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CHILTERN
District Council

INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | Bronze

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting of the **CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL** to be held in the **Council Chamber, King George V House, King George V Road, Amersham** on **Monday, 16th January, 2017** at **6.30 pm** when the business below is proposed to be transacted.

A G E N D A

1   Evacuation Procedures

2   Apologies for Absence

3   Declarations of Interest

4   Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire *(Pages 3 - 8)*

         Appendix 1: Executive Summary (Pages 9 - 22)

         Appendix 2: Strategic Options Case (Pages 23 - 116)

         Appendix 3: District Councils' Submission (Pages 117 - 234)

         Appendix 4: County Council Submission (Pages 235 - 292)

         Appendix 5: Stakeholder Engagement Statement (Pages 293 - 296)

5   Exclusion of the Public (if required)

To resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: All Reports will be updated orally at the meeting if appropriate and may be supplemented by additional reports at the Chairman's discretion.

Bob Smith
Chief Executive

If you would like this document in large print or an alternative format please contact 01494 732145; email democraticservices@chiltern.gov.uk

2.1.

SUBJECT:	*MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE*
REPORT OF:	*Leader of the Council – Councillor Isobel Darby*
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	*Bob Smith, Chief Executive*
REPORT AUTHOR	*Catherine Whitehead (WDC)*
WARD/S AFFECTED	*All*

RECOMMENDATION

That:

(i)   the Strategic options case at Appendix 2 be endorsed; and

(ii)   Members consider the two options for the future of Local Government in Buckinghamshire;

    (a)   Members agree to support the proposal previously submitted by the County Council OR

    (b)   Members agree to support the submission prepared by the District Councils

(iii)   (In the event that (b) is agreed) The Leader of the Council be given delegated authority to make minor amendments and to make the submission on behalf of the Council to the Secretary of State.

Reason for Recommendations

This report seeks Members agreement to make a submission to the Secretary of State under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and s15 Cities and Devolution Act 2016.

Corporate Implications

Financial Implications

1.   Both options propose savings. The County Council proposal includes greater savings than that provided by the Districts but the model the Districts propose will provide better value for money through reducing the cost of provision and increased revenue from economic growth.

2.   The savings proposed over a five year period are £72.9m and £57.4m respectively. The savings are set within an overall budget across the County of 6.8 billion over the same period. The proposed savings remain small at 1.1% and 0.8% respectively.

Legal Implications

3.   The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out the procedure for the creation of a unitary authority. Section 15 Cities and Devolution Act 2016 allows the Secretary of State to make regulations to modify the procedure where there is consensus between authorities. Where there is not consensus, the Act gives the Secretary of State the power to impose solutions, provided that at least one relevant local authority consents.

4.   The Act does not set any criteria for the imposition of a solution on an area, and does not require any specific consultation with the local population or interested bodies before a decision is made.

Content of report

5.   In January last year legislation was enacted in the form of the provisions in the Cities and Devolution Act 2016 which allowed the secretary of state to make regulations with consensus or if that is not achievable with the consent of at least one relevant authority.

6.   On 27th September 2016 the County Council in Buckinghamshire made a submission which proposed the creation of a unitary Council to cover the existing administrative area of the County Council.

7.   The four leaders of the District Councils had previously determined that they would jointly instruct a report from Deloitte to consider the range of options available for the future of Buckinghamshire. The Districts Strategic Options Case report was published in October 2016. The report indicated a timetable for the preparation of a business case following stakeholder engagement on the Strategic Options Case. The stakeholder engagement has subsequently been completed which was supportive of a unitary model different to that proposed by the County Council, and whilst it was finely balanced was more supportive of a North and South unitary.

8.   On 28th November 2016 the Leader of Aylesbury District council received a letter from the Secretary of State which stated that he intended to consider the submission he had received from the County Council and to avoid uncertainty the decision would be taken without delay. A telephone discussion took place with Civil Servants which indicated that the timetable of the end of February 2017 which the Districts had set out for completion of their business case would be too late. Several attempts have been

made to establish the exact timetable for a decision but no clear indication has been given.

9. On 19th December 2016 the Leader of Aylesbury Council received a further letter from the Secretary of State which indicated that if a submission were to be made before he had reached a preliminary decision on the County Council's proposals he would carefully consider the proposals. The date suggested, in response to a letter from the Leader of Aylesbury, was the end of the year. In the circumstances the Leaders of the four Council's prepared a draft Executive Summary (Appendix 1) which was submitted to the Secretary of State before the end of the year, with a covering letter stating that a formal submission would be presented to this meeting and meetings of the four District Councils across the County on 16th January 2017 which if approved would be submitted the following day.

Background and Issues

10. The County of Buckinghamshire has been the subject of a number of previous attempts to move from two tier governance to unitary governance. In 1997 Milton Keynes was split from the rest of the County to become a unitary while the remainder continued to be two tier. The financial climate and the difficulties it is facing in presenting a balanced budget have prompted the County Council to actively pursue a unitary Council for the whole of its current administrative area. It announced early in the year the intention to look at the single option of a unitary based on its own administrative area. Later in the process the Council felt it necessary to include alternative options in its submission. After the submission had been presented it also produced a Strategic Options Case similar to that which had been prepared by the Districts which attempted to consider the options afresh, although by this stage the business case for the original sole option had been submitted to the Secretary of State.

11. The Districts started with the view that the answer was not clear and undertook the work towards the Strategic Options Case to help them to make an informed decision. As an internal report would be prepared by those who would be directly impacted by the decision the report was prepared by Deloitte. It was felt that independent verification was not sufficient to enable a genuine independence in the process.

12. The Strategic Options Case (Appendix 2) provided information which enabled the Districts to carefully consider the delivery options, and models of delivery of social care which would help to bring about transformation alongside structural change.
Appendix 2 is attached.
In particular it was important to ensure that any future model would be sustainable.

13. The District paper has carefully considered a number of key factors:

   • The Economic Geography and the structure most likely to support growth and provide the housing required.

   • The arrangements which would provide the greatest accountability and transparency and ensure that the voice of residents was heard.

   • The model that would best support the improvement of services particularly those that were currently failing.

   • The arrangements that would provide services which provided the greatest value for money.

14. The draft submission from the District Council sets out the analysis of those key areas.

   Consultation

15. A statement in relation to the stakeholder engagement conducted by the District Councils is attached at Appendix 5.

   Options

16. The Options appraisal is set out in the draft Executive Summary.

17. The draft proposes that the five Councils that currently operate on a two tier basis should be abolished. It considers two models for unitary governance across the whole of Buckinghamshire:

   1. Two Unitary Councils - One new unitary and Milton Keynes

   A new unitary Council which covers the area which is currently two tier which will sit alongside the existing unitary Council of Milton Keynes.

   2. Three Unitary Councils – Two new unitary councils and Milton Keynes

   Two new unitary Councils should be created one in the north alongside the existing unitary Council of Milton Keynes and one in the south to cover the area of the three southern district councils.

18. Attached to this report are detailed submissions in relation to both options. One has been prepared by the County Council Appendix 4 and is available here: http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/our-plans/modernising-local-government/ and the latest submission that has been prepared by the District Councils Appendix 3 (attached) will be available from Tuesday 10 January. Members are invited to consider both proposals and select the proposal which they believe will provide the best opportunity for Modernised Local Government across Buckinghamshire. It is also open to Members to abstain or support no change

Conclusions

19. The Secretary of State has made it clear that he intends to consider whether Buckinghamshire should move to a unitary form of governance and abolish the existing two tier arrangements. He has also indicated his intention to consider both proposals before a final decision is to be made. He has however said that if the District submission is not received before he forms a view about the proposal already available to him he will proceed to reach an initial view on that proposal. Members are therefore invited to form a view on which proposal they wish to support if any.

Next Steps

20. The submission which is supported by Members will be referred to the Secretary of State. The County Council are also being invited to consider the District proposals alongside their own. In the event that all five Councils support either the District or the County Council submission there will be consensus in Buckinghamshire and the Secretary of State will be invited to agree to the consensus view.

21. In the event that some Councils support the District proposal this submission (subject to any amendments) will be made to the Secretary of State who will be invited to agree to support the implementation of the District Proposal.

Background Papers:	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

January 2017

CHILTERN
District Council

SOUTH BUCKS
District Council

Stronger in partnership

WYCOMBE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is no dispute about the need for change in Buckinghamshire. But real change requires new thinking. A fresh approach, responding to the economies of the place and to the people who live and work there.

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS

——— " ———

*There is nothing wrong with change
if it is in the right direction.*
Winston Churchill

——— " ———

Buckinghamshire is naturally sliced in two by the topography of the Chiltern Hills. Its distinct communities have been artificially tied together for too long under the administration of an upper tier Council which in turn is obliged to serve two economic masters.

Neither urban nor a collection of market towns, Buckinghamshire is a long strip with no sense of connection between the residents of Buckingham and Burnham. It is fundamentally a divided place. The north is an open area with great potential for rapid growth: a rural vale centred around the towns of Aylesbury and Milton Keynes forming part of the Midlands. The southern communities are nestled in the Chilterns and along the Thames Valley and dominated by their proximity to London: a part of the commuter zone constrained by its green belt and its natural topography. Amersham and Chesham are served by the London Underground and are increasingly used as commuter towns. High Wycombe has pockets of deprivation, rising homelessness and ethnic and religious diversity.

The delivery structures of public services are divided by this geography. The Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) align with the district proposal. So do the local policing areas with a clear division across the natural boundary. The blue light services all recognise Milton Keynes as part of Buckinghamshire. There are no services which are delivered across the county administrative area, although partnerships have formed to help create a pass through the Chiltern Hills. The rivers, rail and roads also reflect the division between the north and south of the County. The poor connectivity between north and south is a product of the topography and emphasises the natural divide.

Milton Keynes, released from the county administrative constraint in 1997, has become the fastest growing city in Europe. Aylesbury could follow suit. The Cambridge to Oxford Corridor is one of the prime growth corridors for UK PLC in the coming decades.

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) recognises Aylesbury Vale as part of that geography and places Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale but – significantly – not the rest of Buckinghamshire – within the Corridor. A unitary Aylesbury Vale working in partnership with its neighbour, has the potential to emulate its success and maximise the potential for growth and increased productivity to the benefit of the UK as a whole.

In the south the pull to London is undeniable. A Council based along the Thames Valley would be able to advocate its cause with its natural partners and can fully benefit from its London and M40 corridor relationships to be part of its own functioning economic geography. The expansion of Heathrow and development of Crossrail will continue to make the south of the County desirable areas for new businesses and those seeking a UK base near London.

Meeting this demand within the constraints of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and green belt requires innovation and agility with a clear focus on developing the infrastructure to maximise land use and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

The new unitary Councils will be able to reshape the relationships with residents focussing on building resilience and independence. Sustainable local government can work alongside people and communities to assist them in securing their own wellbeing with emphasis on early intervention and prevention to reduce demands on hardstretched public services.

Milton Keynes is a growing but yet relatively small unitary (population: 261.7k). The opportunity to share delivery with similar community needs has the potential to improve the resilience of Aylesbury and Milton Keynes. To the south, the increasing number of families being housed in Bucks from Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon to help with the London homelessness crisis requires a different sphere of close working relationships, looking towards London.

The County Council has shouldered the responsibility of delivering strategic services across this divided County. Strategic transport and infrastructure has been driven by the need to provide north/south connectivity. What is more important is connecting economies and communities to their natural neighbours - to the Midlands in the north, and the Thames Valley and London in the south. Social care administered across these different and unconnected communities has proved to be increasingly costly and has failed to realise the economies of scale a large population would ordinarily provide in areas with a clear social and economic centre.

Unsurprisingly the administration has struggled. It has struggled to improve the performance of its services; struggled to keep pace with the rapid growth of its northern neighbour and above all struggled to make ends meet.

An analysis of Buckinghamshire which concludes that reorganising the local government deck chairs will provide the solution is blind to the problems the County faces. An analysis which fails to acknowledge the significant role which Milton Keynes plays in this County is fundamentally flawed and an analysis which assumes that any new Council will be constrained by existing administrative boundaries lacks vision and the ability to engage in unfettered thinking. Real change requires new thinking: this is an opportunity to move beyond the status quo, to a structure that is fit for the future.

"

The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.
Albert Einstein

"

OUR SUBMISSION

We propose to abolish the five Councils that currently operate on a two tier basis. We believe that the best option is for three Councils across Buckinghamshire. This would create two new unitary Councils: one in the north (population: 188.7k) alongside the existing unitary of Milton Keynes (population: 261.7k) and one in the south to cover the area of the three southern district councils (population: 339.7k). Partnership working between the two northern unitaries can provide economies of scale for both councils. This proposal respects the economic geography and the communities of Buckinghamshire.

However, if there is a decision to support a one new unitary solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire the four districts believe that this should be to create two new Councils of fairly equal size which allow for appropriate economic and community based relationships. The proposal by the County Council would create two mismatched Councils (population: 528.4k and 261.7k) that cut through the middle of the economic geography.

"

[The districts proposal] Saves money while allowing disparate communities of North and South Bucks to be catered for most effectively
Della Fitzgerald, Secretary, Marlow Museum

"

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The options under consideration are as follows:

OPTION 1

ONE NEW UNITARY

One new unitary model based on the existing geography of the County Council administrative area and Milton Keynes. Under this model each of the two Councils would deliver the full range of services.

OPTION 2

TWO NEW UNITARIES

A two new unitary model based on the existing boundaries of Milton Keynes existing unitary Council, Aylesbury Vale proposed unitary and a proposed unitary covering the combined area of Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils. Under this option each Council would be responsible for the delivery of all council services. It is proposed that closer working between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale unitaries could realise efficiencies across both Councils. There would also be joint delivery of back office services across two or more of the three unitary Councils.

