


**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**

<u>SUBJECT OF DECISION</u>	
Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire – Structural Changes Order Response	
<u>DECISION REFERENCE</u>	<u>SOURCE OF AUTHORITY AND REFERENCE</u> (i.e. Committee/ Constitution/Minute No. etc.)
DO/10/2026 (TS)	CB58 b) – Cabinet -12 th November 2025 3D.1 General Delegations – d) Take any action incidental to, or to give effect to, decisions taken by elected Members within their sphere of responsibility.
<u>DATE OF DECISION</u>	<u>DECISION MAKER</u> (Name and Job Title)
16 th June 2026	 Tom Shardlow, Chief Executive
<u>RECORD OF THE DECISION</u>	
<p>a) The issue</p> <p>As part of the Local Government Reorganisation, the Government wrote to Chief Executives of all Warwickshire Councils on 19th May 2026 to seek views on matters that will be necessary for the Secretary of State to consider in any Structural Changes Order (see appendix 1).</p> <p>b) The Decision</p> <p>Following consultation with Group Leaders, the Leader of the Council and other Leaders and Chief Executives from across Warwickshire Councils, a single, unified response was submitted on 16th June 2026 to the Co-Deputy Director for Local Government Reorganisation (see appendix 2).</p>	
<u>REASON FOR THE DECISION</u>	
To provide response to the Government’s request to provide feedback ahead of the drafting of the SCO.	

<p><u>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED IN MAKING THE DECISION</u></p> <p>Not responding was an option, however, to exercise this option, would mean that NBBC's opportunity to influence would be lost.</p>
<p><u>WARD RELEVANCE</u></p> <p>All</p>
<p><u>FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS</u></p> <p>Non arising.</p>
<p><u>CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN WITH MEMBERS/OFFICERS</u></p> <p>An in-person meeting was convened with NBBC Group Leaders to allow for discussion and feedback ahead of a meeting of all Warwickshire CEs and Council Leaders. Statutory Officers also engaged.</p>
<p><u>ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED BY ANY MEMBER CONSULTED</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><u>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).</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><u>EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS (including any Equality Impact Assessment)</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><u>HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><u>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</u></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><u>HEALTH EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS</u></p> <p>N/A</p>

<u>SECTION 17 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS</u>
N/A
<u>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</u>
N/A
<u>SME (SMALL/MEDIUM ENTERPRISES) & LOCAL ECONOMY IMPLICATIONS</u>
N/A
<u>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS</u>
N/A
<u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</u>
N/A
<u>ANY OTHER COMMENTS</u>
N/A

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



Beatrice Andrews
Co-Deputy Director, Local Government
Reorganisation
**Ministry of Housing, Communities &
Local Government**
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Chief Executives of Warwickshire Councils

19 May 2026

Dear Chief Executives,

I am writing to seek your views on matters that will be necessary for the Secretary of State to consider in any Structural Changes Order (SCO). The final decision on all these matters, including whether to implement a proposal, with or without modification, lies with the Secretary of State. Seeking your views is without prejudice to whether the Secretary of State decides to implement a proposal.

For the matters below, we would appreciate your response by **Tuesday 16 June**, and if you are able to provide an earlier response this would be appreciated. This is so the Secretary of State can consider and take decisions on these matters after he has taken decisions on which proposal, if any, to implement, with or without modification. These decisions will then be shared alongside the announcement of any reorganisation decision, which we expect to make before summer recess. While all views expressed will be considered, it is ultimately for the Secretary of State to decide what to include in the legislation to ensure any new councils are well placed to go live and to implement the proposal that is chosen.

We encourage you to work together to seek to agree representations for each proposal that would affect your councils for the Secretary of State to consider. You can respond singly, jointly, or as a collective, to [LReorganisation@communities.gov.uk](mailto:LGReorganisation@communities.gov.uk) and to your delivery lead, Jon Scanlan (jonathan.scanlan@communities.gov.uk). Even if agreement cannot be reached, we encourage you to discuss your thoughts with each other. If you are unable to provide a view at this stage on any of these matters, it would be helpful if this could be set out so it can be considered by ministers.

