

Local Government Reorganisation

WEEKLY UPDATE

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Contents for this weekly update

- Kent LGR Decision Information – Option 4b
- MHCLG – full list of decisions across England
- LGR in the press this week (Kent and Medway and other LA areas)
- Publications to support delivery of LGR – Policy and Programme Updates
- Service summaries – a reminder for service leads
- Safe and legal – Local Partnerships – reminder following Wider Leadership Team meeting this week
- Getting LGR Ready: Fleet lessons from Westmorland and Furness
- Reflections on managing LGR from Dorset County Council
- LGR in Parliament and MHCLG appoints an Interim Permanent Secretary
- MHCLG delays response on future devolution map and delays to decisions on LGR in other areas
- Upcoming LGA Events
- Webinars and Resources Available from Local Partnerships
- Resources Page



We have a generic inbox for LGR – if you get a request for information routed directly to you, please refer them to this address:
LGRPMO@maidstone.gov.uk

LGR Decision for Kent Option 4B

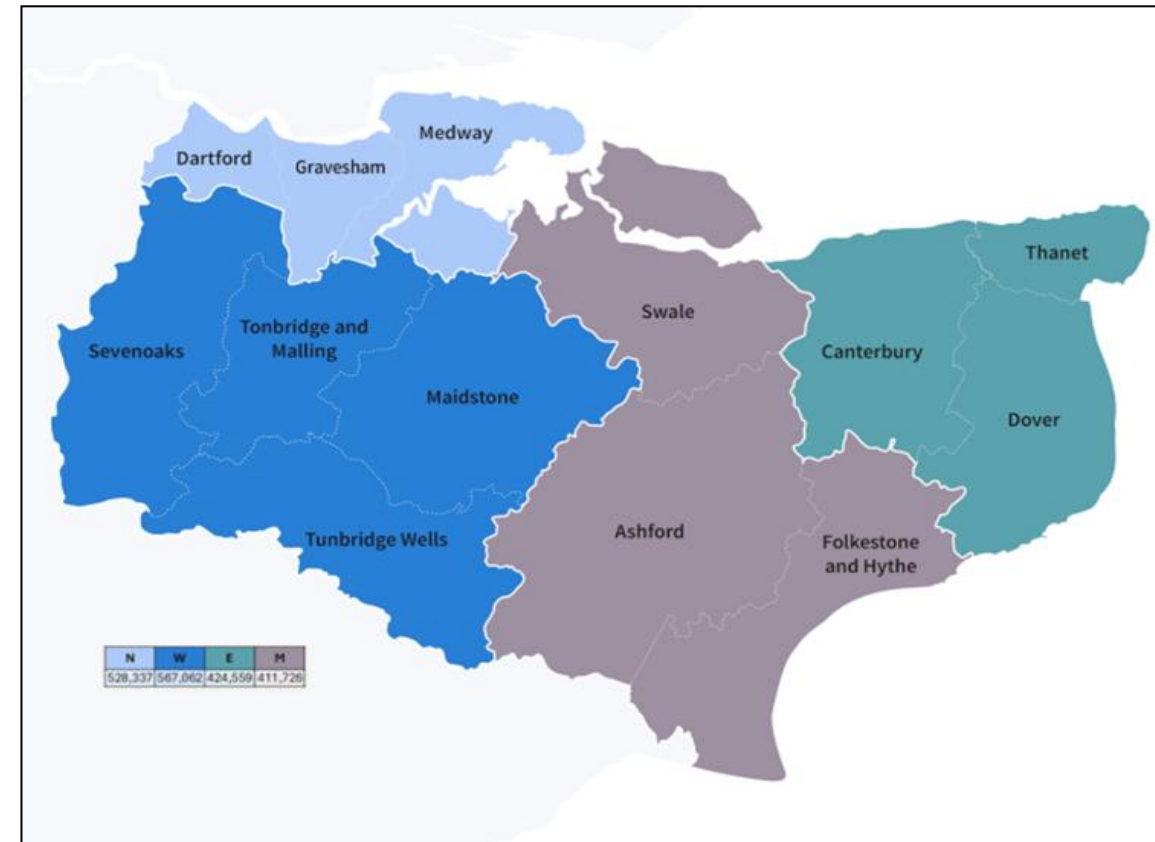
The announcement on 16 July from MHCLG confirmed that Kent will now work towards delivery of ‘option 4b’ with the establishment of 4 Unitary Councils.

Briefings have been arranged with staff on 23 July at 9am, and [you can register to join here](#)

A briefing for Members will take place on 21 July – invites have been circulated.

