



Overview and Scrutiny Committee
02/March2026

Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 2 March 2026

Members present:

Angus Jenkinson (Chair)	Clare Turner (Vice-Chair)	
David Fowles	Jon Wareing	Laura Hall-Wilson
Tony Slater	Michael Vann	Lisa Spivey

Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services Officer	Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place
Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer	

Observers:

Councillor Mike Evely and Juliet Layton

OS.301 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Gina Blomefield and David Cunningham.

OS.302 Substitute Members

Councillor David Fowles substituted for Councillor Blomefield and Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson substituted for Councillor David Cunningham.
Councillor Angus Jenkinson Chaired the meeting with Councillor Clare Turner acting as the Vice-Chair.

OS.303 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interests were made.

OS.304 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 2 February 2026 were discussed. Councillor Tony Slater proposed accepting the minutes and Councillor Jon Wareing seconded the proposal which was put to the vote and agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2026.

OS.305 Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was noted that the response regarding compost required clarification and additional detail.

An update was requested on the supplementary solar PV information from David Stanley regarding installation costs in relation to projected savings.

OS.306 Chair's Announcements

The Chair updated the order of the agenda items to allow visiting speakers to attend additional Scrutiny meetings within the County.

OS.307 Report back on recommendations

There were no comments regarding the recommendations.

OS.308 Public Questions

Councillor Stephen Andrews, Chair of Kempston Parish Council, raised concerns that planning enforcement had declined since it was last reviewed. Referring to a recent Ombudsman report, he urged the Committee to set a clear timeframe for reviewing enforcement and reporting back.

OS.309 Member Questions

There were no Member questions.

OS.310 Update on Local Government Reorganisation

Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer, Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place and Matt Abbott, Head of Communications, gave an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- Further information regarding the terms of reference for the technical, digital and customer, and property and assets workstreams was offered.

- Redundancy costs within the programme were sensitive and complex, with some redundancies expected. Posts would need to be reviewed, evaluated, and costed.
- The government's current election timetable showed Shadow elections scheduled for May 2027, with vesting day on 1 April 2028.
- The figure of approximately 1,100 public engagements from the public consultation referred to all councils across Gloucestershire.
- The invite to the Town and Parish webinar had been sent to all 360 clerks across Gloucestershire to forward to their councillors.
- The Government would use consultation responses to inform its decision. The local programme's role was to ensure residents across the County had every opportunity to participate.
- Individual consultation responses would not be published. Following the closure of the consultation, the Government would provide a summary overview.
- Risk management would be overseen by the Portfolio Board. A risk register would be reviewed fortnightly, with any risks requiring political input escalated to the Steering Board.
- The future operating model workstream was where systems planning and interdependencies between work programmes were being considered.
- Identity and culture work was a key part of the People and Culture workstream, with arrangements in place to support staff transitioning from the existing councils to the new council(s).
- The Programme Board currently included representatives from Town and Parish Councils. Beneath the Board, various project groups would operate, with potential for broader membership. Some groups may specifically involve the voluntary sector or town and parish councils to support delivery.

A request to share material before the meeting was made by the Chair.

17:55 – Councillor Jon Wareing left the Chamber.

OS.311 LGR - Joint Scrutiny arrangements

The options for the proposed joint scrutiny options were presented to the committee by Rob Aliffe, Programme Sponsor for LGR Governance and Legal and Alice McAlpine, Programme Lead for LGR Governance and Legal.

They explained that the task was to deliver and prepare for LGR across the county and provide effective scrutiny. An overview of the 4 options was shared with the Committee and their views requested on the various options with the preferred option being number 4 – a Scrutiny Panel.

The Scrutiny Panel would have two principal roles: to hold the joint programme arrangements to account across the seven authorities, and to contribute to policy development. Members were invited to comment on their level of support for the

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proposed model and to suggest how the Panel could operate effectively to inform the drafting of its terms of reference.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- The seven councils would seek to reach a consensus on the preferred scrutiny model and host authority. The chosen host council would formally establish the Panel, and each of the seven authorities would appoint its representatives in accordance with its constitution.
- The Scrutiny Panel model would allow flexibility to involve town and parish councils. This could include representation from the Association of Parish and Town Councils or inviting parish and town councils to attend specific sessions to give evidence.
- Initially there would be a single Scrutiny Panel. This was because the programme operated as a single programme requiring a unified approach. If the government decided Gloucestershire should have two (or three) unitary councils, there may be some divergence to scrutinise the different council areas separately, but joint scrutiny of the overall programme would remain necessary.
- Scrutiny Panels often generated stronger and more effective recommendations than formal committees, despite lacking call-in powers.
- The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Panel would be determined by the scrutiny function itself.

