Nuneaton & Bedworth
United to Achieve

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Date: 3rd November 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Local Government Reform Sub-Committee** will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Nuneaton, on **Wednesday 11th November 2026** at **6.00p.m.**

Yours faithfully,

Tom Shardlow

Chief Executive

To: Members of LGR Sub-Committee

Councillors: M. Bannister, J. Clarke, G. Finch, B. Hughes, N. King, C. Morris, and K. Wilson

AGENDA

PART I

PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. EVACUATION PROCEDURE

A fire drill is not expected, so if the alarm sounds, please evacuate the building quickly and calmly. Please use the stairs and do not use the lifts. Once out of the building, please gather outside the Lloyds Bank on the opposite side of the road.

Exit by the door by which you entered the room or by the fire exits which are clearly indicated by the standard green fire exit signs.

If you need any assistance in evacuating the building, please make yourself known to a member of staff.

Please also make sure all your mobile phones are turned off or set to silent.

2. APOLOGIES - To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

Declaring interests at meetings
If there is any item of business to be discussed at the meeting in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest or non- pecuniary interest (Other Interests), you must declare the interest appropriately at the start of the meeting or as soon as you become aware that you have an interest.

Arrangements have been made so that interests that are declared regularly by members can be viewed in a schedule on the Council website (Councillor Declarations of Interests) Any interest noted in the schedule on the website will be deemed to have been declared and will be minuted as such by the Democratic Services Officer. As a general rule, there will, therefore, be no need for those Members to declare those interests as set out in the schedule.
There are, however, TWO EXCEPTIONS to the general rule:

1. When the interest amounts to a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is engaged in connection with any item on the agenda and the member feels that the interest is such that they must leave the room. Prior to leaving the room, the member must inform the meeting that they are doing so, to ensure that it is recorded in the minutes.

2. Where a dispensation has been granted to vote and/or speak on an item where there is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, but it is not referred to in the Schedule (where for example, the dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer immediately prior to the meeting). The existence and nature of the dispensation needs to be recorded in the minutes and will, therefore, have to be disclosed at an appropriate time to the meeting.

Note: Following the adoption of the new Code of Conduct, Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their personal interests at the commencement of the relevant item (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary or a Deemed Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, the Member must withdraw from the room.

Where a Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest but has received a dispensation from Audit and Standards Committee, that Member may vote and/or speak on the matter (as the case may be) and must disclose the existence of the dispensation and any restrictions placed on it at the time the interest is declared.

Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest as defined in the Code of Conduct, the Member may address the meeting as a member of the public as set out in the Code.

Note: Council Procedure Rules require Members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to withdraw from the meeting unless a dispensation allows them to remain to vote and/or speak on the business giving rise to the interest.

Where a Member has a Deemed Disclosable Interest, the Council's Code of Conduct permits public speaking on the item, after which the Member is required by Council Procedure Rules to withdraw from the meeting.

4. MINUTES – to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th November 2025 **(Page 5)** and to be signed by the Chair.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION – Members of the Public will be given the opportunity to speak on specific agenda items, if notice has been received.
Members of the public will be given three minutes to speak on a particular item and this is strictly timed. The Chair will inform all public speakers that: their comments must be limited to addressing issues raised in the agenda item under consideration: and that any departure from the item will not be tolerated.

The Chair may interrupt the speaker if they start discussing other matters which are not related to the item, or the speaker uses threatening or inappropriate language towards Councillors or officers and if after a warning issued by the Chair, the speaker persists, they will be asked to stop speaking by the Chair. The Chair will advise the speaker that, having ignored the warning, the speaker's opportunity to speak to the current or other items on the agenda may not be allowed. In this eventuality, the Chair has discretion to exclude the speaker from speaking further on the item under consideration or other items of the agenda.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM – UPDATE. NEXT STEPS FOR WARWICKSHIRE – report of the Chief Executive attached **(Page 7)**

7. ANY OTHER ITEMS **-** which in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances (which must be specified).

Agenda Item 4

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM SUB-COMMITTEE **24th November 2025**

A meeting of Local Government Reform Sub-Committee was held on Monday 24th November, 2025 in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

Present

Councillor C. Watkins (Chair)
Councillors: J. Clarke, S. Hey, M. Kondakor, S. Markham, and K. Wilson

LGR13 **Apologies**

Apologies received for Councillor K. Price

LGR14 **Declarations of Interest**

RESOLVED that the Declarations of Interest for this meeting are as set out in the Schedule published on the website.

