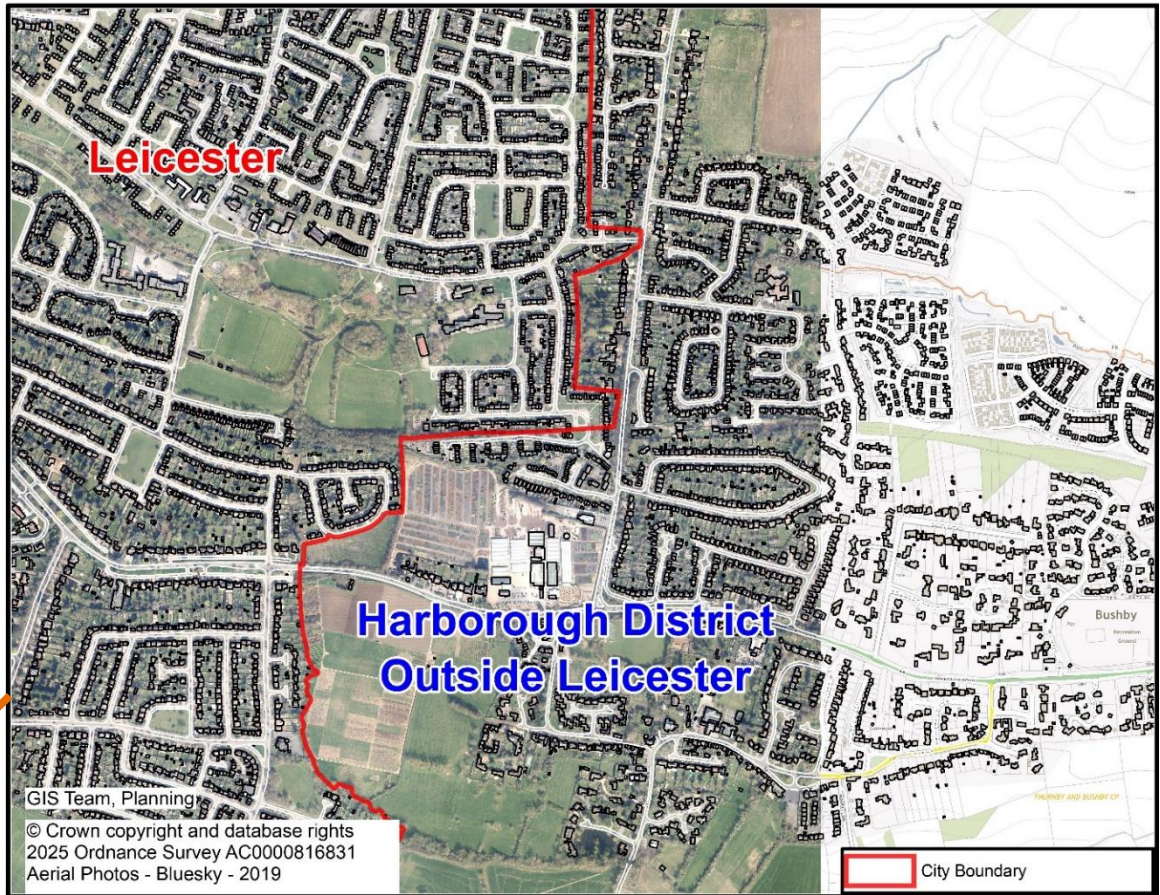
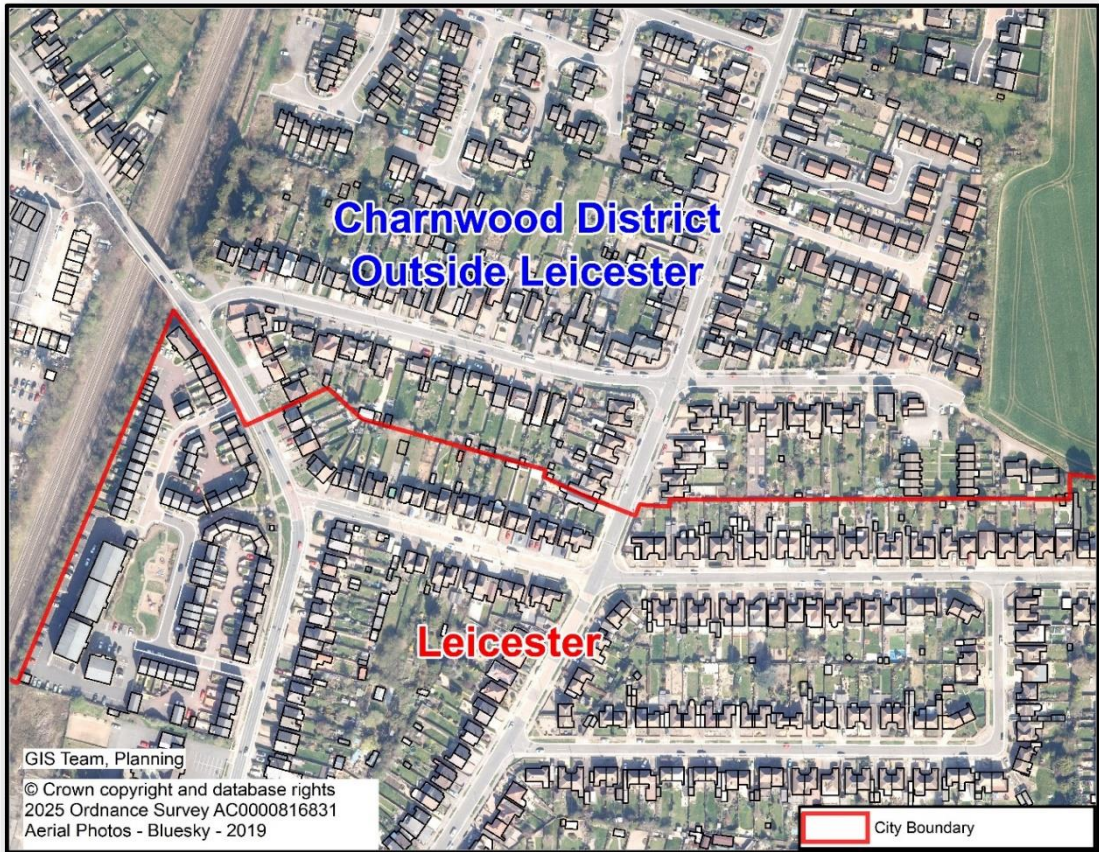


Heavily constrained city boundary

- Boundaries largely fixed c100 years ago
- Small number of authorities not extended in 1973 and 1997 reorganisations
- Illogical boundaries do not recognise the actual extent of the built-up area
- Inefficient/confusing service delivery
- Heavily constrained land for housing/ jobs
- Low tax base



City boundaries are illogical - splitting streets and communities



Comparator cities have land for housing and economic growth and are less than a third as densely populated