In summary, the Committee expressed the following views:

- Option 4 or an alternative panel format was considered.
- Concerns were raised that a panel would lack formal authority, which a committee possessed.
- Private meetings would conflict with the ethos of scrutiny, with public transparency being important for engagement and trust.
- It was suggested that political membership be divided equally rather than proportionally.
- Communication processes were noted as needing transparency.

The Scrutiny Panel's focus would cover 11 workstreams across seven councils to ensure the Local Government Reorganisation programme met its timeframe, with particular attention to timing, finance, and legal compliance on vesting day.

There was little appetite for Options 1–3.

The Chair thanked the guests and commented that it would have been helpful to have seen the presentation in advance.

OS.312 Infrastructure Funding - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Policy

The purpose of the report was to seek delegated authority for the Assistant Director of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, to implement a programme of enhancements.

The report was introduced by Councillor Juliet Layton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, and Helen Martin, Director for Communities and Place, who highlighted the following points:

- The annual bidding window previously ran from March–May with bids assessed by an officer panel using a scoring framework.
- The proposed enhancements were to:
 - Extend the bidding window to year-round, with bids considered October–December.
 - Improve transparency and communication with towns, parishes, community groups, and infrastructure partners.
 - Strengthen the assessment process against clear strategic criteria.
 - Enhance monitoring and reporting to demonstrate impact.
- Cabinet asked to delegate authority to Assistant Director of Planning Services, in consultation with portfolio holder, to implement changes.

In questioning and discussion, the following points were noted:

- The current CIL value held was approximately £5 million.
- Further details on the type of funds that could be applied for was requested.
- Accountability for CIL funding was through legal agreements, requiring recipients to use the money as intended. Financial due diligence was carried out before funds were released to ensure organisations could deliver the project. The Council team would maintain ongoing contact with recipients to ensure funds were spent within agreed timeframes and on approved purposes.
- CIL funding was allocated via a legal agreement to the body delivering the infrastructure. County Council functions were applied for by the County Council, and Parish or Town Council functions were applied for by the relevant Parish or Town Council.
- There was currently no definitive approach for handling funding post-LGR.
- The current team had the skills and resources to implement the proposed changes. Whilst the team was currently busy with the Local Plan, the extended bidding and assessment periods made the enhanced engagement manageable.
- CIL funding was intended for local community infrastructure and could not cover major strategic projects, which fell under Section 106 agreements in collaboration with Gloucestershire County Council.
- A clear framework and scoring mechanism was in place to prioritise bids, considering factors such as wider community benefit, match funding, and deliverability within a reasonable timeframe.

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- The CIL scoring mechanism reflected policy priorities, and any redesign of the scoring framework would reassess those priorities. Council-determined priorities could be embedded in the scoring matrix through question selection and weighting.

The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member and officers and did not wish to submit any recommendations to Cabinet.

19:02 – Councillor Tony Slater left the Chamber.

OS.313 Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees

A review of security measures and Gloucester County Council was underway, and district councillors attending meetings would be issued with passes for access. It was noted that the Cirencester Growth Hub was now being used by the Royal Agricultural University, and that government funding had supported its construction.

OS.314 Work Plan and Forward Plan

This item was not considered because the 3-hour maximum duration had been reached.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 7.09 pm

Chair

(END)

Local Government Reorganisation update

Cotswold District Council - Overview & Scrutiny Committee

02.03.2026

AGENDA

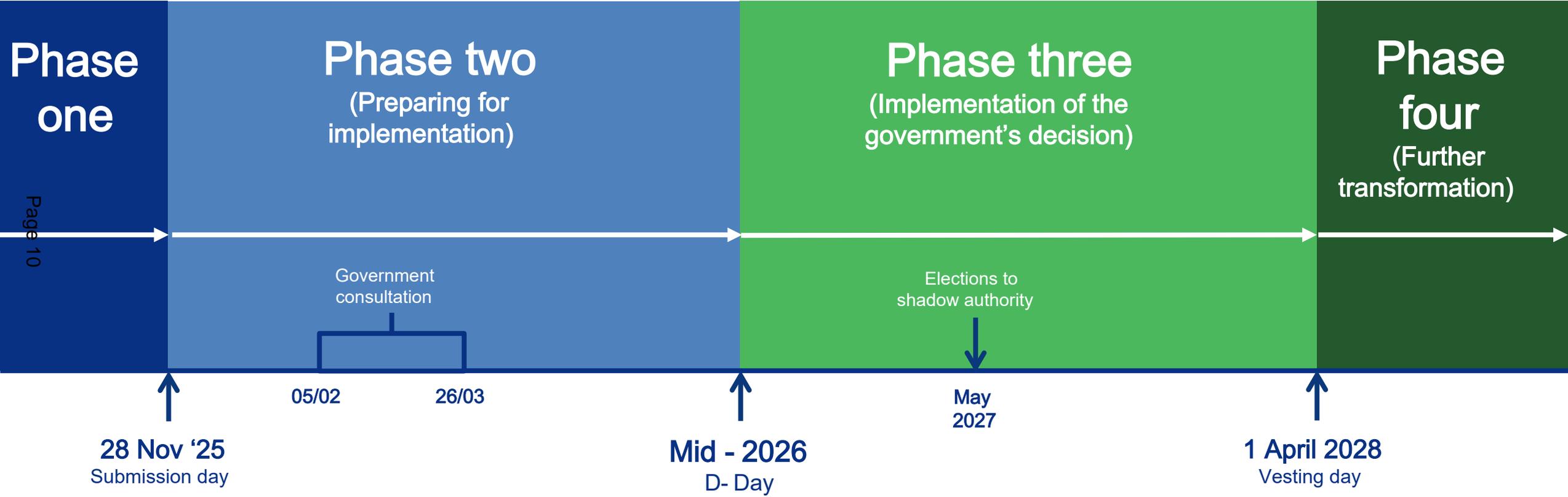
What this update will cover?