CRITERIA ANALYSIS

The following table provides a rating (1 or 2) for each option against the non-financial criteria (1 being the highest scoring rating for each criterion). For ease of comparison the same set of criteria have been used as the County Council business case. The criteria have been allocated with an equal weighting and the overarching score has been calculated by adding the scores of the first three criteria with the average score for the last four sustainability criteria. Where both models have equal merit they have both been allocated the highest score (1).

Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

Options criteria	One new unitary model	Two new unitary model
1. Service performance	2	1
2. Democratic leadership & accountability	2	1
3. Local engagement & decision making	2	1
Sustainability		
4. Economic growth	2	1
5. Skills and capacity	2	1
6. Engagement of supply chain	1	1
7. Co-terminosity with partners (partnership working)	2	1
Overarching score	7.75*	4*
Overarching rank	Second	First

* Scores calculated from the average of the sustainability criteria 4,5,6 and 7 plus the sum of criteria 1,2 and 3. *e.g. option 2 ((1+1+1+1 / 4)) +1+1+1 = 4*

The following table provides a summary of the high level revenue costs and savings (on a real basis) estimated for each option over a five-year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24:

Income foregone, costs and savings	One new unitary model £m	Two new unitary model £m
Total income foregone (Council tax)	8.7	1.1
Total costs (staff, reorganisation change costs)	14.3	14.3
Total savings (staff, democratic and efficiency savings)	95.9	72.8
Net savings	72.9	57.4

Note: A detailed breakdown of the financial analysis is included in the full report. Savings are against annual revenue outturn total service expenditure of £1.3 billion (based on 2015/16 RO data) and £6.8 billion over the five year period, assuming this level of annual expenditure is maintained.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The financial analysis concludes that a two new unitary solution could deliver savings of nearly £58m over five years to residents of Buckinghamshire. A new single unitary would deliver nearly £73m over the same period. These savings are against a total annual budget of £1,357m across the county i.e. £6,785m over five years.

The total scores allocated in relation to the non-financial analysis indicate option 2 is more advantageous than option 1. The financial analysis recognises the additional savings potential from option 1 but option 2 is the preferred overall option as it has the strongest delivery along with potential for significant savings.

OUR VISION

Given the challenges faced in Buckinghamshire systemic and innovative change is required to ensure that local government is sustainable and meets the changing needs and aspirations of residents. The vision is therefore built around the following principles:

1. Local government will be rooted in communities and residents will be empowered to participate in the design and delivery of services for their local area;

2. Administrative boundaries and democratic accountability will reflect real economic and community geographies to allow aligned planning, consistent prioritisation and place based action to improve outcomes for residents and ensure that the deployment of public money is optimised;

3. Community resilience will be enhanced by providing 'just enough' of the right services at the right time, thereby promoting independence and the capabilities of individuals, rather than perpetuating a paternalistic model of local government which increases dependency;

4. There will be clear focus on achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth that creates shared prosperity and promotes resilience and independence.

5. Collaboration and partnership working between public bodies will be enhanced by coterminous working, shared prioritisation and joint action;

6. Innovation in the use of data and technology and in the design and delivery of public services to best reflect and support the way people live their lives and improve effectiveness, productivity and efficiency.

——— **"** ———

"The difference in scale between Aylesbury Vale and the rest of Bucks (e.g. Aylesbury Vale is one of the fastest growing areas in the country) requires specialist expertise to ensure that this is delivered in the most efficient and timely planned manner with a focus that would be lost as part of a larger authority."

Nick Cummins, Executive Director, Bromford Housing Association

——— **"** ———

Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

OUR AMBITION

One Direction - each council focussed on one economic geography

Even More Local - two councils provides greater local accountability

More Effective - the right services at the right time improves outcomes and builds resilience

More Efficient - thriving economies and resilient communities provide sustainability

Why our ambition makes sense for Buckinghamshire:

ONE DIRECTION

The north and south of Buckinghamshire are very different functional economic areas, with distinctive characteristics, challenges and opportunities. Two new unitaries in Buckinghamshire would allow each Council to pursue its own economic goals focused in just one direction.

Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes are part of the Cambridge to Oxford Corridor identified by the NIC as a priority area for national growth. By contrast, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe are part of the Thames Valley and West of London economy. National infrastructure investments such as Crossrail and the expansion of Heathrow in the south, and East West Rail between Cambridge and Oxford - along with the potential expressway, will further intensify this functional difference.

Buckinghamshire has been punching below its weight in terms of economic growth. In particular the key urban centres of Aylesbury and Wycombe have been significantly underperforming in terms of productivity and growth indices. Compared to the Thames Valley NUTS2 sub-region, growth across Buckinghamshire GVA was £1.4 billion lower from 1997 to 2014 missing out on 15,000 new jobs. Had it performed to the level of Milton Keynes it would have delivered additional GVA of £4.6 billion,

35,000 jobs and 5,000 businesses. Milton Keynes, separated from the County to become a unitary in 1997, is now consistently one of the most successful, fastest growing and sustainable cities.

The confusion of the LEP geographies would be resolved by two new unitaries, allowing the LEPs to support and drive growth with a clear focus and direction. At present, the administrative geography of the LEP boundaries hinders this clarity of thought and action. Bucks Thames Valley LEP (BTVLEP) was the last LEP to be formed in 2012. Aylesbury Vale had two years previously joined the South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP)- itself a natural evolution from the Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM) growth area. The Thames Valley Berkshire LEP would better reflect the Thames Valley economic area if it were to include the Chiltern Thames Valley - and offer real prospects for strong partnership working with Enterprise M3 LEP. This arrangement may also provide more sustainable and agile building blocks for future devolution deals based around real issues such as the NIC Cambridge to Oxford Corridor and Thames Valley / Heathrow hub.

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY MAP

Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford Corridor

Cambridge

Milton Keynes

Aylesbury

Oxford

M40

Amersham

High Wycombe

Tube

M4

Reading

M25

LONDON

M25

Basingstoke

M3

Guildford

Influence of London

Thames Valley economic area

South East Midlands LEP

Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

EVEN MORE LOCAL

Two new unitary Councils means arrangements are even more local. Our proposal creates a new opportunity for more local involvement in decision making and true local accountability.

There is a need for local ward councillors to reclaim their community leadership role as the accepted and mandated voice of citizens. Councils supported by local councillors work hard to stimulate good local economic growth and engage with local communities encouraging them to reduce the demand on services and to step into the breach left by the withdrawal of publicly provided services. Councils, and councillors, will need new approaches to do this successfully, such as utilising less formal social networks, participatory democracy, better engagement with young people and a broader influencing role, rather than the more formal traditional structures associated with the public sector.

There are crucial roles for councillors not only in being civic entrepreneurs but also in providing visible civic leadership to enable and support the work of others. Councillors work hard to foster strong relationships and within local communities through partnerships, with Parish Councils, Town Councils and Community Associations; through their service on the boards of local voluntary organisations; their membership of local Business Improvement District Boards and through their wider engagement within their communities to identify individuals from all walks of life, and organisations from all sectors who want to play a role and to inspire others to do the same and more.

They need recognition and support, to help them enhance their role as key influencers and door-openers to other community leaders who can make things happen. Businesses create wealth, not the state, but local government can create the conditions for enterprise to thrive by engaging the private sector and universities to develop their distinctive economic assets. The challenge is to create a new relationship between the citizen and the state, rebuild trust and ensure good local integration between health, social care and other services.

> [The area] "Splits into two natural geographical areas. More local, responds to local issues more effectively without the need for bureaucratic and time consuming "hubs". Less additional work and pressure is thrown on to Parish Councillors (who are volunteers) compared with the single unitary option. AVDC has a great record of innovating income streams for long term financial stability."

Clive Rodgers,
Vice-Chairman, Swanbourne Parish Council

MORE EFFECTIVE

There is no disagreement that the delivery of services will be aided by the demise of the two tier system. A new Council will have the opportunity to write a new chapter. Officials at the Department for Education considered that Ofsted's 'inadequate' judgement in 2014 was at the more serious end of the spectrum of failure. (Red Quadrant Report February 2015). More than two years on, Ofsted are saying that the progress of improvement is too slow, and the service continues to fail to meet its own performance targets. Improvements should not be assumed from Local Government Reorganisation alone.

Even an investment into the services, as has been shown already, will not of itself bring about the necessary improvement. A reappraisal of why the recent investment in Children's Services by the County Council has failed to achieve the level of improvement expected by Ofsted will be required and a model developed which will enable the new Councils to achieve their performance targets. At the heart of this reappraisal will be a drive to focus professional resources on active engagement with children, families and communities and an enhanced approach to partnership working in localities building trust and a shared focus on outcomes amongst agencies.

Approaches must respond to the particular challenges faced in Buckinghamshire and the different communities within the County area. There are distinct differences between the make up of the communities in the two main towns of High Wycombe and Aylesbury which are apparent from the data about the two places. There are also different challenges faced in the different housing areas. For example across Buckinghamshire only 48% of children are placed within the Council's area compared to 75% in Milton Keynes. There is no shortage of housing in the north of the county whilst the south is experiencing price rises and housing shortages.

Design and delivery of local services will be sensitive to the particular needs of different communities. Improving effectiveness in Children's Services is all about providing just enough of the right service at the right time and targeting response where it is needed. A think family approach, building family and community resilience and developing our work force so that we continue to improve outcomes for families is the way forward. This must take place in a co-ordinated, integrated and, wherever possible, co-located way with partners. There must be highly effective leadership and management with a vision of continuous improvement and strong political and community support.

'This new opportunity for Children's Services will deliver the "Right services for Buckinghamshire children and families at the Right time," improving their outcomes and building both their resilience and that of their particular communities'.

Andrew Fraser, former Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Enfield

"Buckinghamshire is a very large and diverse county. North and South are vastly different and our needs and population are very different. We need closer connections and understanding.

Two unitary option - This would provide some economy of scale and retain the element of local representation and knowledge which we believe is extremely important"

Sharon Henson, Clerk/RFO,
West Wycombe Parish Council

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Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

MORE EFFICIENT

The financial analysis concludes that a two new unitary solution could deliver savings of nearly £58 million over five years to residents of Buckinghamshire. However, two new unitary Councils with a focus on economic growth emulating Milton Keynes, have the potential to enable both Councils to significantly improve growth and productivity. Additional GVA and house building have a direct financial benefit both in national revenue and for the Councils concerned. The change to unitary status will not bring about this growth unless there is a redirection of strategic focus - allowing the different areas of Buckinghamshire to operate within their own functioning economic geographies.

The vision of our proposal is about independence and delivering the right amount of help when needed. Low level intervention, coupled with effective early intervention has been successful in enabling people to live in their own homes for longer, for providing independence for people with long term conditions and empowering communities and the voluntary sector to play a role in providing early help and support to people in their own homes. This approach if rigorously pursued can reduce the number of people who require care outside their own homes. The budget analysis for Adult Social Care shows that £74.7 million (58%) was spent supporting service users no longer able to live in their own homes, a significant proportion of the overall spend and one which is subject to upward cost pressures now and in the future. Because of the high and rising cost of care, a small increase in the number of those able to remain in their homes with support would have an impact on budget spend.

Between April 2015 and August 2015, the cost of nursing placements for older people in Buckinghamshire increased by over 11% and for the provision of short term Respite Care for Older People increased by 23%.

These are people who are capable of living in the community but for whom respite is provided to relieve their community carers. Developing community support to relieve the strain on carers is one significant way that rising costs can be contained. Empowered communities and self sufficient individuals in control of their own lives need less and consume less public services.

We have successfully developed ways of earning additional revenue and reducing our own costs through innovation. Aylesbury Vale District Council's approach to digital delivery has been recognized as leading the way and there is real scope to extend the use of digital delivery into social care and health care. Aylesbury Vale have also pursued a policy of commercialism and targeted charges for added value services, where surpluses generated will be reinvested to support core activities.

Wycombe District Council has capitalised on its land values to provide a revenue stream through the effective development and management of commercial property. This approach provides an ongoing revenue stream which continues to support the delivery of other services.

Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils' have successfully partnered with each other including a joint. Chief Executive. This approach can be replicated under new structures to support effective partnering. Beyond this, expanding into new markets, which support the objectives of the councils, thereby providing added value and profits for reinvestment will help to support and protect services. A new approach to building thriving economies and resilient communities alongside innovation will create genuinely sustainable local government.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our proposed two new unitary model is capable of implementation on the same delivery timescale as the one new unitary proposal submitted by the County Council. The detailed work has been undertaken which would enable the first steps to be taken very quickly and shadow arrangements put in place to support the transition.

It remains important to recognise that the financial benefits realised from restructure will not be sufficient to avoid the need for ongoing transformation to continue. Political leadership and management must also continue to be focused on the urgent improvement work in Children's Services without being distracted by any decision towards transition to unitary status.

We have a track record of successfully bringing together two organisations into one with minimum disruption to delivery. We also have expertise in modernisation through innovation. We see this as an opportunity for real change and to design new councils fit for the future.

