

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting: 29 June 2026

Title of Report: Update on Local Government Reorganisation and Establishment of voluntary Joint Committees

This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.

Lead Member: Cllr. Ben Taylor - Leader of the Council

Report Author: Assistant Director - Corporate Services Group Manager and Monitoring Officer

Strategic Themes All Themes: Enabling communities and supporting vulnerable residents; Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment; Growing and supporting our economy; Keeping you safe and healthy; Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

1. Explanation for General Exception Procedure

1.1 This report has not been included in the last Forward Plan. It is a Key Decision. The matter has become apparent since the publication of the Forward Plan and is required to be considered by Cabinet before the decision on Local Government Reorganisation is announced in July. Therefore, it is impracticable to defer the decision on this report until after the operative date of the next Forward Plan on which it could appear. Accordingly, the General Exception Procedure contained in Part 4 Section 2 Paragraph 9 of the Constitution has been invoked to enable its consideration. The Scrutiny Commissioners have been informed, and a public notice has been published on the Council's website and displayed at the Council Offices.

2. What is this report about?

2.1 This report provides Cabinet with an update on the Government's plans for Local Government Reorganisation in Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland.

2.2 The report outlines proposals and recommendations relating to the establishment of one or more Joint Committees, across LLR. Such committee/s would be established initially on a voluntary basis, following an affirmative decision of each council.

2.3 The establishment of voluntary joint committees has happened in other areas of the Country going through Local Government Reorganisation on the priority programme, and is seen as best practice, this allows direction to be given on the

establishment of the new authorities without the Structural Change Order (SCO) being in place.

3. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 3.1 To note the current position regarding local government reorganisation in LLR.
- 3.2 To approve, subject to the similar approval by all LLR Councils the establishment of one or more voluntary Joint Committees, in accordance with section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.3 To delegate the nomination of representatives of such Voluntary Joint Committee/s to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 3.4 To delegate the nomination and appointment of any substitute member on the Voluntary Joint Committee/s to the Chief Executive in consultation with Leader of the Council.
- 3.5 To delegate approval of draft terms of reference of the voluntary Joint Committee/s and the authority to make minor amendments to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 3.6 To note that whilst the Joint Committee/s is established by resolution of all current councils in the geography of LLR, on a voluntary basis, upon the enactment of the Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland (Structural Changes) Order 2026 the Joint Committee/s shall become the Joint Committees required to be established under the provisions of that legislation and that this will be constituted and established under the provisions of section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and pursuant to the requirements of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structural Changes Order 2026/7.
- 3.7 To delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to make any necessary and consequential amendments, arising from the resolution of Cabinet to the Council's constitution.

4. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 4.1 As Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland transition to new unitary local authorities, LLR Councils remain committed to maintaining openness and transparency with residents and wider partners, which includes regular updates to members on local government reorganisation.
- 4.2 The recommendations in this report are made to support the desire to be well prepared for local government reorganisation and to be able to support the LLR Shadow Authority/s from May 2027.

5. Matters to consider

5.1 Background

5.1.1 Since the submission of the LGR proposals in November 2025 work has been continuing regarding local government reorganisation. The expected timetable is replicated below.

2025 – Development and Decision Phase

- **21 March 2025** – Interim proposals submitted to Government.
- **3 June 2025** – Government feedback received on interim submissions.
- **Summer 2025** – Local engagement activity undertaken with residents, stakeholders, and partners.
- **Early September 2025** – Staff and Member briefings held to provide updates and gather feedback.
- **20 October 2025** – Final proposal shared with staff and Members.
- **28 October 2025** – Final proposal considered by Scrutiny Committee.
- **18 November 2025** – Final proposal presented to Full Council.
- **20 November 2025** – Final proposal submitted to Cabinet for approval.
- **28 November 2025** – Deadline for submission of full proposals to Government.

2026 – Government Consideration and Decision

- **Early 2026** – Formal Government consultation on proposals.
- **July 2026** – Government decision on the preferred reorganisation model.
- **Dec 2026** – Draft SCO expected

2027 – Transition Arrangements

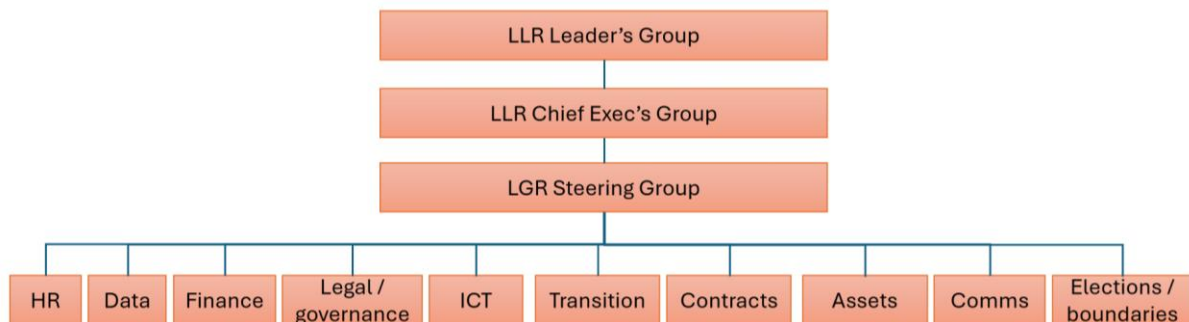
- **March 2027** – SCO expected to be made
- **May 2027** – ‘Shadow’ councils established to begin transition to new structures.
- **During 2027** – Recruitment to key senior posts within the new authorities.

2028 – Implementation

- **April 2028** – New unitary authorities formally take effect and become operational.

