

Report of the Interim Chief Executive

Local Government Reorganisation

1. Purpose of Report

To give an update report on Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to NOTE the report.

3. Detail

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire has progressed through a defined sequence of statutory and policy milestones, beginning with the Government's invitation to develop proposals before submission in November 2025. The process was designed to develop and implement proposals to move from the current two-tier local government system to unitary authorities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The immediate next milestone is the statutory consultation which is live from 5 February until 26 March 2026. Following this, there will be ministerial consideration of all three proposals and consultation evidence, resulting in a "minded to" decision. The process will then move to the preparation and parliamentary approval of a Structural Changes Order. This report will give an overview of each stage of the process in more detail.

3.1 Invitation to submit unitary proposals

The reorganisation process formally commenced when the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government issued an invitation to councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to submit proposals for unitary local government. The invitation set out the statutory framework, assessment criteria and timescales for submission. At this stage, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and the district and borough councils worked to develop an Interim Plan which was submitted in March 2025. This plan detailed the initial findings of potential "Core Options" and how the Council's will work together to develop more detailed options appraisals. Within this submission, Council agreed to include a detailed appendix to the government submission, highlighting the Risks and Concerns of the initial options being proposed.

3.2 Development and submission of proposals

Following the invitation, councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire developed and submitted formal proposals for reorganisation. Each council was permitted to submit a single proposal, either individually or jointly, and proposals were required to address governance arrangements for the whole of the affected

geography. Submissions set out the proposed unitary structures, the rationale for change, anticipated financial and service impacts, and an outline approach to transition and implementation. By the point of submission, councils were expected to ensure that proposals were supported by proportionate evidence and were internally consistent with local financial, service and workforce realities. Within Nottinghamshire, three proposals were developed. The detailed proposals can be found by accessing the link [Nottingham and Nottinghamshire | LGR](#)

Below is a summary of these proposals.

Proposal	Geographical Area
Option 1b	One authority consisting of the current Broxtowe, Gedling and Nottingham City boundaries. One authority consisting of the remaining Nottinghamshire authorities, including Nottinghamshire County Council.
Option 1e	One authority consisting of the current Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Nottingham City boundaries. One authority consisting of the remaining Nottinghamshire authorities, including Nottinghamshire County Council
Option bii Nottingham City Expanded Boundaries	This option is being developed by Nottingham City Council. No detailed map has been produced but the expansion of the Boundaries is expected to take in some areas of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe.

At the Council meeting on 26 November 2025, the following recommendations were made to Cabinet:

1. RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that Proposals 1b, 1e and Bii (Nottingham City expanded boundaries) be rejected.
2. RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Impact Assessment Report be submitted to the Secretary of State by Broxtowe Borough Council as part of this process.

Following the Cabinet Meeting on 27 November 2025, the following was duly resolved:

1. Proposals 1b, 1e and Bii (Nottingham City expanded boundaries) be rejected.
2. The Impact Assessment Report be submitted to the Secretary of State by Broxtowe Borough Council as part of this process.

3. Delegation be given to the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, to write to the Secretary of State to reflect the Council's position.

The letter and Impact Assessment Report were submitted to the Secretary of State on 28 November 2025. At the point of writing the report, no official response has been received.

3.3 Statutory consultation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Statutory consultation represents a mandatory and pivotal stage in the reorganisation process for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Following the submission of proposals, MHCLG are undertaking a formal consultation to gather representations before Ministers can determine on the best proposal for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The consultation seeks views on the implications of reorganisation for local communities, services and governance. Consultation includes councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire that will be affected by the proposals, including Broxtowe Borough Council, as well as a wider range of stakeholders. Whilst the consultation is aimed at stakeholders, it is open to the public.

The consultation focuses on issues such as geographic and economic areas, size of the proposed authorities, service quality, meeting local needs, community engagement and support devolution.

The consultation will primarily ask for opinions based on the submissions that have been made, being 1b, 1e and bii as detailed in 3.2. However, it should be noted that the Council raised concerns regarding these three options for Broxtowe residents and chose to reject all three options at Cabinet meeting on 27 November 2025.

Although MHCLG are leading the statutory consultation, local authorities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are expected to play an active supporting role. The Council's Communication Team are working with all of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities to ensure there is consistent and clear information being provided about the consultation phase. For those that are non-digital, there will be paper copies of the consultation provided in libraries and Council Offices across the County and City area.

A full list of the proposed organisations receiving a request for consultation on the proposals is detailed in the **Appendix**.

3.4 Ministerial consideration and "minded to" decision

Following the close of consultation, Ministers will consider the proposals for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire alongside consultation responses and any additional evidence requested. This stage commonly included the issue of a ministerial "minded to" letter, indicating that the Secretary of State was inclined to proceed with a particular proposal for reorganisation.

