

Navigating the Technology Minefield of Local Government Reorganisation



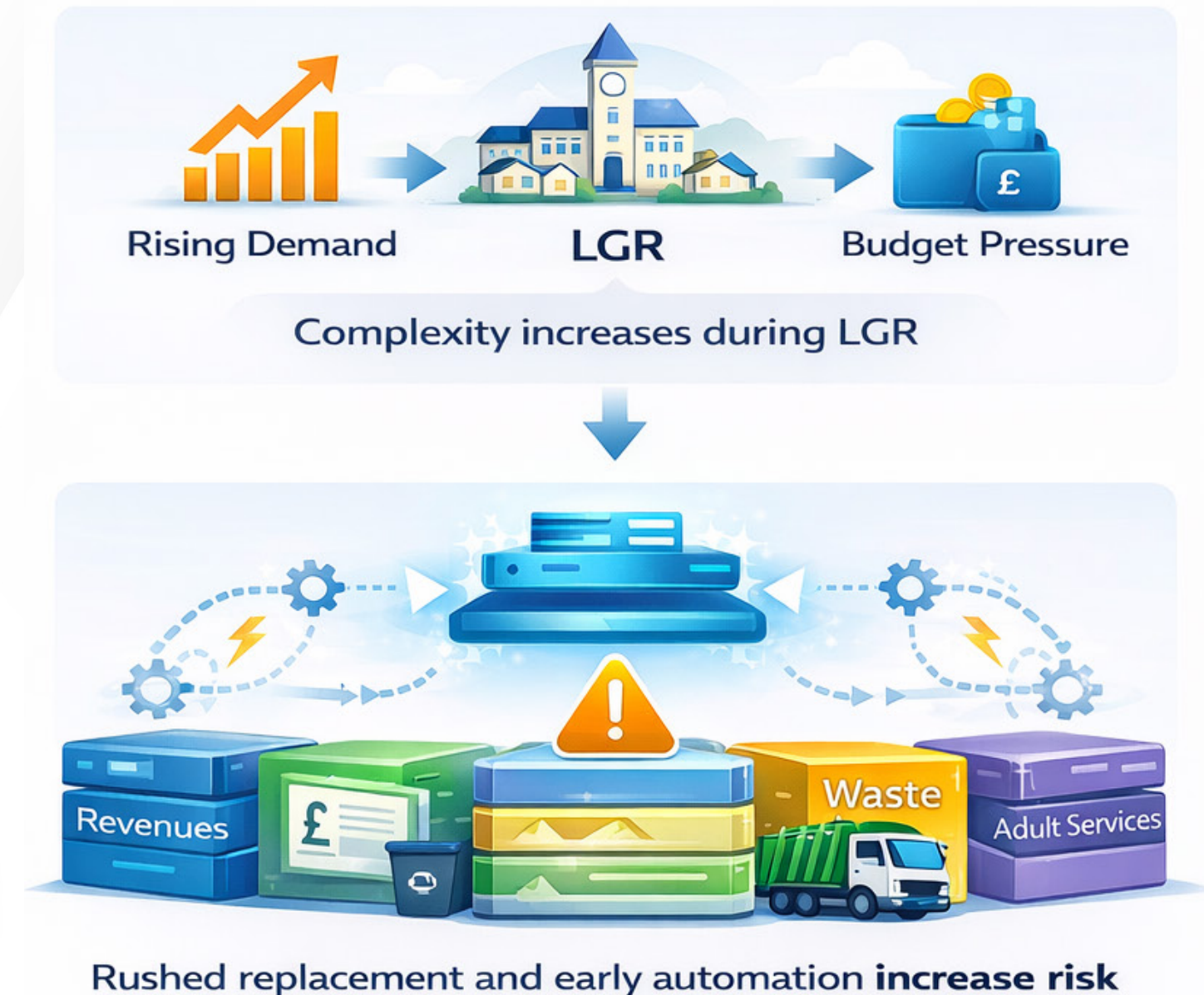


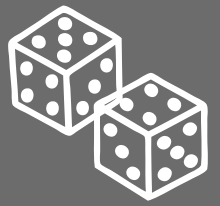
Overview

This article explains why technology alone won't fix the pressures facing local government, particularly during Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It states that rising complexity, duplicated systems, and fragmented data are not technology failures but coordination problems.

