

Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 16 April 2026

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Report Summary	
Report Title	Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Purpose of Report	To enable the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee to consider the latest position in respect of local government reorganisation following the submission to Government in November 2025.
Recommendations	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee note the progress update provided in respect of local government reorganisation.
Reason for Recommendations	This is in line with the Committee’s role to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) oversee the plans for, and impact of, Local Government Reorganisation within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire; and b) liaise with and advise the Council’s Cabinet, Audit & Accounts Committee, Policy & Performance Improvement Committee and other committees so all Members are kept informed and provide an opportunity for them to input their views on LGR.

1.0 Background

1.1 At a meeting on 26 November, Cabinet were asked to endorse the submission of a final proposal for a new unitary structure of Local Government for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. All Members of the Council were also invited to attend a presentation on the content of the Final Proposal held on 18 November 2025.

1.2 Newark & Sherwood District Council, along with Bassetlaw, Gedling and Mansfield submitted the [north-south proposal](#) to government on 28 November.

1.3 The north-south proposal (option 1e) would see the creation of two new unitary authorities:

- Sherwood Forest (North Nottinghamshire) – comprising Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood.
- Nottingham and South Nottinghamshire (South Nottinghamshire) – comprising Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe.

1.4 There were two other proposals submitted in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

1.5 Full proposal, appendices and summaries are available here: [Proposals | LGR](#)

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

2.1 Since submitting proposals in November, we, along with other councils have begun focusing on the subsequent phases of work and planning the steps required between now and the government's decision.

2.2 Statutory Consultation

2.2.1 Government consultation, which launched in February for 6 weeks, closed 26 March.

2.2.2 The Government wrote directly to some statutory consultees across a broad range of organisations across health, education, business, the voluntary sector, and other public sector and national bodies, but anyone was able to take part and share their views.

2.2.3 Furthermore, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire jointly, encouraged everyone with an interest in the future of local services to take part and have their say on the proposals for our area.

2.2.4 The consultation was promoted through the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire [dedicated LGR website](#) and other existing communication channels, including social media.

2.2.5 As a named consultee for the consultation, the Chief Executive of the council responded via the Government's platform in response to all the options.

2.3 Engagement with Other Key Stakeholders

2.3.1 We have recently completed the latest round of staff drop-in sessions with the Chief Executive, attended by over 100 staff and delivered through a combination of in-person and online sessions. In addition, more than 40 people attended virtual Town and Parish Council briefings with the Chief Executive. Both sets of sessions were positively received and provided a valuable opportunity to share updates and respond to questions or concerns at this stage.

2.4 MHCLG Listening Meetings

2.4.1 As part of the process, councils that submitted proposals were invited to take part in a virtual 'listening meeting' with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). On Friday 27 February, our Chief Executive joined colleagues from Bassetlaw, Gedling and Mansfield, alongside our Business Manager for Financial Services and Deputy Section 151 Officer, and Maggie Kenney, Chief Executive of Peopletoo, for a one-hour virtual session with MHCLG representatives.

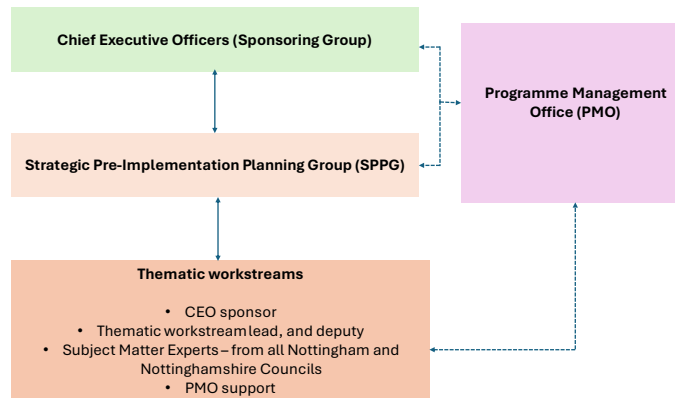
There was a shared view that the meeting was positive and provided a valuable opportunity to outline our proposal, emphasise key points, and raise questions directly with MHCLG.

2.5 Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LGR programme

2.5.1 Councils are working collaboratively and have agreed an interim, pre-implementation governance approach for the LGR Programme to undertake “no-regret” activities that can be progressed ahead of the decision point and are not dependent on the option ultimately selected.

2.5.2 Interim Overarching Structure

Two LGR Programme Director posts are being recruited to: one for Nottingham City Council and one for Nottinghamshire County Council and the District and Borough Councils. Both posts are expected to be in place by April/May.



2.5.3 Thematic Workstreams

Nine thematic workstreams have been established so far. The priority workstreams are set out below:

- Assets
- Digital Data and Technology
- Finance
- Housing & Housing Revenue Account
- Legal & Governance
- People Services (Adults and Children’s)
- Procurement & Contracts
- Service Delivery Models
- Workforce & HR

2.5.4 LGR Principles

There is a commitment to work in accordance with the following principles, which will be applied throughout the LGR Programme structure:

- Collaborative
- Open, honest and transparent
- Focussed on improving outcomes, services, financial sustainability
- Acting in longer-term interest, particularly in use of resources, reserves and decision-making in the interim
- Evidence-informed, based on data
- Resident-focussed
- Valuing and preparing employees for the future at a time of uncertainty and change

2.6 Internal Arrangements

2.6.1 The Council is actively engaged in the LGR programme, with representation on each of the priority workstreams, SPPG and PMO. In addition, the Council is leading or co-leading two workstreams. Internally, LGR progress is overseen through a standing weekly agenda item at the Senior Leadership Team meeting, supported by a weekly internal coordination meeting involving representatives from each workstream to ensure alignment, information sharing and effective oversight from an NSDC perspective.

