

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – 18TH JUNE 2026

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 (2)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - APPOINTMENTS TO NORTH HAMPSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This paper seeks nominations to the Joint Committee which is to be established to oversee the initial stages of the establishment of the new North Hampshire Council prior to the appointment of the Shadow Council in 2027.

Council are RECOMMENDED

- 1) to consider the nominations and appoint 2 Councillors and deputies to the Joint Committee.
- 2) Confirm that those representatives represent the Council in the voluntary Joint Committee arrangements before the Structural Changes Order is made.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. In March 2026, the [Secretary of State announced](#) that as part of their programme of local government reorganisation and devolution the Government had decided to go ahead with the five-unitary-authority option supported by the Council. This means Basingstoke & Deane, Hart, Rushmoor, and Hampshire councils will be replaced by a new North Hampshire Unitary Council.
- 1.2. In a [follow-up letter to chief executives](#), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said it plans to prepare a Structural Change Order for Parliament to approve. This order would create the new councils and close the current ones.
- 1.3. The Structural Changes Order will provide the legal basis for local government reorganisation in Hampshire and the Solent. Both Houses of Parliament must approve it. It will cover things such as setting up the new councils, shadow arrangements, elections, and the responsibilities of the current and new councils. Approval is expected in autumn 2026.

## **2. APPOINTMENT TO JOINT COMMITTEE**

- 2.1. The Structural Changes Order will set out the requirement for a Joint Committee for each new council. These committees will help prepare for the new councils before shadow authority elections. Their main jobs are:
  - Drafting a code of conduct, member allowances scheme, and meeting schedule for the new unitary council.
  - Setting up an officer team called the Implementation Team.
  - Preparing a high-level implementation plan for the new councils.
- 2.2. The Joint Committee cannot make decisions for the new councils. It must not limit the decisions that future shadow councils may want to make but enables progress to be made on reorganisation prior to the Shadow Council being in place.
- 2.3. The North Hampshire Joint Committee will have 12 councillors: 6 from Hampshire County Council, and 2 each from Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, and Rushmoor. The Joint Committee will decide who will be Chair and Deputy Chair, and how meetings will be run.
- 2.4. The Committee is expected to commence on a voluntary basis before Parliament gives final approval. This will help councils begin working together early. It is expected that there will only be a limited number of meetings of the Joint Committee working on a voluntary basis before the SCO is confirmed.
- 2.5. Following consideration at the LGR Cabinet Working Group, Group leaders were requested to provide nominations to the Joint Committee. At the point of publication of the Council Agenda nominations had been received as follows:
  - Cllr Gareth Williams and Cllr Calum Stewart with Cllr Keith Dibble as their deputy.
  - Cllr Martin Tennant with Cllr Gareth Lyon as deputy

## **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1. It is important that the Council make appointments to the Committee if it is to be able to influence the direction of the new North Hampshire Council prior to the establishment of the Shadow Council.
- 3.2. As there are only 2 positions available for Rushmoor on the Joint Committee Council are RECOMMENDED to consider the nominations and appoint 2 Councillors and deputies to the Joint Committee.

GARETH WILLIAMS  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**APPENDICES / ANNEXES:**

Annex 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

- [Report to Council – Local Government Reorganisation – 25 September 2025](#)
- [Letter to Hampshire Leaders from the Secretary of State – 25 March 2026](#)
- [Letter to Hampshire Chief Executives from MHCLG – 26 March 2026](#)

# Equality Impact Assessment: Screening Tool

The **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Tool** should be completed for any new proposal, plan or project. It helps staff check if their proposal will positively, neutrally, or negatively affect residents, staff, or service users. If the impact is positive or neutral, a full EIA isn't needed.

A **full EIA** is required if the screening shows a negative impact on specific groups. We also advise that a full EIA should be completed when a [key decision](#) is being made. Key decisions are executive actions likely to:

- Significantly affect Council tax, budget balances, or contingencies.
- Have a major impact on communities across two or more Borough wards.
- Expenditure or savings over £100,000 qualify as significant, with a £250,000 threshold for property transactions.

Furthermore, for staff, we generally consider the impact on more than 25 people as significant, which would require a full EIA. If you're unsure, you can seek guidance from the Policy Team.

**\*After screening, if you identify the need for a full Equality Impact Assessment, you can use your existing answers as a foundation for the full assessment.**

Name of Project	Local Government Reorganisation Appointments
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Policy, Strategy, and Transformation
Date screening completed	08/06/26
Screening author name	Martin Iyawe
Policy Team sign off	Alex Shiell
Authorising Director/Head of Service name	Karen Edwards

## 1. Please provide a summary of the proposal

The proposal is to appoint the Leader of the Council and an additional representative to the North Hampshire Joint Committee, which will support the transition to a new North Hampshire Unitary Council.

The Joint Committee will carry out preparatory work including:

- drafting governance arrangements (code of conduct, allowances, meetings)
- establishing an implementation team
- preparing a high-level implementation plan

It cannot make binding decisions for the new authority but will influence how the future council is designed and operates.

There are no direct changes to services at this stage. The purpose is to ensure Rushmoor has representation and influence during reorganisation.

## 2. Who will the proposal impact? Please indicate Yes or No

## Annex 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Group of people	Impacted?
Residents	Yes
Businesses	Yes
Visitors to Rushmoor	No
Voluntary or community groups	Yes
Council staff	Yes
Trade unions	
Other public sector Organisations	
Others	Please specify: Yes

### 3. What impact will this change have on staff? Please complete where relevant:

Officers will be required to support the Joint Committee and wider transition programme, including developing implementation plans and attending meetings. This will increase workload and may shift priorities but does not change roles, structures or staffing levels at this stage.

