

Overview and Scrutiny

2026

10th of February

Local Government Reorganisation – Update Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Sue Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation
Report Author	Job Title: as above. Contact email: Hannah.corredor@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/a
Relevant Council Priority	Local Government Reorganisation
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to RESOLVE that:-

- 1) the progress to date in submitting an application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for a two-unitary model titled, 'Transforming Worcestershire', be noted
- 2) the governance that has been established for Local Government Reorganisation in Worcestershire and the next steps outlined in this paper be noted.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1 The timetable for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is set out in the table below.

Stage one: Inviting unitary proposals	Received November 2024
Stage two: Submission of formal unitary proposals.	Completed November 2025
➤ Stage three: Statutory consultation (MHCLG)	Expected to launch in February 2026
Stage four: Decision to implement a proposal	Expected before summer recess, July 2026
Stage five: Making secondary legislation – the Structural Changes Order (SCO).	Begins later in 2026 and ends with shadow elections in May 2027.
Stage six: Transition period	From decision to vesting day April 2028.

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Stage seven: New unitary authority goes live	April 2028.
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- 2.2 Transforming Worcestershire, a collaboration between Malvern Hills, Wychavon, Worcester City, Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, successfully submitted their joint proposal to MHCLG ahead of the Government's deadline in November 2025. The Government are now preparing a consultation on the two proposals received from Worcestershire authorities: a one Worcestershire single unitary or a North / South two unitary option. This consultation is focused on reaching public bodies but is open to all residents and businesses. Further information will be provided when received from the Government.
- 2.2 The Councils have been actively communicating and engaging internally and externally with staff and residents. The Council's LGR Routes project aims to make staff feel informed, engaged and supported through LGR. Quarterly evaluation of staff engagement with this project has shown improving results, with staff particularly enjoying the all-staff briefing sessions and Q&A by the Chief Executive.
- 2.3 Externally, the Council's Transforming Worcestershire partnership with Wychavon, Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Redditch Councils has continued. The Council is preparing to launch a refreshed website that collates all the information regarding the proposal in a single site so that anyone participating in the consultation can access key documentation. The website can be viewed once launched at: www.transformingworcestershire.co.uk [not yet live].

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Following a successful system wide workshop on the 7th of January 2026 with Chief Executives, Monitoring Officers, Transformation leads and Section 151 Finance Officers from every authority in Worcestershire, the Councils have established interim governance for preparatory pre-decision activity and decision from January 2026 until receipt of a decision from MHCLG before the summer recess in July 2026. A monthly LGR Programme Board has been established with Chief Executives from the seven authorities as core members. This board will report to members via the cross-county Leaders Board as necessary.
- 3.2 Reporting into the Board and orchestrating and coordinating four key workstreams is a Programme Management Office (PMO). The programme management office is designed to enable collaboration