> *"The district councils are in a good position to support businesses and they need greater powers, such as control of highways, to make things happen more quickly.*
>
> *"The county council's proposals for one council – probably based in Aylesbury – with various hubs, committees, and town and parish councils doing different things in different areas is not a 'one stop shop'– it would be worse than the current situation."*

Peter Keen,
Chairman of bed manufacturer Hypnos

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Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

For more information visit:

Aylesbury Vale District Council
www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/mlg

Chiltern District Council
www.chiltern.gov.uk/unitaryupdate

South Bucks District Council
www.chiltern.gov.uk/unitaryupdate

Wycombe District Council
www.wycombe.gov.uk/mlg

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Buckinghamshire District Councils

Strategic options case for modernising local government in
Buckinghamshire

10 October 2016

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Deloitte LLP
Leeds
October 2016

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Executive summary

Purpose of the report

In view of the ongoing discussions concerning the establishment of unitary authorities (UA), Wycombe, Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks district councils commissioned Deloitte to produce a strategic options case that provides independent analysis of options for alternative governance arrangements in Buckinghamshire in the form of unitary local government. A number of options are set out in this report to satisfy the need for a robust and comprehensive comparative analysis. This is intended to help the district councils form a view of which option best serves the interests of residents.

Deloitte were commissioned to produce this strategic options case and the scope of the work is summarised below:

- Facilitate a visioning workshop with the senior management teams to consider the key strategic themes that characterise a sustainable and appropriate role for local government in Buckinghamshire.

- Facilitate a series of workshops with senior managers to examine how key strategic services can be delivered and the different options for delivering them, including adult social care, children's services, transport, spatial planning and economic development.

- Perform a non-financial analysis of the options for new unitary organisations in Buckinghamshire based on agreed criteria.

- Perform an analysis of the financial viability and sustainability of the options for new unitary organisations in Buckinghamshire based on agreed criteria.

- Recommend next steps for the district councils including stakeholder engagement activity with: Buckinghamshire County Council (the County Council), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Thames Valley Police, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Members of Parliament (MPs), health partners, and town and parish councils.

Local context for local government reorganisation

Any reorganisation of local government in Buckinghamshire should be designed to sit at the heart of wider public sector reform and transformation in the county. Without this, consolidation of local government into a single tier, whilst providing important savings, will not create the improved outcomes and long term sustainability which residents require. Indeed, unless this happens there is a real danger that an inward-focused reorganisation of local government will get in the way of much-needed integration and transformation in the health and care system and other key aspects of public sector reform, without which the savings achieved will be more than consumed by cost pressures elsewhere. Set in the wider context, local government reorganisation should enable and accelerate reform across the public sector, providing leadership of place and democratic accountability. Most importantly of all local government will need to reshape its relationship with the residents of Buckinghamshire, focusing much more on building resilience and independence rather than defaulting automatically to service provision. Sustainable local government will work alongside people and communities to assist them in securing their own wellbeing, with much greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention to avoid demand for hard-stretched public services.

The starting point for this journey, therefore, needs to be about building a broad consensus, across public sector partners in Buckinghamshire, on an ambitious vision for the future of public services. This vision needs to be set in the context of rapidly rising demand for public services as a result of demographic change, continued resource constraint across the public sector and the changing way that people are living their lives as a result of digitisation and other influences.

Getting the organisational form of local government right within that context of wider public sector reform is extremely important but care needs to be taken to ensure that this takes account of the increasingly complex landscape that local government operates in. A one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate as it would stifle innovation and become a blockage to the sort of collaboration and relationships needed to secure outcomes on a range of different geographies. Successful local government in the future will need to build influence across a variety of geographies from the very local to the pan regional. Of fundamental importance will be the ability to build a new set of relationships with individual communities at a local level, underpinned by visible and accountable leadership and real engagement in decision-making and resource allocation. Even on the issues which benefit from greater scale, such as economic planning and health and social care integration, it is the action on the ground in communities that will prove to be truly transformational in securing improved outcomes.

Overview of Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire has six councils: Buckinghamshire County Council, Milton Keynes Council (unitary authority), Aylesbury Vale District Council, Wycombe District Council, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council. Any reference to Buckinghamshire within the context of this report refers to the geography covered by the four district councils and not the ceremonial county of Buckinghamshire which includes Milton Keynes.

Buckinghamshire has 168 parish and town councils, and a total population of 528,400. Aylesbury Vale is the largest district council with a population of 188,707. Wycombe District Council is the second largest district council with a population of 176,028. Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils have populations of 94,545 and 69,120 respectively.[1] Residents are represented by five Members of Parliament, 49 county councillors and 187 district council members.

There are distinct differences between the north and south of Buckinghamshire; for example, South Bucks has significant links with West London and Reading and Slough in terms of Functioning Economic Market Areas (FEMA) and Housing Market Areas (HMA) whereas Aylesbury Vale has strong economic links with Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire which is a key focus of its work with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP).[2]

Surrounding unitary authorities include Milton Keynes Council with a population of 261,762, Central Bedfordshire with a population of 274,022, Slough Borough Council with a population of 145,734 and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead with a population of 147,708.[3] Other surrounding top tier authorities include Bedford Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Northamptonshire County Council. Surrounding local authority districts' include South Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

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[1] Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015
[2] Identifying HMAs and FEMAs in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas, 2015
[3] Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015

Vision for Buckinghamshire

Given the challenges Buckinghamshire faces, maintaining the status quo is not a viable long term option. Systemic and radical change is required in order to ensure local government in Buckinghamshire is sustainable and meets the changing needs and aspirations of residents in the long term. The districts' shared vision for local government in Buckinghamshire is built around the following principles:

- Local government will be rooted in communities and residents will be empowered to participate in the design and delivery of services for their local areas.

- Services and functions will be planned and delivered across the most appropriate, evidence-based, geographies to ensure the optimum level of scale is achieved.

- Community resilience will be enhanced by reframing the relationship between local government and residents so that it is focused on promoting independence and the capabilities of individuals, rather than a paternalistic model based on dependency.

- Asset-based approaches will be adopted and there will be an increased focus on securing the best outcomes for residents, whilst effectively managing demand.

- Collaboration and partnership working with local government and public sector partners will be enhanced.

The diagram below outlines the districts' shared vision for local government in Buckinghamshire:
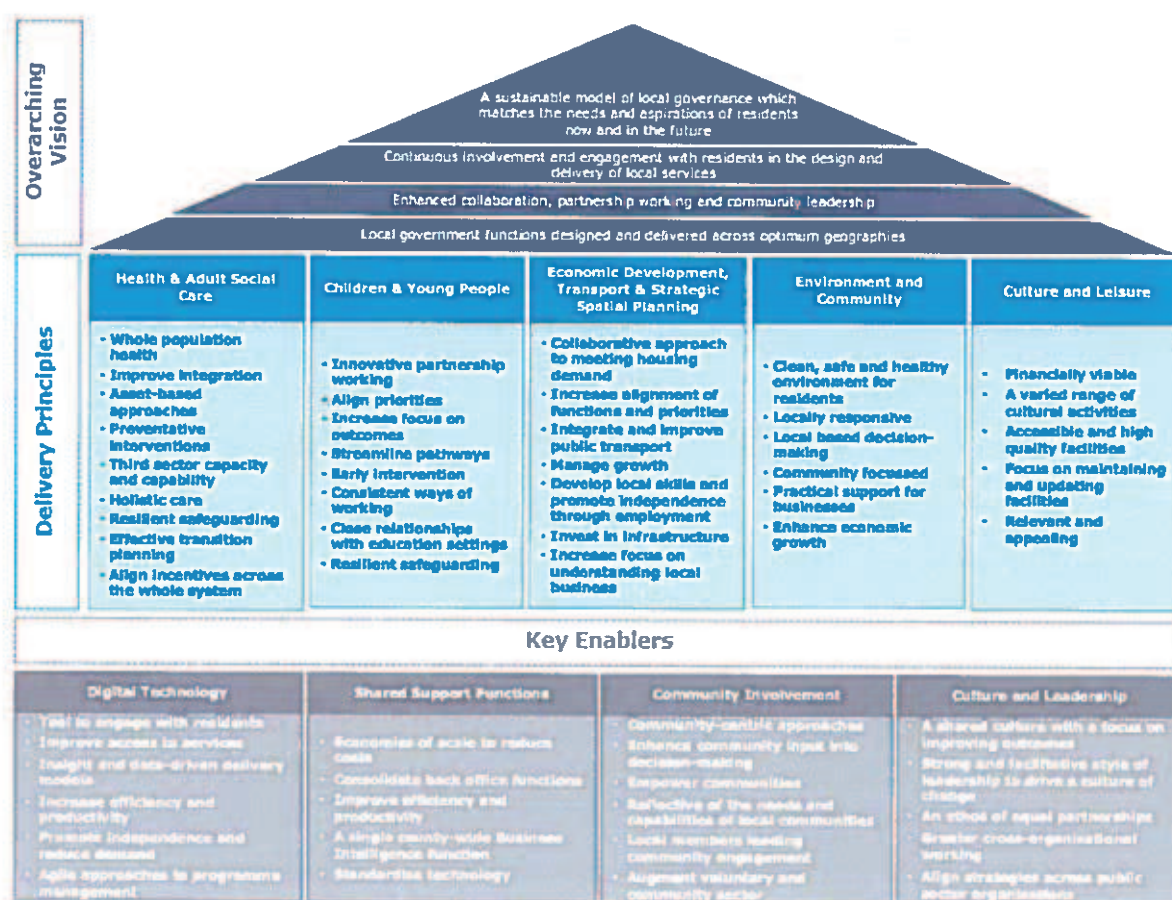
Key challenges

The national and local context for public services has changed markedly in recent years. The twin challenges of constrained resources and rising demand driven by demographic change requires a fundamental rethink to the way services are designed and delivered. Buckinghamshire is generally an affluent area and the vast majority of people achieve good outcomes. However, local government in Buckinghamshire is not an anomaly to the national trends highlighted above and there are significant financial and demand pressures as summarised below:

- Reducing Revenue Support Grant (RSG) funding to zero for Buckinghamshire County Council and the four district councils by 2018/19, replacing the source of funding with localised business rate retention.

- The 65 and over population is projected to increase by 75 per cent between 2012 and 2037 which is likely to lead to increased pressure on constrained adult social care resources.[4]

- Increasing demand for children's services evidenced by a 12 per cent increase in the number of looked after children between 2011 and 2015.[5]

- Housing demand is projected to increase by 21 per cent over the 20-year period between 2013 and 2033. This includes the need for an additional 9,000 affordable homes.[6]

Summary of options appraisal

Options

Three council combination options have been developed. All three options have been designed around the principle of delivering services across optimum geographies. In carrying out this exercise we have attempted to achieve the benefits of scale without missing out on the opportunity for transformation at a local level.

Under all three models of local government, consideration should be given to delivering functions across the area covered by the four district councils where partnership working is optimal and economies of scale can be achieved without adversely impacting on outcomes for residents. Options should be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved in terms of financial sustainability and improved outcomes by planning and delivering services at a greater scale beyond the boundaries of Buckinghamshire.

- **Adult Social Care (ASC) and children's services**
  These functions would be planned at scale to maximise the opportunities for integrated working with other public services to build resilience into the system and enhance safeguarding. Consideration should be given as to whether ASC and children's services should be delivered across the geography covered by the four district councils. This is reflective of Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) and Aylesbury Vale CCG's boundaries and their approach to jointly commissioning services across Buckinghamshire through a federated model. Delivering ASC and children's services across the same geography would support effective transition planning.

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[4] County and district population projections data to 2037
[5] DfE Children looked after in England including adoption: 2014-15, local authority benchmarking
[6] Central Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Assessment, 2015

- **Economic development, transport and spatial planning**
  Consideration should be given as to whether these functions should be delivered across the area covered by the four district councils as this is coterminous with FEMA and HMA boundaries and the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP). This would enable a co-ordinated approach to spatial planning and development through a single planning policy framework. There is also significant potential to operate on a wider area beyond the Buckinghamshire boundary and the process of local government reform should accommodate detailed consideration of the opportunities this may offer. It should be noted that Aylesbury Vale District Council is also a member of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP).

- **Digital**
  Consideration should be given to implementing a digital strategy across the geography covered by the four district councils with opportunities for local adaptation and innovation.

- **Business support**
  Consideration should be given to consolidating these functions across the footprint of the four district councils to drive greater efficiency and productivity by maximising economies of scale.

Services would be jointly commissioned by the unitary authority/ies with one Director, supported by a lead Chief Executive Officer, who would be accountable to a joint committee or combined authority.

Option 1 – a single unitary council

A single unitary council based on the existing geography of the four district councils. Under a single unitary model ASC, children's services, economic development, transport and spatial planning would be delivered across the area currently covered by the four district councils and options will be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved through cross-county working. Environment & community, including local planning (development control), and culture & leisure services would be delivered across the area currently covered by the four district councils. Further work will be required to explore alternative delivery models across all functions.

Option 2 – two unitary councils

A two-unitary council model based on the existing boundaries of Aylesbury Vale and one covering the combined existing boundaries of Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils. Under this option the two unitary councils would separately deliver environment & community, including local planning (development control), and culture & leisure services. ASC, children's services, economic development, transport and spatial planning would be delivered across the area currently covered by the four district councils and options will be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved through cross-county working. Further work will be required to explore alternative delivery models across all functions.

Option 3 – three unitary councils

A three-unitary council model based on the existing boundaries of Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe District and the combined existing boundaries of Chiltern and South Bucks Districts. Under this option the three unitary councils would separately deliver environment & community, including local planning (development control), and culture & leisure services. ASC, children's services, economic development, transport and spatial planning would be delivered across the area currently covered by the four district councils and options will be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved through cross-county working. Further work will be required to explore alternative delivery models across all functions.

Alternative delivery models

The models of local government described above are inclusive of options to work with partners outside the Buckinghamshire geography. Under all three models options should be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved in terms of financial sustainability and improved outcomes through cross-county working, for example:

- Jointly commissioning adult social care and/or children's services with a neighbouring local authority/ies;

- Greater cross-boundary working in terms of economic development, transport and spatial planning; and

- Jointly commissioning environmental services, such as waste disposal, with a neighbouring local authority/ies.

