



Corporate Overview Group

Tuesday, 18 November 2025

Local Government Reorganisation: Decision-Making and Governance

Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) features on the upcoming agendas for Council on 20 November 2025 and Cabinet on 25 November 2025 in advance of the final submission of an approved Proposal to Government on 28 November 2025.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report to the Corporate Overview Group is to provide a brief update on the process of developing the submission proposal and the governance arrangements for scrutiny and approval prior to its submission. These include consultation with Corporate Overview Group on the invocation of the Urgency Provisions in the Council's Constitution to suspend Call-In in respect of the decision to be taken at Cabinet on 25 November.
- 1.3. This report also presents draft Terms of Reference for a Member Working Group to provide additional member engagement opportunities and oversight of the next phase of the LGR Programme.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Corporate Overview Group:

- a) Accepts the update on Local Government Reorganisation including the opportunities for Member engagement provided so far;
- b) Acknowledges that, for the reasons given in this report, the decision of Cabinet to submit the Council's proposal to central Government by 28 November 2025 is a Key Decision to which the Urgency Provisions exempting it from the Call-In procedure apply;
- c) Recommends to Cabinet that a new Member Working Group is constituted to provide oversight of the next phase of the LGR Programme.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. To set out the Council's decision-making process in the context of the LGR timetable set by central Government.

- 3.2. To update on opportunities for Member engagement and oversight of the LGR programme.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. On 6 February 2025, Leaders across the nine councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire received a statutory invitation from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, requiring the development of a proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Proposals are required to be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025, and will be assessed against the following criteria:
- a) A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government
 - b) Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks
 - c) Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens
 - d) Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views
 - e) New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements
 - f) New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.
- 4.2. At its meeting of 17 July 2025, Council debated the model for Local Government Reorganisation which should be developed into a full proposal for submission to the Government and resolved to support the development of option 1(b) i.e. one unitary council covering Broxtowe, Gedling and Nottingham City and one unitary council covering the County and Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe. This was informed by the Options Appraisal completed by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), drawing on information and analysis provided by the nine councils. A link to the published Minutes of the Council meeting is included here: [Printed minutes 17th-Jul-2025 19.00 Council.pdf](#)
- 4.3. Since the Council resolution of 17 July, officers have been working at pace to prepare the evidence base necessary to develop this proposal ready for submission with support from PwC. The County Council resolved to support option 1(b) on 2 September 2025 and the Council has been working in partnership with the County Council in preparing a proposal for submission to Government by the deadline of 28 November. A more detailed summary of this work is provided in the Council report for consideration on 20 November 2025.

- 4.4. The proposal sets out the case for developing two new successful unitary councils; one that will serve the more urban communities in and around Nottingham; and the other serving the more rural communities, towns and villages across wider Nottinghamshire. It is an ambitious proposal that looks to the future for the 1.1 million residents of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

5. Engagement

- 5.1. Working within the constraints of the timetable imposed by Government, the Council has sought to engage on LGR proposals throughout. This includes the following:
- a) Resident engagement exercise running for 6 weeks over summer and ending on 14 September
 - b) LGR Roadshows in key towns and villages to provide an opportunity for residents to ask questions and provide feedback
 - c) Engagement with Town and Parish Councils through Town and Parish Forum, Towns and Parishes questionnaire and engagement with the Nottinghamshire branch of the National Association of Local Council (NALC) including presentation at NALC Annual General Meeting
 - d) Member Workshop on 14 October including roundtable discussions on proposals
 - e) Member Survey on workloads and provisions
 - f) Member Briefing of 12 November to coincide with publication of Agenda for Extraordinary Council meeting called for 20 November.
- 5.2. The Extraordinary Council meeting on 20 November provides an additional consultative opportunity for all Councillors to discuss the final proposal before submission to Government by 28 November deadline.

6. Decision Making

- 6.1. The decision to submit the proposal to Government is an Executive decision to be taken by Cabinet at its meeting of 25 November 2025.
- 6.2. As Local Government Reorganisation is a matter of Borough-wide significance, it is a Key Decision and has been published as such on the Council's Forward Plan.
- 6.3. The Council's Constitution makes the following provision for Call-In of Key Decisions of Cabinet:
- a) **4.383** Key Decisions of the Cabinet will come into effect seven working days (not including the day of the meeting) after the meeting unless five

members give notice in writing to the Chief Executive requesting a Call-In of the decision. The facility to Call-In only applies to Key Decisions.