During 2026 we have been focusing on ‘no regrets’ activities based on work that will be required irrespective of the decision made by Government. This has been based on best practice and advice from MHCLG. This has been undertaken utilising the

workstream structure outline below. Blaby has representation on all these groups and has been instrumental in the work undertaken to date.



5.1.2 The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government is expected to proceed with a decision to create new unitary local authorities for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland which it is anticipated will be received in early to mid-July.

Once government makes a final decision, the proposals for reorganisation will be implemented by way of a Structural Changes Order (SCO), which provides the legal basis for local government reorganisation (LGR) in Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland to happen. The SCO must be approved by both Houses of Parliament and will legislate on matters such as the set-up of the new unitaries, initially as shadow authorities, elections to the new shadow authorities and the responsibilities both the current and successor councils will have in implementing LGR.

The SCO is expected to be laid before Parliament in late 2026 and is anticipated to come into force in March 2027, pending Parliamentary approval.

The current composition of all LLR Councils will remain unchanged until April 2028. All councillors will continue to serve in their existing roles throughout this period.

The government has confirmed that Joint Committee/s must be formally established within 14 days of the SCO coming into force. The Joint Committee/s will oversee LGR implementation until the shadow authority/s holds its/their first meeting/s.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is encouraging voluntary arrangements to be put in place ahead of the SCO coming into force. The existing councils already have the legal authority to establish a joint committee at any time, regardless of the SCO and LGR. The constituent councils see the benefit in optimising the length of preparation period leading up to the shadow authority elections in May 2027. For this reason, councils are recommended to establish a JC, on a voluntary basis, as soon as possible, to enable such preparatory work to commence.

Once all councils in the geographical area of LLR agree to collectively establish a Joint Committee/s, the Joint Committee/s shall arrange to meet to appoint a Chair, appoint an Officer implementation team, and agree their forward work programme.

The draft terms of reference for the Joint Committees should mirror as closely as possible, the provisions anticipated in the SCO when it comes into force, which is anticipated to be March 2027. That means that the Joint Committee/s established on a voluntary basis, is/are highly likely to also satisfy the mandatory requirements of the Joint Committee/s provided for in the SCO, and there should be no need for any further constitution or resolutions to satisfy the SCO. So, it is anticipated that the Joint Committee/s will be established voluntarily initially, by way of resolution of all councils, but will continue in line with the requirements of the SCO, until it/they is/are dissolved on the day after the first meeting of the shadow authority/s.

An officer Implementation Team will support the Joint Committee/s until it/they is/are dissolved. The Team may continue to support the shadow authority/s if the authority/s so requests.

To date the current Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland councils have been working together to prepare for LGR through existing meetings including the Chief Executives and Leaders groups, the Finance Officers Group, the Monitoring Officers Group, and the other thematic groups. It is anticipated that at its first meeting, the Joint Committee/s will appoint a single implementation team, who will support the joint committee/s in delivering an Implementation Plan to transition to the new unitary authorities.

The Implementation Plan will be recommended by the Joint Committee/s to the shadow authority/s for adoption and review at their first meeting.

5.2 Proposal

It is proposed that based on the background section above that Blaby District Council support the formation of Voluntary Joint Committee/s to ensure that we can influence and support the establishment of new unitary council/s for LLR.

Until the decision is made it is not known how many new councils will be formed or the geography of the new unitary councils. Upon the announcement of the decision, it is recommended the representatives of Blaby DC to sit on those committees will be determined via a delegation to the chief executive in consultation with the leader.

It is envisaged that this decision will be making its way through all the LLR Councils in June and July and as such the first voluntary joint committees are likely to meet in August or September.

5.3 Relevant Consultations

Members of Council have been briefed and engaged as the LGR process has progressed, including on the proposal, the implications of the government's decision and the next steps.

Engagement with Leicestershire County Council and the other District and Borough Councils in Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland has been extensive.

Officers across LLR have engaged with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and been involved in consultation regarding the draft SCO.

A public consultation exercise was undertaken regarding the proposal submitted on behalf of the 7 District and Borough Councils and Rutland Council.

5.4 Significant Issues

No significant issues relating to Human Rights, Legal Implications, Human Resources, Public Health Inequalities and Data Privacy have been identified at this stage of the process.

6. Environmental Impact

It is not considered that the proposals outlined in this report would have any environmental impact. No Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) is required for this report.

7. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

There are no direct financial implications arising from recommendations made by this paper. There is likely to be some small expenditure incurred by the servicing and expenses of the Joint Committee and the Chief Finance Officers of the existing councils are currently in discussion as to how those should be apportioned
There are.

The three proposals submitted to government across LLR contained forecasts in relation to the financial implications of local government reorganisation in Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland.

As we transition through reorganisation and gain more certainty, financial implications will be refined and updated.

8. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

There are no direct risks arising from the recommendations in this report. Once the Joint Committee/s is/are established and an implementation team of officers appointed, the focus on risk management will be on how implementation and transition is approached in a safe and legal way.

9. Other options considered

Cabinet may not wish to establish a Joint Committee/s on a voluntary basis and may prefer to wait until the Council is mandated to do so by the SCO. However, this is not recommended as it would not assist in planning for the introduction of the new unitary authorities. It is recommended by Officers and encouraged by MHCLG that it

would be more efficient and effective to develop a voluntary joint committee/s at this early stage to commence the work.

Cabinet may also wish to appoint a Joint Committee but on different terms of reference from those expected in the draft SCO. But the view of officers, having considered the scope of functions in previous local government SCOs for other authorities, is that there is no advantage to any other additional functions being included, and there is benefit in aligning as closely as possible with the provisions of the draft SCO.

10. Appendix

10.1 There are no appendices to this report.

11. Background Papers

11.1 LLR proposals on LGR

11.2 Letters from MHCLG regarding LGR

12. Report author's contact details

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