

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

BUSINESS PLAN

2026–27

www.lgbce.org.uk



**The Local Government Boundary Commission
for England**

Business Plan 2026–27



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We are an **independent statutory body** with responsibility for reviewing the electoral arrangements for local authorities across England.

We remain focused on delivering high-quality reviews that are fair and **take account of local views, communities and needs.**

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Foreword

As the independent statutory body with responsibility for reviewing the electoral arrangements for local authorities across England, we remain focused on delivering high-quality reviews that are fair and take account of local views, communities and needs.

In 2026–27 we will once again deliver a core programme of electoral reviews, ensuring that we continue to meet our duty to review all local authorities ‘from time to time’.

Alongside this, as work progresses on local government reorganisation (LGR), we will continue to provide our expertise to local authorities and to Government in support of the process. Also this year, in preparation for the peak of activity we expect to face further to LGR with the commitment to carry out reviews of all new unitary authorities before their next elections, we will take forward a number of improvement projects to review and refine our processes and improve how we work, helping to maximise our capacity and develop our capability.

Bev Smith
Chair

Ailsa Irvine
Chief Executive

We will also continue to invest in our infrastructure and systems, with our emerging digital strategy providing us with a framework for maximising the benefits of technology to improve our efficiency and to uphold the fairness of reviews in the context of rapid technological change.

The views and insights of local authorities, residents and organisations remain vital in ensuring that our recommendations are informed by local needs, views and circumstances, and we are focused on making it as easy as possible for people and organisations to engage in our work. This will be a key area of activity for us this year, with the development of a new website and the embedding of new communications approaches informed by feedback from our recent stakeholder research.

Our people continue to be integral to our success. In 2026–27 we will prepare a new people strategy, which will support us to develop as a resilient, high-performing and adaptable organisation, that is fit-for-purpose both now and into the future.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with Government, Parliament, local authorities and local communities to deliver fair electoral and boundary arrangements for local electors across England.

Who we are



We are an independent statutory body, directly accountable to Parliament. We conduct electoral reviews of local authorities in England and make recommendations for local boundary arrangements.

We carry out different types of electoral reviews:

Request reviews



We aim to be responsive to requests from local authorities and carry out reviews where asked and where we can support the delivery of effective and convenient local government

Periodic electoral reviews



We aim to review each local authority every three to four electoral cycles, ensuring that we meet our statutory duty to review all local authorities 'from time to time'

New local authorities



We will continue to support the establishment of new local authorities, as agreed by Government and Parliament, and help to ensure that they have fair electoral and boundary arrangements

Intervention reviews



Where a local authority has poor levels of electoral equality, with some councillors who represent many more or many fewer electors than others in the same area, we carry out a review to address these imbalances

Principal area boundary reviews



We will consider carrying out reviews of the external boundaries of local authorities, such as where local authorities jointly request a change to the boundary between two areas

All of our electoral reviews:

Are informed by local needs, views and circumstances

Aim to ensure that, within each authority, each councillor represents a similar number of electors

Seek to create boundaries that are appropriate and reflect community ties and identities

Aim to support the delivery of effective and convenient local government

In carrying out our work, we are guided by our values:



Impartial

We give equal consideration to all views



Objective

Our recommendations are based on evidence



Responsive

We listen to local opinion and take account of the views we hear in developing our recommendations



Transparent

We follow clear and open processes, making information available to support people to engage in our work



Professional

We are reliable, efficient and helpful, delivering our work effectively and to a consistently high standard



Inclusive

We value diversity and the benefits different perspectives and experiences bring to our work


Our objectives

Objective **1** We will deliver high-quality electoral reviews that are fair and take account of local communities and needs

Objective **2** We will work collaboratively with local authorities and local communities to make it easier for people to understand and engage with the review process

Objective **3** We will continue to improve our efficiency, ensuring we have the resources and processes we need in place and are using them effectively

Objective 1



We will deliver high-quality electoral reviews that are fair and take account of local communities and needs

Where we want to be in 2030

We continue to deliver high-quality electoral reviews that command confidence and achieve high levels of satisfaction from those who work with us. We are effectively using digital technologies and communication tools to innovate and enhance how we work, delivering year-on-year improvements to our approach to reviews.

We have developed our processes and how we use data and technology so that we are well-placed to be able to manage the peak in activity that will be required to deliver reviews of all new unitary authorities established under local government reorganisation (LGR) before their next elections. We have strong relationships with individual authorities and across the local government sector, which will enable us to ensure our reviews are timely and carried out in a way that supports authorities at a time of significant change for the sector.

Priorities for 2026–27

In building towards this, our activities for 2026–27 will provide a balance between continued delivery of our core review activity, work to support LGR and improvement activity, with aspects of the latter not only having an immediate impact but also helping to build our capacity and efficiency over a longer period.