LGR15 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Local Government Reform Sub-committee held on 22nd September 2025 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

LGR16 **Community Governance**

The Chief Executive submitted a report outlining the process and key considerations associated with establishing community governance structures within the Borough, specifically through the mechanism of Community Governance Reviews (CGRs).

The following points were raised:

- A member asked what percentage of the population would be needed to initiate a community petition. The Chief Executive (CE) advised that it depends on area and banding but for Nuneaton and Bedworth it would be 10% of the population.
- A member raised that there are a lot of unknowns and would not be supportive of starting this process currently due to the resources required in both monetary and officer time.
- A member raised that we need to ensure that the CGR is completed by NBBC as we know our local area but could also foresee that areas outside the boundary would be more aligned with us e.g. Bramcote and Hartshill.
- Further information to be provided in a comparison chart from other Town Councils that have resulted from unitarisation looking at devolvement of powers and precepts for Council Tax showing the figures for a single unitary or two unitary to see how this would work. The CE advised that it is key that we do that work, Town Councils can have different meaning e.g. some are Civic only, some are local services and some can have pseudo district/borough services.

- A member advised that he had recently attended a meeting of all the Parish Chairs in Warwickshire and there is a huge disparity in different types and what is expected of them.
- It is important that another district/borough council is not created at the outcome of the CGR.
- A member raised that it will be important to retain the historical identity of the area, noting residents' perception of locality and historical importance, this needs to be part of the discussion.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Cabinet that:

a) the report be noted and the actions raised be brought back to a future meeting of the Local Government Reform Sub-committee; and

b) recommend to Council this it is most logical to defer a full council decision to initiate a Community Governance Review, until the Government has decided on the future structure or local government within Warwickshire.

LGR17 **Any Other Items**

a) LGR Submission Letter

It was raised that Rugby Borough Council (RBC) have voted to align with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) for a single unitary of Warwickshire and queried how this would affect our submission. The CE advised that NBBC's submission for a two unitary will still be submitted and that a letter has been circulated to be included in our submission, RBC will submit their letter supporting WCC single unitary option. It will then be Government's decision, but we have the support of the Mayor of West Midlands Combined Authority and five Members of Parliament. A member raised if a letter could be circulated which would be signed by all three group leaders to demonstrate unity.

RESOLVED that the Chief Executive draft a letter to be signed by all three group leaders for signatures and submitted in conjunction with our business case.

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Chair

Nuneaton & Bedworth
United to Achieve

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Local Government Reform Sub-Committee
Date of Meeting:	11th November 2026
Subject:	Local Government Reform – Update. Next Steps for Warwickshire
Portfolio:	Not Applicable
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Plan – Theme:	Your Council
Corporate Plan – Aim:	Strive for transparency and accountability, in all that we do. Increase public scrutiny
Ward Relevance:	All
Public or Private:	Public
Amendment to Budget:	No Council Tax Related: No
Recommendation to Council/Cabinet/Committee:	Subject to Decision made by LGR Sub-Committee
Forward Plan:	No
Subject to Call-in:	Not applicable

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1. Purpose of report

1.1. To inform Members of the Government's announcement of 29 October 2026 regarding the progression of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals across England.

1.2. To note that Warwickshire has been identified as one of five areas where Government is currently minded to proceed with local government reorganisation proposals.

1.3. To advise Members of the forthcoming representation period during which local authorities and stakeholders will have the opportunity to make further submissions before Government reaches its final decision.

2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that the Local Government Reorganisation Sub-Committee:

a) Notes the Government's announcement of 29 October 2026 regarding Local Government Reorganisation proposals across England.

b) Notes that Warwickshire has been identified as one of five areas where Government is minded to proceed with reorganisation proposals, subject to consideration of further representations.

c) Notes that a minimum three-week period has been provided during which further representations may be submitted to Government before final decisions are taken.

d) Agrees to continue to oversee and support the Council's engagement with the Local Government Reorganisation process and any further representations made on behalf of the authority.

