



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Alison McGovern MP

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Sent by email to: Council Leaders in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; Derby and Derbyshire; Devon, Plymouth and Torbay; Gloucestershire; Hertfordshire; Kent and Medway; Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool; Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland; Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire; Nottingham and Nottinghamshire; Oxfordshire; Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent; Warwickshire; Worcestershire

5 February 2026

Dear Leaders,

Thank you for your continued work and collaboration to bring forward proposals for unitary local government.

For the next stage of local government reorganisation, our approach is to consult on all submissions that seek to meet the terms of the 5 February 2025 statutory invitation. My officials have carried out a preliminary review of the submissions received on 28 November to ensure that they address the statutory requirements under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act). Specifically, that the submission contains one option for the whole of the invitation area; that each principal authority has only made (or co-signed) one proposal; and that there is sufficient evidence provided to make a judgement against each criterion. Where submissions request a boundary change together with structural change, we have also looked at whether a justification has been provided.

While a preliminary assessment of all submissions has been conducted, we have not yet made any formal assessment against the invitation criteria. This will be completed once the consultation process has concluded, so that all evidence can be considered. This approach is consistent with our approach across the programme so far.

I am today launching statutory consultations on the 52 proposals I received on 28 November. I appreciate that you may have views on proposals other than your own, and some have already written to me to express those views. Please be assured that before taking decisions on which proposal, if any, to implement, the Secretary of State will consider these proposals carefully. He will also consider the responses to the consultation, all representations and all other relevant information, assessing the proposals against the criteria before reaching a final decision.

The consultations will be available through the individual area pages that will be published shortly on the [local government reorganisation gov.uk page](https://www.gov.uk/government/reorganisation). These consultations will run until Thursday 26 March. Responses to the consultation should be submitted through the department's platform 'Citizen Space' in the first instance, though responses can also be

made by email and post. Artificial Intelligence will be used to assist officials to analyse the responses received, as set out in the consultation documentation.

Named consultees are listed in the consultation documentation, but I would like to hear the views of all those interested in these proposals, including local residents, town and parish councils, residents' associations, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.

I would also ask that you use your existing networks to bring the consultation to the attention of local people and organisations. In doing so you should ensure your actions are compliant with the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity. Please also make sure that consultation documents meet accessibility standards when hosted on your website, and take measures to ensure that digitally excluded groups can access consultation documents, including proposals, in hard copy where appropriate.

Some proposals for local government reorganisation are being grouped for the purposes of the consultation. This is because of the breadth of the proposals, and the fact that new unitary councils must support wider devolution structures.

Our timetable is ambitious, but it is the right thing to do. Local government reorganisation will simplify local government and deliver councils who are equipped to drive economic growth, improve local public services, and lead and empower their communities. I look forward to working with you over the coming months to deliver on our ambitions.

I am copying this letter to your Chief Executives and relevant Police and Crime Commissioners or Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners.

Yours sincerely,



Alison McGovern

Minister for Local Government and Homelessness