

County Councillor Report – October 2026

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – Legal Challenge to Central Government

Local Government Reorganisation remains one of the most significant issues facing Nottinghamshire, with potentially far-reaching consequences for the future of our councils, the delivery of local services and the way our communities are represented.

Nottinghamshire County Council has been challenging the Government's decision-making process following the announcement on 16 July 2026 that the Secretary of State had selected a proposal to replace the nine existing local authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with two new unitary councils.

Under the Government's preferred model, one authority would cover Nottingham City and parts of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. The second would cover Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood, together with the remaining parts of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe.

The decision followed a lengthy process involving the preparation of proposals by local authorities, financial and service assessments, and a statutory public consultation. However, the outcome has raised serious questions about whether the Government's decision properly reflects its own published criteria, the evidence available to it and the interests of the communities affected.

Why is Nottinghamshire County Council challenging the decision?

The County Council's concerns centre on the lawfulness of the decision-making process and the reasoning behind the Secretary of State's preferred option.

The Government established criteria against which the proposals for reorganisation were to be assessed. These included the ability of new councils to deliver high-quality and sustainable public services, meet the needs of their communities, support economic growth and provide effective local government.

The Council's position is that the Government's chosen option did not adequately satisfy the criteria against which the proposals were supposed to be assessed. Where a decision of this scale affects millions of pounds of public expenditure, the future delivery of essential services and the democratic representation of communities, it is vital that the decision is supported by a clear, transparent and properly evidenced process.

Nottinghamshire County Council previously sought further information from the Secretary of State about the rationale for the decision, including the reasoning and documentary evidence underpinning the Government's assessment. According to the County Council, that request was refused.

This lack of clarity led the Council to take formal steps towards a judicial review. In August, it issued a pre-action letter seeking clarification from the Secretary of State as part of the judicial review process. This was an important procedural step intended to obtain further information and give the Government an opportunity to address the concerns before further court proceedings were considered.

The Council's Cabinet subsequently considered the legal challenge on 22 September, and a further decision relating to the challenge was recorded on 7 October.

The purpose of pursuing a judicial review is to establish whether the Government acted lawfully in reaching its decision. It is not simply a disagreement over political preferences or a request for the courts to select a different model of local government. The central issue is whether the decision was reached through a lawful process, with proper consideration of the relevant evidence, criteria and representations.

I believe residents are entitled to expect that decisions affecting the future of their local government are made transparently, consistently and in accordance with the rules set by Government itself.

The Government's decision to pause reorganisation

A further significant development came on 7 September 2026, when the Government announced a national review of its Local Government Reorganisation programme following updated legal advice.

As part of that announcement, decisions in four areas were withdrawn, while a further 14 areas were paused pending review. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire were among the areas affected by the pause.

It is important to be clear that the Nottinghamshire decision was paused rather than withdrawn. The Government has not simply abandoned its preferred model, and the future direction of reorganisation remains uncertain while the review takes place.

The pause is nevertheless significant. It creates an opportunity for the Government to reconsider the wider programme, clarify its approach and address concerns about the legal and practical basis on which decisions have been made.

For Nottinghamshire, the key questions remain whether the chosen model offers the best long-term arrangement for our communities, whether the Government's assessment properly followed its own criteria, and whether the financial and service implications have been fully and transparently considered.

Why does this matter to Tuxford and our rural communities?

Local Government Reorganisation is not merely an administrative exercise involving the drawing of new boundaries and the creation of new council structures. It has the potential to affect how residents access services, how decisions are made, how local priorities are funded and how effectively rural communities are represented.

For residents in Tuxford and across the wider Tuxford Division, it is essential that the needs of villages, smaller towns and rural communities are not overlooked in favour of larger urban centres.

Our communities need accessible services, responsive highways and environmental teams, effective support for vulnerable residents and a council that understands the particular challenges associated with rural living.

Any new arrangement must also provide clear accountability. Residents should know which authority is responsible for a service, who to contact when something goes wrong and how their elected representatives can hold decision-makers to account.

There are also important questions about the transition itself, including the costs of reorganisation, the transfer of staff and responsibilities, the integration of services and the protection of existing service standards. These matters must be properly addressed so that the process does not create unnecessary disruption or divert resources away from frontline services.

My concern is that reorganisation must be judged on whether it delivers genuine, demonstrable benefits for residents, rather than simply achieving a structural change for its own sake.

What happens next?

The legal challenge and the Government's national review are separate but closely related developments. The outcome of the review may influence the future of the reorganisation programme, while the legal process concerns the lawfulness of the decision-making process.

I will continue to monitor developments closely and seek clear information about the implications for Tuxford and the wider division. Residents deserve to understand

what is being proposed, why particular decisions are being taken and what those decisions will mean for local services and democratic representation.

I support the principle that local government should be efficient, financially sustainable and accountable. However, any reorganisation must be based on sound evidence, follow the proper legal process and deliver tangible improvements for the people it serves.

I will continue to press for transparency, proper scrutiny and an outcome that protects the interests of Nottinghamshire's communities.

SEND Reform Programme

Nottinghamshire County Council is beginning a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reform programme, supported by £6 million of Government funding through the Experts at Hand grant during the first year of delivery.

This programme is intended to improve the support available to children and young people with additional needs, particularly those experiencing difficulties accessing or remaining in education.