3. Background

3.1. The Government's programme of Local Government Reorganisation seeks to establish unitary structures in areas currently operating under two-tier arrangements.

3.2. Throughout 2026, councils in affected areas have worked collaboratively to develop and submit proposals for future local government structures capable of meeting Government criteria relating to service delivery, financial sustainability, local identity, strategic leadership and devolution ambitions.

3.3. Warwickshire authorities have actively participated in the development and consideration of options for future local government arrangements.

3.4. The Council submitted its case to Government in November 2025 following consideration at Full Council on 29 October 2025 and approval at Cabinet on 12 November 2025.

3.5. On 16 July 2026, the Government announced its intention to proceed with a two-unitary council model for Warwickshire.

3.6. However, on 7 September 2026, the Government subsequently issued a letter pausing the Local Government Reorganisation programme. Since that time, the Council has worked with partner authorities to conclude programme activity already underway and has awaited further direction from Government.

3.7. On 29 October 2026, the Government announced its latest position regarding Local Government Reorganisation proposals across England. As part of this announcement, Warwickshire was identified as one of five areas where the Government is minded to proceed with reorganisation proposals, subject to a period for further representations before final decisions are made.

4. Body of report and reason for recommendations

4.1. On 29 October 2026, Government announced that it was minded to progress Local Government Reorganisation proposals in five areas of England, including Warwickshire.

4.2. Whilst this announcement represents a significant milestone in the reorganisation programme, it does not constitute a final decision by Government.

4.3. Government has confirmed that a period for further representations will take place before final determinations are reached. The representation period will be for a minimum of three weeks and will enable councils, stakeholders and other interested parties to provide further information and comments for consideration. At

the time of writing the report, it is not clear when the three week representations window will open.

4.4. During this period, councils across Warwickshire will review the detail of the Government's announcement and consider whether any additional representations should be submitted individually or collectively.

4.5. Officers will continue to monitor developments and maintain engagement with Government departments, regional partners and Warwickshire authorities throughout this stage of the process.

4.6. The future structure of local government within Warwickshire remains subject to final ministerial decision and therefore the Council's existing governance, functions and responsibilities remain unchanged at this stage.

4.7. Given the scale and significance of the proposed reorganisation, regular updates will be provided to Members through the Local Government Reorganisation Sub-Committee and/or other appropriate governance arrangements, such as Cabinet.

5. Consultation with the public, members, officers and associated stakeholders

5.1. Consultation and engagement have taken place throughout the development of local government reorganisation proposals at both local and countywide levels.

5.2. The Government's current representation period provides a further opportunity for local authorities, stakeholders and residents to make representations before final decisions are taken.

5.3. Members will continue to be kept informed of developments as the process progresses.

5.4. Members may wish to note the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Members' Briefing Note issued by the Monitoring Officer to all elected Members on 24 July 2026.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

6.2. Any future financial implications associated with Local Government Reorganisation will be reported to Members as further details become available. However, Cabinet may need to consider budget provision for Local Government Re-organisation as part of the 2027/2028 Budget subject to the decision made by Government.

7. Legal Implications

7.1. The Government's consideration of Local Government Reorganisation proposals is being undertaken in accordance with powers available under relevant local government legislation.

7.2. No legal decisions are sought through this report.

7.3. Any future implementation arrangements arising from Government decisions will be subject to further legal consideration and reporting.

7.4. It is worth the committee noting that as detailed within previous reports to Cabinet regarding LGR, Sections 1 to 7 of Chapter 1, Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, provides the legal foundation for structural changes in local government in England. The UK Government's current Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme is underpinned by the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (2025) and guided by the English Devolution White Paper published in December 2024. As of 30 October 2025, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill 2026 was passed by Parliament and received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026.

7.5. Once the Government has made its decision, it appears likely that Shadow Authority Elections will take place in May 2028 with the new Unitary Authorities vesting in April 2029. It remains the case that local elections will proceed in May 2027. The Council will need to seek confirmation from the Government whether the Borough Council elections will proceed as planned in May 2028.