Kent and Medway: “14 councils being reorganised into 4 unitaries. This will align councils with housing markets and local need, support the whole area’s growth, and maintain locally responsive services while strengthening local voices through neighbourhood committees”. [14 more areas to benefit from streamlined local services - GOV.UK](#)

[Kent-Local-Government-Reorganisation-Business-Case-Option-4B.pdf](#)



Unitary	Areas	Population
North Kent	Dartford, Gravesham, Medway	528,337
West Kent	Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells	567,062
East Kent	Canterbury, Dover, Thanet	424,559
Mid Kent	Ashford, Folkestone and Hythe, Swale	411,726

MHCLG Decisions Nationwide

LGR decisions for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and West Sussex have been delayed for further consideration.

Gloucestershire: 7 councils being reorganised into 1 unitary. This will unite the Gloucester-Cheltenham growth corridor and Golden Valley cyber cluster under one council, with reorganisation expected to deliver savings by reducing duplication across services and leadership.

Derby and Derbyshire: 10 councils being reorganised into 2 unitaries. This will let Derby expand in all directions while reflecting the county's distinct north/south geographies and creating two strong partners in the East Midlands Combined County Authority.

Warwickshire: 6 councils being reorganised into 2 unitaries. This will allow each new council to focus on the specific needs of its communities, tackling health inequalities in the north and improving access to services for older and rural residents in the south.

Worcestershire: 7 councils being reorganised into 2 unitaries. This will reflect the county's different economies and identities in the north and south, balancing scale with staying connected to communities.

Oxfordshire: 6 councils being reorganised into 3 unitaries. This will address Oxford's housing constraints, better reflect the city's economic geography, and ensure Oxford has its own seat at the table when regional powers and funding are agreed with government.

Hertfordshire: 11 councils being reorganised into 4 unitaries. This will reflect the county's distinct economic areas, keeping public services organised around where people live, work and travel.

[Local government reorganisation: decision letters to council leaders - GOV.UK](#)

MHCLG Decisions Nationwide

[Press Release: 14 more areas to benefit from streamlined local services - GOV.UK](#)

- **Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland:** 10 councils being reorganised into 2 unitaries. This will expand Leicester's boundary to reflect how the city actually functions, unlocking around 30,000 homes and 67 hectares of employment land, and creating a stronger platform for future devolution.
- **Nottingham and Nottinghamshire:** 9 councils being reorganised into 2 unitaries. This will bring most of Nottingham's urban area under one council, supporting the Mayoral authority's growth ambitions and creating a more balanced urban-rural mix.
- **East Sussex and Brighton and Hove:** 7 councils being reorganised into 2 unitaries with boundary modifications. This will expand Brighton and Hove's planning footprint and tax base to tackle housing unaffordability and support growth across connected communities.
- **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent:** 10 councils being reorganised into 2 unitaries. This will support Stoke's growth opportunities across a natural north/south split, minimising service disruption and achieving strong financial sustainability.
- **Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool:** 15 councils being reorganised into 4 unitaries. This will reflect Lancashire's diverse urban, rural and coastal communities, aligned with existing economic areas and transport links, with a clear structure for future devolution.
- **Devon, Plymouth and Torbay:** 11 councils being reorganised into 4 unitaries. This will align boundaries with economic geography to unlock housing and infrastructure growth, supporting Plymouth's defence sector and Exeter's expansion as key urban engines.
- **Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire:** 10 councils being reorganised into 4 unitaries. This will give Lincoln the space to grow while striking the best balance between urban and rural service delivery and securing Lincoln a distinct voice in devolution.

The Kent and Medway decision in the press

- [Local Government Reorganisation: Kent to have four new unitary councils](#)
- [Four new councils confirmed for Kent and Medway - BBC News](#)
- [LGR decisions in 14 areas | Local Government Chronicle \(LGC\)](#)
- [Ministers Decide Future Shape of Kent and Medway's Councils - Kent Council Leaders](#)

Other K&M Council Press Releases:

- [Local Government Reorganisation and devolution - Kent County Council](#)
- [Decision made on the new local government structure for Kent and Medway | Medway Council](#)
- [Local government reorganisation – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council](#)
- [Government confirms new West Kent council](#)
- [News - Ministers decide future shape of Kent and Medway's councils](#)
- [Kent and Medway to be served by four unitary councils from 1 April 2028 – Thanet](#)
- [Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation](#)
- [Ministers decide future shape of Kent and Medway's councils | Sevenoaks District Council](#)
- [Following a gov consultation, the Secretary of State has opted for a unitary council covering Swale, Ashford & Folkestone/Hythe](#)
- [Ministers decide future shape of Kent and Medway's councils | Folkestone & Hythe District Council](#)



Statement made in Parliament on LGR

<https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/a44ee3be-f62c-4181-a5c4-571f91dc0b8e?in=12:27:36>

