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The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Sent by email and post

7 August 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire — Rugby Borough Council's response to the letter of 20 July 2026

Rugby Borough Council is disappointed in the outcome of the Local Government Reorganisation review but recognises the Government's decision to establish a new unitary authority covering Rugby, North Warwickshire, and Nuneaton and Bedworth.

While our councillors and political groups have held a different view about the most beneficial model of reorganisation for Warwickshire, we note that the Secretary of State's preferred option for Warwickshire has now been announced, subject to Parliamentary approval of the Structural Changes Order. The focus must now move to securing the best possible future for our residents, communities and businesses.

We recognise that the draft Structural Changes Order is now being developed and we welcome your invitation to provide further information ahead of the 17 August 2026 deadline; together with the opportunity referred to in your letter for the four Warwickshire councils to bring forward any further unanimous representations on matters already decided.

We wish to approach the next stage constructively, in partnership and on a cross-party basis. We are therefore raising the following points: some we will pursue with our partner



councils with a view to reaching the unanimous position needed for MHCLG to consider reopening them, and others we offer as constructive representations for MHCLG's consideration as the Order is finalised.

Rugby is a significant town with a strong identity, thriving communities, a growing economy and a proud history. We therefore ask MHCLG and our neighbouring councils to consider the following points.

1. A strong and visible voice for Rugby

The new authority must recognise Rugby's distinctive identity, needs and contribution to the wider economy of the area.

We understand that Ministers have already decided that the new authority will be named North Warwickshire Council. We would like to state our shared view that the new authority should instead be named "North & East Warwickshire", reflecting the fact that the area is made up of distinct communities and identities rather than a single homogeneous place. Indeed, many of Rugby's residents live in areas of the County which are further south than those in the proposed South Warwickshire Council and therefore it is our view that the naming of 'North Warwickshire Council' could lead to confusion and perceived exclusion.

2. Elections and representation

We note MHCLG's confirmation of 61 seats overall for the new council, and that there will be no boundary review or changes ahead of the 2027 elections.

The current draft proposed allocation of Councillors within the new North & East Warwickshire Unitary Council would give Rugby Borough an average of 4285 electors per Councillor, against the Unitary Council average of 3930 electors per Councillor. This would mean an underrepresentation for Rugby Borough's residents of approximately 9% when considered against the new Council's average.

We therefore seek agreement that the four partner councils should determine locally how the 61 seats will be distributed across county divisions to ensure fair representation, based on the ratio of Councillors to electors. We would anticipate that most divisions would return two councillors, with some returning one and some three.



We recommend that the four councils jointly commission an independent review of the data to inform this allocation, funded through LGR transition monies, with the funding basis between the four councils to be agreed and subject to each council's own decision-making and governance processes

3. Thriving services and communities

We note that two different financial modelling reports were submitted for MHCLG's consideration, presenting different assessments of financial viability. Work is ongoing locally to establish accurate figures and to begin financial planning for the new authority.

In the mid to long term, we envisage services thriving as a result of Local Government Reorganisation; however we anticipate a short-term financial risk. We believe that splitting the county budget will create significant inequality between the two new councils, based on demand and income, until 2029 and the next local government finance settlement, which we hope will resolve this through fair funding reform. This point is raised as a standalone concern for the interim funding conversation rather than as a matter requiring a decision by 17 August.

We would welcome MHCLG's advice on how vital services should be maintained if a shortfall arises in the short term, including whether there is scope for a local arrangement with the southern authority to redistribute income, and whether further Government funding could be made available to bridge any interim gap.

Similarly, we remain concerned that the impact of Council Tax Harmonisation may present an immediate challenge for specific communities across Warwickshire and would ask that all options are explored to mitigate or phase those impacts over a longer period of time.

4. Devolution within the new unitary authority

The creation of a larger unitary authority should not mean centralisation. We want the new council to explore meaningful devolution of powers, budgets and responsibilities to local communities, to town and parish councils and other appropriate local bodies, such as Area Committees.



All Leaders on Rugby Borough Council believe that the creation of the new authority should not be viewed simply as an administrative change. It is an opportunity to create a new model of local government which combines the financial resilience and strategic capacity of a unitary authority with genuinely local decision-making.

We wish to create a new Rugby Town Council and are progressing a Community Governance Review, with anticipated elections to the new Town Council in 2027. We would ask that provision for this is included within the Structural Changes Order.

We would welcome MHCLG's response on the above four points above and will seek the agreement of North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council so that, where a unanimous representation is required, this can be submitted jointly ahead of the 17 August 2026 deadline.

We will raise these four priorities for Rugby Borough Council of identity, representation, thriving services and effective devolution with our partner councils for discussion.

We would welcome further engagement with MHCLG, alongside our partners, at the appropriate stage of the process and look forward to receiving your guidance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Robinson'.

Louise Robinson – Leader, Rugby Borough Council (Leader of the Labour Group)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jerry Roodhouse'.

Jerry Roodhouse – Deputy Leader, Rugby Borough Council (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle Stewart'.

Kyle Stewart – Leader of the Reform UK Group, Rugby Borough Council



John Slinger

John Slinger – Member of Parliament for Rugby