

Glossary of Terms

Aggregation

Aggregation refers to the process of combining data, resources, services, or functions from multiple councils into a new authority.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The most senior corporate, executive, or administrative officer in charge of managing an organisation. This role is sometimes referred to as the Chief Executive.

Devolution

In England, devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government. It means decisions are made closer to the local people, communities, and businesses they affect.

Devolution has already taken place in Greater Lincolnshire. We now have the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral County Combined Authority, which covers North and North East Lincolnshire Council and the County of Lincolnshire.

The English Devolution White Paper

The English Devolution White Paper, published on 16 December 2024 is the Government's statement of its plans to reform local government. This includes a wide range of proposals on devolution but also plans for local government reorganisation.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bills

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bills was published on 10 July 2025. The Bill builds on the Government's English White Paper (December 2024) and signals a significant shift of powers from central government to local leaders. Key points in the Bill include the establishment of a new tier of authority in England (the strategic authority) and the intention for all councils in England to secure devolution that works for them, their local economies and their residents.

Implementation phase

A phase is the timeframe during which the implementation plan is in acted.

Implementation plan

A document required legislation; it must contain detailed plans and timetables showing how the new unitary authorities will be delivered effectively.

Local government reorganisation (LGR)

Local government reorganisation is the process by which the structure and responsibilities of local authorities are reconfigured. The government White Paper states that unitary councils can lead to better outcomes for residents, save significant money which can be invested in public services, and improve accountability with fewer politicians who are more able to focus on delivering for residents.

Joint committees

A joint committee is a formal body established by the Structural Changes Order to oversee preparations for the new council until the shadow authority is elected. Unlike a joint voluntary committee, it has statutory responsibilities.

Joint voluntary committees

A joint voluntary committee may be set up by councils, by agreement, before the Structural Changes Order is made. It provides a forum to coordinate early preparations but, unlike a joint committee, it has no statutory responsibilities.

Mayor

In the context of devolution, a mayor is a directly-elected leader of a geographic region. Directly-elected mayors with expanded powers are expected to provide accountability and clearer leadership. They will be best positioned to drive economic development in their regions.

Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA)

A Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) is a type of local government body that is led by a directly-elected mayor. The MSA is responsible for overseeing strategic programmes such as local transport, economic development, strategic planning and other high-level services.

The powers available to a mayor in an MSA span various critical areas, ensuring coordinated and effective governance across the region. Additionally, the concept of devolution plays a significant role in the functioning of an MSA, as it involves the transfer of powers and responsibilities from central government to local authorities, allowing for more localised decision-making and tailored solutions to regional needs.

In the case of Greater Lincolnshire this is the [Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority](#)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Government department which is responsible for local government reorganisation and devolution.

Section 24

Section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 allows the Secretary of State to issue a direction that restricts the financial and contractual activities of local authorities that are to be dissolved under a structural change order. This is to ensure that the current councils do not make significant financial or contractual commitments that could affect the future authorities' ability to manage their resources effectively.

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

The senior responsible owner is accountable for a programme or project meeting its objectives, delivering the projected outcomes and realising the required benefits within the policies set by ministers.

Deputy Senior Responsible Officer (Deputy SRO)

The Deputy SRO supports the Senior Responsible Officer in leading a programme or project and may act on their behalf when required. The SRO remains ultimately accountable for its successful delivery.

Shadow Authority

A shadow authority is established to carry out the functions of a new unitary council until that authority formally comes into effect. This is commonly called “vesting day”.

The shadow authority will manage the transition period and ensure that the new unitary councils are ready to take over all functions and responsibilities from the current councils. This includes setting up governance structures, appointing key officers, and ensuring that all necessary preparations are made for the future councils to become fully operational.

Strategic Authority

Strategic authorities are a new, category of devolved authorities, set out in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. Strategic authorities will have responsibility for overseeing strategic programmes such as transport infrastructure, economic development, health improvement, and other high-level services.

Structural Changes Order

The Structural Changes Order (SCO) is the legal instrument that creates the shadow authorities. It also puts in place the process by which those authorities will assume responsibility for the delivery of services in the following years.

Two-tier authority

Two-tier authorities are where:

- County councils provide services that cover the whole county such as education, waste disposal and adult social care
- District councils (sometimes called borough or city councils) are smaller and provide local services such as refuse collection, environmental health, and leisure facilities
- Parish and town councils are smaller and have differing local responsibilities

Unitary authority

Unitary authorities are a single tier of local government responsible for all local services in an area. They may cover a whole county, part of a county or a large town or city.

Vesting Day

Vesting Day is when the new unitary authorities formally come into effect and take over from the shadow authorities. In Greater Lincolnshire this is anticipated it will be 1 April 2028.