AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Briefing Note

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Briefing Note for Audit and Governance Committee

1. Purpose

1.1 This briefing updates the Committee on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) following the Government announcement of 29 October 2026. It is provided for information and assurance and does not invite the Committee to revisit the Council's established policy position.

2. Background

2.1 Following the Government's invitation to councils across Greater Lincolnshire to submit proposals for local government reorganisation, Full Council considered LGR at a number of stages during 2025. A cross-party Working Group was established and the Council developed an evidence-based position supporting North East Lincolnshire remaining a unitary authority within its existing administrative boundaries.

2.2 Following statutory consultation in early 2026, Government announced on 16 July 2026 its decision to proceed with a four-unitary model for Greater Lincolnshire. The effect for North East Lincolnshire was that the Council would remain unchanged. Implementation remained subject to the necessary Parliamentary process.

2.3 On 7 September 2026, Government announced a review of a number of LGR decisions and the Greater Lincolnshire arrangements were paused. The Council has since continued to monitor the position.

3. Government announcement: 29 October 2026

3.1 Government has now confirmed that the previous decision for Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire has been withdrawn and will be reconsidered.

3.2 Government has made clear that withdrawal does not mean that reorganisation has been cancelled. All options and proposals remain under consideration, with an outcome for all remaining areas expected by early 2027.

3.3 The practical position for North East Lincolnshire is therefore that:

- the July 2026 Government decision can no longer be regarded as the settled outcome;
- no alternative configuration has yet been determined;
- the Council's previously agreed policy position remains unchanged; and
- the Council should continue to monitor Government developments and maintain its supporting evidence pending any further Government decision or request.

3.4 Government has also confirmed that local elections will proceed in May 2027 on existing council boundaries, with elections to shadow councils in May 2028 and new councils intended to be established in 2029.

4. Governance and assurance

4.1 The Government announcement represents a material development but does not of itself require a new policy decision by the Council. The Council's established position remains that North East Lincolnshire should continue as a unitary authority within its existing boundaries.

4.2 The Council's Corporate Governance Group considered LGR on 7 October 2026, when the Government decision remained paused. At that point it concluded that LGR did not need to be retained as a significant strategic risk, whilst agreeing that the position should continue to be monitored and revisited should circumstances change.

4.3 In light of the Government's latest announcement, the appropriate approach remains active and proportionate monitoring through the Council's existing governance and risk arrangements. Any further Government proposal, request for representations or other material development can be considered through the appropriate Council decision-making arrangements.

5. Assurance to the Committee

5.1 Members can take assurance that:

- the Council's position has been developed through formal democratic and cross-party arrangements;
- its preferred outcome is supported by an established evidence base;
- Government developments continue to be monitored corporately; and
- any material implications arising from Government's reconsideration can be addressed through the Council's existing governance arrangements.

5.2 There is therefore no immediate decision required from the Audit and Governance Committee. The Committee is invited to note the changed Government position and the continuing arrangements for corporate monitoring and assurance.

SDJ
Monitoring Officer
29 October 2026