Introducing new platforms or rushing system replacement during LGR often increases risk, disrupts services, and locks councils into long-term costs before organisations have stabilised. In this article we stresses that automation and new technology, introduced too early, can accelerate inefficiency rather than reduce it. Instead, councils need control and connection across existing systems first, creating a stable foundation before simplifying technology over time.

Technology $\neq$ Solution





What Makes LGR Quick Technology Fixes Risky?

There's a familiar pattern whenever local government comes under pressure. Demand rises, budgets tighten, and reform looms. The instinctive response is often to look for a technology solution that can stabilise things quickly — a new system, a new platform, a new digital front door.

With Local Government Reorganisation now accelerating across the sector, that instinct is becoming even stronger.

But this is precisely the moment when buying more technology can do the most damage.

LGR doesn't simplify operating models; it multiplies complexity. It brings together councils with different service designs, data structures, and ways of working. In that environment, it's entirely normal to end up with two or three councils running broadly the same applications in parallel.

That situation isn't ideal. Long term, it's inefficient and expensive. But in the short term, it's often unavoidable.



Why Duplication Isn't the Real Problem

The real risk isn't duplication itself — it's trying to eliminate it too quickly.

A simple example shows why. Imagine a household moving from one legacy council area into another under a new unitary structure. From the resident's perspective, it's a single move. From the council's perspective, it can involve different revenues systems, different housing records, different waste services, and different ways of capturing identity and eligibility.

What should be a straightforward change becomes a maze of re-registrations, repeated evidence requests, and broken handovers.

That isn't a technology failure. It's a coordination problem.

Trying to solve that by rushing into system replacement only increases risk. It introduces disruption at exactly the moment when continuity of service matters most, and often locks councils into expensive, long-running programmes before the new organisation has even stabilised.

A more pragmatic approach accepts reality. Duplication can exist for a period of time, provided there's a clear and credible path to reduce it safely.



Stabilising Complexity Before Simplifying Systems

This is where many transformation programmes lose momentum. The focus shifts too quickly to replacing systems rather than connecting them. Most councils already have capable platforms in place. The issue isn't functionality — it's that each system holds only part of the picture, with no consistent way to link context across services.

When LGR happens, that fragmentation increases. Data models don't align. Processes diverge. And without a way to orchestrate activity across services, technology simply adds another layer of complexity.

The same applies to automation. Introduced too early, it doesn't remove inefficiency — it accelerates it.

What's needed first is control, not replacement. A way to connect services, carry context across organisational boundaries, and create a coherent operational view while existing systems continue to run. That's what creates the space to rationalise platforms later, based on evidence rather than urgency.





What's your plan for this?

How will you manage duplication during LGR? How will you avoid locking in the wrong systems for the next decade? And how will you simplify without disrupting residents at the point they need you most?

We believe there is a better way — one that allows councils to live with complexity in the short term while putting a clear, credible roadmap in place to reduce it over time. We call it the OAS Connected Council and it is a framework we are delivering today.

If this is something you're grappling with, I'd be interested to hear how you're approaching it



In Summary,

This article explains why technology alone cannot solve the pressures of Local Government Reorganisation.

It argues that complexity and duplication are coordination challenges, not system failures. Rushing replacement or automation increases risk and disruption. Instead, councils should prioritise control and connection across existing systems, creating stability before simplifying technology over time.



Connected Council

Get in touch by sending Pete Marshall an email to learn more.

pete.marshall@globaloas.com

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