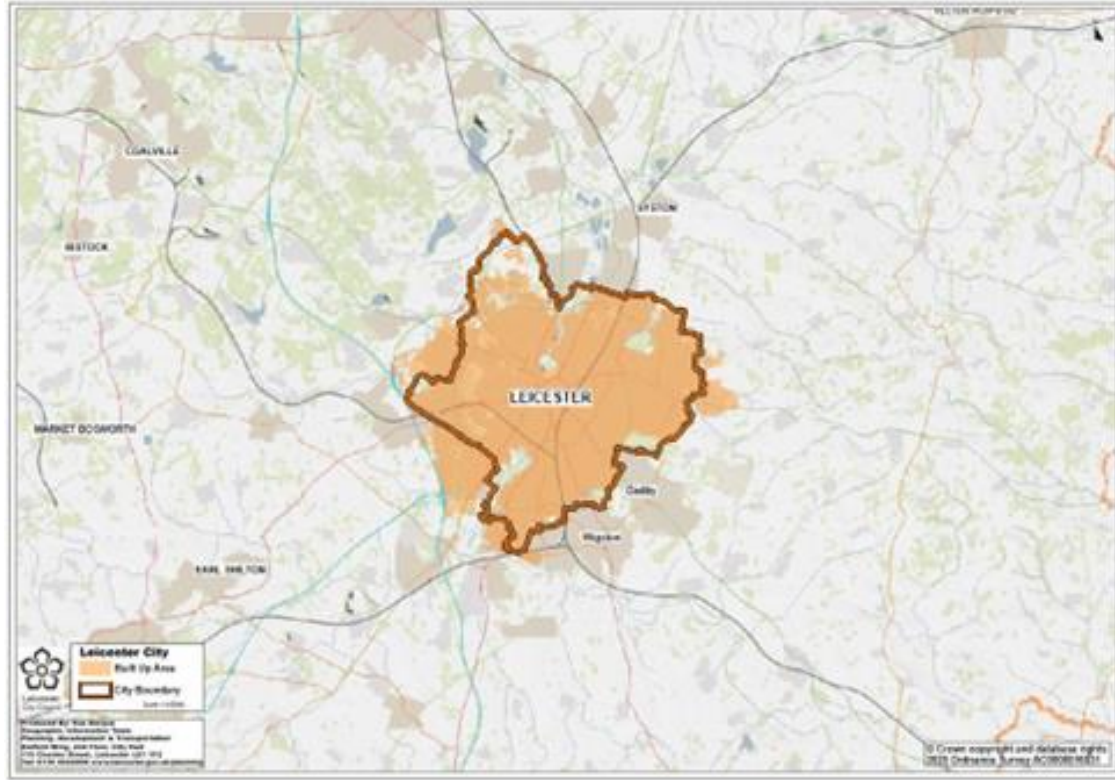
Leicester

Population: 372k

Area km2: 73

Population density
pop'n/km2:

5095



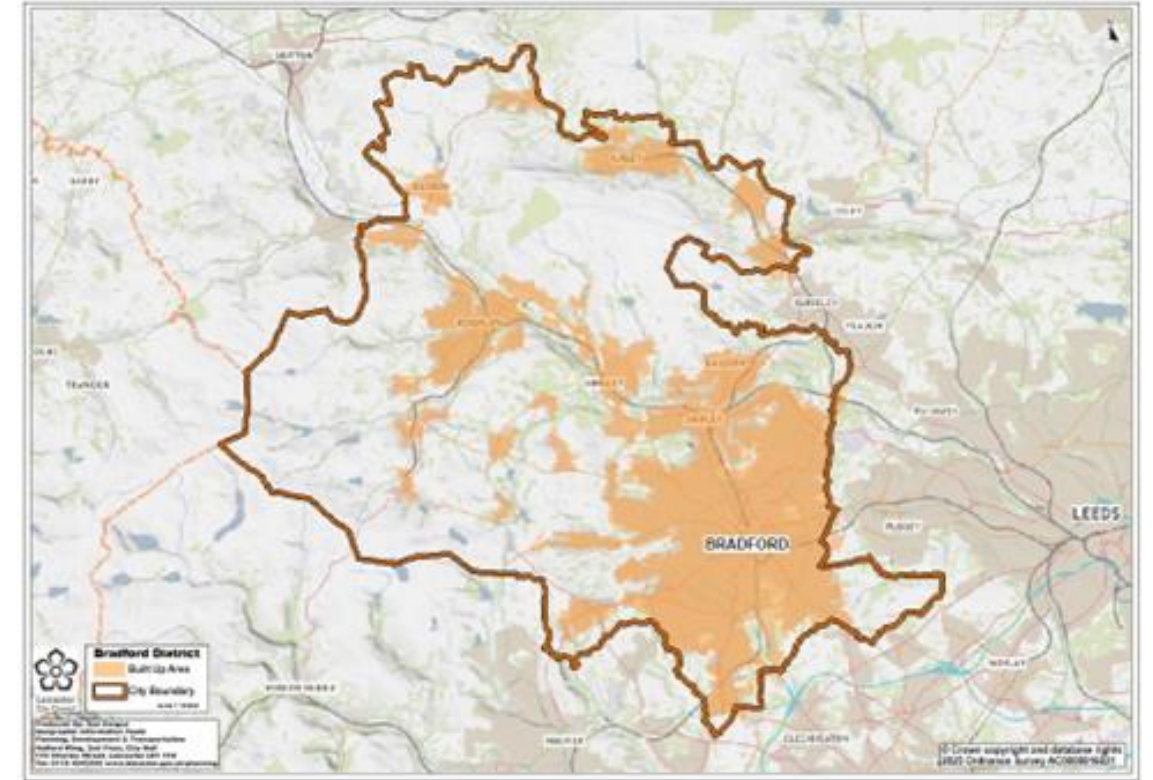
Bradford

Population: 553k

Area km2: 365

Population density
pop'n/km2:

1514



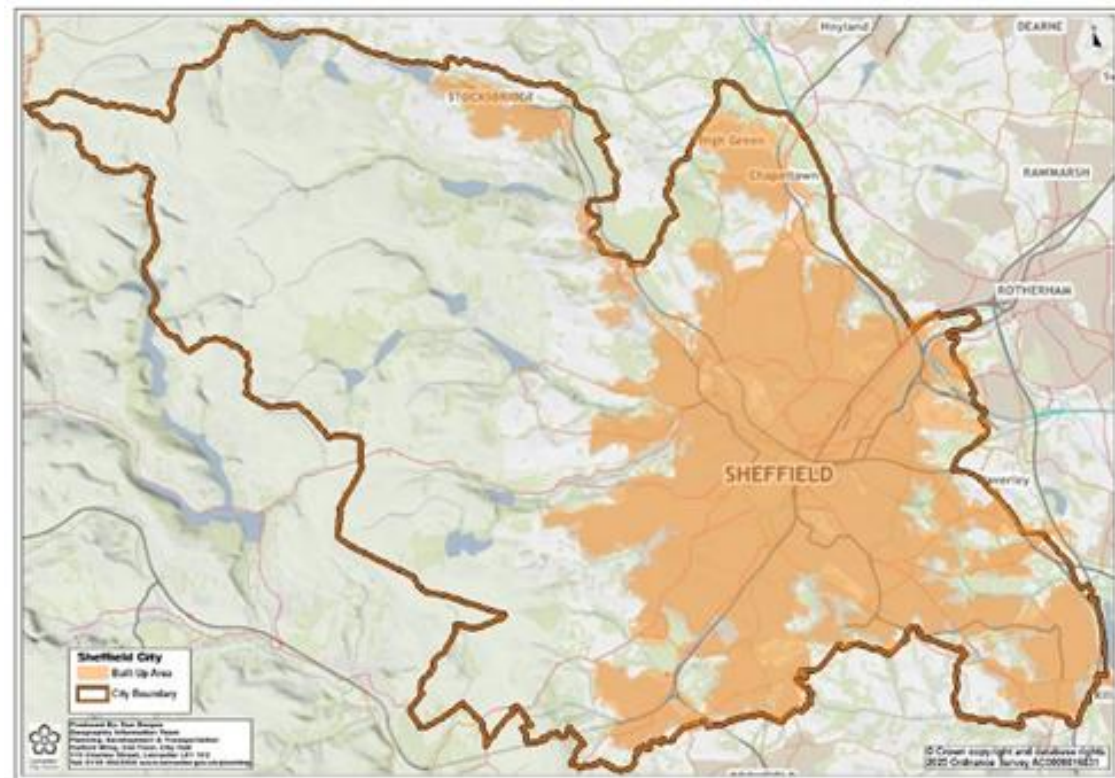
Sheffield

Population: 564k

Area km2: 367

Population density
pop'n/km2:

