RECORD OF EXERCISE OF DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY OFFICER PURSUANT TO REGULATION 13 OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS) (MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012 & THE OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATIONS 2014

SUBJECT OF DECISION Leader of the Council to respond to Ministerial Letter concerning election delays request.	
DECISION REFERENCE DO/78/2026 (TS)	SOURCE OF AUTHORITY AND REFERENCE (i.e. Committee/ Constitution/Minute No. etc. Constitution Part 3D.5 e) Part 3E.1 d) i
DATE OF DECISION 5/1/2026	DECISION MAKER (Name and Job Title) Tom Shardlow, Chief Executive Officer

RECORD OF THE DECISION

a) The issue

On 18 December, the Government wrote to all councils in England scheduled to hold elections in May 2026 and currently undergoing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The letter, addressed to the Leader of the Council, sought their view on whether they wished to delay the elections to allow greater focus on LGR.

Although the letter was directed to the Leader, there was uncertainty around whether the Leader had the constitutional authority to respond on behalf of the Council. The view taken is that it could be deemed as an executive arrangement as it relates to resources of the Council, but it was agreed each political group had a section to provide their view to provide a Council view. Furthermore, the Government provided only a short response window, spanning the Christmas and New Year period, which made it impractical to convene an extraordinary Council or Cabinet meeting

b) The Decision

Following consultation with all political groups, the Chief Executive agreed to support the Leader in preparing a templated response letter. Each group was invited to contribute its own section within the letter, summarising its position on the matter. Each section was headed with the member's name, their group, and the total number of members in that group.

In addition, the Chief Executive and Returning Officer provided a factual assessment of the Council's operational readiness to deliver an election.

It is important to note that the decision to delay or proceed with the election rests solely with the Government. This process only determined the mechanism for the Leader to respond and articulate the Council's views. The CEO used their emergency powers under the Constitution – due to the urgent nature.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

To respond to the Governments request within the timeline given, and to ensure that the Leader acted with Constitutional compliance.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED IN MAKING THE DECISION

The Council could have simply not responded or responded late, but this would not have articulated the Council's view within the Government time window.

WARD RELEVANCE

All

FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS This decision has no bearing. The Government's subsequent decision may give rising to a saving if the election is delayed.
CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN WITH MEMBERS/OFFICERS All Group Leaders / Members.
ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED BY ANY MEMBER CONSULTED N/A
IN RESPECT OF ANY DECLARED CONFLICT BY A CABINET MEMBER, ANY DISPENSATION GIVEN BY THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE (Note if the decision is a non-executive decision, no dispensation can be given). N/A
EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS (including any Equality Impact Assessment) N/A
HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS N/A
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS As above.
HEALTH EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS N/A
SECTION 17 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS **N/A**
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS **N/A**
SME (SMALL/MEDIUM ENTERPRISES) & LOCAL ECONOMY IMPLICATIONS N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS N/A
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS **N/A**
ANY OTHER COMMENTS

PLEASE RETURN TO THE MONITORING OFFICER AS SOON AS A DECISION IS MADE OR AS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE THEREAFTER