The district councils will need to engage with local neighbouring counties to determine the level of appetite for cross-county working before carrying out a comprehensive financial and service due diligence process to determine the level of risk.

Criteria analysis

The following table provides a rating for each option against the non-financial and financial criteria set out below from 1-3 (3 being the highest scoring rating for each criterion). If there is minimal difference in the score, such as for criterion 9 below, all options are given the same score.

The criteria have been allocated an equal weighting, excluding the seventh criterion which has been identified as a condition all options for future local government should meet to be considered viable.

Options criteria	Single-unitary model of local government (option 1)	Two-unitary model of local government (option 2)	Three-unitary model of local government (option 3)
1. Delivers stable and improved outcomes for residents and businesses	1	2	3
2. Protects council tax payers' interests on an equitable basis	3	2	1
3. Locally affordable, representing value for money and can be met from existing local government resources	3	2	1
4. Capable of providing accountable and locally responsive leadership	1	2	3
5. Provides the capacity for councillors to carry out their roles as community leaders and key influencers within their local areas	1	3	2
6. Provides future financial stability	1	2	3
7. Provides a solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire, not just one part	All three options meet this criteria		
8. Supported by a broad cross-section of partners and stakeholders	Not assessed as part of this review		
9. Facilitates the growth and devolution agenda	3	3	3
Total	13	16	16
Overarching rank	**Third**	**First**	**First**

1. **Delivers stable and improved outcomes for residents and businesses**
The three-unitary council option has been allocated the highest score (3) because it creates authorities covering smaller areas containing fewer residents that are more likely to be more responsive to local needs. By contrast the single-unitary option has been awarded the lowest score because it creates one authority to cover the entire Buckinghamshire geography and whilst in the short term the single unitary council option is likely to improve the financial position of local government in Buckinghamshire, larger local authorities which serve bigger populations run the risk of services becoming homogenous and less responsive to local needs.

The three unitary council option provides the greatest level of political leadership accountability which will enable greater engagement with residents and bring decision making closer to communities. Option 3, therefore, has the greatest potential to fundamentally change the relationship between local government and residents from a paternalistic model focused on service provision to one focused on co-production and promoting independence. This will improve the way outcomes are delivered to better manage demand and in the long term the three unitary council option will provide greater financial and operational sustainability.

2. **Protects Council tax payers' interests on an equitable basis**
The single unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) against this criterion. Under this model there will be a single basis for the council tax calculation across all four districts. Residents from Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks will have their council tax reduced to the level paid by Wycombe's residents, which means more Buckinghamshire residents will benefit from reduced council tax rates than in any of the other options. For example, to achieve council tax harmonisation

by going to the lowest level of council tax (Wycombe) in 2019/20, council tax would be frozen for 175k residents in Wycombe and 347k residents from Chiltern, South Bucks and Aylesbury Vale areas would benefit from the reduction in council tax in that year.

3. **Locally affordable, representing value for money and can be met from existing local government resources**
All three options are locally affordable, represent value for money and perform similarly when considering the payback calculation. However, the single unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) in relation to this criterion. This is because greater economies of scale could be achieved through the consolidation of the County Council and four district councils into one organisation. The potential savings achieved from all three options are greater than the transition costs and foregone council tax revenue in year one following the creation of the new unitary council(s) but the net saving is greater for the single unitary model than under the two or three-unitary model. The transition costs for each option can be met from estimated unallocated reserves at 1 April 2016.

4. **Capable of providing accountable and locally responsive leadership**
The three-unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) in relation to this criterion. The number of political leaders and executives under this option will provide the greatest opportunity for locally responsive and accountable leadership which means decision-making will be closer to communities. This will be key to shaping new relationships with residents based on promoting independence and co-production rather than paternalism. Further, the three-unitary model boundaries more closely reflect natural communities than the other two options.

5. **Provides the capacity for councillors to carry out their roles as community leaders and key influencers within their local areas**
Under all three models there will be a reduction in the number of councillors predominantly due to the reduced number of local authorities. The role of local councillors will be central to achieving the modern and sustainable local government vision set out in this document as their role will be key to shaping new relationships with residents in order to reduce demand. The two-unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) against this criterion. This is because under this option there will be more councillors to engage with and represent local residents than the single-unitary model. The three unitary model will provide the greatest level of democratic representation; however, given the financial challenges local authorities face it is important to balance democratic representation with value for money to ensure future resources are prioritised on frontline services.

6. **Provides future financial stability**
The financial challenges faced by local authorities nationally and locally are so great that income generation, increased efficiency and improved productivity alone will not achieve long term financial sustainability. The three-unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) in relation to this criterion. Under this option there will be more accountable political leadership and community engagement than the other options. This will enable local government to create new relationships with residents based on co-production and independence rather than paternalism and service provision more so than the other options. This will be essential in effectively managing demand and enhancing financial and operational sustainability in the medium to long term.

7. **Provides a solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire, not just one part**
The non-financial analysis found that all options have the ability to meet this condition when implemented alongside service transformation.

8. Supported by a broad cross-section of partners and stakeholders

The eighth criterion will be evaluated at a later date. This document presents a strategic options case for local government reorganisation which will be used as a starting point to shape future discussions with stakeholders. Therefore, the district councils will embark on their local partner engagement programme following the release of this report.

9. Facilitates the growth and devolution agenda

Economic Development across all three options should be delivered across the area covered by the four district councils to enable the strategic benefits of planning economic development at scale to be realised. Each option has merit in relation to this criterion therefore all three options have been allocated the highest score (3). The merits of each option are described below:

- It will be easier to build relationships and collaborate with neighbours more so under a single-unitary council than options 2 or 3 as there will be less parochialism and fewer organisational interests to manage.
- Buckinghamshire is a poly-centric economy and a one-size-fits-all model could lead to diseconomies of scale. The distinct differences with regard to economic relationships between the north and south of the county support a two-unitary council.
- The number of political leaders and executives under option 3 will provide locally responsive and accountable leadership. Therefore, a three-unitary option would, more than any other option, allow senior leaders and executives to develop relationships with local SMEs and enable the authorities to tailor their business support programmes to local circumstances in order to support growth.

Summary

The total scores allocated in relation to the non-financial analysis indicate options 2 and 3 are more advantageous than option 1. The non-financial analysis recognises the benefits of scale in delivering short-term savings; however, in the long term there is a need to develop fundamentally different relationships with residents, moving to an outcomes-focused approach and shifting the role of local government towards supporting individuals, families and communities to secure their own wellbeing. This will require focused local leadership and more locally accountable decision-making. More criteria have been allocated the top score (3) under option 3 (4 out of 7 criteria) than option 2 (2 out of 7). This is because option 3 provides greater local accountability. Therefore, on balance it would appear as if the three-unitary model is the most advantageous as it provides the greatest opportunity to transform local government and achieve long-term financial and operational sustainability.

Conclusion

Our conclusion summarises the outcome of this report and indicates which option is most advantageous in terms of long-term financial and operational sustainability.

The analysis recognises the benefits of scale in delivering short-term savings. It is important to work at the appropriate scale to secure agglomerated growth opportunities for the economy and work should continue to consider the benefits of joint working and collaboration, perhaps as part of a devolution deal with Government, on the scale of the functioning economic geography. Additionally, functions such as ASC and children's services need to be planned at a scale which maximises the opportunities for integrated working with other public services and builds resilience into systems of safeguarding.

In the long term there is also a need to develop fundamentally different relationships with residents, moving to an outcomes-focused approach and shifting the role of local government towards supporting individuals, families and communities to secure their own wellbeing. This will require focused local leadership and locally accountable decision-making. Even where functions are planned at a county-wide or larger geography the need for local leadership to promote integrated working and community engagement will be key. For example, whilst planning the integration of health and social care services at the county-wide scale is appropriate, the most transformational impact will come from promoting joint working between GPs, social workers and other community-based services. Therefore, the two or three-unitary authority option provides the greatest opportunity to transform local government and achieve long-term financial and operational sustainability.

Introduction

Purpose of our report

In view of the ongoing discussions concerning the establishment of unitary authorities (UA), Wycombe, Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks district councils commissioned Deloitte to produce a strategic options case that provides independent analysis of options for alternative governance arrangements in Buckinghamshire in the form of unitary local government. A number of options are set out in this report to satisfy the need for a robust and comprehensive comparative analysis. This is intended to help the district councils form a view of which option best serves the interests of residents.

Deloitte agreed an approach with the district councils as follows:

- Facilitate a visioning workshop with the senior management teams to consider the key strategic themes that characterise a sustainable and appropriate role for local government in Buckinghamshire, performing an environmental analysis of social, economic, environmental, political and technological aspects.

- Facilitate a series of workshops with senior managers to examine how key strategic services can be delivered and the different options for delivering them, including adult social care, children's services, transport, spatial planning and economic development.

- Perform a non-financial analysis of the options for new unitary organisations in Buckinghamshire based on agreed non-financial criteria.

- Perform an analysis of the financial viability and sustainability of the options for new unitary organisations in Buckinghamshire based on agreed financial criteria.

- Recommend next steps for the district councils including stakeholder engagement activity with: the County Council, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Thames Valley Police, health partners, Members of Parliament (MPs), the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and town and parish councils.

This section of the report provides:

- Context for local government reorganisation in Buckinghamshire;
- An overview of Buckinghamshire;
- Further background information regarding Buckinghamshire's locality and current authorities within this geography; and
- An outline of the financial pressures facing local authorities.

Context for local government reorganisation

Any reorganisation of local government in Buckinghamshire should be designed to sit at the heart of wider public sector reform and transformation in the county. Without this, consolidation of local government into a single tier, whilst providing important savings, will not create the improved outcomes and long term sustainability which residents require. Indeed, unless this happens there is a real danger that an inward-focused reorganisation of local government will get in the way of much-needed integration and transformation in the health and care system and other key aspects of public sector reform, without which the savings achieved will be more than consumed by cost pressures elsewhere. Set in the wider context, local government reorganisation should enable and accelerate reform across the public sector, providing leadership of place and

democratic accountability. Most importantly of all local government will need to reshape its relationship with the residents of Buckinghamshire, focusing much more on building resilience and independence rather than defaulting automatically to service provision. Sustainable local government will work alongside people and communities to assist them in securing their own wellbeing, with much greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention to avoid demand for hard-stretched public services.

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Getting the organisational form of local government right within that context of wider public sector reform is extremely important but care needs to be taken to ensure that this takes account of the increasingly complex landscape that local government operates in. A one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate as it would stifle innovation and become a blockage to the sort of collaboration and relationships needed to secure outcomes on a range of different geographies. Successful local government in the future will need to build influence across a variety of geographies from the very local to the pan regional. Of fundamental importance will be the ability to build a new set of relationships with individual communities at a local level, underpinned by visible and accountable leadership and real engagement in decision-making and resource allocation. Even on the issues which benefit from greater scale, such as economic planning and health and social care integration, it is the action on the ground in communities that will prove to be truly transformational in securing improved outcomes.

Overview of Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire has six councils: Buckinghamshire County Council, Milton Keynes Council (unitary authority), Aylesbury Vale District Council, Wycombe District Council, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council. Any reference to Buckinghamshire within the context of this report refers to the geography covered by the four district councils and not the ceremonial county of Buckinghamshire which includes Milton Keynes.

Buckinghamshire has a total population of 528,400 and 168 parish and town councils. Buckinghamshire's population increased by 1.1% in 2014, the fourth highest rise among the 27 county councils in England. This was largely driven by growth in Aylesbury Vale which is the largest district council within Buckinghamshire with a population of 188,707. Wycombe District Council is the second largest district council with a population of 176,028. Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe are two of the largest district councils in England. Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils have populations of 94,545 and 69,120 respectively.[7] Residents are represented by five members of parliament, 49 county councillors and 187 district council members.

The County Council is responsible for managing services such as highways, libraries, household waste sites, public health, social care, schools and trading standards. The district councils are responsible for managing services such as planning applications, environmental health, housing benefits, refuse collection, leisure services and council tax collection. A list of services provided by county, district and parish councils is included in Appendix E.

Surrounding unitary authorities include Milton Keynes Council with a population of 261,762, Central Bedfordshire with a population of 274,022, Slough Borough Council with a population of 145,734 and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead with a

population of 147,708.[8] Other surrounding top tier authorities include Bedford Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Northamptonshire County Council. Surrounding local authority districts' include South Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

The following table provides information about the authorities within Buckinghamshire. The table outlines staff full-time equivalents (FTEs) at each Council. The revenue outturn total service expenditure figures have been taken from the 2015/16 Revenue Outturn (RO) statistics for the authorities. The population figures are taken from the Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015.

Authority	Staff FTEs	Revenue outturn total service expenditure 15/16 (£k)	Population	Members
Buckinghamshire County Council	2,385	728,648	528,400	49
Aylesbury Vale District Council	442	47,428	188,707	59
Wycombe District Council	262	40,061	176,028	60
Chiltern District Council	198	24,580	94,545	40
South Bucks District Council	120	20,347	69,120	28

Key boundaries and public sector organisations

The following maps demonstrate the area covered by the County Council and the four district councils:

Buckinghamshire County Council

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The four district councils

Thames Valley Police is the largest non-metropolitan police force in England and Wales and is responsible for policing the Thames Valley area including Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The area covered by the police force is demonstrated in the map below:

Thames Valley Police area

There are two Local Enterprise Partnerships in Buckinghamshire which provide direction and co-ordination for economic development programmes across the region. The BTVLEP

includes all four district councils and works closely with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) which Aylesbury Vale District Council joined in 2011. Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Cherwell District, Corby Borough, Daventry District, East Northamptonshire District, Kettering Borough, Luton Borough, Milton Keynes, Northampton Borough, South Northamptonshire District and Wellingborough Borough councils are all part of the SEMLEP following the merger of SEMLEP and Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP) in August 2016. The following maps outline the areas covered by the LEPs.

Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership
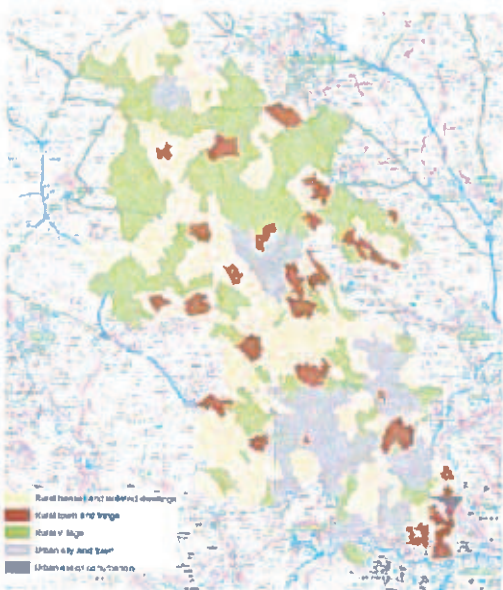
South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership

There are two clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) within Buckinghamshire: Chiltern CCG and Aylesbury Vale CCG. The CCGs divide their areas of responsibility into seven localities. There are three localities within AVCCG: North, South and Central; and four localities in CCCG: Amersham and Chesham, Wycombe, Wooburn Green and South Bucks. Chiltern CCG and Aylesbury Vale CCG jointly commission services across the area through a federated model. The area covered by AVCCG and CCGG and their localities are demonstrated in the diagrams below:

Aylesbury Vale Clinical Commissioning Group

Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group
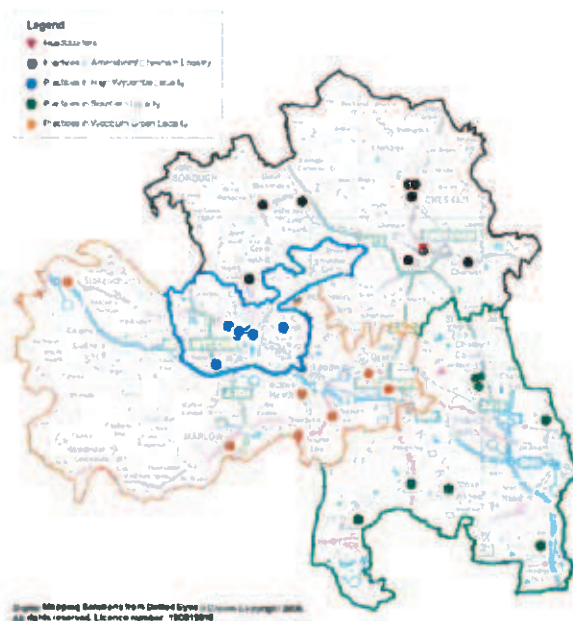
The Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) is a place-based, strategic plan demonstrating how key partners across the health and social care system will work

together to drive transformation to meet future demand and close the health and wellbeing gap. The footprint of the STP covers a population of 1.8 million, seven CCGs, 16 foundation trusts and 14 local authorities.

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West STP

Housing Market Area

Central Buckinghamshire forms a 'best fit' single HMA. Central Buckinghamshire covers all of Chiltern and Wycombe together with the south of Aylesbury Vale and the north of South Bucks.

The north of Aylesbury Vale falls within the housing market area of Milton Keynes, whilst a western part of the district appears within the Oxford housing market and a small area in the north east is closely aligned to Watford and Luton's housing market. In addition, the links between South Bucks and West London, Reading and Slough are significant.[9] However, the approach to defining housing market areas must be pragmatic and take administrative requirements into account; therefore, it is not unreasonable to define the geography covered by the four district councils as an HMA.

Functional Economic Market Area

There is a FEMA in Buckinghamshire which includes Aylesbury Town, the districts of Wycombe and Chiltern as well as northern parts of South Bucks. There are, however, distinct differences in the local economies:

- Aylesbury town has a distinct property market with values typically lower than southern parts of the county;

- Chiltern has a small economy which is broadly similar to South Bucks and focused on serving local demand; and

- Wycombe district plays a much larger sub-regional role, with a higher concentration of manufacturing businesses.

Given this context two sub-FEMAs have been identified within Buckinghamshire: Aylesbury Town in the north; and Wycombe, Chiltern and Beaconsfield (South Bucks) in the south. This division is at least partly due to the existing transport infrastructure and the weak transport links between the north and south of Buckinghamshire.

In relation to South Bucks the district is divided. Southern parts have significant links with the Berkshire FEMA, whilst Beaconsfield and northern parts fit within the Central Buckinghamshire FEMA. Any future model of local government in Buckinghamshire will need to take into account the relationships described above.

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

Buckinghamshire is part of the England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance. This is a partnership of nine Local Transport Authorities and four Local Enterprise Partnerships. The alliance covers an area of 120,000 sq km between London, the Midlands and beyond. The area covered by the Strategic Alliance is home to 3.45 million people and 175,000 businesses, providing over 1.6 million jobs. The alliance has been formed to implement a new delivery model which is focused on providing strategic leadership to determine a single set of priorities for economic growth.[10]

Financial pressure on authorities

The 2015/16 Deloitte 'State of the State' report outlines the financial pressures faced by central and local government. The government's net liabilities have increased by £624 billion, 51 per cent, since 2009/10. This includes £314 billion of borrowing to fund the deficit and £167 billion of rising public sector pension liability. These financial pressures have led to a 37 per cent real terms reduction in funding over the past five years for local government in England. At the same time, demand for services including social care and housing has risen and will continue to rise. Since 2005 the number of people aged 85 and over – and most likely to require social care support – has gone up by a third, and two out of every five councils in England will have more children ready to start primary school in 2016 than they have places. The report also highlights how local authorities may struggle to deliver their medium-term financial plans. The National Audit Office (NAO) reported concerns in 2014 as to whether 52 per cent of single and upper tier authorities would be able to deliver their medium-term financial plans. As councils are legally required to set balanced budgets there is no precedent for financial failure in local government. This means financial difficulties might only become evident when services fail, with potentially distressing consequences to the public.

The Local Government Association (LGA) published a future funding outlook report. The latest version of that report published in June 2015 predicts that there will be a £6bn gap in 2016/17 between the funding available and the spending required to deliver local council services at 2014/15 levels. The report projects the funding gap will increase to £10.3bn by 2018/19. Social care and waste management spend is predicted to absorb a rising proportion of the resources available to councils resulting in a 35 per cent reduction of other services by the end of this decade.

The national financial and demand pressures highlighted above are also felt by the local authorities in the area:

- Government RSG funding to Buckinghamshire County Council, which was £58.4m in 2013/14, will be reduced to zero by 2018/19.

- Aylesbury Vale District Council's RSG funding was £5.2m in 2013/14 and will be reduced to zero in 2018/19.

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[10] http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/strategic-leadership.aspx

- Chiltern District Council's RSG funding was £2.0m in 2013/14 and will be reduced zero in 2018/19.

- South Bucks District Council's RSG funding was £1.5m in 2013/14 and will be reduced zero in 2018/19.

- Wycombe District Council's RSG funding was £4.4m in 2013/14 and will be reduced to £0.1m 2018/19 and zero in 2019/20.

All authorities in the area face financial challenges and the delivery options considered in this report represent an opportunity to ease some of these pressures.

Performance of the authorities

The relative performance of the authorities in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding area is illustrated in Appendix A. The data shows that there is significant variation across the authorities in relation to adult social care and children's services and there is room for improvement in a number of areas, such as adult social care related quality of life.

Vision for Buckinghamshire

Given the challenges Buckinghamshire faces, maintaining the status quo is not a viable long term option. Systemic and radical change is required in order to ensure local government in Buckinghamshire is sustainable and meets the changing needs and aspirations of residents in the long term. The districts' shared vision for local government in Buckinghamshire is built around the following principles:

- Local government will be rooted in communities and residents will be empowered to participate in the design and delivery of services for their local areas.

- Services and functions will be planned and delivered across the most appropriate, evidence-based, geographies to ensure the optimum level of scale is achieved.

- Community resilience will be enhanced by reframing the relationship between local government and residents so that it is focused on promoting independence and the capabilities of individuals, rather than a paternalistic model based on dependency.

- Asset-based approaches will be adopted and there will be an increased focus on securing the best outcomes for residents, whilst effectively managing demand.

- Collaboration and partnership working with local government and public sector partners will be enhanced.

The diagram on the next page outlines the districts' shared vision for local government in Buckinghamshire:
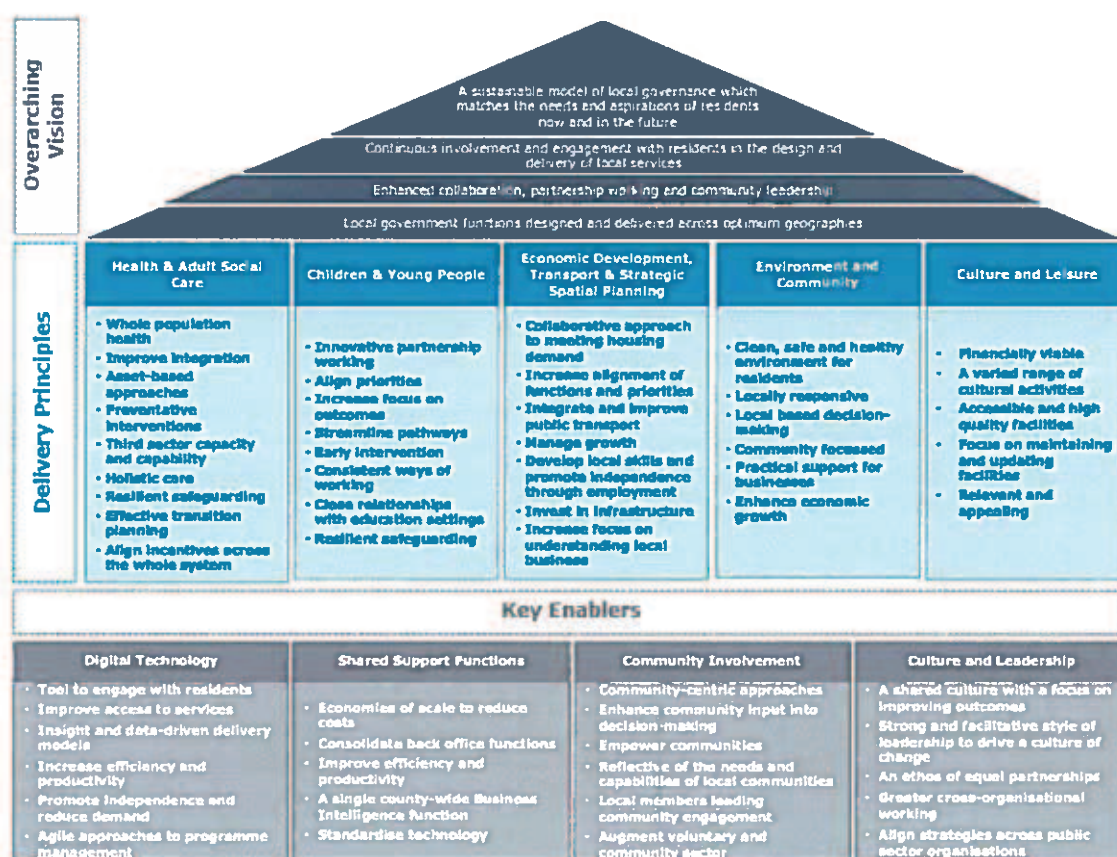
Overarching vision

Local government in Buckinghamshire will be rooted in communities and residents will be empowered to participate in the design and delivery of services for their local areas. Services and functions will be planned and delivered across the most appropriate evidence-based geographies, to ensure the optimum level of scale is achieved, in order to improve efficiency and productivity. Community resilience will be enhanced by reframing the relationship between local government and Buckinghamshire's residents so that it is focused on promoting independence and the capabilities of individuals, rather than a paternalistic model based on dependency. Asset-based approaches will be adopted and there will be an increased focus on wellbeing and securing the best outcomes for residents, whilst effectively managing demand to ensure the financial sustainability of local government in the future. The vision for Buckinghamshire is centred on building consensus and collaboration with local government and public sector partners.

Delivery principles

- **Health and adult social care**

A proactive and asset-based approach to delivering adult social care, with a focus on promoting independence, preventative interventions and improved integration with health providers, is a fundamental component of this sustainable vision. Care will be designed around the customer which will require health, social care and local authority staff to work across organisational boundaries locally to deliver holistic care, alongside strategic working across the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) footprint. Voluntary sector and community capacity will be maximised to enable more care to be delivered closer to home. Unwarranted variation within Buckinghamshire will be removed

to ensure there is equitable access to health and social care provision whilst ensuring there is a continued focus on safeguarding vulnerable adults. A whole population health approach will align incentives and ensure the system is not just focused on treating ill health but also focused on the broad range of factors and conditions that influence health, including lifestyle, housing, mental health and employment. This will ensure the health and social care system can support Buckinghamshire's priorities of promoting healthy lifestyles, long term condition management, and mental wellbeing and emotional resilience. It will also address the fundamental challenge of ensuring that the health and social care system is financially sustainable in the long term by delivering improved outcomes at a reduced cost. A transition team will work closely with children and young people, housing and health partners to track young people transferring to adult social care and ensure appropriately designed services are in place to meet their needs. [11]

Good practice case study:

Salford City Council (SCC) has achieved a 15 per cent reduction in demand for adult social care services via a three-pronged approach:

- *Redesigning the front door to better manage demand;*
- *Introducing independence-led assessments; and*
- *Making best use of community assets to support older people to stay healthy.*

SCC has reorganised the customer pathway operating model and established the Contact Team to manage demand coming through the front door. The Contact Team triages patients to the most appropriate service. Customers with moderate needs are redirected to information and advice which has led to a reduced number of cases entering the system.