Interim implementation structures

In the event of a decision to reorganise, a SCO will provide for the creation of a new single tier of local government for the area. This could either be through the creation of an entirely new council, or by establishing the new council as a continuing authority of one of the existing councils – known as a preparing council. Our current view is that a preparing council will only be considered where there is an existing council on the same geography as the new unitary council. We understand there is interest from some in whether a preparing council model is possible where the geography is very similar – if you think this could apply then your thoughts on democratic accountability and other practical considerations in the transition period in this model would be welcomed.

In advance of elections, the SCO requires the establishment of joint committees for each new council, or an implementation executive for any preparing council. Once elections are held – expected to be on 6 May 2027 – the executive of the shadow council or preparing council is empowered to make preparations for the new council to go live and provides direction to the implementation team. The SCO places duties on all councils to cooperate as a key principle, and it is important that transitional arrangements for reorganisation is a shared endeavour. The transitional responsibilities are set out in the [Implementation Bodies guidance](#) published on 12 March.

The SCO specifies, for each new unitary council, the membership of the joint committee/s or implementation executive. The SCO could, but does not have to, specify who is to be the Chair and could specify provisions around political balance. The joint committee/s and implementation executive would have a time and purpose limited existence given the expectation in this round of local government reorganisation that elections take place 11 months before any new unitary councils go live.

The SCO requires that an officer implementation team consisting of officers of all affected councils across the invitation area would be formed to support the implementation of the proposal through the entire transition. The SCO would specify particular roles, such as the Lead and Deputy Lead.

Elections

The SCO specifies the returning officers for the first election to each of the new unitary councils created. The SCO could also align parish council elections with the elections to the new councils.

Names

The SCO lists the councils that will be abolished and names new unitary councils. To support the timetable described above, we anticipate that decisions will be taken on naming new councils at this stage, with Ministers being guided by the information in proposals and your representations. For the avoidance of doubt, the names announced will be included in the SCO. However, it should be noted that existing legislation provides for a council to change its legal name, and councils do choose to operate with an alternative name for branding purposes.

Councillor numbers and warding arrangements for the first election

The SCO will include a schedule setting out warding arrangements and the number of councillors for each new council for the first election. We anticipate these councillors will be elected for an initial term of five years subject, of course, to Ministerial decision. While councillor numbers were included in proposals, we appreciate this may have been further refined as more detailed modelling work on warding has been undertaken. If this is the case, please do confirm your proposed councillor numbers and any rationale for this to support the Minister's final decisions on the content of the SCO. We will need any further representations on numbers by 16 June at the latest, and ideally earlier.

With regard to your suggested warding arrangements, these can be based on any combination of existing wards, divisions and parish boundaries. We understand there may be significant work compiling this, and that you may wish to wait until after a decision on which proposal is to be implemented to finalise this work. We will need any further information on warding by **17 August** and would appreciate receiving it before this date wherever possible.

We would encourage you to consider the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's guidance, as set out on their [website](#) and in our joint webinars last year as a good place to start while drawing these up, while recognising that the usual criteria are unlikely to be met in the same way as a full review. The Commission can offer advice and guidance as you draw up these boundaries. Please do reach out to them directly if you have not already. The Commission expects to carry out an electoral review of all newly established councils after their first elections and before their subsequent elections.

Ceremonial matters

With regard to historic and ceremonial matters, we understand the importance of these and will work closely with you through the transition period to ensure these are preserved. Many matters are covered by generic regulations, or local agreements you may choose to make. Any matters requiring legislative provision, such as the establishment of Charter Trustees in unparished areas, or amendments to the Lord Lieutenancy, are normally provided for through a supplementary "mop-up" order that brings together localised and place-specific arrangements once the SCO has established the new governance framework. This approach has been used successfully in previous reorganisations, including in Cumbria, and is the approach we are taking in Surrey, and ensures historic rights and privileges are preserved while allowing the main Order to focus on the transition to new unitary arrangements. If there are any particular issues that we should be aware of, please do reach out if you have not already done so.