1540



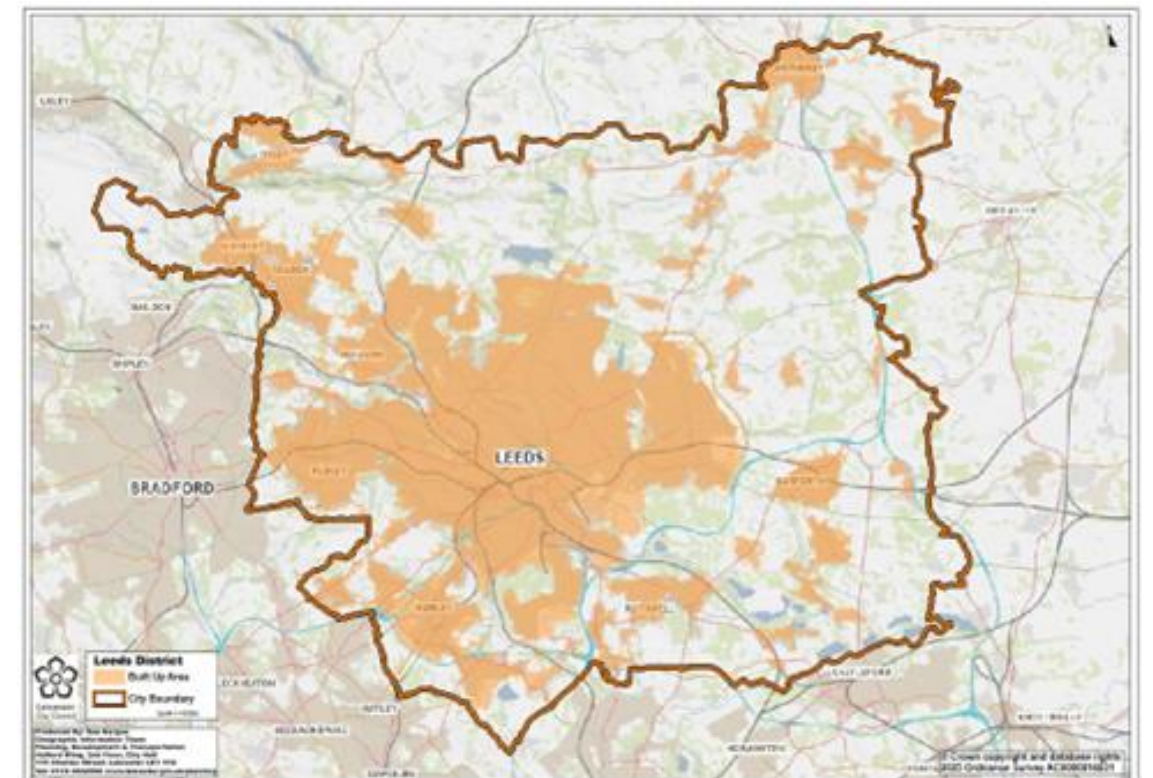
Leeds

Population: 820k

Area km2: 550

Population density
pop'n/km2:

