Report for Tenbury Division Town & Parish Councils Summer 2026

This report is focused on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The Government has announced that on April 1st 2028, Worcestershire County Council and the six District Councils will be merged into two new unitary authorities, North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire. All of the functions carried out by existing councils will be divided or shared between the two new authorities.

In respect of Worcestershire County Council, this means that Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Highways, which together will amount to more than 80% of the total budget of the new authorities, will either have to be disaggregated or formed into a Shared Service Arrangement.

Both of these scenarios will inevitably create significant disruption and additional cost for services that are already under immense pressure. In terms of a Shared Service Arrangement, this is unlikely to be sustainable in the long-term as the two new authorities will inevitably have different financial and strategic priorities. This means that both in terms of funding and operational approach the services will end up needing to be separated. In respect of disaggregation, whether immediate or in future years, determining how each service is divided between the new authorities and then implementing the changes is likely to cause significant problems for years to come.

While there may be savings from District Councils due to services that are currently duplicated being merged (such as housing or planning), given that these savings will apply to less than 20% of the total budget the net cost of LGR will, in all probability, be huge.

Given that the criteria that the Government set out have been largely ignored in this decision, it is difficult to see how this decision is anything other than politically motivated. It is on this basis that, to date, three Local Authorities have indicated they will seek a Judicial Review on the Government's decision. We will need to wait and see what impact this legal process has, if any, on this decision.

Justin Bowen

Worcestershire County Councillor for Tenbury Division