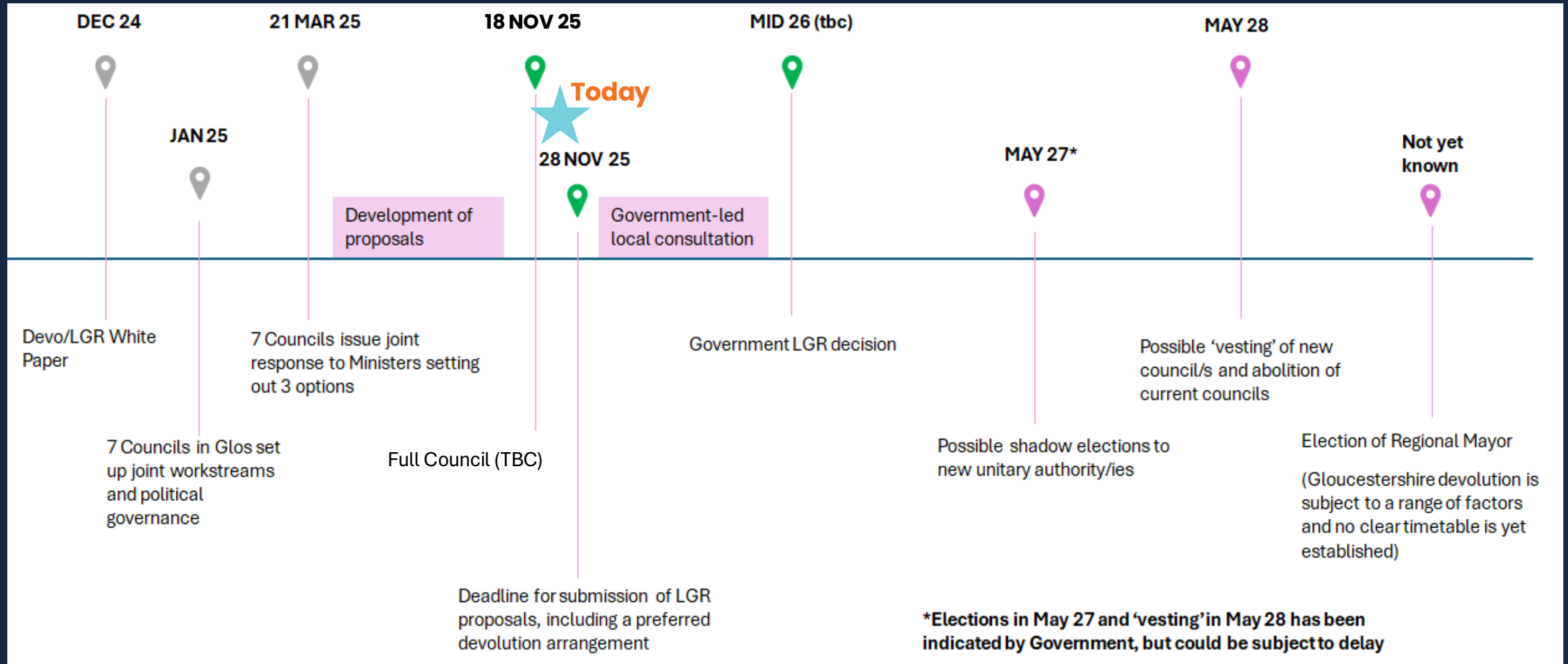


Parish and town council seminar

27 November 2025

LGR – where are we?



LGR – where are we?

- Working with the six other Gloucestershire councils, we've developed two proposals:
 - A single unitary for Gloucestershire (1UA)
 - An east/west two unitaries proposal (2UA)
- Members will decide which option to support on 18 November.



A third option - Greater Gloucester - has been prepared
by Gloucester City Council.

1UA and 2UA proposals – similarities

- Vision and ambition
- Future Operating Model (FOM)
- Neighbourhood model
- Digital, data and technology
- Democratic arrangements
- Devolution arrangements
- A roadmap for implementation*



Neighbourhood model

20k-50k populations

Part of the new Council/s
constitution and target
operating model (TOM)

Working closely with
parishes in the area

Greater agency for people
and local places

A Gloucestershire neighbourhood partnership area

A focal point for access to
and accountability for
council services

Supported by a staff team
with a range of skills and
roles + £ resources

Consistent in one or
two unitaries

Also joining up with the
VCFSE sector and partners
like health (NHS)

Democratic arrangements

	Single unitary	Two unitary (east/west)	Greater Gloucester and Gloucestershire
Wards / divisions	County divisions	County divisions	District wards for Greater Gloucester, county divisions for Gloucestershire unitary
Numbers of councillors	110	58 (west) 52 (east) 110 (total)	52 (Greater Gloucester) 81 (Gloucestershire) 133 (total)
Cllr / elector ratios (rounded)	1:4500	1:4500	1:2500 (Gr. Gloucester) 1:4500 (Gloucestershire)

Who might we partner with?