1493

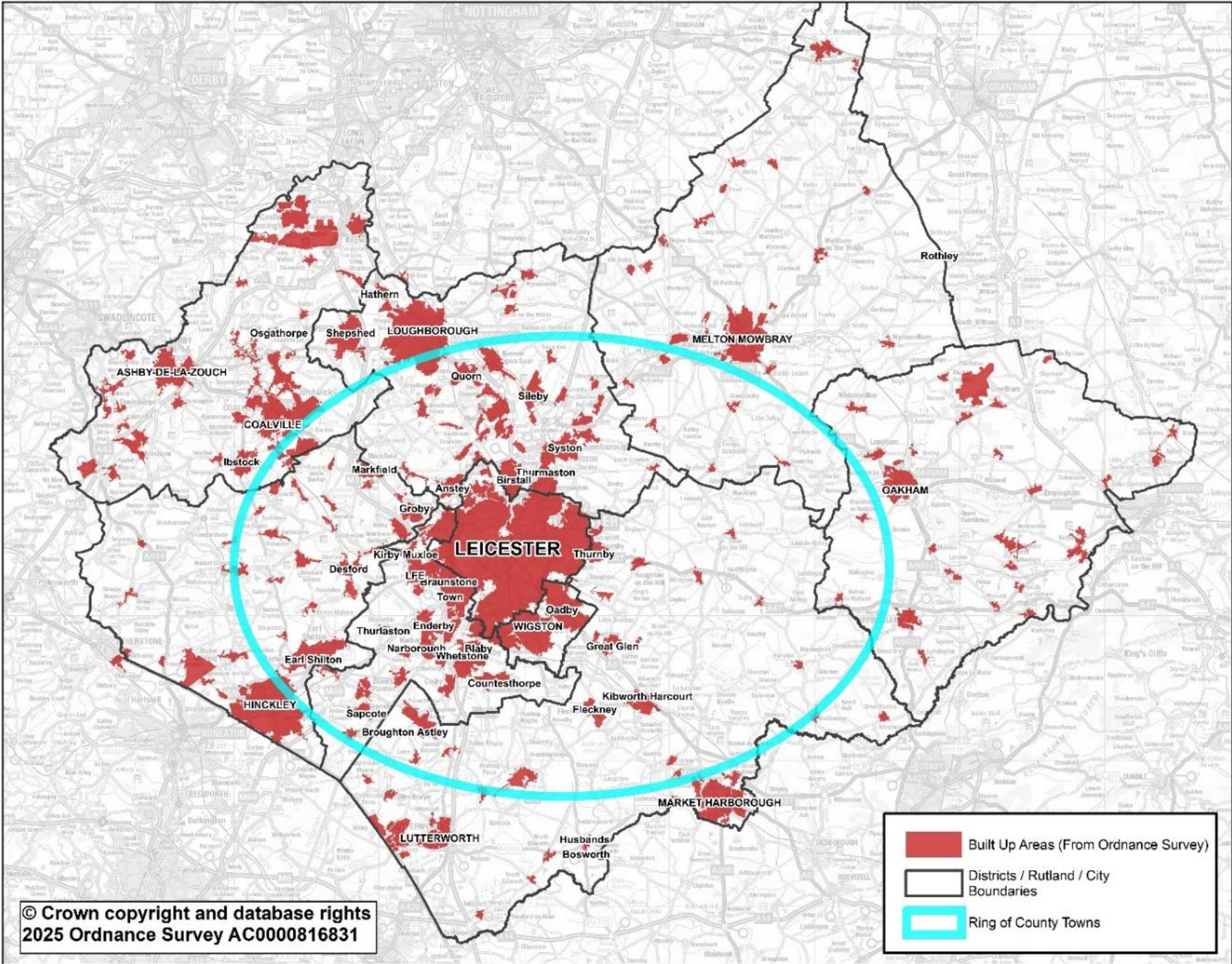


Establishing a sensible boundary for the city

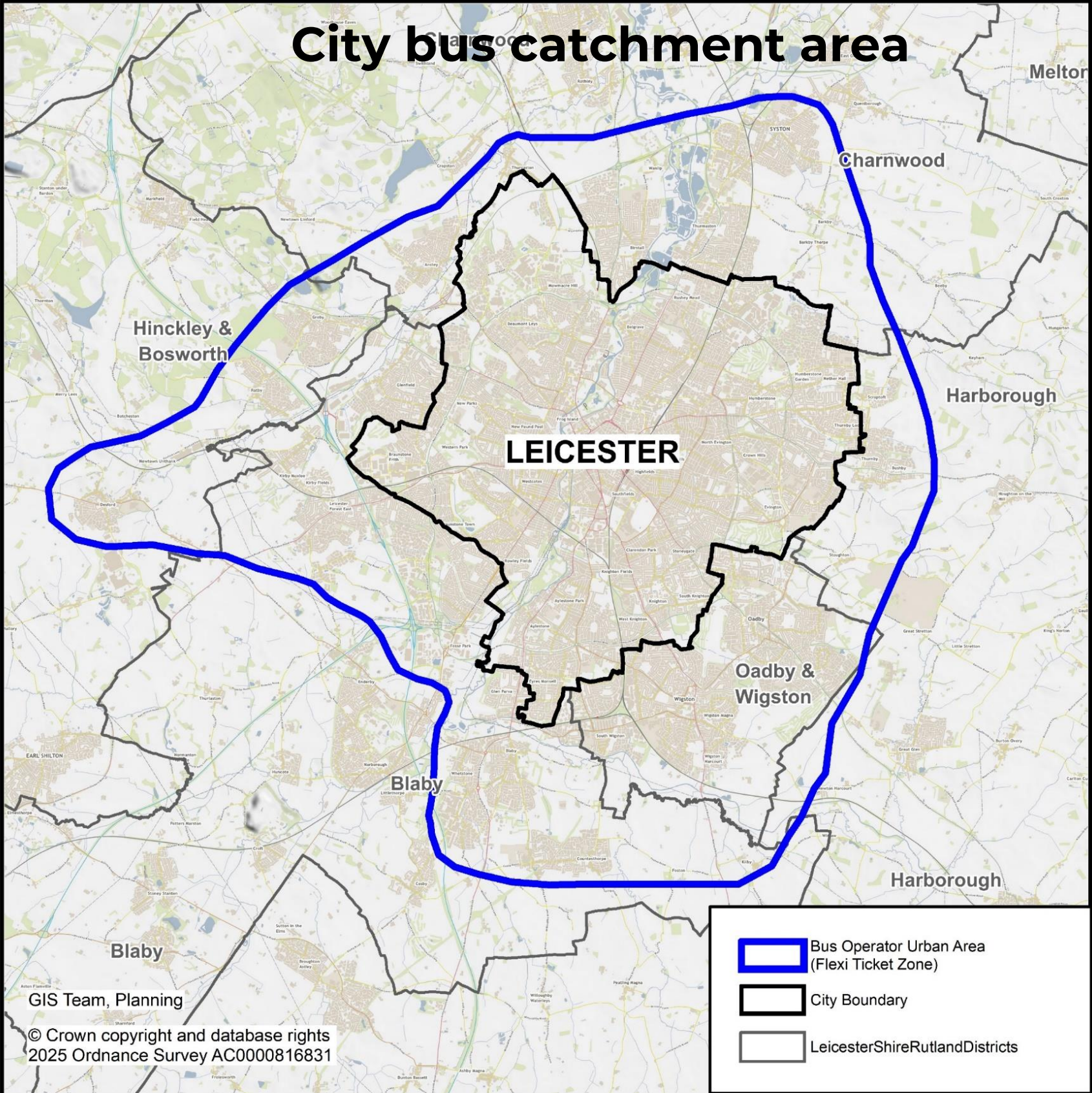
- Coherent geography recognising the city and its suburbs and rural areas
- Recognising how people live their lives – travel to work, shop and leisure facilities
- Room for future city expansion - housing and jobs for local people



Coherence of central urban city and rural areas with ring of county towns

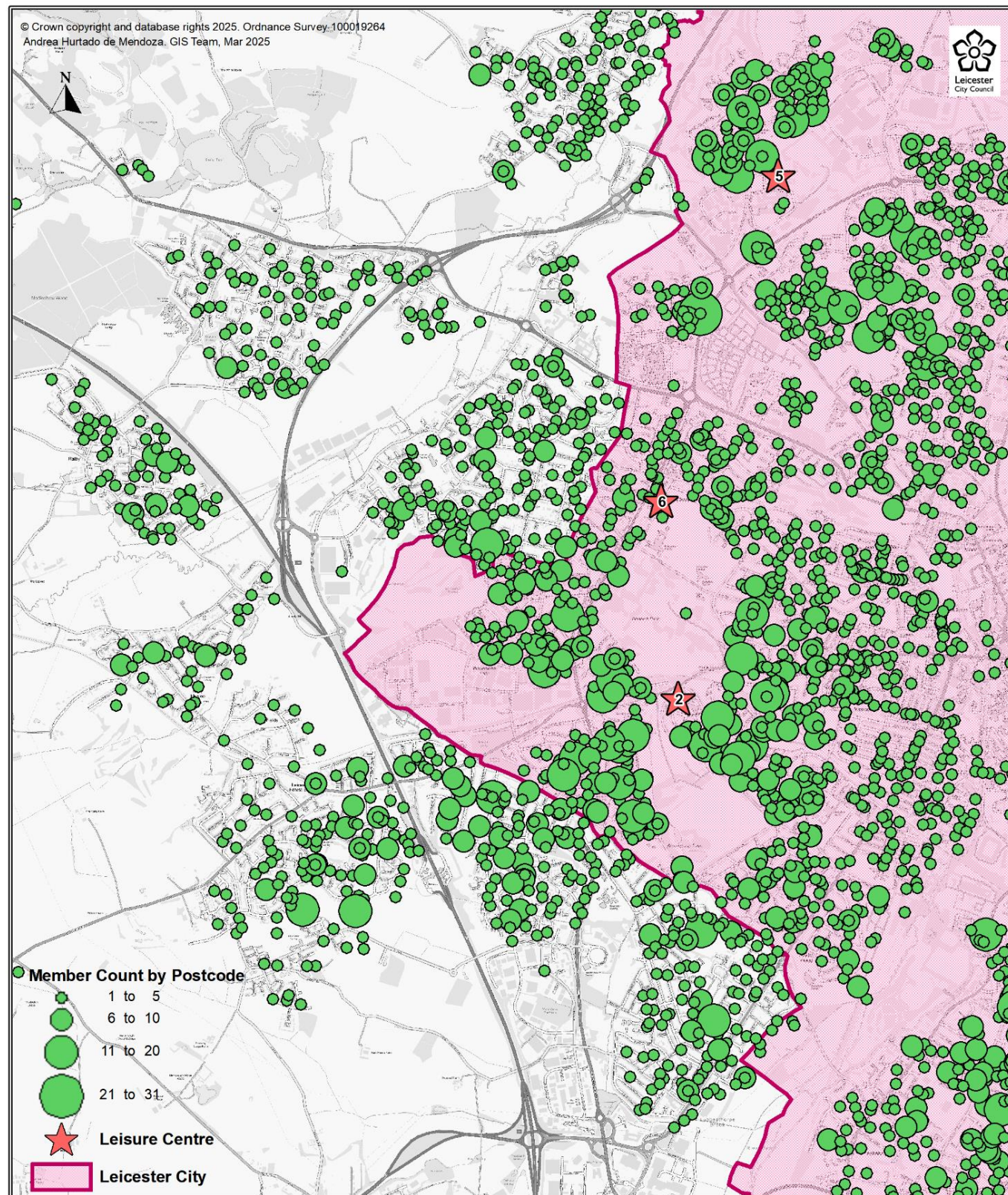


City travel catchments showing high degree of self containment for work, leisure and shopping journeys