While the “minded to” letter does not constitute the final legal decision, it represents a significant milestone for local authorities in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It provides a clear position on the Government’s preferred proposals and enables councils to move from high-level proposal development to detailed implementation planning. At this point, authorities will be expected to strengthen programme governance, develop detailed implementation plans and prepare for legislative transition.

This decision is expected to be made prior to the Parliament entering summer recess, which is scheduled to commence on 16 July 2026.

3.5 Decision to implement and preparation of the Structural Changes Order

Once Ministers decide on the proposal for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, MHCLG will begin preparing secondary legislation in the form of a Structural Changes Order. For Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, the order would establish the new unitary authorities, abolish existing councils on the relevant vesting date, and set out transitional, governance and electoral arrangements.

Local authorities are expected to work closely with MHCLG to provide technical input, support detailed drafting and ensure that the specific circumstances of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire were accurately reflected in the legislation.

3.6 Transition and implementation period

Following the making of the Structural Changes Order, local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will enter a formal transition period. Existing councils continue to deliver services while preparations were undertaken to transfer responsibilities, assets, staff and budgets to the new authority or authorities.

Councils are expected to deliver a comprehensive implementation programme covering governance arrangements, service transition, workforce transfer, financial planning, assets and liabilities, ICT systems and democratic processes. Given the scale of services across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, this phase will require strong programme management and assurance to ensure service continuity and financial stability. This programme management resource is currently being developed within the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area with Nottingham City Council having already recruited to a LGR Director post.

3.7 Shadow Elections

Shadow elections are expected to take place in May 2027 to establish the first cohort of elected Members for the new unitary authorities created through Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. These elections would normally be provided for within the Structural Changes Order. The purpose of shadow elections is to ensure that a democratically elected body is in place ahead of vesting day to provide political leadership, approve key strategic decisions and oversee preparations for the transition from existing councils into the new governance arrangements.

3.8 Vesting Day and commencement of the new unitary authorities

On vesting day, the new unitary authorities for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire become fully operational and assume all statutory functions, powers, assets and liabilities of the predecessor councils, which were formally dissolved. Vesting day is proposed to be 1 April 2028.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Interim Deputy Chief Executive were as follows:

The Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will continue to work with the Nottinghamshire Finance Officers Association (NFOA) on LGR matters, having previously supported the NFOA with the financial aspects of the options submitted in November 2025. This work was completed in conjunction with the consultants, PwC, and supported by CIPFA. The assumptions made by PwC have been challenged and reasonable assurances have been provided as to transition costs and potential financial savings that could be achieved by LGR.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The Council was invited on 5 February 2025 to submit a proposal for unitarisation and local government reorganisation under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”) across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. This power has been actively exercised under the current government's Devolution Priority Programme, as outlined in the English Devolution White Paper published in December 2024, which sets out a renewed commitment to simplifying local government structures to improve service delivery, accountability, and efficiency. These invitations were issued pursuant to the statutory powers under the 2007 Act, supported by ministerial statements and guidance that establish criteria for assessing proposals, including local support, financial sustainability, and service improvement.

Under section 3(6) of the 2007 Act, the Council may respond to the invitation either by a) making its own proposal in accordance with the invitation; or b) making a proposal, in accordance with the invitation, jointly with any of the other authorities. In any event, the proposal will have some sort of impact on Nottinghamshire authorities, when the proposals come to be considered by the Secretary of State as a whole.

There is no statutory requirement on the Councils to consult the members of the public affected by a proposed reorganisation. However, the Secretary of State's invitation and guidance does state that ‘It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal’ and ‘Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed’. Engagement in respect of the

Councils' proposed preferred option has been undertaken, and the results of that engagement are set out in this report.

The decision is then to be made by the Secretary of State by way of a Structural Changes Order (SCO) being laid, which is to follow only after a period of consultation to be undertaken by the Secretary of State and any response to a request for review made of the Boundary Commission. The SCO will cover the initial transitional arrangements, pending elections to the new local government areas, as well as matters relating to those elections.

The approval of any proposal under the Act is an executive function in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 Section 9D(2). The Executive will, therefore, be required to make a final decision on approving the Council's proposal for submission, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Council, which is a consultee in relation to this matter.

6. Human Resources Implications

There were no comments from the Human Resources Manager.

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

It is probably too early at this stage to make any firm comments until the situation affecting members of staff are fully known. Regular engagement with staff to make them aware of progress and to seek their views on these important proposals is essential to maintaining good staff morale moving forward. We do accept that as the LGR progresses then the implications on staff will be clearer and then we feel that relevant feedback from Unison will thus be provided.

8. Climate Change Implications

Not applicable.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

11. Background Papers

Nil.