

Report of the Chief Executive

Local Government Reorganisation1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the ongoing preparatory work being undertaken across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in relation to Local Government Reorganisation.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to NOTE the report.

3. Detail

Work relating to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) continues across all nine councils within the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area following the submission of proposals and subsequent engagement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

This report provides an update on programme activity, recruitment to programme management arrangements, and recent correspondence from MHCLG relating to matters which may potentially form part of a future Structural Change Order (SCO), subject to any proposed decision by the Secretary of State.

Programme Management Office (PMO) Recruitment

At the point of writing this report, recruitment to the initial Programme Management Office (PMO) positions hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council has commenced.

These posts are being offered as secondment opportunities and are open to officers from all nine councils involved in the LGR process. The first wave of recruitment consists of 15 positions covering a range of programme and workstream functions designed to support the ongoing development of the reorganisation programme.

Ongoing Workstreams

Alongside recruitment activity, work continues collectively across all councils to gather, review and develop the relevant information required to support the programme.

This activity is currently being undertaken through nine established workstreams, which continue to gather information with the view to analyse across a range of service, organisational, financial, governance and operational areas associated with LGR.

MHCLG Request for Information Relating to Structural Change Order

MHCLG has recently issued a request for information relating to matters that may potentially be included within a future Structural Change Order, once the Secretary of State makes a proposed decision to proceed with LGR in Nottinghamshire.

The request included the following series of questions,

- Whether you would prefer a preparing council and implementation executive model (where geographies align) or a new council model with a joint committee?
- How many members from each relevant council would you prefer to sit on each joint committee or implementation executive, including the balance of members from different councils?
- Would you prefer for any individuals to be specified for the Chair/Deputy Chair roles, and if so, who?
- What are your views on any requirement for political balance in the implementation executive/joint committee(s)?
- What would be your preferences for the membership of the Implementation Team and whether roles should be specified?
- Who should be the returning officer for the first election to each of the new unitary councils, that proposals would see established (anticipating that the SCO would specify the role at a particular council rather than an individual person)?
- Confirm if you would prefer the SCO to align future parish council elections with those of the new councils and set out when parish council elections currently take place across the four-year electoral cycle for each of the new council areas?
- What are the current legal names of the councils and what would be your preferred names for new councils? If different to the proposals, has there been any further modelling of your preferred councillors for each new council that you would like the Secretary of State to consider, alongside any information on the rationale for the numbers?

Following receipt of the request, a meeting was held with all Group Leaders of the Council to consider an appropriate response.

Following discussion, it was agreed that, in light of the Council's previously submitted representations to the Secretary of State regarding the Council's view that LGR should be paused and further developed based upon service need and taking in to the consideration the views of the Broxtowe residents (as evidenced by the Council's survey conducted in August 2025), it would not be appropriate

to provide a substantive response to the questions posed by MHCLG at this stage. However, it was felt that a letter responding to the request should be provided by the Leader of the Council confirming this position. This letter is provided in the **Appendix**.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were as follows:

The Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer continues 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. The earlier work was completed in conjunction with the consultants, PwC, and supported by CIPFA. The assumptions made by PwC were 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 and Deputy Monitoring Officer 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.

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.