SCC implemented a 'just enough care' approach to promote independence. This has improved outcomes for service users and has positively impacted on reducing demand downstream. A Central Assessment team to assess service users with moderate needs was established. The team implemented a new threshold of substantial and critical need and now utilises an independence-led assessment rather than a needs-led assessment.

With the help of Salford Community and Voluntary Services, SCC has identified over 7,000 community assets across Salford, which provide a valuable neighbourhood resource. People are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by making greater use of these community assets.

As part of the wider programme to reduce health and social care demand, Salford plans to place volunteer wellbeing champions in GP surgeries to support those who require non-medical interventions to more effectively manage their own wellbeing and tackle social isolation. Volunteers will have access to technology in order to effectively signpost individuals to appropriate community assets.

- **Children and young people**

Children's services in Buckinghamshire will work to develop trusting and innovative partnerships with a wide range of organisations, including housing services, debt management services, health partners, education providers and the voluntary and community sector, to ensure greater collaboration. Schools and other education settings maintained by local government, academies or by third party providers will be core to creating strong local communities and improving education, health and wellbeing outcomes for Buckinghamshire's children.

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[11] Deloitte supported project

Aligning priorities and ensuring there is an increased focus on outcomes will be key to achieving joined-up and cross-agency working. Enhanced inter-disciplinary working will reduce duplication and improve the way resources are deployed by streamlining pathways. Early intervention programmes will prevent children developing problems as adolescents and young adults by ensuring support is provided in a timely way to children and families who are identified as being at risk of running into difficulties. Best practice will be shared to ensure professionals work in a consistent way with children and families to deliver improved outcomes. Commissioning will take place at an appropriate scale to ensure safeguarding provision is resilient and robust. [12]

> *Good practice case study:*
>
> *The Life Programme is a new initiative that aims to support and empower families in chronic crisis to develop their capabilities. The scheme is being run across four locations across the UK.*
>
> *Resources are focused on building capabilities within families in order to support them to build the life they want to lead and help them move from being stuck in a cycle of expensive, reactive and crisis-driven state interventions. A series of simple and practical bespoke tools has been developed that support and track the work that takes place with families. These tools help ensure that difficult conversations happen, plans are made and change happens at all stages. In addition to bespoke measures, each Life Programme also tracks outcomes and cost data at a local authority level.*
>
> *Amongst the families who have been supported by the programme there has been a 28 per cent reduction in children with Child Protection Plans and a 49 per cent improvement in school attendance. Furthermore, there has been a 6 per cent reduction in the number of families with no adults in employment and a 24 per cent increase in families with a family member developing skills to be work-ready. On top of these gains there has been a 36 per cent reduction in families with family members reported to be involved in crime or antisocial behaviour. These social gains are coupled with significant financial savings, with the total cumulative cost reduction estimated to be £727,890 at the beginning of 2013.*

- **Economic development, transport and strategic spatial planning**

Over the coming years there is a need to deliver a significant number of new homes, which will need to be balanced with protecting and enhancing the quality of life of existing and new communities, and this is a significant step change for Buckinghamshire. Collaborative and strategic approaches to spatial planning will be required to ensure the future housing needs of Buckinghamshire are met, including social, affordable and supported housing. The housing agenda will be aligned to social care policies in order to better manage the market, promote independence and reduce demand. Transport and education plans will be aligned to spatial planning to ensure Buckinghamshire's infrastructure can support the increased number of homes.

Local Government will be designed to maximise Buckinghamshire's influence on national infrastructure projects that will underpin strong economic growth. Transport plans will focus on improving accessibility for rural residents and the increasing elderly population, and integrating transport modes from planning to payment, whilst ensuring services remain affordable. This will encourage residents to utilise public transport and relieve congestion. The new model of local government will need to balance planned capital expenditure to prevent assets, such as property and highways, deteriorating due to poor

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[12] http://springconsortium.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Case-Studies6.pdf

maintenance which results in greater costs in the long term. There will be a collaborative approach to managing air pollution across services and this will involve promoting and investing in environmentally friendly methods of transport such as, walking and cycling, which will also improve the health and wellbeing of Buckinghamshire's residents.

Local government will play a full part in securing optimum growth for Buckinghamshire, balancing jobs and prosperity with other quality of life factors. We recognise that economic growth and public sector reform need to go hand in hand, therefore, programmes which increase employment rates and develop local skills in order to realise wider benefits of increased independence and reduced demand for public services will be prioritised wherever appropriate. This may involve developing the 'corporate parent' role of local government authorities and providing employment opportunities for those who may struggle to find and remain in employment to promote long term independence, for example care leavers. In some parts of Buckinghamshire there will be an increased focus on income generation, entrepreneurial approaches to unlock latent demand and the provision of discretionary services residents want to buy into which will enable local government to become self-sustaining.[13]

> _Good practice case study:_
>
> _Catch22 is a not-for-profit business with a social mission operating across England and Wales. The business supports the transition from care to independence to ensure care leavers have the same opportunities as other young people. Catch 22's Care2Work employment programme provides support for those seeking employment or apprenticeships. 189 care leavers were supported by the programme between April 2015 and January 2016. Of these 77 per cent were given interviews; 50 per cent of those started work or an apprenticeship; of these, 80 per cent were offered full-time jobs or apprenticeships._

- **Environment and community**

Functions will be designed to provide Buckinghamshire's residents with a clean, healthier and safer environment in their communities. Local businesses of different size and type will be provided with practical support to grow the economy. The service will be locally responsive, founded on local decision-making in Buckinghamshire's communities, and delivered and supported by highly functioning delivery and support teams.

- **Culture and leisure**

Culture and leisure activities in Buckinghamshire will be financially viable and enable a range of varied and exciting cultural activities. Sports and active recreation facilities will be accessible and high quality. Services will be supported by a financial model which enables programmes and facilities to be maintained and updated so that they remain relevant and appealing to local residents and visitors.[14]

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[13] https://cdn.catch-22.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Catch22-Looked-After-Children-and-Care-Leavers-Services.pdf
[14] http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Sir-Peter-Bazalgette_NLGN-Speech_13-04-2016.pdf

> *Good practice case study:*
>
> *Shared service delivery approaches have the potential to support culture and leisure facilities to remain relevant and sustainable. The Libraries West Consortium is a partnership of library services in the South West. It uses a shared management system pool resource to achieve significant economies of scale and better deliver services for customers. In addition, Manchester's library service is being co-located with other services to create cultural centres, with a common library card for the combined authority.*

Key enablers

- **Digital technology**

Digital approaches are key to re-imagining the relationship between residents and local government. Buckinghamshire's future local government model will prioritise investing in digital solutions to ensure delivery models are aligned to the way communities live their lives now and in the future. Digital solutions will be used to improve the way residents access services through improved signposting to reduce avoidable demand, enable the management and design of services to be more insight and data-driven, and empower local communities by facilitating the co-design of services. Technology, alongside effective data sharing beyond the boundaries of local government with other public sector organisations, will enable processes to become more streamlined and efficient leading to increased productivity.

Given the rapid rate at which technology changes, agile approaches to programme management and governance will be applied. Local government in Buckinghamshire will embrace the pace at which technology evolves, accept that we are unable to predict future developments with accuracy but will be agile enough to adapt service models to new technology quickly.

> *Good practice case study:*
>
> *Aylesbury Vale District Council's transformation programme has seen the relaunch of its website and the introduction of an IT platform to automate processes and deliver digital services more efficiently, save money and improve customer experience. As a result of the programme, the council has reduced calls from the public by 22 per cent. The organisation is building a platform with a customer portal to link to back-office systems in order to automate as many transactions as possible. The council also aims to save £455,000 by implementing more up-to-date digital forms to open and update claims. The move follows research that found of the 50 forms available on the council's website, 73 per cent related to just two services, revenues and benefits and waste management. The new forms have since seen an increase in take-up of around 300 per cent. The council's digital efforts have led it to be honoured by the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) with the Council of the Year award 2015.*

- **Shared support functions**

Consolidating and connecting core business functions across local government in Buckinghamshire provides an opportunity to drive greater efficiency and productivity by maximising economies of scale. A range of core business functions can be provided at scale and a business intelligence function will drive greater insight and improve evaluation. Options will be explored to determine whether further economies of scale could be achieved by consolidating back-office functions across other public services, and by sharing functions with local government organisations in neighbouring counties.

Good practice case study:

Barnet has established a Customer and Support Group in partnership with Capita. A number of key back-office services have been relocated to Capita's centre of excellence including: corporate procurement, customer services, estates, finance, human resources, information systems, revenues and benefits and transformation capability.

- **Community involvement**

Buckinghamshire's residents will be empowered to participate in designing bespoke services which reflect the needs, capabilities and priorities of their communities. Residents will have a greater role in deciding which services should be prioritised and local members will have increased responsibility in terms of ensuring communities are fully engaged in this shared design process through town and parish councils. Maintaining decision-making at a local level wherever appropriate is designed to enhance community engagement, build resilience and independence in communities and individuals, allow better alignment of services to improve outcomes and reduce demand for public services. This new relationship with residents and communities is at the heart of our vision for modern local government in Buckinghamshire.[15]

Good practice case study:

Salford City Council with a population of 245,614 has augmented its local decision-making by establishing community committees, made up of representatives from the local community and voluntary organisations. Community committees establish action plans and decide on the use of local budgets to achieve priorities. £1 million is devolved down to neighbourhoods each year. Some of these committees use participatory budgeting, others allocate the money via task groups.

Neighbourhood partnership boards, made up of councillors, senior officers from the council, community committee representatives, health trust partners, police and other key service providers, have been established. The boards bring together performance information from their agencies to promote a shared understanding of progress in the neighbourhood.

- **Culture and leadership**

The future model of local government in Buckinghamshire will work across organisational boundaries to establish a shared culture focused on securing better outcomes for residents and businesses through greater partnership working. Under the new model public sector organisations across Buckinghamshire will need to better align their incentives to ensure organisations are working towards securing better outcomes for residents. A strong and facilitative style of leadership will be required to drive cultural change and build consensus for the agreed model of local government. At the heart of

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[15] http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=6dba73c3-09e2-4e96-869e-e9a760fc46ad&groupId=10180

this vision is a model of local government which is genuinely rooted in local communities. Decision-making will take place at a local level wherever appropriate thus respecting the unique characteristics of each individual community. This will lead to improved outcomes, enhanced resident satisfaction and reduced demand for services.

The vision outlined above is based on the workshops held with executives and senior managers and upon the international and national best practice examples of service transformation, more of which are outlined in Appendix B.

Case for change

This section of the report highlights the key challenges that threaten the long term financial and operational sustainability of local government organisations in Buckinghamshire.

Adult social care

Buckinghamshire is one of the most prosperous counties in England and ranks eighth out of 149 in the index of multiple deprivation. It has much better educational attainment than the national average with 35 per cent of people aged 16 and over holding a higher education qualification in 2011, compared to 27 per cent nationally. This means that Buckinghamshire has a highly skilled workforce, and lower levels of poverty and unemployment compared to other parts of the country. These socioeconomic circumstances, alongside other factors, contribute to the better health and wellbeing of the Buckinghamshire population when compared to the national average.

However, there are pockets of deprivation and in 2010 18,800 people lived in areas that are within the 30 per cent most deprived in England. This has a significant impact on health and wellbeing demonstrated by the 7.9 year male and 5.4 year female life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived residents. Therefore, the people living in the most deprived areas have less favourable socioeconomic circumstances and are less likely to have good health and wellbeing.[16]

The increase in spend on adult social care services in recent years indicates there has been an increase in demand. In 2015/16 Buckinghamshire's spend on adult social care services totalled £107.7m, compared to £84.1m in 2013/14. This increase is largely driven by the rising cost of services for older people which increased by 53 per cent between 2014/15 and 2015/16.[17]

This trend is set to continue as summarised below:

- The 65 and over population is projected to increase by 75 per cent between 2012 and 2037, whilst the 90-plus population is projected to increase by 277 per cent over the same period.[18]

- Currently, only two per cent of the population are aged 85 and over; however, they account for 33 per cent of all adult social care clients. Therefore, the demographic changes highlighted above will lead to increased demand for health and social care resources in future years.[19]

- The number of people aged 65 and over unable to carry out at least one self-care activity on their own will increase by 18 per cent between 2014 and 2020 to 37,042.

- The number of people aged 65 and over unable to carry out at least one domestic activity on their own will increase by 18 per cent between 2014 and 2020 to 45,249.