2.6.2 In parallel, the Council has also established a new organisational structure to support the transition to a future unitary council. This structure is intended to strengthen capacity, and ensure the Council is well positioned to manage transition activity effectively.

2.7 LGR Working Group – Newark and Sherwood’s Legacy

2.7.1 As set out at the last Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee, 5 February 2026, it is recognised that, on appropriate topics, there will be a need for alternative forums to provide oversight of specific aspects of LGR activity. One such area is the approach to members’ legacy, which has previously been raised by a number of members.

2.7.2 Subject to the Government’s decision, it is anticipated that a dedicated working group comprising both members and officers could be established, potentially from around September 2026, to explore this in more detail and agree a coordinated approach. Further details on how member nominations will be collated for the working group will be provided in the next update report, 18 June 2026.

2.8 Guidance from MHCLG

2.8.1 MHCLG have shared a guidance note on implementation bodies and predecessor councils during local government reorganisation: [Local government reorganisation: implementation guidance - GOV.UK](#). The note explains the roles and responsibilities of Predecessor Councils, Joint Committees or Implementation Executives, and Implementation Teams. Two statutory periods of transition are expected:

1. When the Structural Changes Order (SCO) comes into force, up to the inaugural elections to the new council. For this period there needs to be an implementation body representative of the existing councils in the area. these bodies are mostly constituted as Joint Committees (one Joint Committee for each new unitary council).
 2. A defined date following the inaugural elections, up to vesting day – referred to as the reorganisation date in the SCO. The Joint Committee will be dissolved and replaced by a new, different implementation body made up of the members elected in the inaugural elections to the new unitary council – a Shadow Council.
- 2.8.2 Surrey is the first two-tier area to move into statutory implementation under the Government’s LGR programme: [Surrey Structural Changes Order 2026](#) The SCO provides the statutory framework to implement LGR in Surrey, replacing the existing two-tier system with two new unitary authorities from 1 April 2027.
- 2.8.3 The Order represents the formal transition from proposal development to implementation, establishing clear legal duties, timescales and governance requirements for the councils involved.

The Surrey SCO sets out:

- The establishment of a single tier of local government, abolishing existing councils
 - Within 14 days of order must establish Joint Committees for each new council. The SCO defines its membership (numbers of nominees from county and districts in the new council area), to manage certain functions until the Shadow Authority meet. Joint Committees will be dissolved day after first meeting of new shadow authorities
 - Within 21 days of order coming into force Joint Committee must form a single team of officers the Implementation team to assist the joint committee including officers from all authorities
 - Electoral matters, including ward boundaries, councillor numbers
 - Within 14 days following the shadow election, they must create a Leader and cabinet executive, adopt a code of conduct, designate an interim Monitoring Officer, Section 151 and interim Head of Paid Service.
- 2.8.4 It also places explicit legal duties on all predecessor councils to cooperate throughout transition, and that shadow elections and subsequent costs of the shadow authority must be agreed and shared proportionally by all other authorities
- 2.8.5 While Surrey is the first area to progress on the LGR journey, its geography, scale and political context differ from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Nevertheless, there are clear lessons to be drawn from its governance arrangements, mobilisation approach and sequencing, and it provides an indication of the level of prescription Government may apply once a statutory order is made.

- 2.8.6 The Council is continuing to develop its understanding of the SCO, including undertaking further research into its implications and the expected transition process. To support both officers and Members, consideration will be given to holding a dedicated session on the SCO at a later stage, to help build a shared understanding of what it means in practice and what can be expected as the process progresses.
- 2.8.7 Once a government decision has been made and often once a Structural Changes Order is in draft, existing councils will remain legally responsible for services until vesting day but:
- Their decisions can bind or constrain the new authority
 - There is a risk of councils making long-term or high-value commitments that the new council inherits
- 2.8.8 A section 24 direction under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 restricts certain categories of decisions unless consent is given by the shadow authority, such as disposing of land, entering capital and non-capital contracts exceeding a certain value. This prevents actions that could have financial or operational implications on the new unitary council.
- 2.8.9 A SCO legally creates the new council(s), and a Section 24 direction manages behaviour before vesting day. The two work together to ensure an orderly transition.

3.0 The Timeline

- 3.1 The Committee may also wish to consider next steps in accordance with the timetable below:

Key milestones:	By when
All councils work on transition planning	November 2025 – vesting day
Government launches statutory consultation for several weeks	5 February – 26 March 2026
MHCLG holds “listening meeting” with representatives of each proposal submitted	27 February 2026
Two LGR Programme Directors in post	April/May 2026
In person visit with MHCLG	April/May 2026
Decision by Government	By Summer recess 2026
Government to share a draft direction and explanatory note for councils to consider and to provide representations upon	Summer/Autumn 2026
Structural Changes Order – Legislation laid in Parliament	Autum 2026
Legislation made, subject to Parliamentary approval	Late 2026, early 2027
Elections for shadow authority	May 2027
New unitary authority vesting day	April 2028

4.0 **Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Implications Considered			
Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable			
Financial	NA	Equality & Diversity	NA
Human Resources	NA	Human Rights	NA
Legal	NA	Data Protection	NA
Digital & Cyber Security	NA	Safeguarding	NA
Sustainability	NA	Crime & Disorder	NA
LGR	NA	Tenant Consultation	NA

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Cabinet 26 November: Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Final Proposal](#)