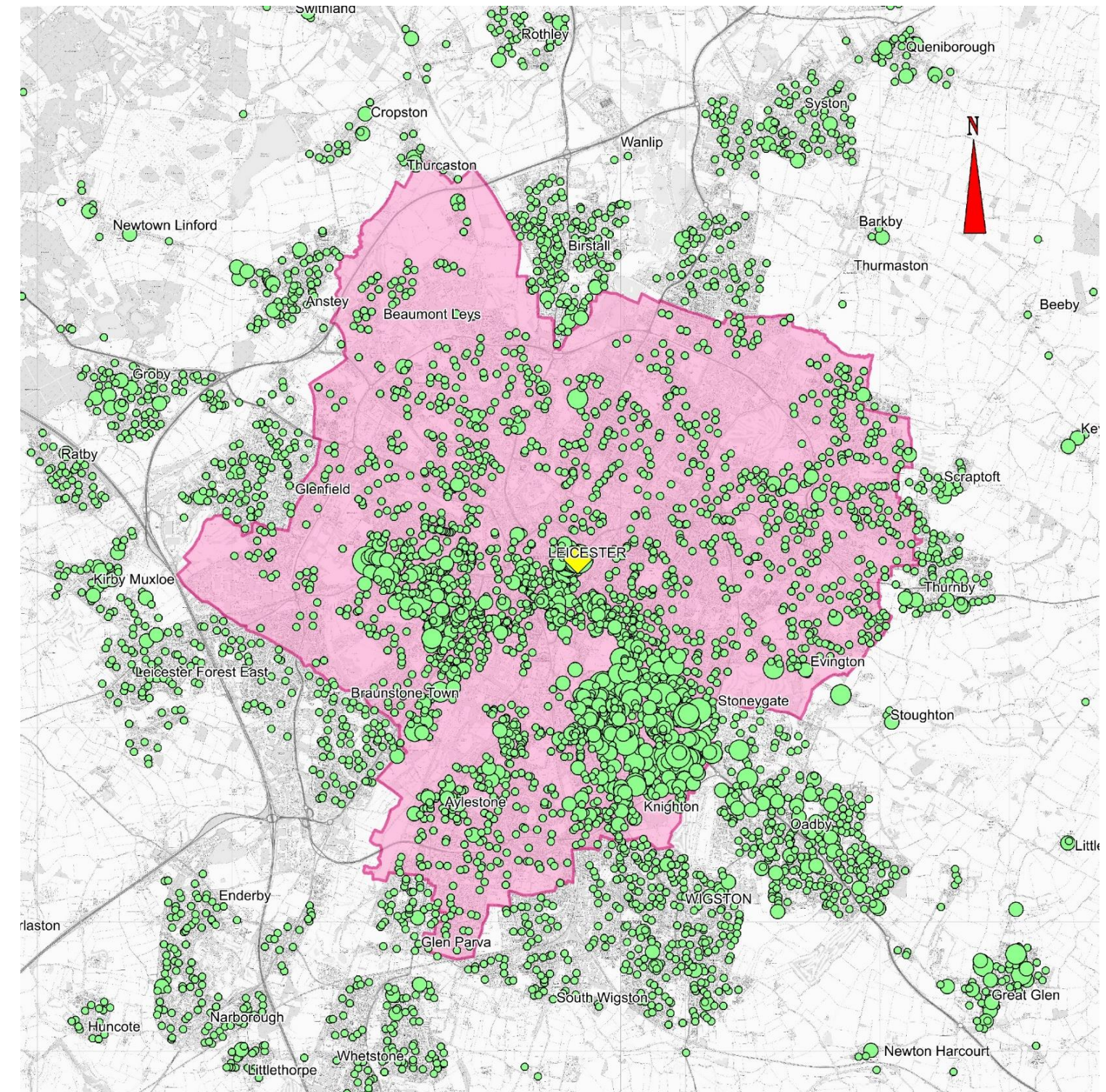


People living in suburbs outside the city boundary regularly travel to use city facilities

City Leisure Centre Memberships



Phoenix Cinema customer database

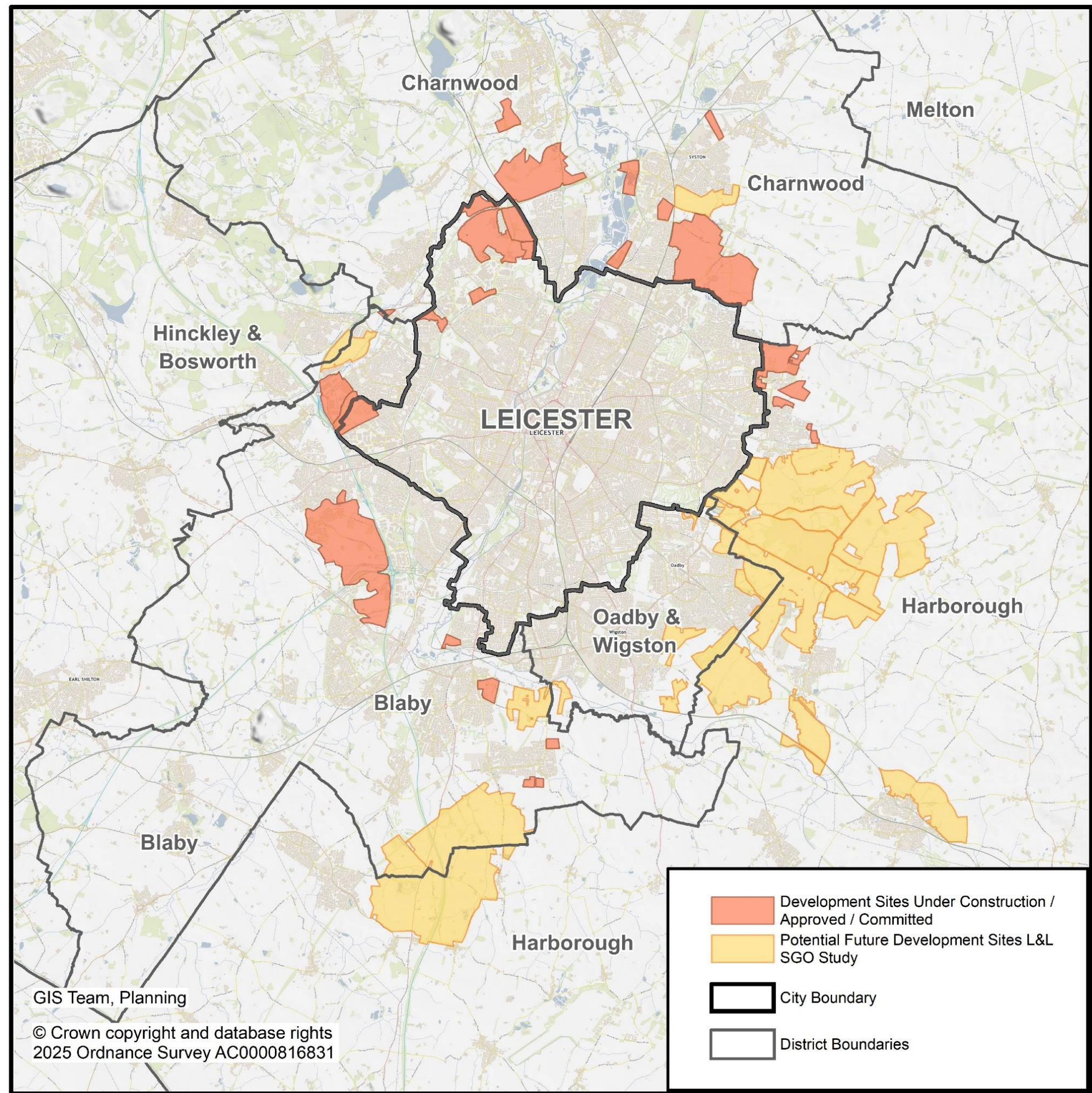


Future Growth

Committed and potential future strategic housing and employment growth sites

Room for future long term city growth

Sensible to plan and deliver development coordinated by one unitary council working with development partners/funders



