



Co-Deputy Director, Local Government Reorganisation
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

19 August 2026

Dear Ms Miller,

Re: Proposed Name for the 'North Lancashire' Unitary Authority – Lancaster, Preston & Ribble Valley Council

Following the Government's confirmation of the local government reorganisation proposals to be taken forward, we welcome the opportunity to continue working collaboratively across the future unitary area and to support the successful transition to a new authority.

As discussions progress, we wish to formally set out our collective position regarding the naming of the proposed unitary authority currently referred to as 'North Lancashire'. While we would have welcomed greater engagement from the upper-tier authority on this matter, we remain keen to work constructively towards an outcome that reflects the clear and unanimous preference of the three district councils.

Following consideration by the three district councils of Lancaster City Council, Preston City Council and Ribble Valley Borough Council, there is unanimous support for the alternative name:

Lancaster, Preston & Ribble Valley Council

The three district councils are demonstrably the custodians of place within their respective communities. Place is a defining characteristic of local government, shaping identity, strong geographic recognition, democratic engagement, economic confidence, investment decisions and community belonging.

Consequently, the significance of place should be a primary consideration when determining the permanent name of the new authority. The combined names engender a spirit of partnership and equality (which is also the reasoning for alphabetical order). An important consideration as we take staff on the journey of a new authority based on the best of the present with a spirit of change and innovation for the future.

Importantly, Lancashire itself will continue to feature prominently through the Lancashire Combined County Authority and proposed elected Mayor of Lancashire,



ensuring the wider county identity remains visible and understood. The proposed unitary name therefore complements, rather than diminishes, the Lancashire identity.

While "North Lancashire" has served as a practical working title throughout the early LGR submission, it lacks a clear geographical identity and does not accurately reflect the area it describes, for example Preston is not located within the north of Lancashire. The term has been used inconsistently across various proposals during the reorganisation programme and was widely understood to be a temporary descriptor rather than a permanent identity. Retaining the working title as the permanent name would therefore risk confusion and does not accurately represent the area the authority will serve.

By contrast, 'Lancaster, Preston & Ribble Valley' reflects established places with strong recognition locally, regionally and nationally. Lancaster and Preston are unique within Lancashire as the county's two cities, each possessing centuries of distinguished municipal history. Lancaster's association with local governance dates back to its borough and market charter of 1193, while Preston received its first Royal Charter in 1179. Ribble Valley is similarly recognised as a distinct and valued place with a strong and established identity.

The name 'Lancaster, Preston & Ribble Valley' provides clear geographical recognition and reflects the breadth and diversity of the new authority. It encompasses the historic county town and heritage of Lancaster, Preston's central role as the principal economic engine of the area, the concentration of academic excellence across the two cities, and Ribble Valley's nationally recognised rural economy, food production sector and outdoor leisure offer.

The proposed name also reflects a spirit of partnership and equality between the constituent areas. The use of alphabetical order acknowledges the equal importance of each place and supports the creation of a shared identity for residents, businesses, elected members and staff. As we embark on the significant task of creating a new organisation, it is important that the chosen name builds on longstanding local identities while establishing a positive foundation for future innovation and collaboration.

Given MHCLG's indication that alternative naming proposals may be considered where unanimous agreement exists across the affected upper and lower-tier authorities, we respectfully request that the proposed name 'Lancaster, Preston & Ribble Valley Council' be given full consideration as the preferred alternative for the new unitary authority.



We believe this name best reflects the distinct places, heritage, economic strengths and communities that will come together to form the new council, whilst providing a strong and enduring identity for the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Jackson'.

Councillor Caroline Jackson
Leader, Lancaster City Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Brown'.

Councillor Matthew Brown
Leader, Preston City Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Hore'.

Councillor Simon Hore
Leader, Ribble Valley Borough Council

For and on behalf of Lancaster City Council, Preston City Council and Ribble Valley Borough Council