1. Recap and reminder on overall timelines
2. What's happened since November?
 - A. Implementation portfolio & governance
 - B. Who's who?
 - C. Baseline and data collection
 - D. Government consultation
3. Financing LGR in Gloucestershire
4. Neighbourhoods and communities

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1 | Recap on overall timelines

Recap and reminder on overall timelines



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The proposals

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Two unitary authorities

One covering the east

One covering the west



Two unitary authorities

One covering a slightly expanded Gloucester City

One covering the rest of Gloucestershire



One unitary authority

Covering the entire county

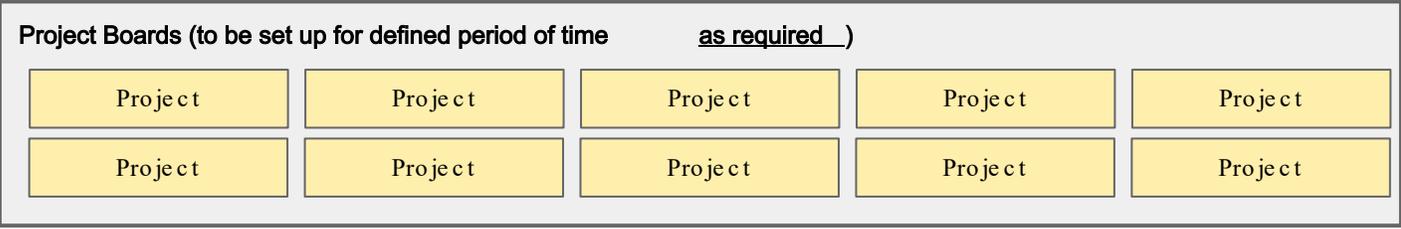
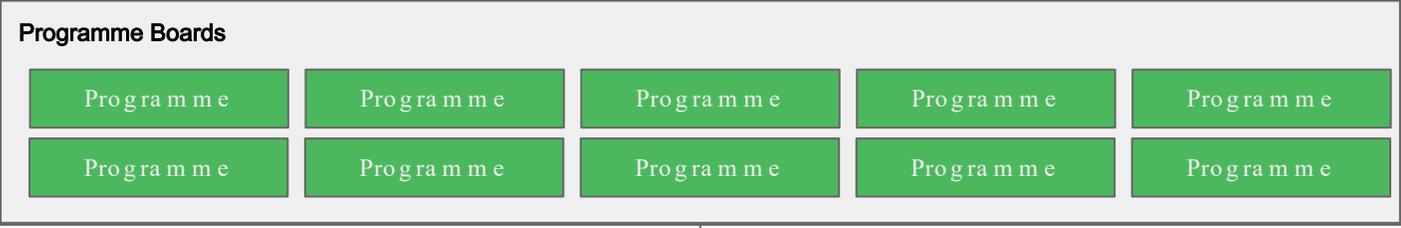
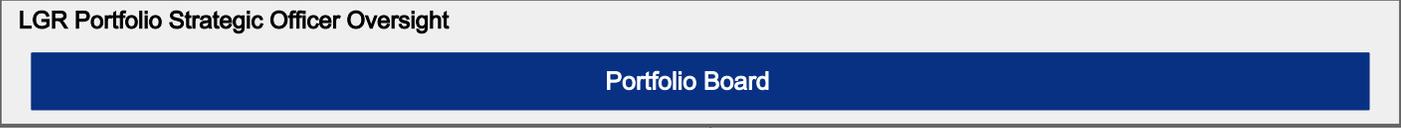
Ways of working principles

Leaders and Chief Execs agreed how they will work together in the run up to MHCLG's decision and during the shadow period; ensuring that staff, members, partners and residents remain confident in the process. These **shared and already agreed** principles are as follows:

-  **1** Continue to involve all our staff proactively
-  **2** Remain aligned around our shared future vision
-  **3** Open and honest communication and collaboration
-  **4** Aligned decision - making and transitional support
-  **5** Invest in core skills

2 | What's happened since November?