County Council Proposal

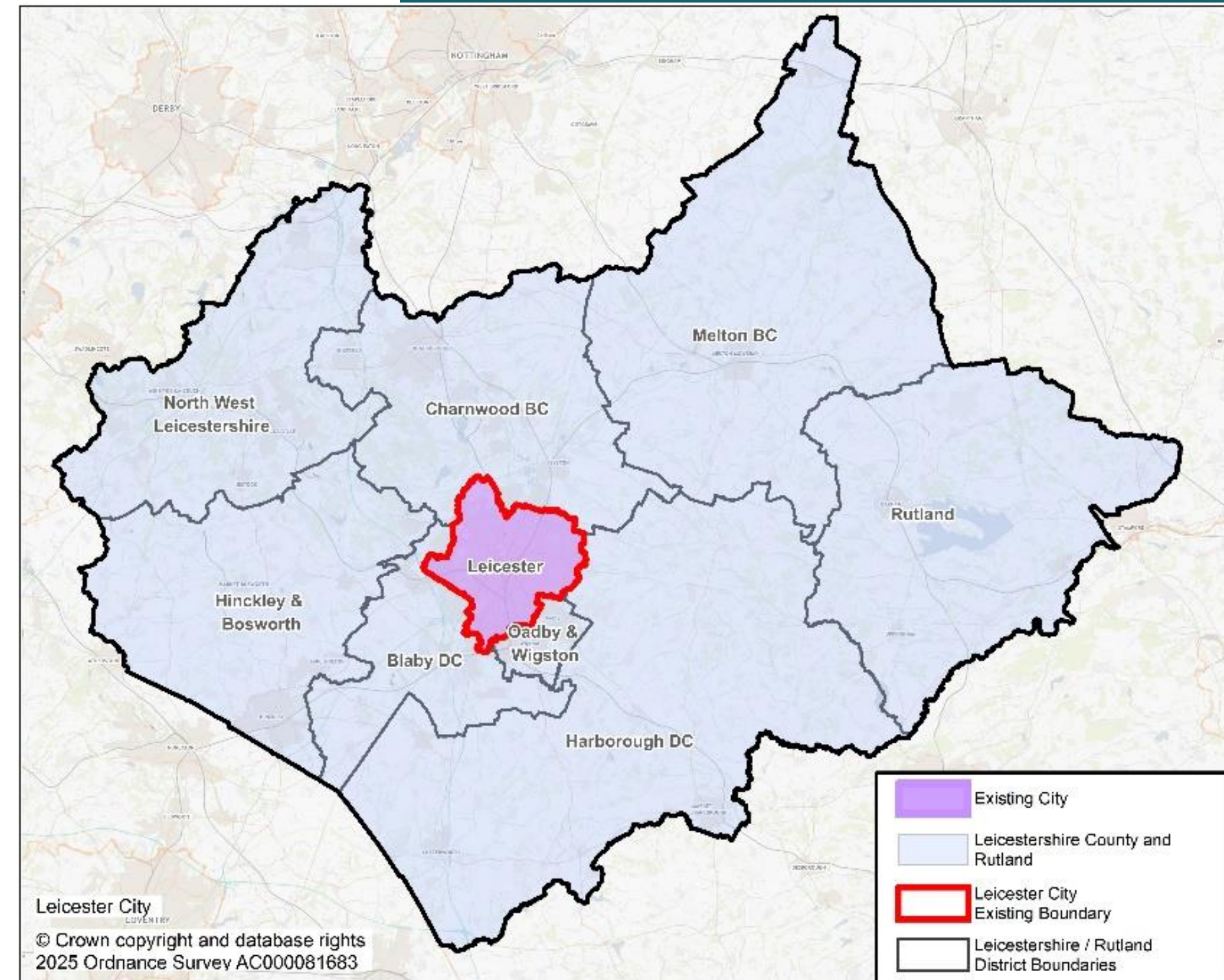
- One unitary council for existing county area and Rutland
- **City excluded – no boundary change**

Population estimates – 2028

Existing City – **392k**

Whole County unitary – **814k**

Very imbalanced councils with substantial variance from Gov't guide population of at least 500k



Districts/Rutland Interim Proposal

- Two unitary councils across current county/Rutland area
- **City excluded -No boundary change**

