

CABINET

Tuesday, 30 June 2026

Attendance:

Councillors
Tod (Chairperson)

Cutler
Cramoysan

Porter
Thompson

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Becker, Learney and Reach

Members in attendance who spoke at the meeting

Councillors Horrill, Laming, Lee and Warwick

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Becker, Learney and Reach as noted above.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Tod and Porter declared disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of reports CAB3566 on the agenda due to their roles as Hampshire County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

4. **LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Tod announced that later that day the councils that would make up the proposed new Mid-Hampshire Unitary Authority (MHUA) would submit the proposed warding arrangements for the new authority to the government. This comprised 78 councillors across the four local authority areas, of which 22 councillors would be within the existing Winchester district area. The proposal was based on three member county divisions with two member county divisions within the Meon Valley. There was no guarantee that the government would

agree the proposal but no other submission had been made for the mid-Hampshire area.

5. **NOTICE OF INTENTION TO COMMENCE LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION UPDATE**
(CAB3566)

Councillor Porter introduced the report confirming that the notice of intention to commence plan preparation would be published by 30 June and a number of additional steps would be taken to mitigate against the continued uncertainty due to the proposed boundary changes in relation to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). She advised that the council would use the time before the first gateway to work with other councils in the proposed Mid-Hampshire Unitary Authority and the South East Hampshire Unitary Authority to ensure the plan remained secure and fit for purpose as the new unitary authorities came into existence.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Lee, Warwick, Horrill and Laming addressed Cabinet as summarised below.

Councillor Lee

Councillor Lee supported the immediate commencement of a plan-led approach to avoid development being shaped by appeals, although he expressed concern about the complexity of meeting the demands both of LGR and new national planning regimes. He raised a number of detailed questions including relating to the timing and coherence of a joint local plan, specifically questioning how value for money would be protected if work had to be redone once government transitional guidance emerged. He expressed concern over maintaining Winchester's high policy standards within a more prescriptive national framework and how would nature be embedded as critical infrastructure to address the climate and nature crisis.

Councillor Warwick

Councillor Warwick acknowledged the pressure of delivering a 60% housing uplift through a fast-tracked plan revision while simultaneously navigating the complexities of LGR. She requested an explanation of the financial and statutory risks associated with delaying the plan's launch and sought assurance that investments in producing the technical evidence would remain valid for any successor authority. She requested that infrastructure planning receive equal priority with housing numbers and requested that the SHELAA site assessments be published to ensure parish councils and residents had sufficient time to scrutinise developer submissions.

Councillor Horrill

Councillor Horrill acknowledged the legal necessity of issuing the notice of intention to commence the Local Plan but sought clarification on the specific penalties for non-compliance and the actions required to remain compliant before reaching the next milestone. She asked that Cabinet

commit to transparent communication with all members and requested that engagement on planning issues include every district MP to ensure a cross-party approach. She queried proposals for the governance of collaborative plan-making and the potential impact of the judicial review submitted by Hampshire County Council. She also questioned the apparent exclusion of the general public from the proposed consultation strategy. Finally, she expressed concern over the omission of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes from the risk assessment and asked for better insight into how these reforms might impact the council's immediate planning activities.

Councillor Laming

Councillor Laming welcomed the proposals in the report as a sensible means of complying with government requirements during the transition towards LGR.

Councillor Porter, the Strategic Director, the Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services and the Strategic Planning Manager responded to the comments and queries raised, including advising that the new local plan timetable would be published on the council's website and this would be updated as new guidance was received.

The Director (Legal) outlined the potential legal implications if the council failed to publish the Notice of Intention by 30 June 2026.

In response to Cabinet Member questions, the Strategic Director advised that further clarification was being sought from the government about the exact date of the first gateway.

Councillor Tod confirmed that all members would be notified of future letters to and from government in relation to this matter and that all MPs within the district would also be involved. He also suggested that the full list of questions raised by invited councillors and cabinet members at the meeting be compiled and referred to in future communications with the government.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report and outlined above.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Government's requirements for commencement of Local Plan preparation under the new plan making system introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 be noted, specifically the letter from Government to the Chief Executive on January 15, 2026 and the Government guidance on the 'Roll out of the new plan-making process' updated on 6 March 2026.

2. That the proposed Local Government Reorganisation arrangements for Hampshire be noted, including the proposed Mid Hampshire unitary authority, the transfer of the Parish of Newlands to the proposed South-East Hampshire unitary authority announced on 26

March 2026, and emerging arrangements for devolution and strategic planning across Hampshire and the Solent.

3. That in the absence of Government guidance on transitional arrangements for authorities affected by Local Government Reorganisation and to be legally compliant, it be agreed that Winchester City Council will continue to publish a Notice of Intention to Commence Plan Preparation by 30 June 2026 on the current administrative boundary.

4. That the Strategic Director (Place) be authorised to engage with other Mid Hampshire authorities to explore opportunities for collaborative or joint plan-making and shared evidence gathering for the proposed Mid Hampshire geography.

5. That the Strategic Director (Place) be authorised to engage with other South-East Hampshire authorities to explore how we can support an appropriate plan-making process to include Newlands Parish as part of South-East Hampshire.

6. That the Strategic Director (Place) be authorised to continue engagement with Government regarding plan making requirements, transitional arrangements and future strategic planning responsibilities arising from Local Government Reorganisation and devolution.

7. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Place), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan and the Director of Legal to amend the above timetable where necessary should the Government issue revised guidance, transitional arrangements or legislation relating to the Local Government Reorganisation and plan making.

The meeting commenced at 11.30 am and concluded at 12.35 pm

Chairperson