Preparing for implementation: Portfolio governance



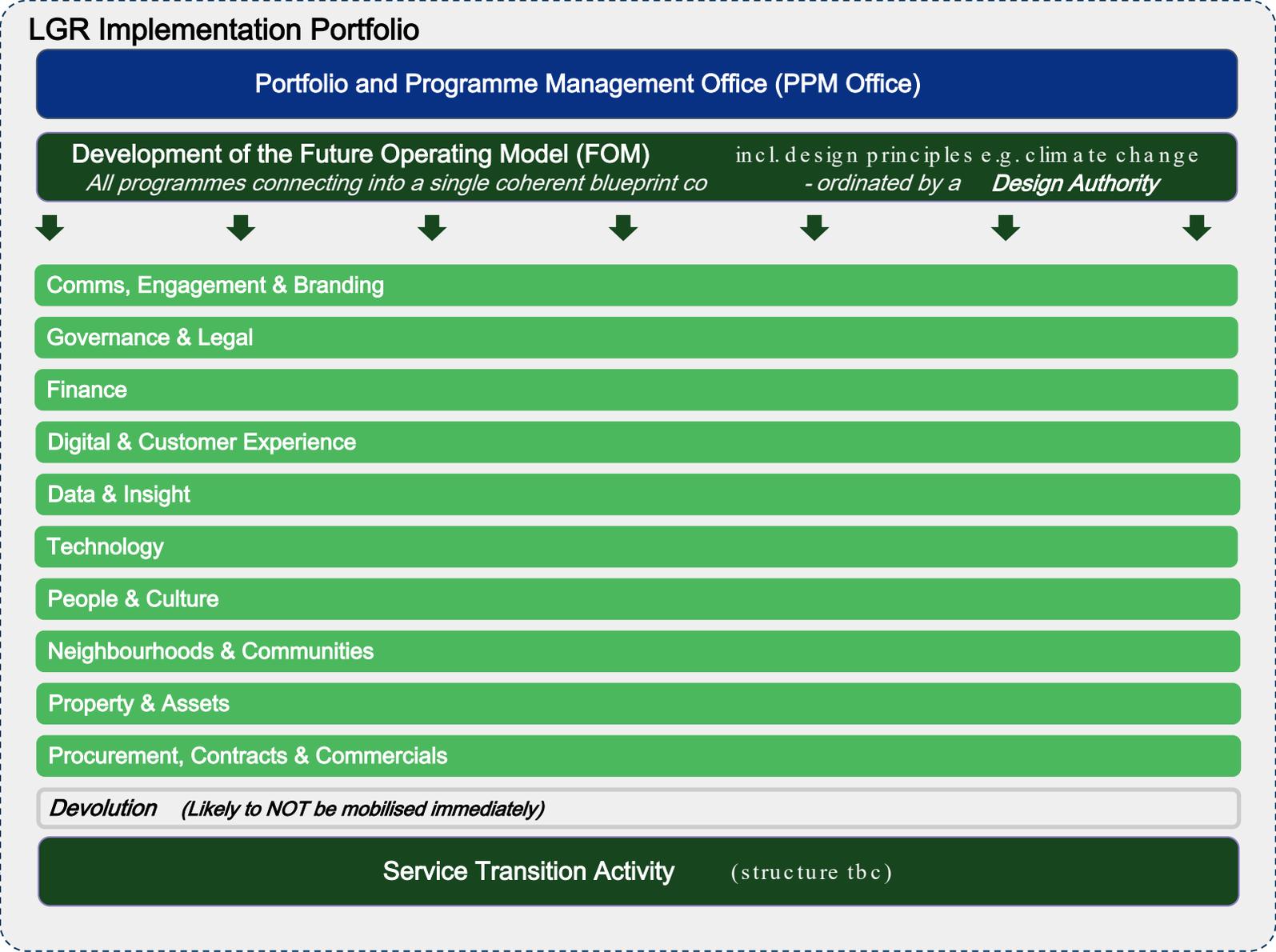
We have created a simple, transparent structure that has grown from the success of our workstreams in 2025.