A key element will be the establishment of a new multi-agency alternative education team. This team will support children who are out of school, attending school very infrequently or at risk of becoming disengaged from education.

The approach recognises that difficulties can develop for a variety of reasons and that families can face considerable challenges when trying to secure the right support for their children. By bringing professionals together and improving access to specialist advice, the Council aims to identify problems earlier and provide more coordinated assistance.

Early intervention is particularly important. When children and families receive appropriate help before difficulties become more serious, there is a greater opportunity to prevent prolonged absence, reduce disruption to education and improve longer-term outcomes.

The programme should also help schools obtain advice and guidance more quickly, enabling them to respond to individual needs and work more effectively with families and other professionals.

The £6 million of funding provides an important opportunity to strengthen the service, but the real measure of success will be the difference it makes to children and their families. I will be interested to see how the programme develops, how

effectively the new team operates and whether families experience more timely and joined-up support.

Every child deserves the opportunity to access an appropriate education and receive the support they need to achieve their potential.

Crackdown on Illegal E-Scooters and Modified E-Bikes

Nottinghamshire County Council has passed a motion calling for stronger action against illegal and modified e-scooters and e-bikes.

Concerns have been raised about vehicles that have been modified to achieve extremely high speeds, with some reportedly capable of reaching up to 72 mph. Such speeds create obvious dangers when vehicles are used in public spaces, particularly where pedestrians, cyclists and other road users may be present.

There are also growing concerns about the use of these vehicles in connection with anti-social behaviour and the potential risks posed by machines that do not comply with the relevant legal and safety requirements.

The motion calls for Nottinghamshire Police and the Council's Trading Standards team to identify and trace those responsible and take appropriate action against retailers, suppliers and importers of non-compliant vehicles.

Enforcement needs to address the supply of illegal vehicles as well as their use. Where businesses are selling or importing products that do not meet the required standards, action against those responsible is an important part of tackling the problem.

At the same time, it is important to distinguish between illegal, dangerously modified vehicles and lawful e-bikes that comply with the relevant regulations. The objective should be to address dangerous and unlawful behaviour without unfairly penalising people who use legal forms of transport responsibly.

Residents should be able to walk, cycle and go about their daily lives without being put at risk by vehicles being used recklessly or unlawfully.

I welcome efforts to improve enforcement and support a proportionate approach that prioritises public safety, tackles anti-social behaviour and holds those responsible to account.

A1 Safety Concerns and Litter in Tuxford

I have continued to raise concerns about safety and the condition of the A1 in the Tuxford area, particularly where children can access the road through a substantial gap in the existing fencing.

This is a serious concern. The A1 is a major road carrying fast-moving traffic, and any opening that allows children to gain access to it presents an unacceptable risk. Preventing access to dangerous roads must be a priority, especially where nearby public spaces and parks may attract families and young people.

I raised the matter with Nottinghamshire County Council's highways portfolio holder, calling for the County Council to put pressure on National Highways to install temporary fencing and ensure that the gap is properly secured.

Bassetlaw District Council has installed fencing around the park on the inside. While this is a welcome measure, the fencing stops short of the gap and therefore does not resolve the underlying problem. The dangerous access point remains the central issue.

I recognise that responsibility for the A1 rests with National Highways rather than the County Council. However, that should not prevent the relevant authorities from working together to address an obvious safety concern.

My priority is to ensure that the responsible organisations take practical action before somebody is seriously injured. I will continue to press for a suitable solution, including temporary measures where necessary, while longer-term arrangements are considered.

Litter along the A1

I have also asked the County Council to put pressure on National Highways to remove the growing amount of litter accumulating along the A1 in the Tuxford area.

The rubbish is an eyesore and detracts from the appearance of the surrounding area. It also creates additional environmental concerns and gives an impression that the area is not being properly maintained.

Residents should be able to take pride in their local surroundings, and the condition of our major roads forms part of the impression visitors and road users have of Tuxford.

I appreciate that litter removal along the A1 falls within the responsibilities of National Highways, but I believe it is reasonable to expect the organisation to maintain the road and its surroundings to an appropriate standard.

I will continue to raise the issue and seek action to clear the accumulated rubbish and improve the appearance of the area.

Tackling Illegal Fly-Tipping in Our Rural Communities

I have been working alongside Cllr Simon Richardson and Cllr Matthew Evans to address the persistent problem of illegal fly-tipping across our rural communities.

Fly-tipping is an issue that affects residents, landowners, farmers and businesses, as well as the wider environment. Waste is frequently dumped in country lanes, lay-bys, field entrances and other secluded locations, leaving local communities to deal with the consequences.

We are particularly concerned about cases where waste is brought into the area from elsewhere and deposited in our villages and countryside. Rural locations can be attractive to offenders because there may be fewer cameras, less passing traffic and fewer immediate opportunities to identify those responsible.

The consequences extend beyond the appearance of the countryside. Dumped waste can create environmental hazards, damage land, obstruct access and place additional pressure on the resources needed to investigate and clear incidents. The financial burden can ultimately fall on landowners, councils and the wider public.

It is deeply frustrating for residents who take pride in their villages to see their local environment treated as a dumping ground by people who believe they can act without consequence.

Warren Limber

County Councillor for Tuxford Division