

Allerdale Borough Council

Council – 22 September 2022

Local Government Reorganisation

Portfolio holder	Councillor Mike Johnson, Leader of the Council
Report from	Sharon Sewell, Chief Officer: Governance & Place and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected	All
Is this a key decision	No

1.0 The reason for the decision

- 1.1 To update Council on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process and seek delegated authority for the Chief Executive to represent the Authority's interests in the transitional work required in the reorganisation project

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, be authorised to represent the authority's position and work with Cumbrian authorities on the implementation of reorganisation, including negotiating the draft Structural Changes Order with MHCLG;
- 2.2 To formally establish a cross-party working group comprising two members from each of the Political Groups;
- 2.3 To note that further reports will be brought to Council where appropriate.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Secretary of State in July 2021 announced his decision, subject to Parliamentary approval, to implement a proposal for two unitary councils on an East-West geography for the whole of the administrative county of Cumbria. The decision will mean the replacement of all principal authorities with a new unitary Council for the area comprising Barrow, South Lakeland and Eden and one for the area comprising Copeland, Allerdale and Carlisle.
- 3.2 The Secretary of State will seek Parliamentary approval for secondary legislation to implement the two unitary authority proposal and a draft Structural Changes Order (SCO) will be laid in Parliament "around the turn of the year". The SCO will include provision for the appropriate transitional arrangements, including for elections in

May 2022 for the future unitary councils, and for those councils to assume the full range of local authority responsibilities on 1 April 2023.

- 3.3 Government will discuss with Chief Executives and senior officers in Cumbria details to be included in the SCO and meetings are being arranged to discuss these matters further and how the programme of transition will be managed. MHCLG is actively encouraging discussions and input to the SCO, however, it is important to acknowledge that its content is a decision made by the Secretary of State.

4.0 Local Government Reorganisation: Transition Programme

- 4.1 The Cumbria Chief Executives meet regularly to progress the transition programme for the reorganisation and have now reached the stage where it has been agreed in principle. They will now be focusing on mobilising the programme, allocating resources and starting the work to establish the new councils. The programme will start formally on 14 September. In its first phase the programme has four parts:

- Produce high level option appraisals for service areas;
- Collate and analyse the wide range of information and data needed to allocate resources and to establish the new councils;
- Develop in more detail a Benefit Realisation Plan, setting out the ambitions and key outcomes for the new councils;
- Gather information and views to inform the drafting of the Structural Changes Order.

- 4.2 Each area of work in the programme will be strengthened by the three key themes: People, Place and Enabling. Each theme will be sponsored and led by Senior Officers from the District Councils and County Council. Additional capacity and support for the programme will be required and opportunities will be offered to staff from the District Councils and County Council.

- 4.3 An informal cross-party working group has been set up within Allerdale Borough Council and the Working Group will be kept informed of progress and their views on issues under discussion will be sought as and when required. This report also seeks to formalise that Working Group.

5.0 Finance/Resource implications

- 5.1 The county Chief Finance Officer group is currently working on establishing the transitional costs and other financial implications of the LGR process.

6.0 Legal and governance implications

- 6.1 The Monitoring Officer is represented at weekly meetings of the Cumbria Monitoring Officer group which considers the legal and governance implications of the LGR process and advises the Chief Executive group and the Governance Working Group accordingly.

7.0 Risk analysis

Risk	Consequence	Controls required	Mitigated score
CEO is not fully authorised to represent the authority's position	Allerdale's position is weakened in the LGR discussions	Cross party working arrangements; council support for engagement with process	Low

Appendices attached to this report

Appendix number	Title of appendix
N/A	

Background documents available

Name of background document	Where it is available
N/A	

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