



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

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

To: Leaders of councils with elections in May 2026 where proposals have been submitted for Local Government Reorganisation

16 February 2026

Dear Council Leaders,

POSTPONEMENT OF LOCAL ELECTIONS IN ENGLAND IN MAY 2026

The Government has today written to the High Court setting out the following position:

The Secretary of State has decided to withdraw his decision to postpone the council elections of 30 local councils due to take place in May 2026 in the light of recent legal advice (for the avoidance of doubt no privilege is waived).

The Secretary State invited the housing minister, who was not involved in the initial decision-making, to reconsider the position afresh on a very urgent basis recognising the pressing timescales involved. The housing minister has decided that the elections should proceed in May 2026.

The Secretary of State will seek to agree an order with the Claimant in the light of this announcement disposing of the claim and will agree to pay the Claimant's costs of these proceedings.

The Government can confirm that all local elections in May 2026 will now go ahead.

I recognise that many of the local councils undergoing reorganisation voiced genuine concerns about the pressure they are under as we seek to deliver the most ambitious reforms of local government in a generation.

I am therefore announcing today that we will provide up to £63m in additional capacity funding to the 21 local areas undergoing reorganisation across the whole programme, building on the £7.6m provided for developing proposals last year. I will shortly set out further detail about how that funding will be allocated.

My officials will be in touch with those affected councils to understand if any further practical support will be required.

I am copying this letter to your Chief Executives, the other Leaders and Chief Executives of councils in the local government reorganisation programme, and to local MPs, Combined/Combined County Authority Mayors, Police and Crime Commissioners and Best Value Commissioners in local government reorganisation areas.

I am also copying this letter to the Electoral Commission, County Councils Network, the District Councils Network and Local Government Association – as well as the Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee and the Shadow Secretary of State.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Steve Reed". A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature.

RT HON STEVE REED OBE MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government