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[16] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13
[17] Buckinghamshire County Council, Market Position Statement Spring Refresh 2016, Adults and Family Wellbeing
[18] County and district population projections data to 2037
[19] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13

- The number of people aged 65 and over who require residential and nursing care placements is also expected to increase by 72 per cent between 2012 and 2032 to 4,930.[20]

In addition to the rise in the numbers of older people in Buckinghamshire, there are other population changes that are likely to cause increased demand for health and social care services in future years which have been summarised below:

- **Dementia**
  It is estimated that in 2012 there were 6,549 people with dementia in Buckinghamshire. 6,282 of whom were over the age of 65. This number is predicted to rise to 8,454 by 2020.[21]

- **Learning Disabilities**
  There are an estimated 150 people aged 18 to 64 with profound and multiple learning disabilities, 1,130 with severe learning disabilities and around 4,610 with moderate learning disabilities. The numbers of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities in Buckinghamshire is projected to increase by 40 per cent by 2031.[22]

- **Physical Disabilities**
  It is estimated that in 2012 there were 31,644 adults with a moderate or serious physical disability in Buckinghamshire. This figure is projected to rise by 3 per cent in 2030 to a total of 32,537 people.[23]

- **Mental Health**
  Depression is widely acknowledged to be the most common mental health problem among older people. 40 per cent of people aged 85 and over live with debilitating depression which affects their ability to engage in daily activities. As population projections indicate this group is expected to significantly grow in future years, there will need to be an increased focus on preventing depression in Buckinghamshire.[24]

- **Autism**
  Applying national prevalence rates to Buckinghamshire will mean there will be a 3 per cent increase in male residents with autism across the county by 2030 and a 4 per cent increase in female residents.[25] There are increasing numbers of young adults with autism transitioning from children's services to adult social care. In 2016, an estimated 70 young people aged 17 to 18 years are likely to be eligible for adult services.[26]

- **Special Education Needs**
  1,365 of the children with statements of Special Education Needs (SEN) are due to turn 18 in the next five years. Of these, 20 young people aged 14 to 17 have profound and multiple learning disabilities, 100 have severe learning disabilities, and 400 have moderate learning disabilities. These young people will require transition support as they move into adult social care services.[27]

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[20] Buckinghamshire County Council, Market Position Statement Spring Refresh 2016, Adult and Family Wellbeing
[21] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13
[22] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13
[23] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13
[24] Older Leaders for Change in Mental Health, NDTi
[25] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13
[26] Buckinghamshire County Council, Market Position Statement Spring Refresh 2016, Adult and Family Wellbeing
[27] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13

Therefore, demand for adult social care services is expected to rise in future years and transformational change is required in order to manage this demand within the existing financial envelope of local government. Further, the relative performance of local authorities in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas in relation to adult social care is illustrated in Appendix A. The data shows that there is significant variation across the authorities and in some areas, such as adult social care related quality of life, there appears to be room for improvement.

Children and young people

The county is a generally affluent area and the vast majority of children and young people achieve good outcomes. However, there are pockets of deprivation which can have a significant impact on the health and education of children and young people. For example, by the time children from the most deprived areas have reached the age of five, only 49 per cent have reached a 'good level of development', compared with the county average of 65 per cent. Further, local analysis indicates that children in deprived areas are 2.5 times more likely to be on a child protection plan than the Buckinghamshire average.[28]

There are 128,300 zero to 19 years olds in Buckinghamshire, of whom 1,617 have been identified as children in need, 444 have child protection plans and 447 are classified as looked after children.[29]

Demand for children's services is rising. There are increasing numbers of referrals to social care and in the number of children and young people being taken into the care of the local authority. The graph below indicates there was a 12 per cent increase in the number of looked after children between 2011 and 2015.

Number of looked-after children in Buckinghamshire
(Position as of the 31st March)
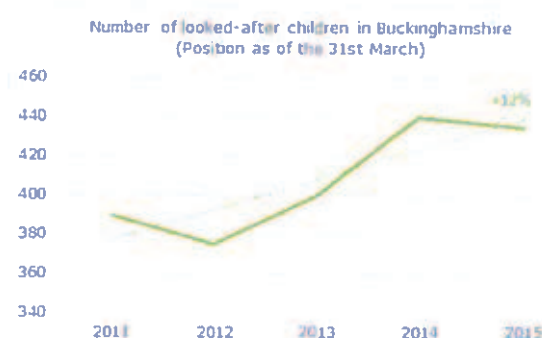
Further, the graph below indicates there was a 14 per cent increase in the rate of referrals to children's services between 2012/13 and 2014/15, compared to a five per cent increase nationally.[30]

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[28] Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board, Annual Report, 2014/15
[29] Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Improvement Plan, 2016, county and district population projections data to 2037
[30] Please note, the spike in referrals in 2013/14 can be attributed to a temporary change in process where all contacts to children's social care were progressed to referrals. Source: DfE Children looked after in England including adoption, 2014-2015, local authority benchmarking

Rate of referrals to children's services per 100,000

| | Buckinghamshire | England |

The increase in demand is difficult to meet locally and has led to children being placed with foster carers in the independent sector and outside the Buckinghamshire area. In 2014/15 43 per cent of looked after children in Buckinghamshire were placed internally within the boundaries of the local authority, compared to the national average of 60 per cent. Further, in 2014/15 55 per cent of Buckinghamshire's looked after children were placed with private providers, compared to 34 per cent nationally.[31] Private placements are generally more expensive and can lead to increased costs for local authorities. Out-of-area placements can lead to worse outcomes for children and young people if they are removed from their existing support networks.

In 2015/16 revenue expenditure on children's services per head of population (0 to 17) was 4 per cent greater than that for England.[32] There are a number of reasons driving spend in children's services, including increasing demand, agency social workers and the use of private providers.

The relative performance of local authorities in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas relating to children's services is illustrated in Appendix A. The data shows that Buckinghamshire is performing well against a number of performance indicators and achieving good outcomes for children and young people. However, there is room for improvement in some areas such as outcomes for looked-after children. More needs to be done to better manage demand and improve outcomes for children and young people through transformational programmes of work such as early intervention.

Transport, economic development and spatial planning

Transport

Buckinghamshire's population is projected to increase by 12 per cent between 2011 and 2016 and this will result in increased pressure on Buckinghamshire's transport services and networks.[33] There are a number of transport challenges in Buckinghamshire which have been outlined below:

- **Physical inactivity**
  Increased reliance on cars has contributed towards more sedentary lifestyles. Encouraging more active modes of transport can have a dramatic impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. The scale at which Buckinghamshire relies on cars as a mode of transportation and the impact on the health and wellbeing of residents is summarised below:

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[31] DfE Children looked after in England including adoption: 2014-2015, local authority benchmarking
[32] LGInform
[33] Buckinghamshire's Local Transport Plan 4, March 2016 - 2036

- o 87 per cent of households in Buckinghamshire have access to one or more cars. This is higher than the average for the South East (82 per cent) and significantly higher than the national average of 74 per cent.

- o The majority of journeys to work in Buckinghamshire are made by car; approximately 70 per cent of people travel to work by car, which is greater than the national average of 63 per cent.

- o The South East region has a higher percentage of people travelling to work by sustainable transport than Buckinghamshire at 18 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

- o Buckinghamshire has the third lowest rate of cycling in the South East, with only 12.5 per cent of people cycling at least once a week.[34]

- **Pollution**
  Poor air quality is a risk to public health, with vehicular traffic the main source of most air pollutants. In 2007, average carbon dioxide emissions released per person in Buckinghamshire from cars and vans were 50 per cent higher than the national average.[35]

- **Rural isolation**
  90 per cent of Buckinghamshire's residents have access to an hourly or better bus service. However, the very low density of populations in rural parts of Buckinghamshire make these areas difficult to serve with bus routes. Geographic location can lead to social isolation for Buckinghamshire's elderly residents and, given the changing age profile, this is likely to become a much greater issue in future years.[36]

Therefore, more needs to be done to encourage residents to take up more active means of transport, tackle pollution and overcome rural isolation.

There are a number of major developments which have been designed to alleviate the projected increased pressure on Buckinghamshire's transport networks which have been summarised below:

- The proposed construction of Western Railway access to Heathrow;

- The East West Rail project will provide train services between Milton Keynes, Oxford, London Marylebone and Aylesbury; and

- Highways England is planning a range of improvements including, the M4 'Smart Motorway' project and is exploring the possibility of an Oxford-Cambridge expressway.

There are also a number of major national infrastructure projects which are likely to have a huge effect on Buckinghamshire, including the proposed Phase One of HS2 which will run through the county for approximately 60 kilometres and the expansion of Heathrow with the introduction of a third runway.

Given the importance of these developments to residents any future model of local government in Buckinghamshire will need to maximise its influence over these programmes in future years.

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[1] Buckinghamshire's Local Transport Plan 4, March 2016 - 2036
[2] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13
[3] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13

Economic development

Buckinghamshire is one of the most prosperous local economies in the UK, with productivity, employment, human capital and entrepreneurship all well above national levels. The county has the highest proportion of smaller companies employing fewer than five people in England. It also boasts several specialist business clusters including motorsport around Silverstone and media at Pinewood Studios. Buckinghamshire's prosperity is summarised below:

- Buckinghamshire's total employment rose to 268,600 in 2015.[37]

- Buckinghamshire's employment rate of 79.7 per cent is higher than the UK average (76.6 per cent).[38]

- The number of out-of-work Buckinghamshire residents claiming either Job Seekers' Allowance or Universal Credit fell by 60 in June 2016 to 2,495. At 0.8 per cent of working age residents, Buckinghamshire has the third lowest claimant count rate of the 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), ranking sixth among the 27 county council areas.[39]

- At £28,991, Buckinghamshire had the fifth highest workplace-based gross median full-time earnings of all 27 county council areas in 2015.[40]

However, not all residents benefit from the strength of the economy and residents living in the most deprived areas have less favourable economic circumstances. For example, earnings in 2012 fell fastest among the lowest paid and unemployment is highest in the most deprived areas of the county.[41]

Economic growth will be a significant factor in the future success of the county and a new model of local government must enable businesses to succeed by prioritising investment in broadband, transport networks, skills and accommodation. Strategic planning across Buckinghamshire will be key to promoting business growth in future years. There will also be a need to consider operating on a wider footprint beyond the boundaries of the four districts for transport, economic development and spatial planning.

Spatial planning

To accommodate population growth more homes will need to be built in Buckinghamshire.[42] The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) predicts that the need for additional housing will increase by 21 per cent to 43,000 dwellings over the 20-year period between 2013 and 2033. This includes the need for 9,000 more affordable homes.[43]

The provision of affordable housing is a particular issue in Buckinghamshire as it is an expensive area to live, as summarised below:

- **House prices**
  Property prices in Buckinghamshire are among the highest in the country. In 2016 the average price of buying a home was £397,613. The highest average price was in

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[37] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1941962882/printable.aspx
[38] http://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-area=E10000002&mod-group=AllSingleTierAndCountyLaInRegion_SouthEast&mod-metric=49&mod-period=3
[39] https://bbf.uk.com/news/ruperts-research-column-stats-galore
[40] https://bbf.uk.com/news/earnings-in-buckinghamshire-2015
[41] Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13
[42] Buckinghamshire's Local Transport Plan 4, March 2016 - 2036
[43] Central Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Assessment, 2015

South Bucks district at £636,215 and the lowest was in Aylesbury Vale district at £328,048.[44]

- **Rents**

At £1,113 per month, mean private sector rents in Buckinghamshire are 35.7 per cent higher than across England as a whole, the second highest among the 27 county council areas, ranking third among the 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships behind London and Oxfordshire.[45]

The relative performance of local authorities in Buckinghamshire against a number of indicators relating to housing is illustrated in Appendix A. The data shows that there is variation across the authorities and there appears to be room for improvement in some areas.

Opportunities for service improvement

Buckinghamshire's performance against a range of indicators has been benchmarked against neighbouring local authorities in Appendix A. The data highlights specific areas for improvement, such as improving outcomes for care leavers, which any future model of local government will need to address through service improvement.

Appendix B provides a range of good practice examples of service improvement that public sector organisations in Buckinghamshire may wish to consider when designing future service transformation programmes.

Financial challenges

Current and future funding situation for local government in Buckinghamshire on a council-by-council basis

The main sources of funding for local government are:

- Central government grants
- Business rates
- Council tax
- Fees and charges
- Investment income

Central government, business rates and council tax

Changes to the way in which local government is funded in England will mean councils are facing sharp reductions in the amount of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) they have historically received with the RSG expected to end for all councils by 2020/21 as part of finance reforms to localise business rate retention. Under the current business rate retention scheme there is a system of top-ups and tariffs to redistribute funding from local authorities that collect more in business rates than their identified need, to those who do not collect enough for their needs, i.e. councils may receive additional income or will make a contribution from the rates they collect. As part of the new funding arrangements councils in England have been offered four-year settlements and must decide by 14 October 2016 if they are to accept the four-year offer.[46]

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[44] https://bbf.uk.com/news/house-prices-sales-in-buckinghamshire-july-2016
[45] https://bbf.uk.com/news/private-sector-rents-in-buckinghamshire-q1-2016
[46] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-information-for-local-authorities-final-local-government-finance-settlement-2016-to-2017

Another significant element of funding from central government is the New Homes Bonus grant paid by central government to councils to reflect and incentivise housing growth in their areas by rewarding councils with a payment equivalent to six years' council tax for each additional new home they add to their housing stock. However, a government consultation published in December 2015 proposed to reduce the amount to four years' council tax for each new home and the outcome of this consultation is not yet known.

The following tables summarise the funding (RSG, estimated business rates, the New Homes Bonus scheme and council tax) for each council based on their respective Medium Term Financial Plans, Statement of Accounts, four-year DCLG settlements and 2016/17 New Home Bonus grant allocations:

Buckinghamshire County Council

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£23.7m	£8.08m	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£40.7m	£41.5m	£42.8m	£44.1m
New homes bonus	£3.6m	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Council tax*	£245.1m	£259.3m	£274.2m	£290.0m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£1.6m	£11.0m

*Council tax increase by 3.99% each year including the 2% Social Care precept.

