**Warwickshire Local Government Reorganisation – Frequently Asked Questions**

The Government’s Devolution White Paper and subsequent direction from Ministers requires all local authorities in areas where there are currently two tiers of local government, to develop proposals for re-organisation. We are working closely with other district and borough councils across Warwickshire and the County Council to consider future arrangements that will best meet the needs of our communities.

This will be a once in a generation change that effects local people and services for decades to come and it is important that there is proper consideration of the options and meaningful consultation with residents, key local organisations, including business, and our public sector partners.

These are ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ for residents at this early stage in the process.

1. **What is local government reorganisation?**

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is the process in which the structure and responsibilities of local authorities are reconfigured. The Government have set out plans to move away from the current two-tier system of district and county councils in England.

The Government has indicated that for most areas this will mean creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more, but there may be exceptions to ensure new structures make sense for an area, and enable devolution, and decisions will be on a case-by-case basis.

1. **Why is this reorganisation happening?**

The [English Devolution White Paper](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper) is the Government’s statement of their plans to devolve power from Westminster to local areas and reform local government. This includes a wide range of proposals on devolution but also wider plans for local government reorganisation.

The Government position is clear that devolution is a key part of their ambition to build an economy that works for everyone. They see the White Paper as a route to a completely new way of governing – a generational project.

The Government’s invitation asks councils in two-tier areas to explore whether local government could be made simpler and more efficient. This process is about ensuring that councils deliver high-quality services, provide value for money, and remain responsive to local needs.

1. **What is a unitary authority?**

Unitary authorities are a single tier of local government responsible for all local services in an area. They may cover a whole county, part of a county or a large town or city.

1. **What Councils in Warwickshire’s will this effect?**

This is relevant to Warwickshire County Council and the five district and borough councils in the county (North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Stratford District Council and Warwick District Council).

1. **What changes are being proposed and what is my local authority calling for?**

The council is working with local partners and other councils in Warwickshire to respond to the Government invitation received on 6 February 2025.

The Government has invited councils in Warwickshire to consider proposals for changing how local government is structured. Currently, services are delivered through a **two-tier system**, with:

* **Warwickshire County Council** providing countywide services such as social care, highways, and education.
* **Five District and Borough Councils** delivering local services such as planning, housing, and waste collection.

While no decision has been made, reorganisation could mean replacing the two-tier system with **one or more unitary councils**, which would be responsible for all local government services in their areas.

1. **What will this mean for local services?**

During the process our focus remains on delivering essential services across the local authority. The aim of any reorganisation would be to improve services and make them more efficient. However, the impact would depend on the model chosen. We are committed to ensuring that key services continue to meet local needs.

1. **Will my council tax change?**

It is too early to say what impact LGR would have on council tax. However, any proposals will need to consider the financial implications, including how services are funded and whether council tax levels would need to be harmonised across different areas.

1. **How will this impact North Warwickshire’s Town and Parish Councils?**

The White Paper acknowledges that people value the role of governance at the community scale and that can be a concern when local government is reorganised. The White Paper sets out that the Government wants to see stronger community arrangements when reorganisation happens in the way councils engage at a neighbourhood or area level. The Government has stated it will also rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal local authorities, strengthening expectations on engagement and community voice.

1. **What will this mean for businesses?**

Businesses may benefit from streamlined services, such as licensing, planning, and business support, under a unitary authority. There could also be a more consistent approach to economic development across Warwickshire.

1. **What are the timelines?**

This is an outline of the timeline provided by the Government in the white paper. It includes proposed and confirmed dates. Further dates will be confirmed as we receive updates.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** |
| 6th February | Statutory invitation received from Government to submit unitary proposals |
| 21st March | Submit interim Local Government Reorganisation proposal |
| 1st May | Warwickshire County Council Elections |
| 28th November | Submit full Local Government Reorganisation proposal |
| April/May 2027 | Proposed elections (Shadow authorities) |
| April 2028 | Proposed vesting day for new unitary councils |

1. **Can I have my say?**

We are committed to involving residents in developing future proposals and will carry out a public consultation as the process develops. We will also seek the views of local organisations and local business.

1. **How can I be kept up to date?**

You can stay updated and share your views by signing up for updates here / registering for updates here **[Insert Contact Email]**.