8. Equalities implications

8.1. It has been identified that no assessment is required at this stage.

9. Health implications

9.1. It has been identified that no assessment is required at this stage.

10. Environmental implications

10.1. No direct climate and/or environmental implications have been identified.

11. Section 17 Crime and Disorder Implications

11.1. No direct Section 17 crime and disorder implications have been identified.

12. Risk management implications

12.1. The following risk management implications have been identified:

12.1.1. Uncertainty remains until Government reaches a final decision.
12.1.2. Changes to local government structures may create uncertainty for residents, partners and staff.
12.1.3. Reputational risks may arise if stakeholders perceive that local views have not been appropriately represented.
12.1.4. If the Government proceeds with LGR in Warwickshire, members will need to be conscious of the organisational resource and capacity to deliver services in addition to planning and preparing for the new unitary Council.

12.2. It is proposed to mitigate the above by implementing the following mitigations:

12.2.1. Continued engagement with Government and partner authorities.
12.2.2. Clear communication with Members, staff and stakeholders.
12.2.3. Timely consideration and submission of any further representations during the Government's consultation period.

12.2.4. Consideration of resource will be required as will collaborative working with Warwickshire based local authorities. Furthermore, expectations will need to be managed in terms of delivery against the Corporate Plan and Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.

13. Human resources implications

13.1. No direct human resource implications have been identified.

13.2. Any workforce implications arising from future Government decisions will be considered and reported through the appropriate governance arrangements.

14. Biodiversity Implications

14.1. No direct biodiversity implications have been identified.

15. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

15.1. The following LGR implications have been identified:

15.1.1. Warwickshire has been identified as one of five areas where Government is minded to proceed with Local Government Reorganisation.
15.1.2. A further representation period will take place before final decisions are made.
15.1.3. Future local government structures within Warwickshire remain subject to ministerial determination.

15.2. If the recommendations are approved, the decisions will bring the following benefits from an LGR perspective:

15.2.1. Members are formally informed of the latest Government position.
15.2.2. Appropriate governance oversight of the reorganisation process is maintained.
15.2.3. The Council remains well positioned to influence and respond to future developments.

16. Options considered and reason for their rejection

16.1. In formulating this report and recommendations, the following other options were identified. Reasons for their rejection or why the option and recommendation proposed

in section 2 of the report has been selected are outlined below.

Option Ref	Option Title	Reason for rejection or why the option and recommendation proposed in section 2 of the report has been selected
A	Do nothing	Rejected. Members should be informed of significant Government announcements affecting the future governance arrangements of the Borough.
B	Defer Consideration	Rejected as it would delay Member awareness and oversight of an important stage within the reorganisation programme. There was also a scheduled meeting setup.

17. Conclusion

17.1. The Government's announcement of 29 October 2026 represents a significant milestone in the Local Government Reorganisation programme and confirms that Warwickshire is one of five areas where Government is currently minded to proceed with reorganisation proposals.

17.2. The announcement is not the final decision. A minimum three-week representation period will now take place before Government reaches a final determination.

17.3. It is therefore appropriate that Members note the announcement, the forthcoming opportunity for representations, and the continued engagement of the Council in the Local Government Reorganisation process.

18. Appendices

18.1. Please note the following appendices:

i. Appendix A - Letter from Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth

19. Background papers

19.1. Please note the following background papers:

i. Cabinet – 7th October 2026 – Agenda item 10
ii. Cabinet - 12th November 2025 – Agenda Item 8.

iii. Extraordinary Full Council – 29th October 2025.
iv. Full Council – 2nd July 2025– Agenda Item 11c.
v. Cabinet– 18th June 2025– agenda item 12.
vi. English Devolution White Paper– Power and Partnership: Foundations for Growth (December 2024) - English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK / https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth
vii. Interim Plan Submission– March 2025 - interim-plans-warwickshire-march-2025 and district-borough-warwickshire-interim-lgr-plan
viii. Warwickshire Local Government Reorganisation | Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council / https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/downloads/download/312/warwickshire-local-government-reorganisation

20. Report Writer Details:

Officer Job Title: Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance

Officer Name: Matthew Wallbank

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Council Leaders in Warwickshire
By email

29 October 2026

Dear Leaders,

I am writing to set out the outcome of the Government's review of the framework for the local government reorganisation programme and, separately, the Secretary of State's current provisional view on the proposals for local government reorganisation in Warwickshire.