Other England LGR Decisions in the press

- [Two-council plan for Warwickshire gets government go-ahead - BBC News](#)
- [LGR decision: District leader hits out at 'shameful betrayal' | Local Government Chronicle \(LGC\)](#)
- [Massive expansion for Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay - BBC News](#)
- [Parts of Nottinghamshire to be split in two as city expansion approved - Nottingham Post](#)
- [Major shake-ups in local government being announced across the Midlands - what it means for you | ITV News Central](#)
- [Leicestershire to be governed by one super council and Leicester's boundaries set to be expanded](#)
- [Lancashire to split into four authorities with 15 councils abolished by 2028](#)
- [Derbyshire councils to be abolished in biggest shake-up in 50 years](#)
- [Derbyshire to be split to create two new councils - BBC News](#)
- [Brighton to expand eastwards in biggest East Sussex council shake-up in decades | ITV News Meridian](#)
- [Preston dodges Blackpool, will merge with Lancaster and Ribble Valley – Blog Preston](#)
- [LIVE: Local Government Reorganisation for Herts announced | Herts Advertiser](#)
- [Major change to local councils delayed as 'mired in chaos' government slammed](#)
- [CONFIRMED Future council structure for Gloucestershire Local Government Reorganisation](#)



Publications – programme and policy updates for delivering LGR



Local government reorganisation: guidance on sector support Guidance for councils undergoing local government reorganisation on the support available to them.

[Local government reorganisation: guidance on sector support - GOV.UK](#)

Shared principles that will guide Ofsted and Care Quality Commission's approaches to inspections, assessments and other activity during local government reorganisation. [Local government reorganisation: supporting adult social care, public health and children's services - GOV.UK](#)

Information for areas undergoing local government reorganisation about adult social care, public health and children's services. [Ofsted and Care Quality Commission: shared principles for local government reorganisation - GOV.UK](#)

Local government reorganisation: staffing issues guidance - Non-statutory guidance for local authorities in England undergoing local government reorganisation under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. [Local government reorganisation: staffing issues guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Service Summaries – Contributing to LGR

UPDATE: A service summary sheet has now been circulated to all service leads for completion by 20 July.

Charlotte Walker, LGR Programme Manager is coordinating our responses. Please email lgrpmo@maidstone.gov.uk if you have any queries in the first instance.

All Kent Councils will be contributing to the Executive Service Summary which is intended to provide a clear, high-level overview of services across councils to support the early stages of local government reorganisation planning.

Its primary purpose is to equip the future Programme Management Office (PMO) and implementation teams with a baseline understanding of what currently exists across organisations, including staffing, service functions, and overall structure.

This summary is to a starting point from which more detailed analysis and information requests can follow as the programme progresses.



'Safe and legal' – New guidance issued

Publication of **LGR: Safe & Legal** developed in conjunction with HM Treasury, Local Partnerships, and the LGA - this document sets out the essential requirements that must be in place to ensure a new unitary authority is safe, legal and operational on Vesting Day, enabling the continuity of critical services and the discharge of statutory responsibilities from day one.

Document can be accessed here: [Safe-Legal-V3.pdf](#)

Re-added to the weekly update as a reminder as this was referred to by Alison Broom in the Wider Leadership Team Meeting on 14 July



Getting LGR Ready: Fleet lessons from Westmorland and Furness



LocalGov have published an article about the journey of Fleet Services Transformation at Westmorland and Furness:

When local government reorganisation (LGR) created Westmorland and Furness Council in 2023, Austin Shields, Senior Manager – Fleet Services, found himself inheriting vehicles, depots, data systems and working cultures from multiple legacy organisations.

The instinct to get ahead of the process would prove invaluable. With less than two years between the Government's announcement and vesting day on 1 April 2023, there was precious little time to waste. 'Work together, document your decision making and your risks, and seek advice from other organisations,' he says. 'Recognise that a decision has been made, it's going to happen – and get on with it.'

Fleet managers facing reorganisation are welcome to get in touch with Austin Shields at: austin.shields@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk.

[Getting LGR Ready: Fleet lessons from Westmorland and Furness | LocalGov](#)



Reflections on managing LGR from Dorset County Council

Key takeaway

Successful reorganisation isn't just about structures and systems; it's about leadership, culture, and making the most of the people you already have.

