



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
*Secretary of State for Housing,
Communities & Local Government*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Chair of Housing, Communities & Local
Government Select Committee
Florence Eshalomi MP

29 January 2026

Dear Florence,

Re: Further decisions on the postponement of local elections scheduled for May 2026

I am writing to provide a further update following my decision to bring forward legislation to postpone local elections scheduled for May 2026 in a number of areas undergoing local government reorganisation.

As set out previously, my initial decision was to postpone elections in 29 councils where I was satisfied that postponement would release essential capacity to deliver reorganisation. That decision followed an assessment of the representations provided by councils and other interested parties.

Since then, I have considered further representations from Pendle Borough Council. This provided additional and substantive evidence demonstrating that postponing the election would enable the Council to redirect critical resources that would otherwise be required for election delivery towards the effective delivery of local government reorganisation. Having carefully considered this material, **I have decided to include Pendle Borough Council in the legislation to postpone local elections for one year.**

I have also considered a further representation relating to Essex County Council. While that representation set out a number of clear and acknowledged challenges associated with reorganisation and the electoral cycle, there remains no clear and unambiguous request from the Council's leadership to postpone elections. **I have therefore decided that elections in Essex will proceed as scheduled.**

Today, I have written to the leaders of both Pendle Borough Council and Essex County Council to inform them of these decisions. Copies of this correspondence have been deposited in the House of Commons Library in order to keep Parliament fully informed.

With the inclusion of Pendle Borough Council, legislation will now provide for the postponement of elections in 30 councils in total. Elections in all other areas undergoing local government reorganisation will continue to take place in May 2026 as planned.

These decisions remain grounded in a locally led approach, informed by councils' own representations and focused on ensuring that local government reorganisation can be delivered at pace while safeguarding value for money and service continuity. I intend to bring forward the legislation to implement those changes as soon as practicable and further information will be published alongside the Statutory Instrument and its accompanying Explanatory Memorandum.

I will continue to keep stakeholders informed as this work progresses.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Steve Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

RT HON STEVE REED OBE MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

LIST OF 63 COUNCILS IN REORGANISATION AREAS WITH ELECTIONS SCHEDULED IN MAY 2026

Elections where legislation will be brought forward to postpone

Adur District Council
Basildon Borough Council
Blackburn with Darwen Council
Burnley Borough Council
Cannock Chase District Council
Cheltenham Borough Council
Chorley Borough Council
City of Lincoln Council
Crawley Borough Council
East Sussex County Council
Exeter City Council
Harlow District Council
Hastings Borough Council
Hyndburn Borough Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Norfolk County Council
Norwich City Council
Pendle Borough Council
Peterborough City Council
Preston City Council
Redditch Borough Council
Rugby Borough Council
Stevenage Borough Council
Suffolk County Council
Tamworth Borough Council
Thurrock Council
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
West Lancashire Borough Council
West Sussex County Council
Worthing Borough Council

Elections that are going ahead as scheduled

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Brentwood Borough Council
Broxbourne Borough Council
Cambridge City Council
Cherwell District Council
Colchester City Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Epping Forest District Council
Essex County Council
Fareham Borough Council

Gosport Borough Council
Hampshire County Council
Hart District Council
Havant Borough Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
Isle of Wight Council
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
North East Lincolnshire Council
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Oxford City Council
Plymouth City Council
Portsmouth City Council
Rochford District Council
Rushmoor Borough Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Southampton City Council
Southend-on-Sea City Council
St Albans City and District Council
Three Rivers District Council
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Watford Borough Council
West Oxfordshire District Council
Winchester City Council