We are grateful for all the work that went into developing proposals and preparing for implementation, and for the patience you have shown throughout this process. We recognise that the review period has not been easy, and do not take for granted your continued commitment to the long-term work needed to fix the foundations and put local government in the best possible position.

Outcome of the programme review

Following the announcement to Parliament on 7 September 2026, the Secretary of State and I have worked with officials to interrogate the key pillars and framework underpinning the Local Government Reorganisation programme, including asking whether the existing unweighted criteria ('the criteria') set in February 2025 and its objectives continue to support the policy priorities of the new Government.

We have concluded that the basis of the programme is robust and that the criteria against which proposals have been submitted were both correct on their own terms and continue to support the Government's policy agenda. Following this initial phase of the review, we can therefore confirm that the Government remains committed to delivering Local Government Reorganisation and that we will continue to move forward with the programme based on the criteria, which we hope gives confidence as the programme progresses.

Minded to decision for Warwickshire

Separately from the programme-level review, the Secretary of State and I, in my capacity as Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth, are currently minded to implement the **two unitary proposal submitted by North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council.**

The proposal that we are currently minded to make would establish the following new councils, **with elections in May 2028, ahead of vesting in April 2029:**

Proposed new council	**Existing local government areas forming proposed new council** (excluding county council)	**Current population**
North Warwickshire	North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council Rugby Borough Council	323,000
South Warwickshire	Stratford-on-Avon District Council	295,000

	Warwick District Council	

Consideration of the proposals

This letter sets out our consideration of each proposal against the criteria and the reasons why the Secretary of State is currently minded to select the preferred proposal. Where relevant, we have also set out areas where we are seeking further information before reaching a final decision. Further detail of the minded to process is set out at the end of this letter.

We have considered the proposals received from councils in Warwickshire:

- The one unitary proposal from Warwickshire County Council
- The two unitary proposal from North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council

We have assessed each proposal against the six criteria and considered their strengths and weaknesses before reaching this minded to decision.

Both proposals meet all six criteria.

Criterion 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government

The two unitary proposal meets criterion 1.

Warwickshire has distinct area geographies, demographics and challenges. A more industrial northern area has higher levels of deprivation and distinct priorities around skills and employment, while the south has needs around connectivity and access to services. We consider that the two unitary structure would better reflect the distinct identities, geographies and priorities of the northern and southern areas. It would also allow housing, planning and economic development to be more closely aligned with local needs.

The evidence identifies materially different economic, demographic and housing conditions across the two areas. Our assessment is therefore, that the two unitary proposal is a better approach for sensible geographies to help increase housing supply. Aligning housing and planning responsibilities should allow policies to be better tailored to local housing need, growth and regeneration compared with a single countywide approach. We consider that the two unitary proposal would therefore bring housing and planning together at the right level, allowing each proposed council to respond to the distinct needs of its area. In the northern area, this could support housing-led regeneration and address higher levels of housing need and deprivation. In the southern area, it could provide a stronger focus on affordability pressures.

Effective coordination on transport, infrastructure, housing, employment and other cross-boundary issues will be essential to the successful transition. We will work with local areas to support them to deliver this well, in line with our wider sector support work, and the funding made available for reorganisation.

We recognise that establishing two councils would require existing countywide strategic functions and relationships to be divided. This is inevitable for any options that move away from the two-tier system, which allow for a single upper-tier county council covering a whole county to be split in any future model of two or more unitary councils on the same footprint. But this must always be balanced against seeking to ensure that the new unitary councils are deemed to be right for the local context and the wider benefits of councils which are closer to the communities they serve.

Turning to the other proposal, the one unitary proposal would establish a single Warwickshire council of approximately 618,000 people, bringing housing, planning, transport, infrastructure and economic development responsibilities within a single authority. While one unitary could provide a consistent

approach to strategic planning across Warwickshire, we consider that the two unitary proposal provides a more effective approach to addressing the different housing needs of the northern and southern areas. We also consider that one unitary authority risks being less able to respond to different economic, demographic, housing and service needs across the two areas.