Timetable

The SCO is subject to the affirmative procedure and usually takes six to nine months to prepare and take through Parliament, depending on the complexity. As an indicative timetable, we hope to draft the SCO over the summer, with a version shared in the autumn for fact checking, before sending the Order for pre-legislative scrutiny and laying in Parliament around the end of the year.

Questions

In summary, for each proposal these are the questions for you to consider for 16 June or before:

- 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? (We anticipate 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 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?

For 17 August or before:

- What are your suggested wards, that reflect the proposal and councillor numbers decided, and that best meet the LGBCE guidance, for inclusion in the SCO?

We have attached some information that sets out how this has been done previously along with links to relevant SCOs including Surrey. We would again emphasise that decisions will be taken for each area taking account of the representations across all proposals in an area and other relevant matters.

We are meeting on 29 May to discuss these matters and any initial views you have by then. We would like the ideas that you share with us by 16 June 2026 to have political endorsement; accordingly, we ask that this letter is shared with Leaders.

Yours sincerely,



Beatrice Andrews
Co-Deputy Director, Local Government Reorganisation

North Warwickshire Borough Council



Beatrice Andrews
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Phone: 01827 715341
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Date: 16 June 2026

By email to - LGRorganisation@communities.gov.uk
Cc Jon Scanlon - by email to jonathan.scanlan@communities.gov.uk

Dear Beatrice

Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire – Structural Changes Order

I write on behalf of the Chief Executives of the Principal Councils in Warwickshire ('the Councils') in response to your letter of 19th May, and further to our meeting with your team on the 29th May.

Set out below is our joint response to your letter and the questions posed within it. This has been discussed with our Council Leaders and other Councillors within our Councils and at a joint meeting of Council Leaders and Chief Executives on the 10th June.

You will see from the response, and our presentation to your team on the 29th May, that a great deal of the matters are relatively straight forward and there is complete agreement between the Councils. There are however some matters in which views differ, and we set out those differing positions within this letter. I am pleased to confirm however that most of the differing positions are not new matters and that there have been positive conversations with all Councils seeking to understand the respective positions of colleagues. We remain committed therefore to working together positively and effectively on this programme, and we are pleased to note the comments of your team that this commitment is very obvious and is welcomed by MHCLG.

We appreciate that your seeking views is without prejudice to such decisions the Secretary of State may make. Similarly, we have answered the questions on the basis of the current position assuming a decision in July 2026 leading to new Authorities in 2028. Members in particular wanted to point out that if there were changes to that programme then these answers are without prejudice to any further or different points they would wish to make at that point.

Steve Maxey BA (Hons) Dip LG Solicitor Chief Executive

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In respect of the specific questions asked:

1. *Whether you would prefer a preparing council and implementation executive model (where geographies align) or a new council model with a joint committee?*

The Councils have agreed that irrespective of whether there is to be one or two unitary Councils, they would prefer a new council model with a joint committee. We are aware that this is a different position from the submitted proposals.

2. *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?*

The Councils note the Surrey SCO and the 50/50 split regarding Members (i.e. the same number from the County Council as, combined, from the District and Borough Councils). Most of the Councils would be content with that, and that is the County Council's preference. However Stratford-on-Avon District Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council notes that in previous local government reorganisations, such as Cumbria and Northamptonshire, there has been equal membership from each Council, and their preference would be for this model. Furthermore, the view of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council is that additional weighting is considered for District and Borough Councils.

3. *Would you prefer for any individuals to be specified for the Chair/Deputy Chair roles, and if so, who?*

The Councils would prefer for this to be a local decision. We do however note that depending on the Secretary of State's view on question 2, there may be an even number of Councillors on the Committee(s) so we note there is a risk of impasse if agreement cannot be reached. We do not however regard that risk to be high given the good working relationship that exists in the County. Your team suggested that the Chair of the Committee(s) would not have a casting vote; given the general law and practice with regard to committees we would not suggest this, as there would not then be a mechanism to resolve any impasse.