Officers from all councils have shown they enjoy collaborating, make good collective decisions, are responsive to evidence, and work well together in the interests of Gloucestershire

LGR implementation portfolio structure

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The FOM Programme is developing a service baselining approach which will develop into service design and transition activity



Who's who | Key portfolio roles (1 of 2)

Portfolio and Programme Management Office (PPM Office)

	Emily McGuinness Portfolio Director	IMAGE	Bella Chambers Portfolio Manager	IMAGE	NAME OF PERSON Portfolio Support Officer
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Cross - cutting enabler programmes (1 of 2)

Comms, engagement & branding

	Jane Portman Programme Sponsor
	Matt Abbott Programme Lead
IMAGE	NAME OF PERSON Programme Manager

Governance & Legal

	Rob Ayliffe Programme Sponsor
	Alice McAlpine Programme Lead
IMAGE	NAME OF PERSON Programme Manager

Future Operating Model (FOM)

	Jo Walker Programme Sponsor
	Alex Khaldi Programme Lead
IMAGE	NAME OF PERSON Programme Manager

Finance

	Nina Philippidis Programme Sponsor
	David Stanley Programme Lead
IMAGE	NAME OF PERSON Programme Manager

Who's who | Key portfolio roles (2 of 2)

Cross - cutting enabler programmes (2 of 2)

Digital & Customer Experience



Alistair Cunningham
Programme Sponsor



Clare Evans
Programme Lead

IMAGE

NAME OF PERSON
Programme Manager

Data & Insight



Alistair Cunningham
Programme Sponsor



Emily White
Programme Lead

IMAGE

NAME OF PERSON
Programme Manager

Technology



Jon McGinty
Programme Sponsor



Sherrill Holder
Programme Lead

IMAGE

NAME OF PERSON
Programme Manager

People & Culture



Kathy O'Leary
Programme Sponsor



Mandy Quayle
Interim Programme Lead

IMAGE

NAME OF PERSON
Programme Manager

Neighbourhoods & Communities



Siobhan Farmer
Programme Sponsor



Helen Martin
Programme Lead

IMAGE

NAME OF PERSON
Programme Manager

Property & Assets



Gareth Edmundson
Programme Sponsor



Neil Corbett
Programme Lead

IMAGE

NAME OF PERSON
Programme Manager

Procurement, Contracts & Commercials



Nigel Brinn
Programme Sponsor



Benedict Leigh
Programme Lead

IMAGE

NAME OF PERSON
Programme Manager

What are Work Programmes doing now?

**Baselining &
data collection**

**Mapping
milestones,
developing project
initiation plans**

**Kick off meetings
and appointing
work programme
members**

**Understanding
dependencies /
interdependencies
across Portfolio**

Government's LGR consultation

Key points

- Government running consultation
- **Closes on March 26th**
- Consulting on **all three options**
- Asks to what extent consultees believe **proposals meet criteria**
- Government reached out to its own list of "named consultees"

What we're doing?

- **Amplifying** the consultation
- **A best endeavours, zero cost** approach
- **Neutral** and in accordance with publicity code
- Written to all stakeholders proposed by councils
- A range of online and offline activity
- **Town & Parish council webinar** (5/3)
- Working with partners and stakeholders to share with networks

Results so far

- MHCLG has reported that **over 1,100** have taken part so far
- Above average vs other LGR areas in country
- Pack of resources created and published online
- Over 50,000 views of content on social media, driving almost 1000 people to consultation/Future Glos website

How can members help?

- Spread the word with residents – share link to Future Glos website
- Encourage TPCs in your ward to attend webinar on Thursday
- Complete the consultation yourselves

Future→
Gloucestershire

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3 | Financing LGR

Set up costs for new authorities

1UA	2UA
21,284,600	30,129,100

Overall costs for each authority

55:45 County/Districts, Equal split Districts	1UA	2UA
Gloucestershire County Council	11,706,530	16,571,005
Cheltenham Borough Council	1,596,345	2,259,683
Cotswold District Council	1,596,345	2,259,683
Forest of Dean District Council	1,596,345	2,259,683
Gloucester City Council	1,596,345	2,259,683
Stroud District Council	1,596,345	2,259,683
Tewkesbury Borough Council	1,596,345	2,259,683
	21,284,600	30,129,100

How those costs will be split between existing councils

Cost to Cotswold District Council

How will that money be spent?

Type of transition cost	1UA Estimated cost (£)	2UA Estimated cost (£)
Redundancy	4,033,000	3,646,000
External comms, branding and implementation	366,000	549,000
External transition, design and implementation support	4,700,000	7,000,000
Internal programme management	2,200,000	3,300,000
Creating the new council	700,000	1,500,000
Contingency	5,500,000	8,100,000
Organisation closedown	400,000	400,000
Public consultation	274,500	412,000
ICT costs	2,800,000	3,500,000
Shadow costs	311,100	622,200
Fire and Rescue disaggregation	0	1,100,000
Total	21,284,600	30,129,200

How will spend be managed?

Shared funding model

All programme costs are pooled into a single portfolio budget funded 55% by the County Council and 45% collectively across District Councils, avoiding individual council drawdowns.

Governance & oversight

Joint Portfolio Board (JPB) approves and oversees the full LGR portfolio budget, supported by the Portfolio and Programme Management Office's (PPMO) consolidated monitoring and reporting framework. There will be a regular finance report to the steering group

Transparent rules

All resource requests must follow a defined approval process via PMO and JPB. Secondments funded by portfolio, with councils responsible for backfill

Eligibility criteria for spend

Portfolio funding covers costs directly required to deliver LGR (i.e programme staffing, specialist support, IT, consultation, and establishing the new unitary). Routine operational costs, transformation investments, and shadow authority elections are excluded

Robust planning, monitoring & audit

Budgets are planned annually, reviewed quarterly, and tracked monthly with full audit trails. All decisions must show value for money, alignment to the Implementation Roadmap, and evidential justification.

3 | Neighbourhoods & communities

Recap of proposals (what we have said so far)

6. Local engagement and empowerment This criterion assesses whether the model can support stronger local democracy and provide practical tools for neighbourhood-level decision-making.	A) Enables stronger community engagement	8. Civic engagement and participative democracy This criterion assesses whether the model provides meaningful democratic representation at community level.	A) Promotes civic engagement and strengthens participative democracy
	B) Delivers genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment		

What we said...

- Ensure we will meet the government criteria
- Build on existing good practice across the county
- Value communities of geography, identity and interest
- Seeing Town & Parish councils and VCSFE sector as key partners
- Emphasising participation, empowerment and trust
- Starting point of neighbourhoods of 20,000 to 50,000
- Shaping neighbourhood boundaries by "thorough consultation" including experience and views of councillors.

- **Programme mobilisation** : Sponsor and Programme Lead appointed. Now reviewing the Programme Board membership, projects and accompanying governance (e.g. risks, stakeholder mapping) as part of this.
- **Pre- decision** : begin process to understand communities and stakeholders views on “neighbourhoods” and establishing clear baselines of our current locality models.
- **Identifying strengths and gaps:** understanding better current services, ensuring we know who is already working with communities and how they are doing this.
- **Recognising unknowns:** await details on English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.
- **Mindful of wider context:** Health reorganisation and neighbourhood health model, OPCC abolition, police reorganisation, devolution agreements.
- **Planning this as a 10 year transformation programme** : given the above, what is *achievable* versus what is *essential* by “Day 1”?

Key elements of the Neighbourhoods & Communities Programme

Below project areas indicative

– still being developed

Natural Communities	What might our neighbourhood areas be?	Staffing	Who currently does what across the seven councils?
Statutory Partners	How will we align with key statutory partners like Health?	Neighbourhood Governance	How can neighbourhoods be governed and operate in practice?
Funding	What are the seven councils currently spend with the VCFSE, and how neighbourhoods will be resourced?	VCFSE	What issues and opportunities do we want to address through reorganisation?
Service Offer	How might unitary council services align with neighbourhoods?	Towns and Parishes	How can we use reorganisation to develop and/or improve the local council offer?
Digital and Data	What is the opportunity for neighbourhoods and communities in better use of digital and data/insight?		

Questions to answer as part of the programme

- 1) What is essential for “Day 1” of the new council(s) versus what will take longer to develop?
- 2) What does good ‘neighbourhood governance’ look like?
- 3) To what extent will councillors lead, drive and make decisions?
- 4) To what extent should empowerment of local people and organisations be the focus?
- 5) What is different about how we want to work with local organisations (Parishes, VCFSE, businesses) in the future?
- 6) In creating neighbourhoods, how far do we want neighbourhoods to focus on the same things, and how far do we see them developing differently?
- 7) What services are important to localise (in some way) if achievable?

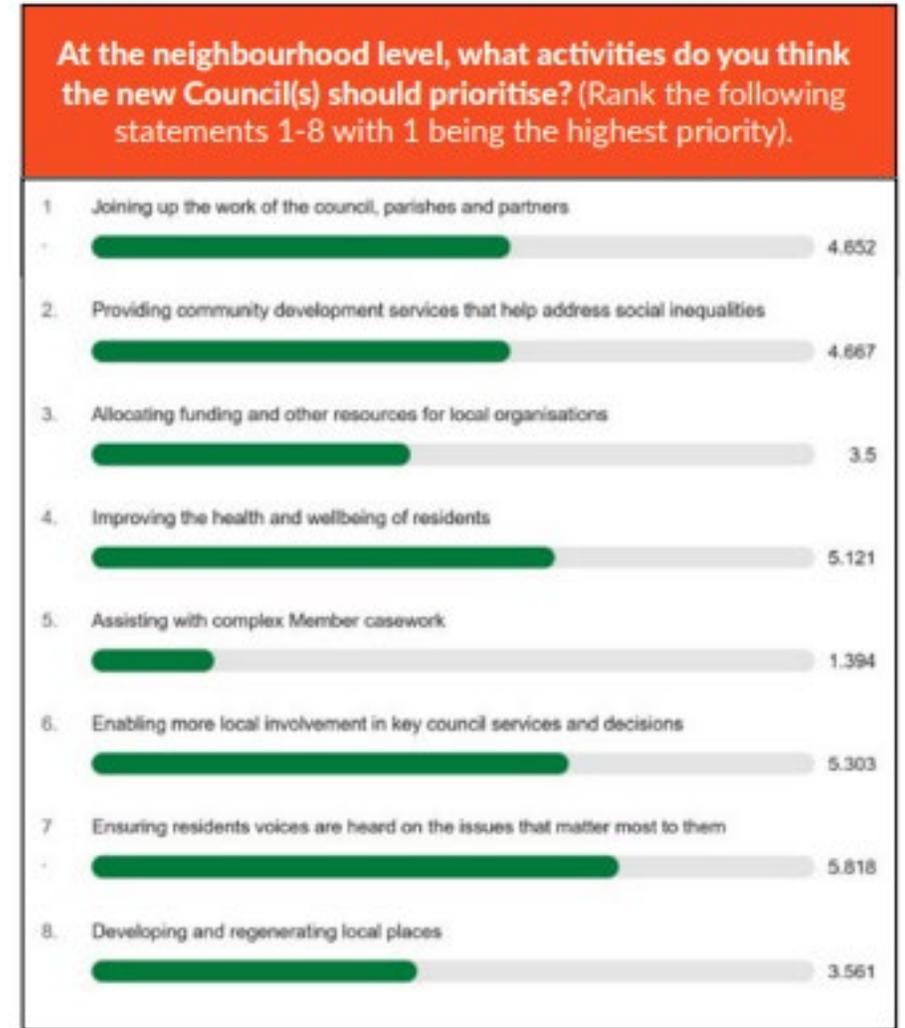


Diagram 2: Results from all member webinar ranking exercise

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Proposals for Joint Scrutiny of the LGR Portfolio

Rob Ayliffe

05/02/2026

PURPOSE / CONTENT

To consider options for providing scrutiny of the LGR Portfolio

What do we want to achieve:

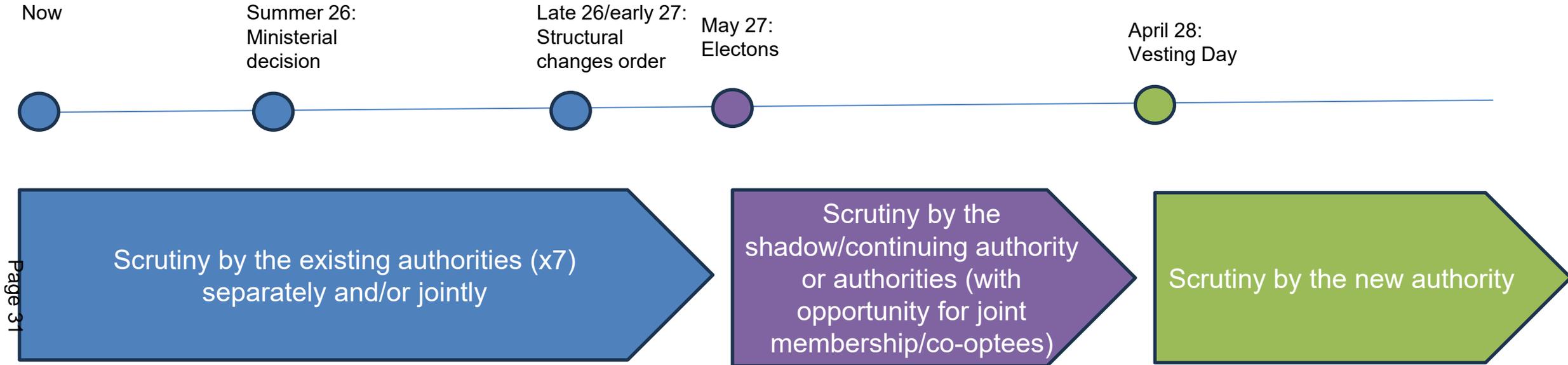
- Providing accountability for the programme and those charged with delivering it
- A sounding board to work through issues and choices
- Widening political ownership and buy - in to the future governance
- Building cross - council relationships and trust

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Other factors to consider:

- Political balance: different models will have different implications for political balance
- Ease and speed of implementation
- Cost
- Flexibility of the model to adapt at each stage of the programme
- Whether the committee should have formal powers of call - in
- Frequency – assumed that meetings should take place every 2 months as a minimum

Scrutiny of LGR at each stage of the Process



Whatever we do now will need to evolve, and will only be in place in its initial form until the May 27 elections.

The arrangements must enhance and dovetail with existing arrangements, so will not replace each Council's own existing scrutiny function

*There is limited time at each stage for scrutiny meetings to take place –
so time is of the essence*

Headline options

1. Formal Joint Scrutiny Committee

2. Scrutiny committee or sub-committee “hosted” by one Council

3. Separate scrutiny by each Council

4. Scrutiny panel

Option 1: Formal Joint Scrutiny Committee

Establish a new Joint Scrutiny Committee of the 7 councils

- This option would require each Council to take a formal decision to establish a new joint scrutiny committee
- Would need to agree terms of reference, including support arrangements
- As a result, will be slower to set up (est 3 - 4 months)
- The terms of reference and ways of working will be determined jointly **before** the committee is set up
- Political balance would reflect the membership of all 7 councils (see table)
- All meetings will be held in public
- Depending on the Terms of Reference, the committee could have formal powers of 'call in'
- Consideration would need to be given to chair's allowance

	% of seats	e.g. no of seats (/15)
Liberal Democrat	41	6
Green	19	3
Conservative	16	2
Labour	10	1
Reform	5	1
Independent / Other	9	1

Option 2: A scrutiny committee “hosted” by one of the councils

One of the Councils establishes a new scrutiny committee or sub an existing one, then co - opts members from the other councils.

- committee, or repurposes

- The committee would follow the scrutiny rules of the host authority
- If re-purposing an existing committee, the membership is already determined, and existing cultural/style issues or tensions are likely to be carried forward
- Councils may not perceive themselves as having an equal stake
- Quicker to set up than Option 1, but will still require formal decision making by the host authority (est 2 - 3 months)
- The terms of reference and ways of working will be determined by the host authority **before** the committee is set up (but in consultation with the others)
- Political balance would reflect the membership of the host council, but could be adjusted through co - options (see table of what this would mean, based on GCC or CDC as the host authority – purely for illustration)
- All meetings will be held in public
- Depending on host authority’s scheme of allowances, chair would attract an allowance
- Host authority would be responsible for support arrangements, but may look to other councils for a contribution

Examples of political balance under different options	If hosted by GCC		If hosted by CDC	
	% of seats	e.g. no of seats (/15)	% of seats	e.g. no of seats (/15)
Liberal Democrat	49	7	58	9
Green	16	2	3	1
Conservative	11	2	26	4
Labour / Independent / Other	2	1	3	1
Reform	20	3		

Option 3: Separate scrutiny by each Council

Each council scrutinises its own contribution to the LGR programme

- Requires no changes to existing arrangements, so could begin with immediate effect
- Would not incur additional cost, but
- Likely to place a greater burden on Programme staff
- Unlikely to secure shared ownership or build relationships across existing councils
- From May 2027 to March 2028, (depending on which LGR option is taken forward) could result in 9 separate committees scrutinising LGR, increasing potential for divergence of views / tension
- Call - in would remain a function of each separate council

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Option 4: Scrutiny Panel (recommended option)

Establish a scrutiny panel under one of the existing scrutiny committees

- Would require a decision of one of the existing scrutiny committees, so is relatively quick to establish
- Would follow the arrangements set out in 'host' authority's constitution
- Would best reflect current collaborative approach to cross - Council working
- Would not be bound by rules on political proportionality, so more scope to widen ownership
- Members could be drawn from each council's existing scrutiny committee(s) where those exist, in order to provide a link back to individual council scrutiny committees
- Terms of reference could be changed with little effort
- Would not automatically incur a chair's allowance
- Consideration would need to be given to how it is supported/resourced – but this would not have to fall to the host authority, and could be shared
- Could meet in public, but would also have the option of private meetings
- Offers more flexibility in terms of culture/ways of working and frequency of meeting
- Could make recommendations back to the Leaders / Programme Board
- BUT, would not have formal powers, including call - in

Proposed membership and frequency of Scrutiny Panel

- Total of 14 members
- Two members to be nominated by each authority
- Each Council is encouraged to choose a member from each of their 2 largest groups (see table for resulting membership)
- Each Council is encouraged to nominate from the membership of the relevant scrutiny committee
- Nominees must not be a member of any Council's Executive or Executive Committee

	Resulting seats (/14)
Liberal Democrat	5
Green	3
Conservative	4 or 3*
Labour	1
Reform	1
Independent / Other	0 or 1*

** Conservatives and Independents are the joint 2nd largest groups on Forest of Dean District Council*

Next steps

1. Chief Executives to sound proposals out with Leaders to test whether option 4 is supported
2. Engagement with each Council's scrutiny committee to secure ownership/agreement

If option 4 were agreed...

3. Agree which authority will host - the host authority would need to have at least one existing scrutiny committee, and provision in its constitution for scrutiny panels.
4. Agree how the committee will be supported – this need not be solely by the host authority
5. Agree membership, appointment of chair and nomination process
6. Host authority decision to establish panel