Criterion 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

The two unitary proposal meets criterion 2.

The two unitary proposal would establish councils of approximately 323,000 people in the northern area and 295,000 in the southern area. We consider that the distinct geographies, identities and service needs of the two areas justify councils below the population guideline of 500,000. The guiding principle of 500,000 is not a fixed threshold, and I made clear that councils across the programme could develop proposals for authorities with populations either above or below that figure in statements to Parliament and in discussions with the sector over many months. In this case, this is justified by the different characteristics and needs of the two areas and by the benefits of councils with a clearer local focus. It is also relevant that many single-tier councils, with a median population of around 275,000 have operated effectively across the same key services for decades. Critical to success will be strong leadership, sufficient capacity and capability, and clear prioritisation of resource to support the transition and ensure high performance of these services going forward.

As set out above, the case for two councils rests on their ability to respond to the distinct economic, demographic, housing and service needs of the north and south, rather than on savings alone. Two councils would allow more locally focused housing and planning and public services tailored to each area, including prevention and service transformation.

We have considered projected efficiencies separately from longer-term financial sustainability. The two unitary proposal acknowledges lower savings from fewer economies of scale and the costs of disaggregation. We also have lower confidence in the scale of its savings estimates, but our sustainability assessment found that both options could improve on current arrangements.

We recognise that the two unitary proposal sets out that the northern council would face higher levels of deprivation, which is likely to put pressure on its finances. We consider that this can be managed in the long term within the proposed two council structure because of our sustainability assessment. It is important to say that while reorganisation can contribute to local government sustainability, it is only part of the answer alongside the cross government and sector working on public sector reform and high-cost, demand-led services in adult social care, children’s services, SEND and temporary accommodation for example. Much of that work is underway and supported by new investment alongside a focus on early intervention and prevention.

Turning to the other proposal, which also meets criterion 2, we have greater confidence in the savings assumptions in the one unitary proposal, which we also judge to have more scale and financial capacity. It would avoid the costs and risks of dividing countywide services, though all councils undertaking reorganisation would require corporate and service changes, for instance in bringing together those elements currently held by district councils in the area.

Criterion 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens

The two unitary proposal meets criterion 3.

The two unitary proposal would allow services to respond more closely to the different needs of the northern and southern areas of the county. Bringing district and county functions together in each area could support prevention, earlier intervention and service transformation. As set out in the two unitary proposal, the priorities for the north, include health inequalities, deprivation and healthy life expectancy. In the south, they include healthy ageing, rural access and supporting independence.

Our view is that the two unitary proposal would provide the better approach to tailor high-quality and sustainable public services in line with those different priorities and needs.

We recognise that this proposal requires disaggregation of countywide services and that in any disaggregation there will be concerns about safeguarding, adult social care, public health, children's services, SEND, workforce and leadership capacity, commissioning, and established partnership arrangements. The councils would also face different levels of demand and resources. We are, however, confident that these risks are understood and can be managed.

The two unitary proposal sets out how it would address this with a tailored approach to each service. Functions that benefit from a closer local focus would be divided between the councils, but the proposal also provides for joint safeguarding and specialist services, regional commissioning and interim arrangements in which one council hosts shared services.

The proposal also cites existing shared services in Warwickshire and examples from previous reorganisations as evidence that separate councils can continue to work together where this is beneficial. It sets out a phased transition focused on continuity of statutory services, safeguarding, ICT and workforce capacity. The proposal sets out a plan to reduce short-term risks while longer-term arrangements are put in place, without losing the benefits of more locally focused services during the transition.

At a minimum, councils must plan for and reduce the risks to service continuity, leadership capacity, safeguarding and commissioning. The proposal acknowledges that a safe transition will require robust planning, clear allocation of resources and liabilities, and arrangements to maintain children's and adult services. This will include plans to manage the workforce and provider market, with shared arrangements where that works most effectively for specific services.

Our department, working in partnership with other government departments, has also developed a clear support offer comprising of several elements. Funding will enable each area undertaking disaggregation to bring in additional capacity to support a safe transition process. National work to support the leadership pipeline for key roles such and children's and adults service directors will help ensure that in the medium term there is adequate capacity and quality to deliver effective and safe services for those that need them.