- 6.4. As the Key Decision is to be taken on 25 November and the Government deadline for submission by the Council of its proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in its area is 28 November, it is necessary for the following Urgency Provisions to be invoked to exempt the decision from Call-In:
- a) **4.394** The Call-In procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the Call-In process would prejudice the Council's or the public's interests
 - b) **4.395** The Cabinet must decide that no Call-In may be made on the grounds of urgency at the time the decision is made, and not subsequently. This will be indicated at a set point on the agenda
 - c) **4.396** If there is an urgent item, which it would not be practicable to Call-In, then the Cabinet decision can be implemented by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the relevant Cabinet member and the Chair of the relevant scrutiny committee.
- 6.5. Failure to submit the Local Government Reorganisation Proposal by the 28 November deadline risks that the Council's proposal is not considered by Government. This would be prejudicial to the interests of the Council and the Borough's residents. For this reason, it is considered necessary to exempt the Cabinet decision from Call-In on grounds of urgency. This requires consultation with Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee. This consultation is through this report to Corporate Overview Group to ensure transparency and increase consultation for this strategically important issue. The notice at **Appendix 1** has been sent to the Chair of Corporate Overview Group and the Chairs of the Council's three Scrutiny Committees.

7. Member Working Group

- 7.1. It is proposed to establish a cross-party member working group to provide opportunity for oversight of the next phases of the LGR process. The draft Terms of Reference of the proposed Group are attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 7.2. Corporate Overview Group is asked to consider the proposed Terms of Reference and provide comments. It is also asked to recommend to Cabinet that the Group is set up. This draft Terms of Reference are also included in the Council report for consideration at the 20 November meeting.

8. Risks and Uncertainties

- 8.1. If the Urgency Provisions are not invoked to exempt Call-In of the Cabinet decision to be taken on 25 November, it would not be possible to meet the Government's submission deadline and this Council's proposal would not be put forward to Government for consideration, having negative reputational

impact and a potential impact on the future of services delivered to our residents.

- 8.2. Due to the amount of work required to build a proposal taking into account the collaborative aspects of the work, the central Government driven timetable, and the desire to engage with both residents and members, it was not possible to complete the work early enough to allow for the full Call-In period after Cabinet to be observed.
- 8.3. The inherent risks in suspending the Call-In period have been mitigated by ongoing communications and engagement with all councillors through briefings and workshops.

9. Implications

9.1. Financial Implications

There will be resource implications in servicing an additional Member Working Group. If additional resources are required in supporting LGR there will be a call on the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve and this will be reported to both Cabinet and Corporate Overview Group as part of normal financial reporting.

9.2. Legal Implications

The relevant legislation is the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Under Section 2 of the Act the Secretary of State has issued an invitation to councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to submit proposals for a single tier of local government. The Secretary of State has the power to implement proposals with or without modification, but the Act prevents any Order being made unless consultation has been carried out with all affected authorities and others considered appropriate. This statutory consultation will be led by Government and is separate from the Council's own engagement activity.

If the Government decides to proceed, the necessary legislation will be prepared in the form of a Structural Changes Order (SCO) for parliamentary approval. The SCO will establish the new single tier of local government and make provision for the abolition of predecessor councils. The SCO would place a duty on all affected councils to co-operate, to provide information as reasonably requested, and to prepare for the transfer of functions, property, rights and liabilities.

At this stage there are no direct legal implications for the Council. If implemented, there will be significant contractual, property and staffing implications requiring further legal advice, which will be addressed through the transition process.

The decision of approving a submission on Local Government Reorganisation to the Secretary of State, is one for the Council's Executive i.e. Cabinet.

9.3. Equalities Implications

There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

9.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no direct Crime and Disorder Act implications arising from this report.

9.5. Biodiversity Net Gain

There are no direct Biodiversity Net Gain implications arising from this report.

10. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	The LGR proposal sets out aims to protect our local environment.
Quality of Life	The LGR proposal sets out aims to have a positive impact on residents' quality of life.
Efficient Services	The LGR proposal aims to improve services ensuring they are more efficient through public service reform.
Sustainable Growth	The LGR proposal sets out plans to support and deliver sustainable growth.

11. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Corporate Overview Group:

- a) Accepts the update on Local Government Reorganisation including the opportunities for Member engagement provided so far;
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- c) Recommends to Cabinet that a new Member Working Group is constituted to provide oversight of the next phase of the LGR Programme.

For more information contact:	Adam Hill Chief Executive 0115 9148577 AHill@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	

List of appendices:

Appendix 1: Notice of Urgency and Exemption from Call-In.

Appendix 2: Draft Terms of Reference of proposed Member Working Group