Three possible directions for Gloucestershire:

1. Southwards – **West of England** Combined Authority (WECA)
2. Eastwards – **Swindon and Oxfordshire**
3. Northwards – **Worcestershire and Herefordshire**

The analysis shows the strongest economic alignment with WECA, but also strengths in the other options.

No firm recommendation or conclusion is made.

1UA and 2UA proposals – differences

- **Options analysis** – meets most of the government's criteria – the 1UA case is assessed as stronger
- **Financial case**
 - 1UA proposal contains greater efficiencies and savings
 - 2UA west authority would have greater needs and costs



1UA and 2UA proposals – differences

- **Disaggregation** – the 2UA case would mean that county-wide services, like social care and education, would be split between the east and west councils
- **Fire and rescue** – in the 2UA model, must legally separate from council control



Finance

	1UA	2UA		Greater Gloucester
		East	West	
Day 1 net position	£0.0m	£20.5m	-£23.3m	£0.0m
Net annual savings	£21.1m	£4.9m	£5.9m	£13.48m
One off transition costs	£21.3m	£13.2m	£15.8m	£26.9m
Payback period	2.0 years	4.9 years	4.9 years	4.0 years
Cumulative savings over 10 years	£164.0m	£26.3m	£28.5m	£89.0m
Transformation savings - base	£16.0m	£7.4m	£8.8m	
Transformation savings - stretch	£26.2m	£12.0m	£14.4m	

One unitary authority proposal (1UA)



Strengths (based on proposal):

- **Strategic scale and resilience:** Meets the government's preferred population threshold
- **Consistent, high-quality services:** Enables countywide planning and delivery
- **Financial efficiency:** Delivers the highest and fastest savings
- **Simpler, clearer governance:** One council, one point of accountability, and one voice for Gloucestershire in national negotiations and devolution
- **Empowered locality working:** Strong neighbourhood partnerships ensure local voice, co-design, and tailored services
- **Stronger partnerships:** Aligns with coterminous boundaries of NHS, police, fire, and other partners.

One unitary authority proposal (1UA)



Weaknesses (based on proposal):

- **Perception of centralisation:** Risk that a single large authority could feel remote or less responsive
- **Ensuring local voice:** Needs deliberate design to avoid local voices being lost.

Two unitary authority proposal (2UA)



Strengths (based on proposal):

- **Local visibility:** Smaller councils may feel more accessible and responsive to local communities.
- **Improved councillor visibility:** Smaller footprints could improve councillor-resident connections.

Two unitary authority proposal (2UA)



Weaknesses (based on proposal):

- **Financial and service imbalance:** West unitary would start with significant deficit and higher demand/costs for social care, higher deprivation, and lower assets per resident.
- **Duplication and disaggregation:** Duplication of statutory roles, systems, and governance. Higher transition costs, longer payback period, and lower annual net savings.
- **Fragmentation of countywide services:** Disaggregation of integrated services increases risk of inconsistency, inefficiency, and gaps in provision.
- **Strategic and partnership risks:** Splitting the county risks weakening Gloucestershire's voice in national negotiations and devolution.
- **Potential for inequality:** West unitary may struggle to meet higher needs, risking a "rich side/poor side" divide.

Greater Gloucester proposal



Strengths (drawn directly from proposal)*:

- **Place-based governance:** two unitary councils tailored to distinct geographies
 - Greater Gloucester (GG): Urban, younger, more deprived population.
 - Gloucestershire Unitary (GU): Rural, older population with different service needs.
- **Improved service delivery:** Targeted reform of services.
- **Preservation of identity:** GG strengthens Gloucester's cathedral city heritage and GU protects the historic county identity and rural character.

*No formal due diligence has been undertaken

Greater Gloucester proposal



Weaknesses (based on proposal)*:

- **Population imbalance:** GG's population (~180k) is below the government's preferred 500k threshold. Creates disparity in size and resources between GG and GU.
- **Higher transition costs:** Estimated one-off cost of £26.9m. Complexity in disaggregating county-wide services.
- **Efficiency:** Lower projected efficiency savings.
- **Service fragmentation:** Potential duplication or disruption in services.
- **Complex implementation:** Requires boundary modifications and ministerial approval. Longer implementation timeline and risk of public confusion.

*No formal due diligence has been undertaken

Councillors voted to support the creation of a single unitary authority for Gloucestershire

- Joint covering letter will accompany the 1UA and 2UA proposals
- All councils will have the option to comment from their perspective
- Letter from our Leader will outline our position.
- Councillors asked for a supporting document to balance against the two-unitary case by Cheltenham Borough Council.