- **Delivery of our electoral review programme** – we will continue to carry out reviews of all local authorities ‘from time to time’, while also maintaining the capacity to look at the electoral arrangements in areas where some councillors represent many more or many fewer electors than others. We expect to start 11 reviews in 2026–27, whilst maintaining the flexibility to be able to respond to changing circumstances. In delivering these reviews, we will continue to refine and embed the work from projects delivered in 2025–26, including new approaches to communications at the preliminary stages of reviews and the rollout of ArcGIS Pro as the Commission’s default mapping software.

- **Local Government Reorganisation** – we will continue to provide our expertise to support the LGR process. We will maintain our offer of support to authorities as they develop their interim electoral arrangements, and build relationships with new authorities and across the wider sector in preparation for carrying out reviews before their next elections. We will also respond appropriately to any requests for advice or input from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on matters relating to our areas of expertise.
- **Continuous improvement of the review process** – we will use technology and different approaches to communications and engagement to refine further the review process and ensure it delivers high-quality outcomes. Building upon work undertaken in 2025–26 to map the review process, we will look for opportunities to streamline and automate processes. This will not only improve how we work now but also start to develop our capacity ahead of the expected peak in activity from 2029–30 when we anticipate beginning reviews of the new authorities created as a result of LGR before their subsequent elections. In 2026–27, we plan to focus on the councillor numbers stage of the review process, our review processes and our approach to using further draft recommendations.


To help us understand how we are performing against our objectives, we have identified key performance indicators that we will use to monitor our progress. These were first introduced in 2025–26, and we will use the data from that year to establish baselines for our performance that will enable us to show our progress in this and future years.

- Number of reviews started each year
- Orders in place in time for the implementation of the new electoral arrangements at the scheduled election
- Improving levels of confidence in the review process
- Increasing levels of positive feedback from local authorities on the review process

Objective 2



We will work collaboratively with local authorities and local communities to make it easier for people to understand and engage with the review process



Where we want to be in 2030

We have a strategic approach to communications and engagement. We use the best available techniques and tools to support understanding of and engagement with the review process, ensuring we achieve high-quality inputs to inform our reviews. Our approach to communications will be inclusive and accessible, minimising barriers to engagement with our reviews.

We are evidence-led and informed by feedback from those we engage with as well as insights from our research. We work collaboratively with local authorities, local people and the wider local government community.

Priorities for 2026–27

In working towards this objective, our activities this year will be focused on using the feedback and insights we have received to improve how we talk about electoral reviews and their process, and to continue to develop relationships across the local government sector, raising awareness of our work and of the role of electoral reviews in supporting local democracy.

- **Development and delivery of a communications strategy and associated action plan** – we will embed a communications strategy and develop and deliver an associated action plan, helping to ensure we are more strategic in our approach and are maximising our impact, enabling us to better reach and engage with a diverse range of communities. This will include a social media strategy that will guide our approach to the use of social media tools, including the tone and style of our messaging. Our activity will be informed by

stakeholder research we have undertaken in 2025–26, the findings of which will support us in further improving both our strategic approach and the content and form of our tools and resources.

- **Delivery of a new website** – a key priority for the Commission in 2026–27 will be the delivery of a new website, which will support people to understand and engage with the review process. The new website will be user-led and accessible, in line with good practice and industry standards, and will be informed by the feedback received from the website survey conducted between June 2024 and June 2025, as well as our recent stakeholder research. The new website will be developed in line with the principles agreed in both the emerging communications and digital strategies.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – in line with our emerging communications strategy, we will look for opportunities to enhance engagement across the local government community and to communicate effectively about who we are and what we do, including our role in relation to local government reorganisation.

To help us understand how we are performing against our objectives, we have identified key performance indicators that we will use to monitor our progress. These were first introduced in 2025–26, and we will use the data from that year to establish baselines for our performance that will enable us to show our progress in this and future years.

- Maintained or improved levels of engagement with our consultations
- Increasing percentage of people feeling they have the information they need to be able to participate in the review process

Objective 3

We will continue to improve our efficiency, ensuring we have the resources and processes we need in place and are using them effectively

Where we want to be in 2030

We are a high-performing, digitally-enabled and data-driven organisation that maximises our efficiency and delivers value for money. Our processes are streamlined, transparent and automated where appropriate, supporting us to deliver our functions with agility and resilience.

We have a culture of continuous improvement, where staff are empowered with the right tools, skills and leadership to be agile and able to adapt to changing demands. Our systems are integrated and secure, supporting data-driven decision-making and minimising duplication.