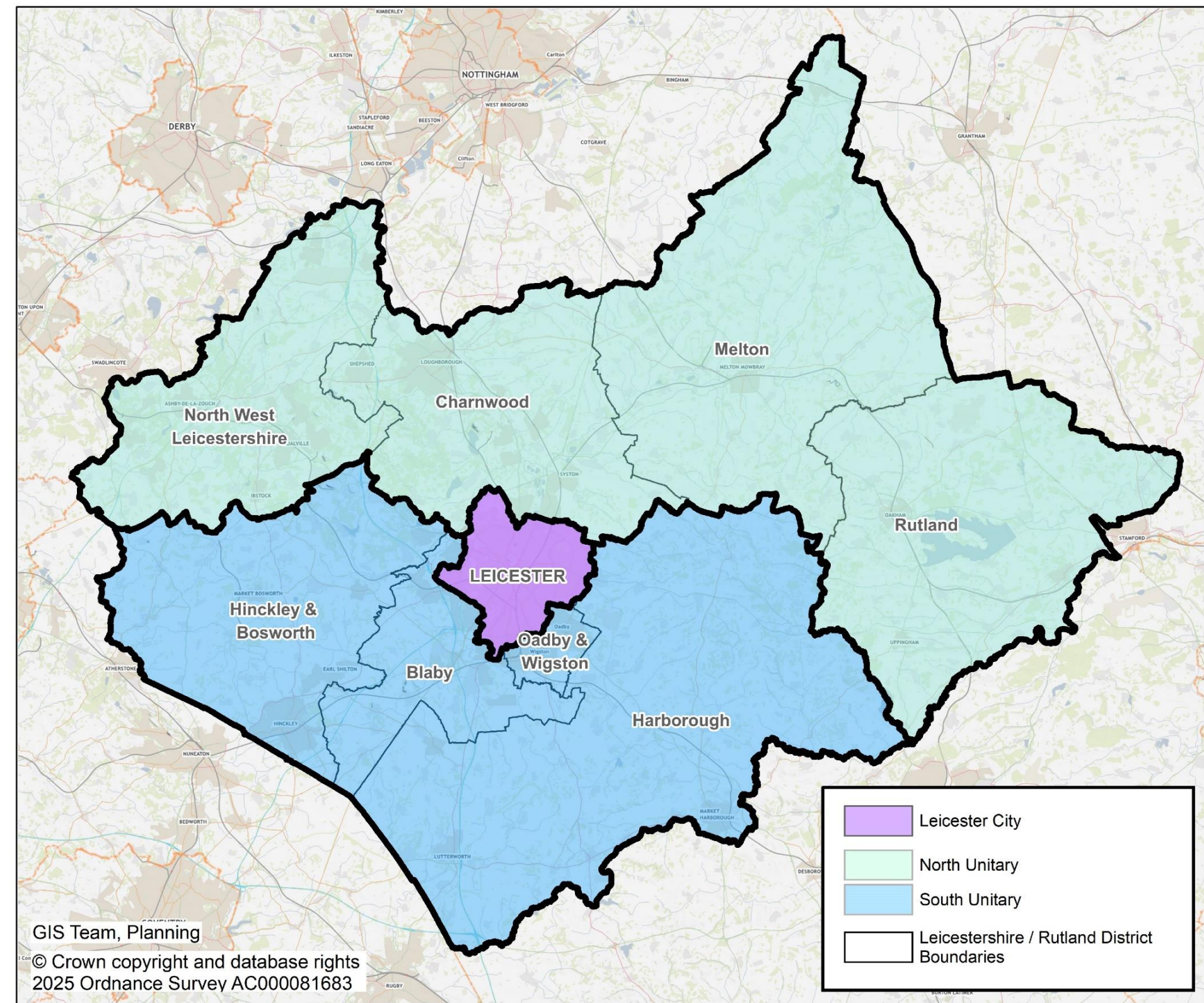
Population estimates – 2028

Existing City – **392k**

North Unitary (NW Leicestershire, Melton, Charnwood, Rutland) – **413k**

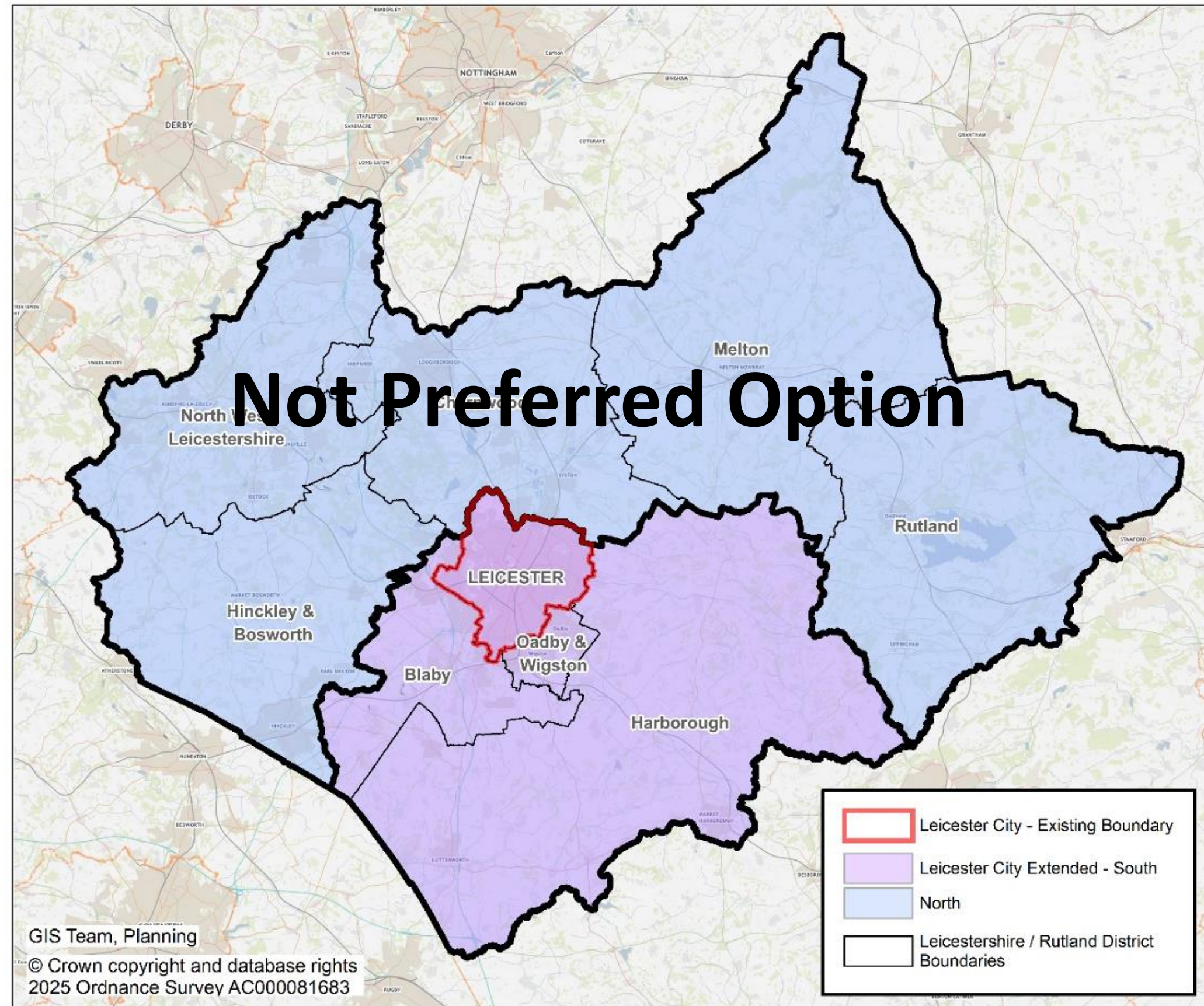
South Unitary, (Harborough, O & W, Hinckley & Bosworth, Blaby) – **401k**

Balanced councils but all below Gov't guide population of at least 500k



Compliant base proposal

- Government/legal advice - compliant proposals should initially be formed using whole districts as building blocks
- To ensure compliance, a suitable base proposal has been identified including the current city council area with Oadby and Wigston, Harborough and Blaby districts
- Detailed boundary change will be requested in parallel to achieve the council's preferred city boundary expansion proposal
- Similar approach to other constrained cities: Brighton, Nottingham and Southampton