Council decisions

Gloucestershire County Council

Proposal backed: *Single unitary authority*

Cheltenham Borough Council

Proposal backed: *Two unitary authorities (east/west)*

Tewkesbury Borough Council

Proposal backed: *Single unitary authority*

Forest of Dean District Council

Proposal backed: *Not supportive of LGR i.e. none of the above*

Stroud District Council

Proposal backed: *Single unitary authority*

Gloucester City Council

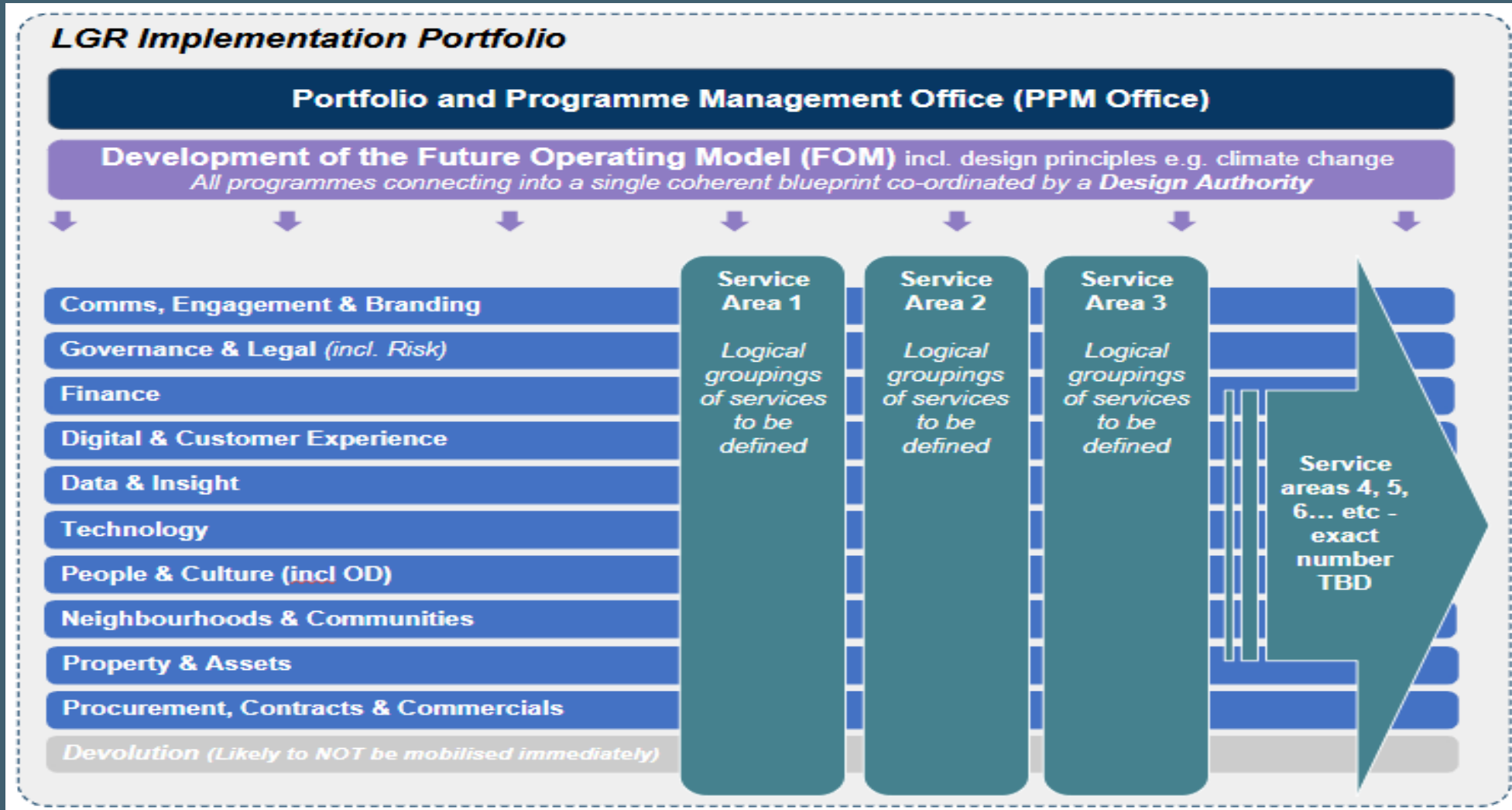
Proposal backed: *Greater Gloucester model*

Cotswold District Council

Proposal backed: *Single unitary authority*

What's next?

Implementation



Parish and town council seminar

Q&A