



CLERK'S REPORT

Meeting Name and Date:	General Management Committee 11 June 2026
Report Title:	Clerks Report (26-GMC-001) - LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - TIMING OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS
Report Author:	Gillian Martell, Town Clerk
Circulated to:	All Councillors for information and transparency

1. Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide the General Management Committee with background information regarding the proposed timing of future town and parish elections as part of Local Government Reorganisation and to set out the Council's available governance process due to the short consultation timescale.

This report has been circulated to all Councillors to ensure that all Members are aware of the issue, the available options and the process being followed.

The General Management Committee is not being asked to determine the Council's formal position. Full Council remains the Council's sovereign decision-making body.

2. Background

As part of Local Government Reorganisation, Hertfordshire is preparing for the transition from the current county and district council structure to new unitary authority arrangements.

It has been proposed that shadow authority elections will take place in May 2027, with the new authority arrangements becoming operational in 2028.

A question has arisen regarding the timing of future town and parish elections.

Two broad options are currently being considered:

1. Town and parish elections in May 2027
 - a. Elections would align with the wider Local Government Reorganisation electoral timetable.
 - b. Councillors elected in 2027 would serve a five-year term until 2032.
 - c. This may avoid separate election events in consecutive years.
2. Town and parish elections in 2028
 - a. Elections would take place following implementation of the new unitary authority arrangements.
 - b. This would avoid extending the normal electoral cycle to a five-year term.
 - c. Electors would vote once the new structure of local government is in place.
 - d. It may provide town and parish councils with a fresh democratic mandate at the start of the new arrangements.

The deadline for representations on this issue is FRIDAY 12 JUNE 2026

3. Why is this being considered by General Management Committee?

Under normal circumstances, a matter of this strategic significance would be referred to Full Council for consideration and a formal decision.

However, the representation deadline falls before the next scheduled Full Council meeting. Due to the statutory notice requirements for meetings, it is not possible to convene an Extraordinary Full Council before the deadline.

As Local Government Reorganisation is already an existing workstream of the General Management Committee, the matter is therefore being considered by the Committee to allow Members to discuss the issue and formally record their views.

The General Management Committee may choose to make a recommendation to Full Council regarding its preferred position. Although Full Council cannot consider that recommendation before the representation deadline, the recommendation will provide a formal record of Members' views prior to any consideration of the Council's urgent decision-making procedures.

4. Urgent decision-making process

The Council's Scheme of Delegation, adopted by Full Council, contains provisions allowing the Town Clerk to take urgent action where a meeting cannot reasonably be convened in time and the relevant criteria are met.

Following the General Management Committee's consideration of this matter, the Town Clerk will consider whether those circumstances apply and whether any urgent action is necessary to ensure that the Council's opportunity to make representations is not lost due to the consultation deadline.

The Town Clerk will have regard to the views expressed by the General Management Committee and will consult relevant Members where practicable in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

Any decision taken under delegated authority will be recorded in writing and reported to Full Council at the next available meeting.

5. Options available to the General Management Committee

The General Management Committee may:

1. Recommend to Full Council that the Council supports representations in favour of town and parish elections taking place in 2028.
2. Recommend to Full Council that the Council supports representations in favour of town and parish elections taking place in 2027.
3. Make no recommendation and note the information contained within this report.

6. Officer recommendation

The General Management Committee is invited to:

1. Consider the information contained within this report;
2. Note the governance position created by the consultation deadline and the procedures available under the Council's Scheme of Delegation should urgent action be required.

No formal Council position has been adopted at this stage.