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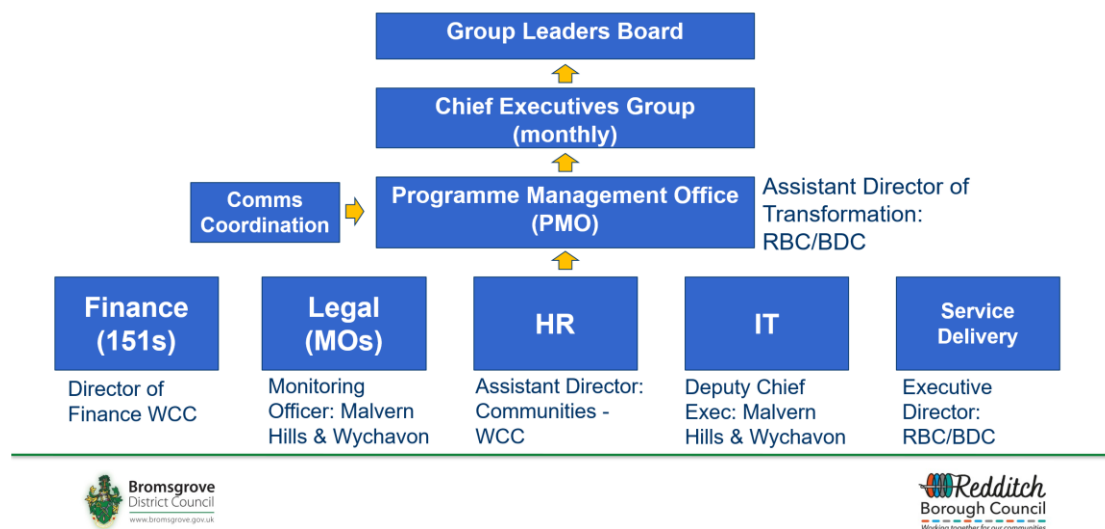
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across priorities, set a clear rhythm and pace for activities, and provide the board with assurance reports on progress and strategic items for discussion/decision. The PMO will also work closely with a dedicated communications group, also with representatives from across the county. This group will also focus on ensuring both internal and external partners and stakeholders are engaged and informed about progress.

- 3.3 It was agreed that initial activities would focus on housekeeping in Finance, Legal, HR and IT. Primarily, these activities focus on cleansing data, aligning information and developing a baseline for key issues that will be essential to future implementation, regardless of the decision made. A Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for each of the four workstreams was agreed as outlined in the diagram below. Each workstream is required to report back at each meeting of the board for the six months until a decision is taken. The next update is expected at the next LGR Programme board on 5th of March 2026.

System-level: Five key workstreams for Preparations Phase



- 3.4 Note that senior officers from Redditch and Bromsgrove are SROs for two key areas. Hannah Corredor, Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Transformation will lead the Programme Management Officer. Guy Revans, Executive Director will lead the workstream on Service Delivery. This group will begin to gather information about what services are offered to residents across the District and how the Council's models of service delivery vary. Further into the future, Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils will lead on the development of options appraisals.

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- 3.5 At Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, a fortnightly LGR Preparations Board has been established to oversee and direct internal work. This board is chaired by the Chief Executive. Service Managers and Assistant Directors from all key areas are represented, including communications.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is expected that there will be significant upfront, unfunded costs incurred as a result of LGR. At present, the Government has made no funds available for the preparation or implementation of phases LGR. The exact cost of managing this transition in a way that manages key risks and ensures the quality of the Council's everyday services to residents go unaffected has not yet been calculated – but costs will be material and will continue to increase as the Council approaches Vesting Day in April 2028. Officers have earmarked provisional reserves for 2026/27 and 2027/28, however the investment required and mid- and long-term benefits of investing adequately have not yet been validated. These costs will include shared costs incurred in partnership with authorities across the county, as well as internal costs for the proper resourcing of implementation and continued high-quality service delivery.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Significant legal implications will continue to arise as LGR progresses. The Overview and Scrutiny Board will be updated as and when necessary.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 LGR is the subject of this report.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The information provided in this report supports the council's organisational priority of sustainability.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 No specific climate change implications have been identified.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

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- 6.4 Significant equalities implications will arise from the redesign and redistribution of services across the County. Reports will be presented for Members' consideration once planning progresses to a stage where these can be considered.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Devolution and LGR are listed as a Corporate Risk in the Corporate Risk Register, owned by the Chief Executive Officer and led by the Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Transformation. The inherent risk level is 20 but the residual risk reduces to 12 with mitigations including much of the activity described here including new appointments, governance described above, development of detailed action plans and adequate planning.
- 7.2 A quarterly report on risk is scheduled for the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's consideration on the 17th of February 2026.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/a

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Baxter	28/01
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Hannah Corredor	27/01
Financial Services	Julie Lorraine	26/01
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings	28/01/26
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Hannah Corredor	26/01
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	N/a	