Priorities for 2026–27

Our key areas of activity for this year are focused on continuing to maximise our use of technology and data, and ensuring that we are able to attract, retain and develop the people we need.

- **Digital modernisation and user experience** – we will continue to modernise our digital systems to improve efficiency, transparency and user experience, guided by our emerging digital strategy. We will integrate platforms to reduce duplication, improve reporting and enable data-driven decision-making. We will maintain a strong focus on cyber security throughout this process, ensuring systems remain secure and resilient as we modernise. Additionally, we will strengthen data governance by embedding integrity standards, delivering targeted staff and Commissioner training and applying consistent protocols across all systems. Taken together, these actions will create a more streamlined, secure and user-friendly digital environment that supports better outcomes for the public and our stakeholders.

- **People strategy and organisational resilience** – we will develop a people strategy that positions us for the future by supporting us to develop as a resilient, high-performing and adaptable organisation. This strategy will prepare our workforce for evolving ways of working and in readiness for the challenges ahead, including the anticipated pressures from the peak of activity to deliver reviews of all new unitary authorities before their subsequent elections. Building on a digital skills assessment completed in 2025–26, we will deliver tailored training to ensure employees and Commissioners have the confidence and capability to use new tools and systems effectively. Alongside this, we will continue to keep under review our core HR policies and seek to identify further ways to improve our ways of working, enhance flexibility and support wellbeing.
- **Value for money and financial governance** – we will continue to use our resources wisely by improving cost transparency and streamlining processes across the organisation. A key priority will be developing a costing framework for electoral reviews, enabling us to understand better the financial implications of our decisions, supporting us to refine our approach over time and helping us to make more informed investment choices. This will draw on insights from our process mapping work to identify and reduce duplication, enhance efficiency and support effective resource allocation.

To help us understand how we are performing against our objectives, we have identified key performance indicators that we will use to monitor our progress.

- Continued identification of efficiencies, both cashable savings and non-cashable benefits
- Maintained high levels of staff engagement

Our key risks



As with any plan, there are risks to its delivery. We have identified a number of key areas of risk that could impact on the delivery of our objectives.

- **Resilience** – as a small organisation, we face particular risks arising from our size and capacity. We will need to continue to ensure that we mitigate against single points of failure, and ensure our processes are well documented and as efficient as they can be.
- **Changes in demand** – we are susceptible to changing landscapes and their impacts on us and our core work. We will need to horizon scan efficiently to remain alert to what is coming, and develop our work programme and manage our resources in as flexible a way as possible to enable us to adapt to changing demands.
- **Financial** – with a continued focus on public spending, there will be an inevitable pressure on budgets and efficiency. Effective horizon scanning coupled with strong relationships with the Speaker’s Committee and Parliament will be important to help ensure we have the resources we need to be able to deliver what is expected of us and that we can do so in a timely, quality way that delivers value for money.
- **Societal** – low levels of interest and trust in politics and democratic institutions, and of political engagement, create challenges for achieving effective public engagement in our consultations, which is vital to the quality of our recommendations. We will need to be innovative in finding ways to help people to understand why reviews matter to them and why it is important to give us their views, and to use the insights we have to shape how we engage with local communities.
- **Information management and security** – in common with other public sector bodies, we face risks relating to cyber security and how we manage our information. We will need to maintain our robust cyber security arrangements and information management policies in order to safeguard our infrastructure and the systems and data that we use.

We manage risks through our operational management structures, with oversight from the Audit and Risk Committee and the Commission Board.

Our resources



We are funded by HM Treasury through an annual budget. Each year, our budget is reviewed by the Speaker’s Committee before it is laid before the House of Commons for approval.

For 2026–27, our spending estimate is broadly in line with the five-year plan set out in our corporate plan. It includes specific investment in the redevelopment of our website and in updating our communications resources to take account of the insights obtained through our recent stakeholder research.

In addition to ensuring we can continue to deliver our core functions efficiently and effectively, the investment we make this year will also contribute to increasing our capacity and capability. This will help to ensure we are best placed to be able to respond to expected future peaks in activity and in particular to carry out reviews of all authorities established under local government reorganisation before their next elections.

£'000	2026–27
Staff and Commissioners	2,051
Mapping and printing	207
Stakeholder engagement	233
Business costs	896
Legal and professional	226
Risk and resilience	148
DEL resource	3,761
Depreciation	88
AME resource	88
Resource total	3,849
DEL capital	275
Total	4,124

As a small organisation, we have little opportunity to make further significant financial savings beyond those already achieved over previous years, without compromising the quality, pace or robustness of our work. However, we will continue to make sure we use our resources as efficiently as possible and that we are delivering value for money across all of our functions, and will continue to seek efficiencies in everything we do.



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