Remind yourself frequently that LGR is all about people: you, your colleagues, members, and residents. It is easy to get absorbed by the details of workstreams, project plans, and deliverables. However, the biggest driver of success will be the culture and behaviour of the people who make it happen for the benefit of our communities. [Reflections on managing LGR from Dorset County Council | Local Government Association](#)



Other articles on the subject of Dorset's LGR Journey:

- <https://www.lgcplus.com/politics/governance-and-structure/dorset-council-created-new-unitary-08-08-2019/>
- [Microsoft PowerPoint - APSE LGR Dorset – PPT](#)
- [LGR support: Asset management | Local Government Association](#)

LGR in Parliament and MHCLG appoints an Interim Permanent Secretary

The Conservative party secured an urgent question in the Commons yesterday about local government reorganisation
[Local Government Reorganisation - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

Minister asked if LGR decisions 'will hold beyond the week'

- From <https://www.lgcplus.com/politics/devolution-and-economic-growth/minister-asked-if-lgr-decisions-will-hold-beyond-the-week-14-07-2026/>

Watch the Debate on BBC Iplayer

- [House of Commons - Local Government Reorganisation Urgent Question - BBC iPlayer](#)

 UK
Parliament

Hansard



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

MHCLG appoints interim permanent secretary

Will Garton has been appointed the delegated permanent secretary at the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Speaking at the Commons housing, communities & local government committee yesterday, Mr Garton said he has been "delegated for a short period" in the top civil servant role.



MHCLG delays response on future devolution map and delays in LGR decisions by MHCLG

MHCLG delays response on future devo map

Kirsty Weakly at the LGC, has written an article outlining delays to the development of Foundation Strategic Authorities, and quotes Will Garton, director general of local government, growth & communities at MHCLG, as having said “There’s some stuff that we were going to do under this administration that we are no longer going to do, because we have to give new ministers a chance to have a look at that.”

[MHCLG delays response on future devo map | Local Government Chronicle \(LGC\)](#)



LGR decisions delayed in two areas

Communities secretary Steve Reed announced the decisions in the Commons this lunchtime and said West Sussex as well as Cambridgeshire & Peterborough needed more time. “I am not announcing decisions today because further time is required to get the decisions right,” he said.

West Sussex’s decision has already been delayed once, so the government could consult on its suggested modifications to the business case. [LGR decisions delayed in two areas | Local Government Chronicle \(LGC\)](#)



Upcoming LGR events hosted by LGA

Devolution and LGR webinars and events | Local Government Association

Staff Engagement and Internal Communications during LGR

On Thursday 17 September, the LGA are holding an in-person workshop designed to support communications and change professionals in delivering effective **staff engagement and internal communications during Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**.

LGR presents a period of significant change and uncertainty for council staff, with implications for roles, structures and organisational identity.

This practical, one-day session will provide an overview of internal communications approaches throughout LGR, combining best practice with insight from areas that have already undergone reorganisation. **Register for the event**

Pay Alignment and Industrial Relations Through LGR

Pay alignment is one of the most significant workforce challenges facing councils undergoing Local Government Reorganisation, requiring the integration of different pay structures, terms and conditions, and organisational cultures while maintaining fairness, affordability and positive industrial relations.

This virtual event will draw on the experience of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council following the creation of the new authority. Speakers will share practical lessons on managing pay alignment, engaging effectively with trade unions, and navigating the challenges and opportunities of workforce integration during reorganisation.

The session will hear from colleagues with direct LGR experience, include a short presentation from the LGA, and provide time for questions and discussion.

Register for **Pay alignment and industrial relations through LGR**

Webinars and Resources Available from Local Partnerships



There are a wide range of webinars, resources and training guides online at the Local Partnerships Website, supporting LGR journeys across England.

I'd recommend for those of you thinking about the wider Devolution journey that the Localis / Local Partnerships report 'everything in its right place' is a good read!



Have a look here for toolkits, resources, reports and webinars: [Resources - Local Partnerships](#)



Where to find a range of resources

There are a wide range of resources available online including (not an exhaustive list):

- [Kent Council Leaders - A collective voice for Kent & Medway](#)
- **A Summary of the Kent LGR Options currently being considered by MHCLG:** [Local Government Reorganisation Consultation - Kent Council Leaders](#)
- **Policy and Programme Updates from MHCLG:** [Local government reorganisation: Policy and programme updates - GOV.UK](#)
- **Local Partnerships** [Local Government Reorganisation \(LGR\) – Tools, Templates & Learning Hub - Local Partnerships](#)
- **LGA Resources Hub** <https://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation-lgr-delivery-network>
- **Local Government Reorganisation Digital and Cyber Playbook** [Resources | Local Digital](#)
- **LGIU:** [Democracy & Governance – LGIU](#)
- **Local Councils Network:** [Leading locally. Influencing nationally. | District Councils' Network](#)
- **CfGS:** [Scrutiny and local government reorganisation - a practice guide – CfGS](#)
- **Institute for Local Government** [Local government reorganisation | Institute for Government](#) **NEW**

If you think there are key resources missing Let me know charlottewalker@maidstone.gov.uk