Taken together, the plans set out in the proposal, the funding, and the support offer give us confidence that the identified risks to public services during transition and the division of services can be managed if implementation is handled well. This is also the first time government has provided funding support in this way. The experience in Cumbria provides us with further reassurance: well-planned and supported disaggregation can strengthen local accountability and improve services, and children's services continued to improve following reorganisation. We consider that close working between government and local councils throughout transition can also help manage the concerns.

Turning to the one unitary proposal, which also meets criterion 3, we recognise that keeping countywide services together would limit disruption. It would preserve existing staff, leadership, contracts and partnerships across care and education. On balance, we judge that two councils would better support delivery of public services tailored to local needs. Delivering those benefits will depend on managing the service risks throughout the transition but with the transition planning and support set out above, we are confident that these risks can be managed and the overall benefits outweigh the continuity and scale offered by one council.

Standing still is not an option for any council, let alone those undertaking reorganisation. There is no proposal that does not involve corporate and service delivery changes and in fact the best councils are already working on greater collaboration in areas and developing more effective neighbourhood footprints.

Criterion 4: 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

The two unitary proposal meets criterion 4.

The two unitary proposal was submitted jointly by four district and borough councils. It demonstrates collaboration across the north and south and a shared view that two councils would better reflect their different identities and needs. Councils shared information to develop a common understanding of local needs and pressures, building on established collaboration.

The proposal was informed by a structured programme of engagement, including an open questionnaire completed by around 2000 people. The statutory consultation also received around 2000 responses, including responses from named consultees. Most residents and organisations that were not named consultees preferred the two unitary proposal, as did the majority of Warwickshire MPs.

We have treated local support as relevant evidence of identity and need, but support was not uniform. We have considered the concerns raised by Rugby about its inclusion in the northern council. The coordination and neighbourhood arrangements set out elsewhere in this letter will be important in addressing local concerns about place and identity, but we appreciate that there remain differences of view.

Turning to the one unitary proposal, which also meets criterion 4, it was submitted by Warwickshire County Council and supported by Rugby Borough Council. It reflects a countywide approach focused on strategic coherence, financial strength and service continuity. Some named consultees preferred the one unitary proposal, including the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Integrated Care Board. We have weighed that support alongside the wider consultation evidence and the case for two councils.

Criterion 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements

The two unitary proposal meets criterion 5.

The two unitary proposal would provide separate representation for North and South Warwickshire, allowing each to reflect differing economic relationships and strategic priorities, including North Warwickshire’s links beyond the county, while retaining greater flexibility as the future devolution geography remains unresolved.

We have concluded that the two unitary proposal would preserve greater flexibility while future devolution arrangements are developed. We have treated that flexibility as more important because it avoids settling the local government structure in a way that could narrow future devolution choices before the devolution geography is determined.

Turning to the other proposal, which also meets criterion 5, the one unitary proposal would provide a single Warwickshire voice, simplifying representation and coordination on transport, housing, infrastructure and economic development. However, the limited flexibility could be a drawback of this model when the devolution path is not yet clear.

Criterion 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

The two unitary proposal meets criterion 6.

The two unitary proposal would create authorities closer to their communities and allow approaches tailored to the north and south, potentially providing a stronger structural proximity and better scope for local approaches. In our view, the consideration given to the interaction between key public services and the local community makes the two unitary option particularly strong. It also has stronger support from councils and local residents.

Implemented effectively, this option will support neighbourhood empowerment. We have placed weight on the closer connection between each proposed council and the distinct priorities of its area. The north and south councils would still need strong neighbourhood arrangements, particularly to ensure that rural communities and places at the edges of the proposed geographies retain meaningful influence. We consider that having two councils provides a sound basis for that work without treating structural proximity as a substitute for effective local engagement.

Turning to the one unitary proposal, which also meets criterion 6, it would operate at county scale which would make effective neighbourhood governance, strong relationships with town and parish councils, and meaningful local influence important. Its organisational capacity could support well-resourced local arrangements, although their effectiveness would depend on the functions, funding and decision-making influence provided.

