

Q&As from MHCLG following LGR announcement on 7 September:

Q. Why are you doing this?

- We're pausing to reflect before implementing final decisions, following the Prime Minister's promise to listen to concerns raised by local people. Our commitment to reform and reorganisation hasn't changed.
- This is not an admission that the original decisions were wrong, and there have been no court findings against the Government.

Q. How does reorganisation affect the devolution programme?

- This does not impact our timetable for devolution. Unitary local government can help strategic authorities function smoothly, but it's not a prerequisite.
- Areas already on the Devolution Priority Programme, like Norfolk and Suffolk and Greater Essex, continue their devolution work unaffected. The same goes for Hampshire's mayoral election, which remains set for May 2028.

Q. Is this the end of local government reorganisation?

- No. This Government remains committed to devolution and the Government remains of the view that unitary councils are a better foundation for mayors and strategic authorities. The review will again consider proposals and how best to deliver unitary councils in this Parliament.

Q) What will the review look like?

- The review will consider the four withdrawn decisions, the further decisions taken in July, and the two places where decisions have yet to be made: West Sussex and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We recognise the need for clarity; extended delay is in no-one's interest. We will set out decisions as soon as possible.

Q) What happens next?

- The review will consider all local government reorganisation decisions announced in March and July, and the two remaining areas: West Sussex and

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We are working at pace to review these decisions and will report back to Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

Q) What about local elections – which elections will go ahead?

- Elections are still going ahead in May 2027 on existing council boundaries.
- Surrey is unaffected, with new councils going live on 1 April 2027 as planned.
- The new Prime Minister promised members of this House that he would listen to concerns raised by local people about local government reorganisation decisions.
- As a new administration, we want to pause and reflect before implementing final decisions. We want to make sure that the programme meets our priorities.