### 4. What consultation or engagement will you be leading (with residents, staff, or other stakeholders) as part of this project?

Group Leaders and the LGR Cabinet Working Group were consulted on the proposed appointments. There has been no public consultation, as the decision relates to internal governance arrangements required by the reorganisation process. Wider public engagement will take place as part of the transition to the new authority.

### 5. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

#### Direct and indirect impacts

When completing this table, please consider both **direct and indirect impacts**, see helpful guidance.

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a **protected characteristic**. This includes:

- **Actual possession** of a protected characteristic.
- **Perceived possession** of a protected characteristic (discrimination by perception).

## Annex 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

- **Association** with someone who has a protected characteristic (discrimination by association).

A valid comparison must show that someone without the protected characteristic would have been treated better in similar circumstances. It can still be direct discrimination even if the person treating you unfairly shares the same characteristic.

*Note: Age discrimination may be lawful if it can be objectively justified. For other protected characteristics, direct discrimination is unlawful regardless of intent or justification.*

Indirect discrimination happens when a **policy, rule, or practice** applies to everyone but puts people with a protected characteristic at a **particular disadvantage**. It occurs when:

- A policy is applied equally to all.
- It disadvantages a group sharing a protected characteristic.
- You are personally disadvantaged by it.
- The organisation cannot justify the policy as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

If the policy can be objectively justified, it is not considered indirect discrimination.

*For example: Closing public toilets may be an example of indirect discrimination, as it affects everyone but disproportionately disadvantages women, due to toilet frequency, alternative options and safety/hygiene factors.*

### Likely impact

For the groups identified earlier, tick the likely impact (both direct and indirect) on people with protected characteristics (e.g., age, disability, race, etc.):

- **Neutral:** No impact.
- **Positive:** Benefits people with protected characteristics.
- **Negative:** Harms people with protected characteristics.
- **Not Sure:** It's unclear how this affects people with protected characteristics, or more information is needed.

Rate the negative impact as **low, medium, or high**. Also, consider whether the proposal may be seen as controversial or negative by some groups. See the guidance for help.

### Protected characteristic - Age

(for example, young people under 25, older people over 65)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		This proposal does not change services, eligibility, or access.  Any impacts on different age groups will arise later through service design under the new authority.

### Protected characteristic – Disability

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(include people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, blind and partially sighted people, Deaf or hard of hearing people, neurodiverse people. This also includes carers.)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct impact at this stage. However, decisions influenced by the Joint Committee (e.g. governance and service planning) could affect accessibility of services in future.

### Protected characteristic - Gender reassignment and identity

(Include people who identify across the trans\* umbrella, not only those who have undergone gender reassignment surgery. This is inclusive of girls and or/women, men and/or boys, non-binary and genderfluid people and people who are transitioning) \*Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct or indirect impacts identified at this stage as the proposal is limited to governance representation.

### Protected characteristic - Marriage and Civil Partnership

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct or indirect impacts identified at this stage as the proposal is limited to governance representation.

### Protected characteristic – Pregnancy and Maternity

(Include people who are pregnant in or returning to the workplace after pregnancy. Could also include working parents.)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct or indirect impacts identified at this stage as the proposal is limited to governance representation.

### Protected characteristic – Race or ethnicity

(include on the basis of colour, nationality, citizenship, ethnic or national origins)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable)

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				<i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct impact, but representation at Joint Committee level may influence how the needs of diverse communities are reflected in future policies and services.

### Protected characteristic – Religion or belief

(include no faith)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct or indirect impacts identified at this stage as the proposal is limited to governance representation.

### Protected characteristic - Sex

(Under the Equality Act 2010 and following the 2025 Supreme Court ruling on 15 April 20205, a person’s legal sex is defined as their biological sex as recorded at birth. Trans individuals are still protected from discrimination under the characteristic of gender reassignment.)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct or indirect impacts identified at this stage as the proposal is limited to governance representation.

### Protected characteristic - Sexual Orientation

(Include people from across the LGBTQ+ umbrella, for example, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual or asexual.)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>
	Yes	Choose an item.		No direct or indirect impacts identified at this stage as the proposal is limited to governance representation.

### Protected characteristic - Other

(e.g. people on low incomes, people living in poverty, looked after children, people with care experience, people who are homeless, people with mental health problems, people who are prison leavers, people affected by menopause, people affected by menstruation and/or period poverty)

Positive impact	Neutral impact	Negative impact	Not Sure	Description of the impact (if applicable) <i>Consider both direct and indirect impacts when completing this table</i>

## Annex 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

	Yes	Choose an item.		No immediate impact. However, governance decisions made during transition could affect prioritisation of services used by lower-income or vulnerable residents.
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### 6. Screening Decision

Outcome	Yes or No
Neutral or Positive – no full EIA needed*.	Yes
Negative – Low Impact – full EIA at the service director’s discretion*.	No
Negative – Medium or High Impact – must complete a full EIA.	No
Is a full EIA required? Service decision:	No
Is a full EIA required? [Policy Team] sign off recommendation:	No
Flag for DPIA (will include engagement that collects personal data). [Policy Team]:	No
Flag for ethics (high risk / will involve engagement with vulnerable residents):	No

Once you’ve completed the screening tool and determined that the proposal is likely to have a positive or neutral impact on people with protected characteristics, the following can be included in the ‘Equality Impact Assessment’ part of the report. ***‘An equality impact check found that this proposal would have a positive or neutral impact on people with protected characteristics. Therefore, a full assessment is not required.’***

Please send this completed EIA Screening Tool to [Policy@rushmoor.gov.uk](mailto:Policy@rushmoor.gov.uk) for quality checking by the policy team.