Compliant base proposal

Unitary 1 – City + three districts

- Oadby and Wigston
- Blaby
- Harborough

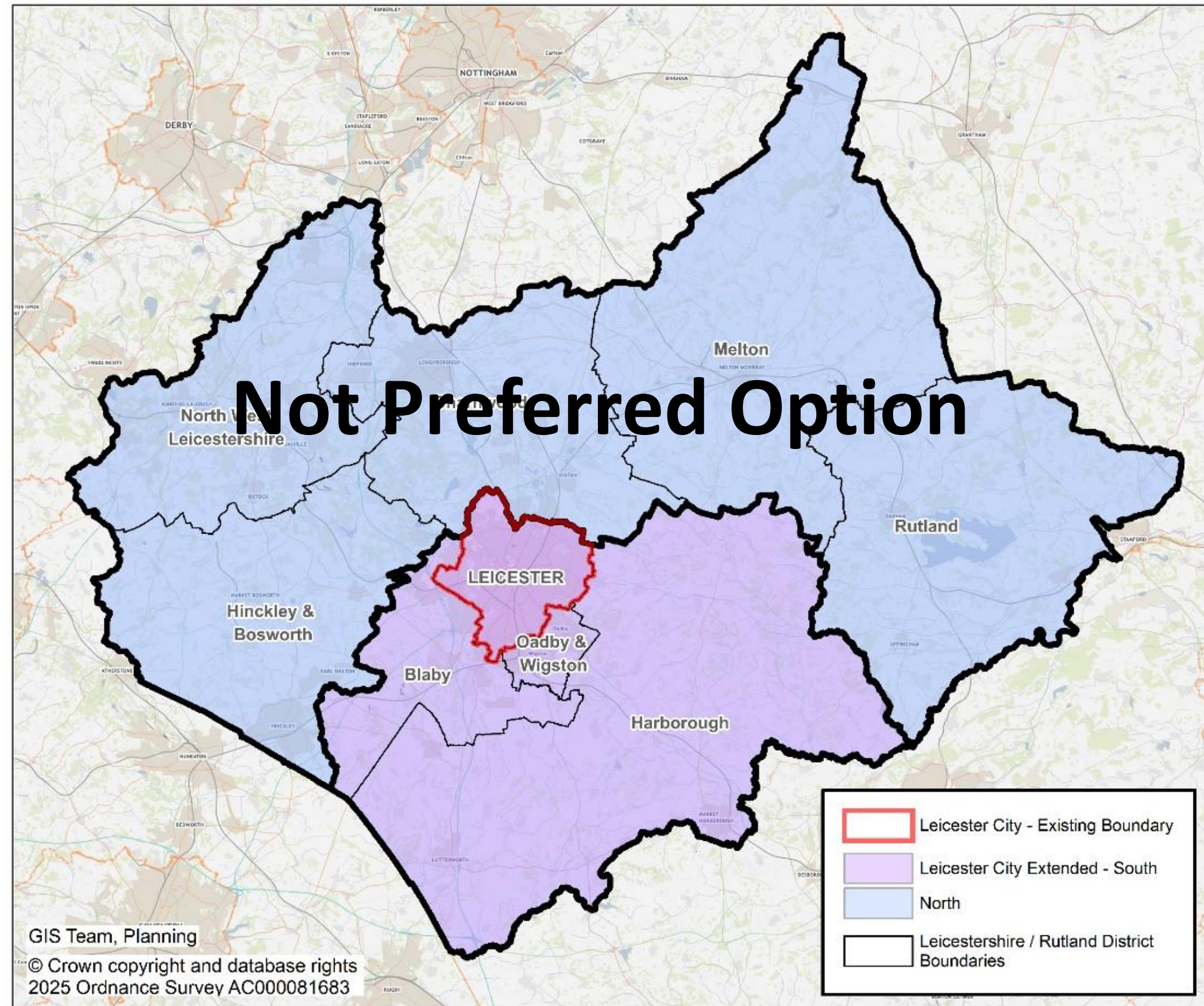
Population (2028) – 673k

Unitary 2 – North Leicestershire and Rutland

Population (2028) – 528k

Both meet Govt 500k+ guide - less
balanced than city preferred option

City boundary includes extensive rural
areas and not urban areas in Charnwood



City Council preferred proposal

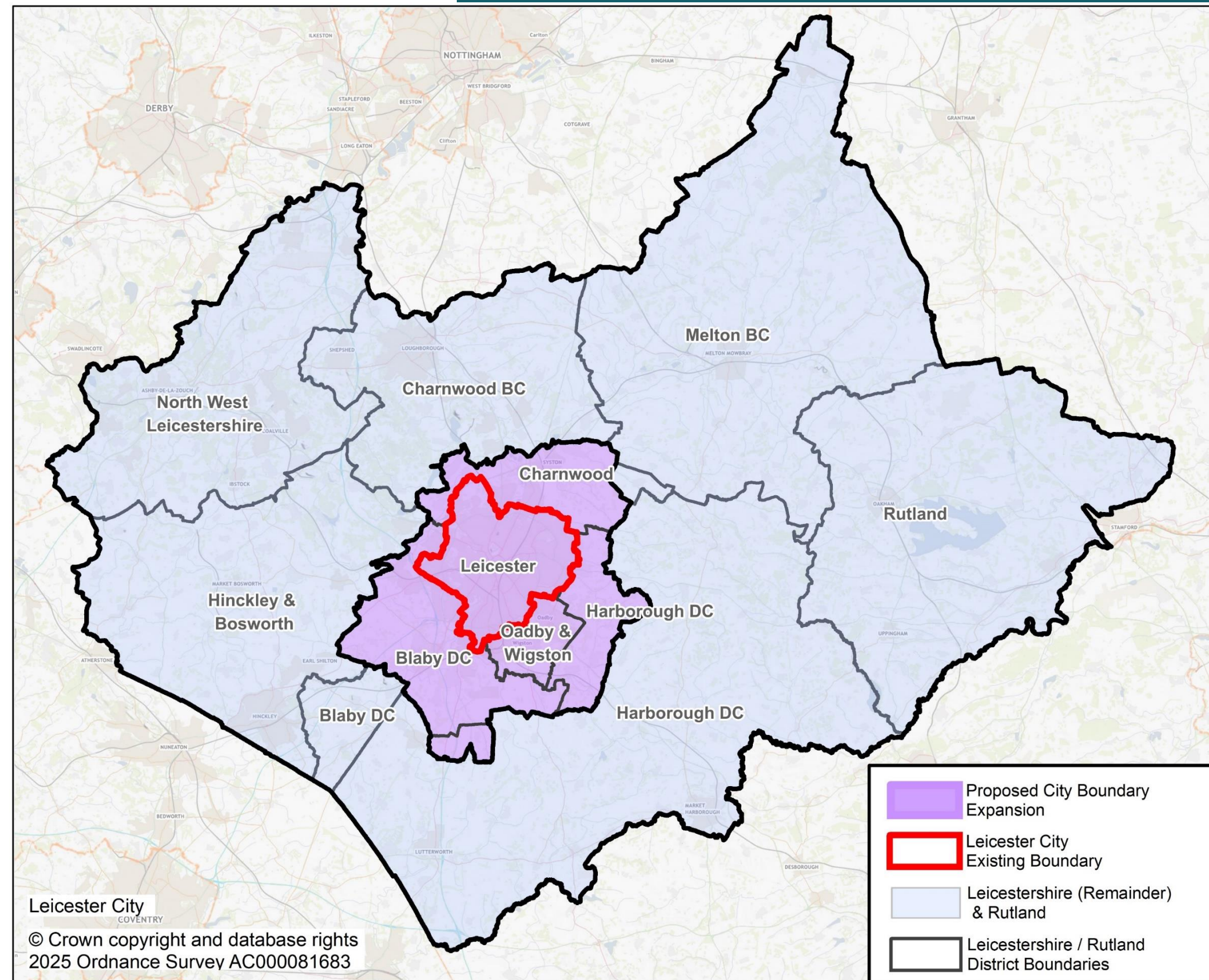
- Expanded unitary city council
- New unitary council for remaining Leic's county with Rutland

Population - 2028

Expanded City – 622k

County/Rutland – 584k

Balanced councils where both meet
Govt 500k+ guide

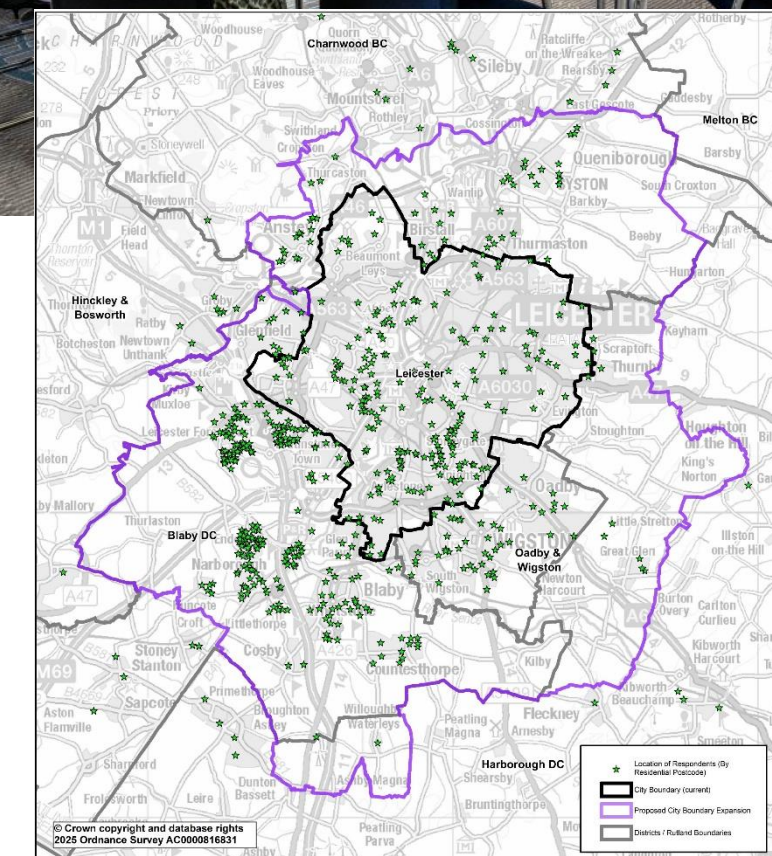


Stakeholder engagement/public consultation

- Engaged c100 **stakeholders** - public bodies, voluntary sector, business, leisure and sports, unions, parish councils
- Stakeholders generally considered the council's preferred city boundary expansion proposal to be sensible for the long-term future of the city and the wider LLR area

Public survey 810 responses - 89% were residents

- 85% strongly agree or agree that councils should reflect how people live, work and travel across the area.
- 85% strongly agree or agree that urban and rural communities face different issues. To be most effective, councils should represent areas that share common issues.
- 46% of ranked efficient services as the most important when thinking about the future of their local council
- 42% raised significant concerns for city expansion
- 15% of respondents have been unsure which council to contact for a service or issue.



City boundary expansion preferred proposal

- ✓ Two unitary councils with **balanced populations meeting the Government's 500,000 + guideline**
- ✓ **Highest annual savings for LLR of £46m....**putting the most back into frontline services
- ✓ Share savings to **better balance budgets** across LLR unitary councils
- ✓ **Equalise the cost per person of service delivery** - difference of only £50 between councils – (£300 - county plan & £340 - district plan)
- ✓ Recognise the **true physical extent of the urban area**, confirmed by how people travel and use facilities across the city



- ✓ Better **balance development opportunities across LLR**
- ✓ **Address growing city development**– est 30,000 homes and 67 ha of employment land required to 2046
- ✓ Replace fragmented services across ten LLR councils with **two simple urban and rural focused unitary councils**
- ✓ Replace fragmented services across the conurbation with **a single joined-up city council** with clarity on who delivers services
- ✓ Maximise economic growth potential **for whole of LLR** by **unlocking a Mayoral Strategic Authority**

Preferred proposal– examples of benefits to people

- ✓ **Clear council responsibility for services** e.g. waste collection and street maintenance not split within streets and neighbourhoods
- ✓ **Simpler streamlined service planning** e.g. only two local plans with city and rural area focus / delivery of urban extensions brought within one council area
- ✓ **Services better focused on needs of urban and rural areas** e.g. city and rural bus services
- ✓ **More sustainable services supported by users from across the whole city** e.g. leisure centres and cultural facilities



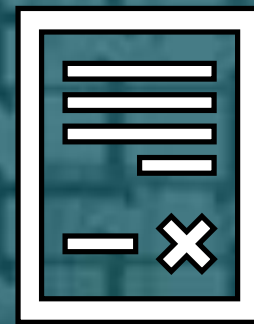
- ✓ **More effective Joined-up services** e.g. common housing support service across whole of urban area – match demand and stock / More able to plan and deliver SEND services
- ✓ **Better value services** – larger councils with better buying power benefitting service users e.g. commissioning adult and children social care services
- ✓ **Delivers most savings for the whole of LLR to support frontline services for all**



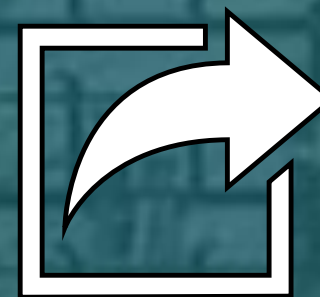
Next steps



Full Council
20th Nov



Final submission
to Government
by 28th Nov



Government
consultation
early 2026?

Government
decision
Summer 2026?



Shadow
elections May
2027?



LGR 'go live'
April 2028?

