

Local Government Reorganisation Member briefing 19th August 2021



Activities following Secretary of State announcement on 21st July 2021

The five Chief Executives (CEX) met with MHCLG team on 9th August

- Timetable for moving to unitary from 1st April 2023
- Timetable for negotiating Structural Change Order (SCO)
- Frequency of ongoing meetings with MHCLG (Minister for Housing, Communities & Local Government)

The five CEX met 10th August to discuss and agree ways of working

- Three officer teams have been stood up – legal, elections and programme leads
- CEX to form Chief Executive Officers Group – precise Terms of Reference and role in shaping to be determined
- CEX to meet weekly, Council Leaders will meet fortnightly

The five Leaders met 10th August to discuss and agree ways of working, including Joint Committee – their discussions are ongoing

Officer Groups

Legal team will advise on drafting of the Structural Change Order (SCO). Team comprises Melanie Wellman (SDC), Lesley Dolan (MDC), Jill Byron (SSDC), Kevin Williams (SWT) and Scott Wooldridge (SCC).

Elections team will work to identify draft electoral divisions for new authority. MHCLG advises 'fewer than 100 councillors'. Time is short (October deadline for receipt). We may submit 2-4 alternatives, but the decision rests with the Boundary Commission.

- note: elections team arranges for May 2022 elections with new boundaries, but may not have these confirmed until late March 2022
- Parish council elections may need to be brought forward to run concurrently

Programme leads will meet on 23rd August. Purpose of the meeting is to review draft implementation plan and timetable, agree revisions and identify resource requirements. Team comprises Alison Turner (SDC), Liz Dawson (MDC), Jan Gamon (SSDC), Alison North (SWT) and Carlton Brand (SCC)



MHCLG Timetable for implementation

2021

- October Draft Order shared by MHCLG for comment.
- Late Oct/early November draft Order finalised and Departmental legal checks undertaken.
- Mid November / December Draft Order sent for pre-legislative scrutiny; order finalised following scrutiny (usually takes 3-4 weeks while Lords sitting)

2022

- No later than mid January draft Structural Changes Order laid in Parliament.
- Late January – mid March Parliamentary scrutiny of draft Order (requires 6-8 sitting weeks).
- Before 28 March Minister signs and makes Order and it comes into force
- 5 May elections to new council
- Following 5 May elections, new council executive assumes responsibility for implementation

2023

- By 31 March all necessary local implementation work completed including for staff and asset transfer and IT infrastructure.
- 1 April predecessor councils abolished.



Agreement on next steps

- Leaders jointly signed 'county deals' letter to Robert Jenrick, setting out our intention to submit a bid for a devolution deal.
- Joint Committee proposal discussed by Leaders. Likely to be established at outset in form which can be continued beyond agreement of orders. Terms of Reference (ToR) to be drafted by Monitoring Officers (MO's) and returned to Full Council for agreement.
- Full Council is requested to agree the District Executive recommendation that the Chief Executive has delegated authority to negotiate Structural Change Order (SCO).
- Implementation plan to be agreed, with appropriate workstreams.



Communication

- Recommendation to Full Council to agree a member working group
- Regular briefings for all members throughout implementation phase
- Regular engagement for all staff
- The five councils will develop a communications strategy together for residents, Town/parish/city councils and businesses as part of the implementation programme

