



15 April 2026

**Invitation to an Executive Round Table Discussion:
'Local Government Reorganisation and its Impact on Strategic Relationships;
Strategic Collaboration Frameworks & Strategic Collaboration Programmes'**

So the 'LGR starting gun' has been formally fired by the Government and work is starting in earnest to create new unitary authorities across Essex; Hampshire & Isle of Wight; Norfolk and Suffolk for a 1 April 2028 Vesting Day launch.

It sounds a long way off; however it is not!

Other unitary authority solutions across other areas of England will be announced by the Government in due course; they are also likely to be on a 1 April 2028 launch deadline. Meanwhile Surrey is already underway with a launch of 1 April 2027.

Of course, for all the local authority staff concerned this will be a period of both excitement - being part of something new; whilst also a degree of uncertainty - where do I fit into any new structure?

But....

How will the LGR process impact on:

- existing **strategic relationships** (*local authority to key partner organisations*);
- existing **strategic collaboration frameworks** (*partnerships, alliances, etc - where the local authority provides the backbone [[click here](#)]*); and a raft of
- existing **strategic collaboration programmes** - *such as place-making, community safety, health & wellbeing, etc?*

Previous LGR experiences (*including my own - see personal profile below*) tend to show a predictable and quite natural pattern of human behaviour....

Senior Councillors start to disengage from externally focused partnership working and turn increasingly inwards as they look to the Shadow Elections and wonder whether they will get voted back in? And, if they do get voted back in - what will the political composition of the new Shadow Unitary Authority be and will they have a Cabinet role in it?

Senior Officers (chief executives, directors, heads of service) also start to disengage from externally focussed partnership working and turn inwards as they start to further cement their credentials as strong candidates for senior roles in the new unitary authority. Note that senior roles for the new unitary authorities have to go out to open recruitment.

So both Senior Councillors and Senior Officers who currently play pivotal leadership roles (*they are the key faces of the local authority and the ones that key partners know*) within existing strategic relationships / strategic frameworks / strategic collaboration programmes MIGHT not actually have a stake in their new unitary authority as they either did not get elected (Councillors) or did not secure a senior role (Officers) within it!

This is a huge risk that needs careful consideration, planning and mitigation.

As an example, take the case of three local authorities merging to become a single unitary authority. What are the direct impacts on key partners and collaborative programmes:

- 3 separate sets of local authority strategic relationships will need to become 1 set of strategic relationships within the new, geographically larger unitary authority.
- 3 separate sets of strategic frameworks (partnerships, alliances, etc) will need to be reviewed, transitioned and realigned into a coherent single set of strategic frameworks across the new, geographically larger unitary authority area.
- Multiple strategic collaboration programmes across the 3 local authority areas will need to be reviewed and realigned across the new unitary authority area.
- New individual relationships (Senior Councillors and Senior Officers) will need to be formed with key partners during the Shadow Year to ensure strong relationships with the new

unitary authority are in place from 1 April 2028.

- On-boarding programmes and activities will be critical.
- All partners across all 3 local authority areas (in this example) will need to be fully engaged in 'developing the new unitary collaboration framework' during the Shadow Year (if not starting earlier) to ensure they are fully part of the LGR journey - 'done with; not done to'!
- Critically, who will provide 'the backbone' [[click here](#)] to build on existing good practice and drive all of the above during the Shadow Year to ensure the new, geographically larger unitary authority gets the best collaborative working start possible?
- Finally, there is a huge risk that strategic relationships / strategic frameworks / strategic collaboration programmes are placed on the *'this is really difficult to do during the Shadow Year; so we'll park everything until after the new unitary authority has gone live and they can deal with it'* pile!

Implications of all the above are seismic including key partners disengaging; high profile / high stakes collaboration programmes struggling to deliver at pace; lost momentum and goodwill, coupled with high levels of frustration!

A lot of issues and risks to consider!

With this in mind, **I am looking to host an online Executive Round Table to explore the above challenges and risks; and to identify the mitigating actions needed to address** - date to be confirmed but likely to be mid-May after the local elections.

If you are interested in attending the Executive Round Table, please do send me a quick email by 30th April 2026 to reserve your place. Further information will follow accordingly. Also, please do forward this e-bulletin to any colleagues who would be interested in attending.

Thank you.

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About Henry Pavey MBA, CTArcf, FICW:

Henry is a specialist advisor and facilitator; guiding leaders and organisations in building 'Collaborations of Impact' - - a *unifying framework for collaborative action that delivers at pace; thereby exceeding the expectations of you and your partners.*

With over 25 years of real world hands-on experiences – both as a local government employee and as an independent consultant - coupled with relevant academic under-pinning and a military service background; he provides leaders and organisations with practical advice and solutions to the multi-faceted frustrations they face in seeking to build 'Collaborations of Impact'.

He is uniquely placed to advise leaders on the impact of Local Government Reorganisation on strategic relationships / strategic frameworks / strategic collaboration programmes given his direct experiences as Deputy Programme Manager implementing unitary authority status; as an Interim Programme & Partnership Manager driving a complex place-making programme whilst in the midst of a three-authority unitary merger; and as an Interim One Public Estate Programme Manager working with a relatively new unitary authority.

As a leading authority in strategic partnership working and collaboration, Henry is an Associate Director and Fellow of the Institute for Collaborative Working. He is also an accredited Collaborative Transformation Architect Fellow from Canterbury Christ Church University; has an MBA from Solent University and a Diploma in Training Management from the British Army.