It is important to note that the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 requires all councils in England to make appropriate arrangements for effective neighbourhood governance in neighbourhood areas, with the Secretary of State able to make further provisions on those arrangements through regulations. Local government reorganisation provides an opportunity to embed this approach from the outset. Effective neighbourhood governance can help ensure that, within larger unitary structures, communities retain a strong local voice, are able to influence decisions affecting their area, and see their distinct identities and priorities reflected in how the new councils operate. We will publish a Neighbourhood Governance Framework later this year, which will provide new councils with some high-level principles to consider.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above and considering the proposals' performance against the criteria in the round, the Secretary of State is currently minded to proceed with the **two unitary proposal submitted by North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council.** The Secretary of State currently regards several factors as weighing particularly strongly. The ability of two councils to respond to the different economic, demographic, housing and service needs of the north and south (criterion 1); the ability of two councils to better tailor delivery of public services to respond local needs, with increased opportunities for place-based prevention and service transformation (criterion 3)**;** and the flexibility the structure would preserve for future devolution (criterion 5).

We have weighed those advantages against the stronger short-term savings case for one unitary, the benefits of countywide strategic planning and service continuity, the lower confidence we have in the two unitary savings assumptions and the challenges of disaggregation – but no reorganisation proposals are without significant corporate and service change and with that will provide a challenge to whatever proposal is agreed to.

We have concluded that those elements do not outweigh the two unitary proposal's stronger response to the different circumstances of the north and south, its potential for locally tailored housing and planning, its approach to prevention and service transformation, and the flexibility it preserves for devolution. Our minded to decision reflects the greater weight we placed on those enduring place-based advantages, while recognising that the short-term risks will require active mitigation during implementation.

Status of this provisional view

This letter does not constitute a final decision to implement this or any other proposal.

The conclusions set out above represent the Secretary of State's current provisional view, reached following consideration of the relevant material. Before reaching a final decision, the Secretary of State will consider all representations received in response to this letter together with any other relevant material.

The Secretary of State remains open to reaching a different conclusion following that consideration, including modifying the provisionally preferred proposal further, deciding to implement a different proposal, or deciding not to implement any proposal.

Invitation for representations

Relevant councils and other interested parties will be invited to make representations on the provisional conclusions and reasoning set out in this letter. This representation period will be for a minimum of three weeks. We will confirm the exact timings shortly.

Representations should, where possible, address the provisional conclusions and any specific requests for information identified in this letter. We are grateful for the time already given to prepare and submit proposals, views and supporting evidence. There is no need to reproduce material submitted previously or repeat points that have already been made: that material will remain available to the Secretary of State and I when reaching the final decision.

The previous decision

The Secretary of State has today decided to withdraw the decision announced on 16 July 2026 concerning local government reorganisation in Warwickshire.

The Secretary of State and I are considering the proposals afresh and will reach a new final decision after considering the representations invited by this letter and any other relevant matters.

Statutory process

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides the statutory framework for local government structural change. The statutory process permits the Secretary of State to implement a proposal with or without modification following the required consultation.

If, following the further consideration described in this letter, the Secretary of State decides to implement a proposal, the structural changes would need to be provided for in a structural changes order under section 7 of the 2007 Act, subject to the applicable Parliamentary procedure.

This letter does not itself establish any new council, alter any existing local government boundary or otherwise implement structural change.

Capacity funding and other matters

I recognise that councils have already incurred costs associated with preparing for local government reorganisation and have committed significant time, resource and leadership to this work.

I am pleased to confirm that Warwickshire will be paid 50% of the £900,000 per new unitary transition support funding. This is equal to £900,000. Grants will be paid in November to the previously confirmed recipient authority.

When final decisions are made, we will pay any remaining balance of the £900,000 transition support per each new unitary, taking account of funding already paid to its area, as well as £150,000 of supplementary funding per new unitary for Leadership Capacity and Continuity in Children’s Services, Adult Social Care and Public Health.

We are setting out further detail in the Written Ministerial Statement on city status and ceremonial matters, and the transition from the committee system.

I am copying this letter to your Chief Executives, MPs, and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire.

Yours sincerely,



JIM MCMAHON OBE MP

Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth