

Local Government Reorganisation update

Cotswold District Council - Overview & Scrutiny Committee

02.03.2026

AGENDA

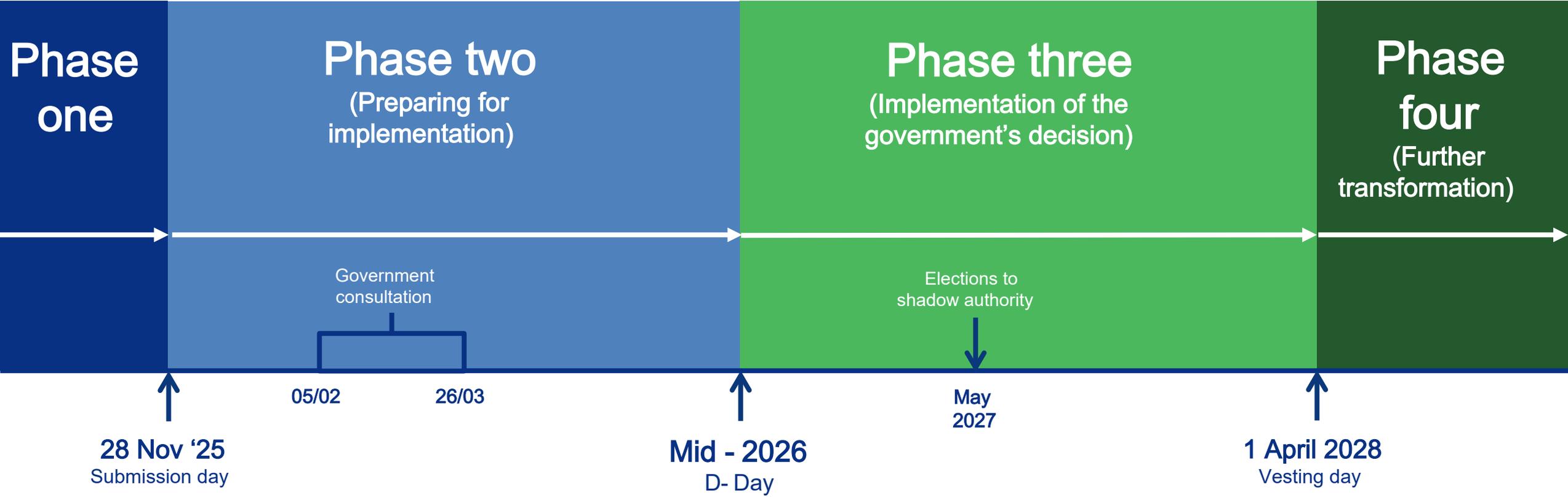
What this update will cover?

1. Recap and reminder on overall timelines
2. What's happened since November?
 - A. Implementation portfolio & governance
 - B. Who's who?
 - C. Baselining 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



The proposals



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

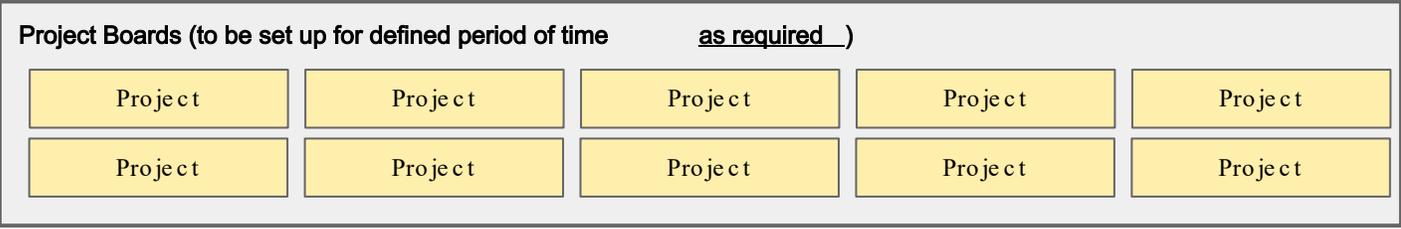
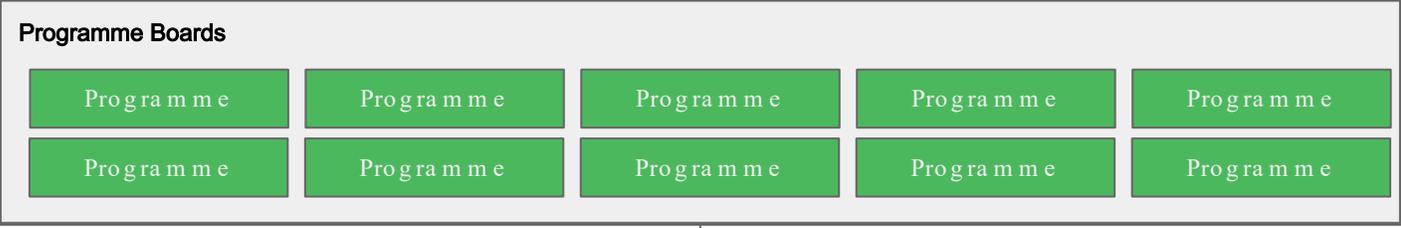
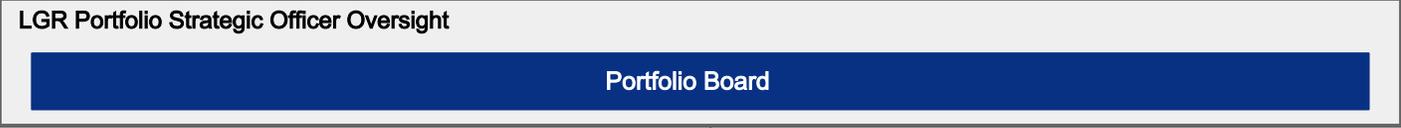
 **4** Aligned decision - making and transitional support

 **5** Invest in core skills

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2 | What's happened since November?

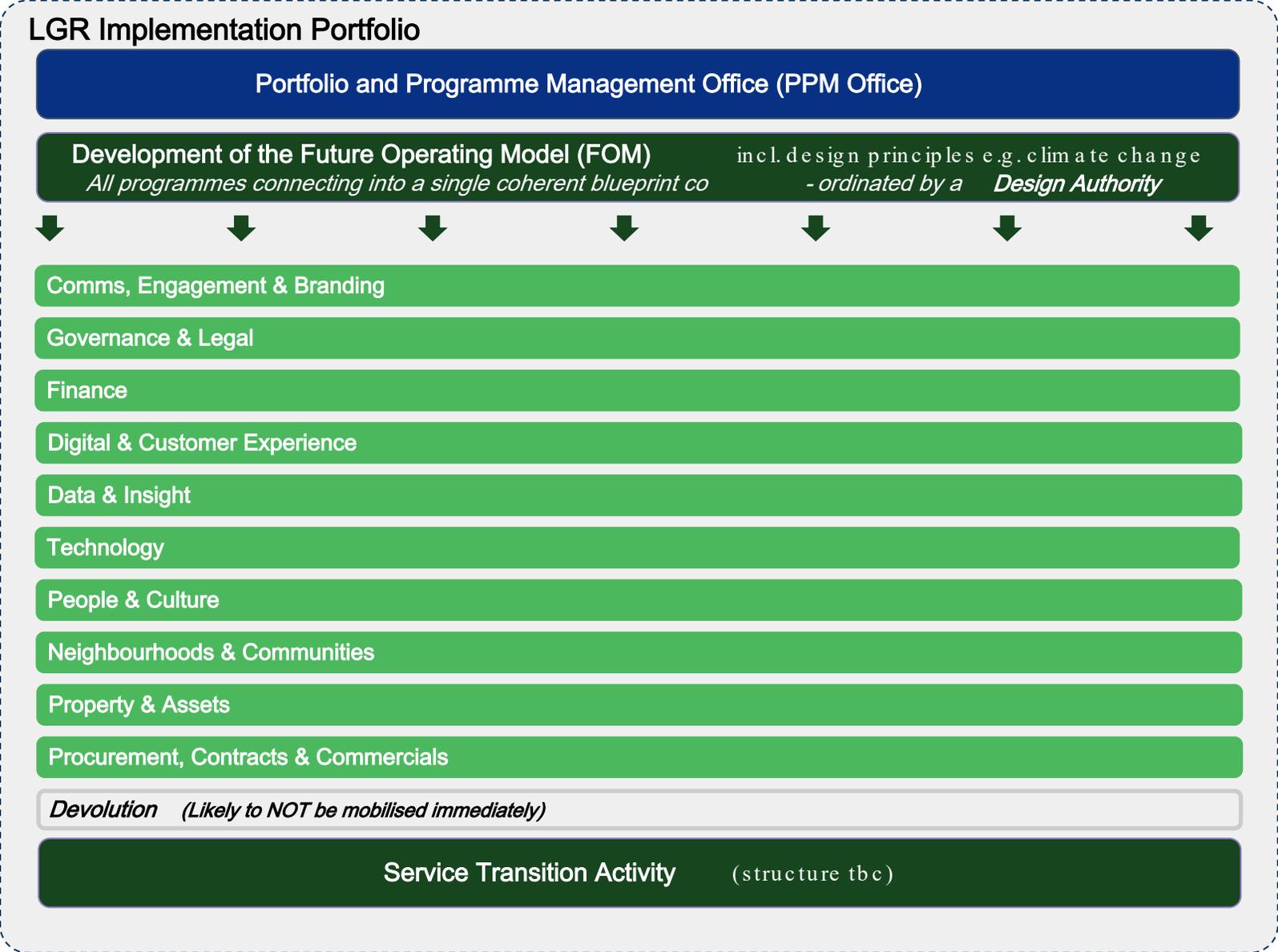
Preparing for implementation: Portfolio governance



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



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

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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)

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

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?

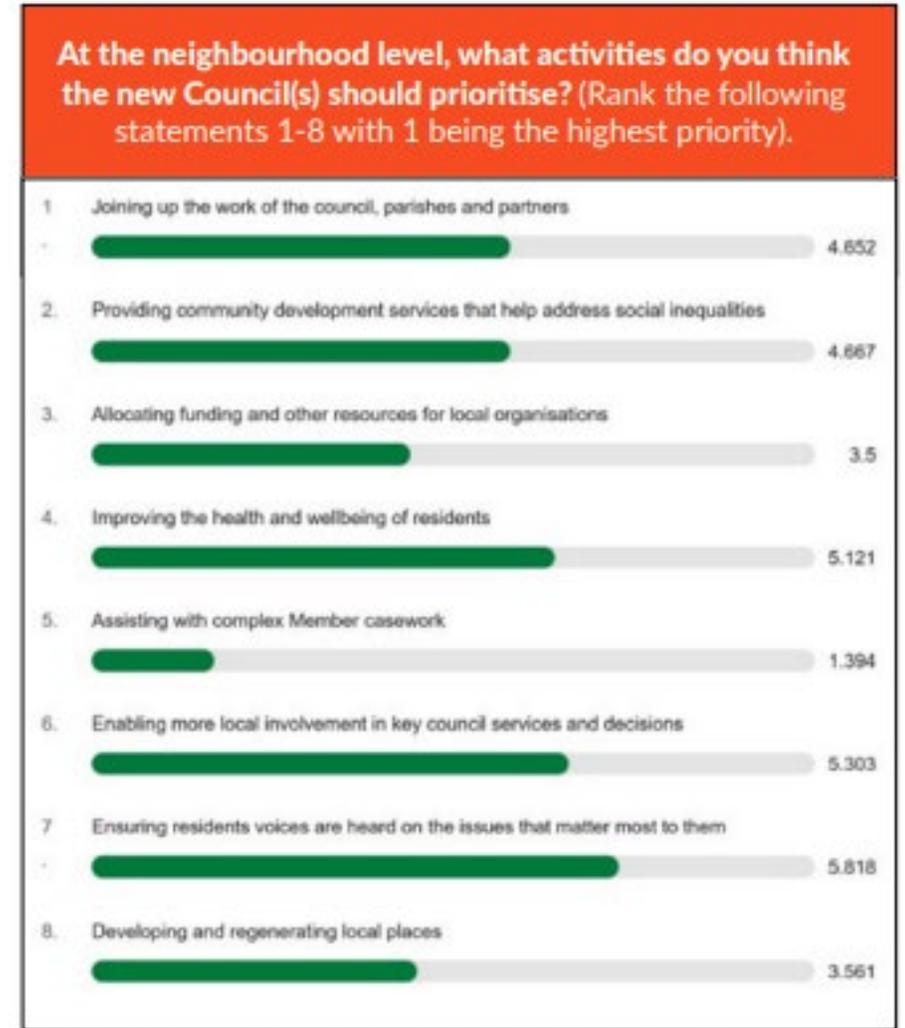


Diagram 2: Results from all member webinar ranking exercise