4. *What are your views on any requirement for political balance in the implementation executive/joint committee(s)?*

The Councils do not regard this as being necessary, not least as in the current circumstances a representative from the Leadership of each Council (subject to their respective arrangements) will ensure representation from five political groups (Conservative, Green, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Reform).

5. *What would be your preferences for the membership of the Implementation Team and whether roles should be specified?*

Again, we would ask that the roles be decided locally but all the Councils endorse the Surrey model which we think should be implemented irrespective of whether there is to be one or two Unitary Authorities.

6. *Who should be the returning officer for the first election to each of the new unitary councils, that proposals would see established? (We anticipate that the SCO would specify the role at a particular council rather than an individual person)*

Again, our view is that this should be decided locally but should be from within the Chief Executive, s.151 officer and Monitoring Officer cohort.

7. *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?*

The Councils very strongly believe that this is vital and this view is supported by the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils. If Town and Parish Council elections are not aligned, they would be left to bear the full cost of their own elections which would have a very serious impact on the excellent work that these Councils do, by significantly reducing their available funds.

8. *What are the current legal names of the councils and what would be your preferred names for new councils?*

The current legal names are as follows:

North Warwickshire Borough Council
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Rugby Borough Council
Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Warwick District Council
Warwickshire County Council

For a single unitary Authority, the Councils would prefer that to be named 'Warwickshire Council'.

For two unitary Councils, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council would prefer 'North Warwickshire Council' and 'South Warwickshire Council'.

Rugby Borough Council would prefer 'Northern Warwickshire Council' and 'Southern Warwickshire Council'. Rugby prefers to consult on the issue of the name and believes the area would not feel comfortable with a Council named North Warwickshire. There are other names to consider in addition such as 'North and East Warwickshire' or 'North Warwickshire and Rugby'.

9. *If different to 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?*

We have already made representations to your team that specifying a number of Councillors before further work on warding arrangements is challenging and the Councils would prefer for this to be done the other way round. Notwithstanding this, our representations are set out below.

For a single unitary, Warwickshire County Council's submission, endorsed by Rugby Borough Council, suggested using the existing County Council Divisions, with two Councillors per division which would produce 114 Councillors. Under this scenario all Councils would support the use of existing County Council Divisions. Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council proposed in their submission that this model be used if there is to be two Unitary Councils.

However, there are a number of Divisions that are out of tolerance, in particular three Divisions, one in Nuneaton and Bedworth, one in Warwick District and one in Stratford on Avon District, which are around 30% or more out of tolerance (Weddington, Bidford & Welford and Budbrooke & Bishops Tachbrook). This could be corrected, pending a full Boundary Commission for England review, by the addition of one Member into each of these Divisions taking the number of Councillors to 117.

The submission for two unitary Authorities suggested that two options could be considered. Firstly, as above with two Councillors per County Council Divisions which would produce 60 Councillors for the North/Northern Council and 54 in the South/Southern Council (or 61 and 56 if the two divisions which are out of tolerance by over 30% are corrected). The alternative being to apply District / Borough ward boundaries

In the case of two Unitary Councils, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils in particular would prefer the use of the existing Borough and District Wards to give greater representation at least initially until a full electoral review, which would be beneficial in the first years of the new Authorities. This would result in 85 Councillors for the South/Southern Warwickshire Council.

Whilst there is interest in exploring and modelling this option further between now and 17th August, North Warwickshire Borough Council believe using the County Divisions, as amended above, would be simpler and more in line with recent Local Government Reorganisation decisions. However, if the Secretary of State is minded to use the Borough/District wards for a South/Southern authority, then clearly the same basis would need to be used to determine Councillor representation for the North/Northern authority, with 115 Councillors for the North/Northern Council.

As requested we will provide further information on Ward arrangements by the 17th August at the latest.

If you require any further information, including more details on the reasons for our answers, we would be happy to meet with you and your team again.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Maxey', with a large loop at the end.

Steve Maxey
Chief Executive