Aylesbury Vale District Council

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£1.6m	£0.6m	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£3.7m	£3.7m	£3.8m	£3.9m
New homes bonus	£8.3m	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Council tax*	£9.7m	£9.9m	£10.2m	£10.6m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£20k	£700k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year

Chiltern District Council

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£0.4m	£0	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.5m
New homes bonus	£1.0m	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Council tax*	£7.3m	£7.5m	£7.7m	£7.9m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£848k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year.

South Bucks District Council

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£0.4m	£0.1m	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£1.0m	£1.0m	£1.1m	£1.1m
New homes bonus	£1.5m	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Council tax*	£4.7m	£4.9m	£5.1m	£5.2m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£414k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year.

Wycombe District Council

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£1.5m	£0.6	£0.1	£0
Estimated business rate income	£3.1m	£3.1m	£3.2m	£3.3m
New homes bonus	£3.7m	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Council tax*	£8.8m	£9.0m	£9.0m	£9.0m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£460k

*Council tax freeze from 2017/18 onwards

Core spending power

Core spending power measures the core revenue funding available for local authority services. The government's 2015 spending review set out the expected available revenue for local government for the period up to 2019/20 to assist councils with the planning of service delivery in this period. The components that make up the spending power calculations for each are:

- Council tax requirements (excluding parish precepts)
- Additional council tax available from the adult social care 2% precept
- Additional council tax available to district councils – the greater of £5 or 2%
- Better Care Fund payments
- New Homes Bonus payments[47]
- Rural Services Delivery Grant
- Transitional grant to ease the pace of RSG reductions in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The following table shows the estimated spending power of the five councils for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20:[48]

	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Buckinghamshire County Council*	351.4	352.2	355.5	366.6
Aylesbury Vale District Council	24.4	24.4	21.6	21.7
Chiltern District Council	10.4	10.4	10.3	9.9
South Bucks District Council	7.8	7.6	7.2	7.0
Wycombe District Council	17.5	17.2	15.8	15.7
Total	**411.5**	**411.8**	**410.4**	**420.9**

*Includes between £32.7m (2016/17) and £34.8m (2019/20) in each year above the spending power calculations for learning disability and health reform, Care Act funding, local welfare provision, early intervention, lead local flood authorities and sustainable drainage systems.

Sales, fees and charges

The five councils each have separate policies to charge for some of the services they provide in order to recover the cost of providing them. With the funding landscape shifting considerably there is more pressure on the councils to consider charging for services that are currently not being charged for or increasing charges subject to the constraints of legislation where they exist to improve outcomes and support budgets to deliver the outcomes. Leading up to and following any reorganisation the councils would need to perform a review of the different fees and charges structure and align these under the different reorganisation options being considered. The income earned from

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47 Amounts included for New Homes Bonus for 2017/18 to 2019/20 are notional based on the Spending Review and so actual amounts to be received are not known beyond 2016/17.
48 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-spending-power-provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2016-to-2017

sales fees and charges over the past two years by the five councils as reported in the Revenue Outturn (RO) Statistics for 2014/15[49] and 2015/16[50] is as follows:

	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
Buckinghamshire County Council	57.1	49.0
Aylesbury Vale District Council	17.2	23.6
Chiltern District Council	7.7	8.0
South Bucks District Council	5.5	6.6
Wycombe District Council	14.9[51]	9.6

Investment income

As funding from central government is being sharply reduced it has become critical for councils to develop financial strategies that include investment plans to earn commercial income or investing in schemes that in the longer term will allow outcomes to be achieved more efficiently.

49 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2014-to-2015-individual-local-authority-data-outturn
50 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2015-to-2016-individual-local-authority-data-outturn
51 Wycombe District Council have identified an error in their RO submission for 2014/15 where the sales fees and charges amount should be £9.3m

Options analysis

This section of the report describes the three options for local government that have been developed. It also outlines the information and approach used to undertake the financial and non-financial analysis of the options.

Options under assessment

Options

Three council combination options have been developed. All three options have been designed around the principle of delivering services across optimum geographies. In carrying out this exercise we have attempted to achieve the benefits of scale without missing out on the opportunity for transformation at a local level.

Under all three models of local government, consideration should be given to delivering functions across the area covered by the four district councils where partnership working is optimal and economies of scale can be achieved without adversely impacting on outcomes for residents. Options should be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved in terms of financial sustainability and improved outcomes by planning and delivering services at a greater scale beyond the boundaries of Buckinghamshire.

- **Adult Social Care (ASC) and children's services**
  These functions would be planned at scale to maximise the opportunities for integrated working with other public services to build resilience into the system and enhance safeguarding. Consideration should be given as to whether ASC and children's services should be delivered across the geography covered by the four district councils. This is reflective of Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) and Aylesbury Vale CCG's boundaries and their approach to jointly commissioning services across Buckinghamshire through a federated model. Delivering ASC and children's services across the same geography would support effective transition planning.

- **Economic development, transport and spatial planning**
  Consideration should be given as to whether these functions should be delivered across the area covered by the four district councils as this is coterminous with FEMA and HMA boundaries and the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP). This would enable a co-ordinated approach to planning and development through a single planning policy framework. There is also significant potential to operate on a wider area beyond the Buckinghamshire boundary and the process of local government reform should accommodate detailed consideration of the opportunities this may offer. It should be noted that Aylesbury Vale District Council is also a member of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP).

- **Digital**
  Consideration should be given to implementing a digital strategy across the geography covered by the four district councils with opportunities for local adaptation and innovation.

- **Business support**
  Consideration should be given to consolidating these functions across the footprint of the four district councils to drive greater efficiency and productivity by maximising economies of scale.

Services would be jointly commissioned by the unitary authority/ies with one Director, supported by a lead Chief Executive Officer, who would be accountable to a joint committee or combined authority.

By delivering these services at scale, resources would be pooled across Buckinghamshire to provide a more sustainable funding model for local services across the whole geography, reflecting the variations in the levels of financial challenge locally and ensuring financial resilience is built into all three options in terms of ability to cope with increased financial pressures, demographic pressure and any new risks that may arise.

Resource allocated to the remaining services would be redistributed per capita on an equitable basis and delivered across the geography of the preferred unitary council option.

Option 1 – a single unitary council

A single unitary council based on the existing geography of the four district councils. Under a single unitary model ASC, children's services, economic development, transport and spatial planning would be delivered across the area currently covered by the four district councils and options will be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved through cross-county working. Environment & community, including local planning (development control), and culture & leisure services would be delivered across the area currently covered by the four district councils. Further work will be required to explore alternative delivery models across all functions.[52]

Option 2 – two unitary councils

A two-unitary council model based on the existing boundaries of Aylesbury Vale and one covering the combined existing boundaries of Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils. Under this option the two unitary councils would separately deliver environment & community, including local planning (development control), and culture & leisure services. ASC, children's services, economic development, transport and spatial planning would be delivered across the area currently covered by the four district councils and options will be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved through cross-county working. Further work will be required to explore alternative delivery models across all functions.[53]

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[52] The new model of local government may wish to consider delivering the developing control function in line with UA boundaries to protect local interest

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Option 3 – three unitary councils

A three-unitary council model based on the existing boundaries of Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe District and the combined existing boundaries of Chiltern and South Bucks Districts. Under this option the three unitary councils would separately deliver environment & community, including local planning (development control), and culture & leisure services. ASC, children's services, economic development, transport and spatial planning would be delivered across the area currently covered by the four district councils and options will be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved through cross-county working. Further work will be required to explore alternative delivery models across all functions.

Alternative delivery models

Options beyond Buckinghamshire's boundaries

The models of local government described above are inclusive of options to work with partners outside Buckinghamshire's geography. Under all three models options should be explored as to whether further benefits can be achieved in terms of financial sustainability and improved outcomes through cross-county working, for example:

- Jointly commissioning adult social care and/or children's services with a neighbouring local authority;

- Greater cross-boundary working in terms of economic development, transport and planning;

- Jointly commissioning environmental services, such as waste disposal, with neighbouring local authorities; and

- Jointly commissioning back-office functions with neighbouring local authorities.

The district councils will need to engage with local neighbouring counties to determine the level of appetite for cross-county working before carrying out a comprehensive financial and service due diligence process to determine the level of risk. Appendix A benchmarks the performance of local authorities in the neighbouring counties of Buckinghamshire against a range of indicators. The data shows that there is significant

Good practice case study:

Small local authorities can face challenges when commissioning services because of the limited economies of scale. However, by joining up with other local authorities they can increase their power to negotiate high quality contracts, whilst reducing management overheads and administrative burdens. The boroughs of Richmond and Kingston have recently amalgamated their children's services into a single shared organisation, called 'Achieving for Children', which will offer greater capacity for safeguarding and looking after the most vulnerable children in both boroughs. The model aims to offer an environment in which services can be developed more effectively and creatively outside the rigid local government bureaucracy.

The councils state that the transitional cost of delivering Achieving for Children totals £1.5 million, with projected savings of £6 million over three years from the initial merging of services. They also envisage wider efficiency benefits for the services once different opportunities and ways of working are fully developed and utilised by the new organisation.

variation across authorities. Given the level of variation there is an opportunity to improve if good practice can be replicated across a wider geography.

Adult social care

There are a number of alternative delivery models to be considered in relation to ASC, including:

- **Jointly commissioning ASC under a joint contract with NHS partners**
  Where joint commissioning arrangements have been established elsewhere significant savings have been established in both sectors.[54]

Good practice case study:

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership NHS Trust took on responsibility for the delivery of adult social care in 2012 from Staffordshire County Council under a section 75 agreement. It is the largest provider of integrated health and social care in the UK and employs around 6,050 staff. The agreement has led to significant savings of around £20m, together with improved integration and more streamlined services.

Good practice case study:

The Richmond Response and Rehabilitation team is jointly commissioned by the council and CCG. The service builds on the best aspects of the borough's reablement service and community health intermediate care services. The aim of the service is to offer people a flexible care pathway for hospital discharge. The integrated service is managed through the Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare Trust with council staff seconded to the trust. The service has reduced demand for council services, reduced lengths of stay in hospital, supported admission avoidance and directly contributed to £2.1 million in savings over a three-year period.

- **Mutual organisations**
  Mutuals are organisations which have left the public sector 'parent body' but continue to deliver public services with a greater emphasis on employee control. An intrinsic benefit of this delivery model is that there is a greater focus on employee engagement which is instrumental to improving service delivery. Mutuals are unlikely to be able to inherit contracts from local authorities and face a standard procurement procedure. A mutual that is staffed by former council employees could therefore fail to win the contract for work previously undertaken by the department.[55]

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54 http://www.grant-thornton.co.uk/Documents/Alternative-Delivery-Models-LG.pdf
55 http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05950/SN05950.pdf

Good practice case study:

People2People is a social enterprise that operates as a mutual and delivers the front-end adult social care service for Shropshire County Council. Staff and users are involved in running the organisation at all levels. People2People has an independent board of directors that includes service users, staff, council representatives and other specialist non-executive directors.

There is a need to comply with council reporting and monitoring requirements; however, People2People has greater freedom and scope to be innovative. Bureaucracy is reduced and the teams have autonomy regarding funding of all but the most complex support plans. Team members have been encouraged to develop their own new ways of working and trial new ideas. The social enterprise has led team members to report increased levels of empowerment, motivation and job satisfaction.

- **Outcomes-based procurement**
  This involves providers being paid for achieving outcomes, for example promoting independence. Performance management is key to ensuring services are managed against the outcomes outlined in service contracts.[56]

Good practice case study:

Wiltshire Council has replaced traditional community care services for older people with an integrated system of care and support through an outcomes-based commissioning model. Under the Help to Live at Home (H2LAH) service assessments are person-centred and focus on outcomes, in particular outcomes that leave customers better able to live well with less care. H2LAH pays providers for achieving results that improve independence rather than hours worked. The council applies financial penalties when customers' outcomes are not achieved and rewards care providers when customers recover faster than planned. Efficiency savings total £11.6 million.

Children and young people

There are a number of examples of alternative delivery models for children's services, including:

- **Mutual organisation**
  Services for children and young people, like ASC, can be delivered through mutual organisations.

[56] http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11779/LGA+Adult+Social+Care+Efficiency+Programme+-+the+final+report/8e042c7f-7de4-4e42-8824-f7dc88ade15d

> *Good practice case study:*
>
> *Epic in Kensington and Chelsea became the first public service youth mutual to spin out of local government. Epic delivers a comprehensive range of youth support services to children and young people. Its mission is to inspire young people to achieve their potential and to make a positive difference to the communities in which they work. The mutual model has empowered Epic's staff to identify and implement innovative and enterprising ideas for working with young people, which will be sustainable over the long term. For example, a local independent school funds one of Epic's youth centres to develop an environmental project for young people at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system. Epic is predicted to pass on significant savings to the council – more than £800,000 over five years.*

- **Strategic partnerships**
  Strategic partnerships with third sector organisations can drive improvements by building on a wider resource pool and expertise.[57]

> *Good practice case study:*
>
> *Norfolk County Council and children's charity Barnardo's are to pursue an imaginative strategic partnership to improve outcomes for looked-after children and care leavers. The partnership is intended to support new joint service models, new ways of working and will involve combining resources to achieve common aims. The partnership does not involve any transfer of staff or funding and each organisation will remain independent in terms of policy and governance.*

- **Trust organisations**
  A handful of local authorities have introduced independent, not-for-profit children's trusts which take over the authority's services for vulnerable children.[58]

> *Good practice case study:*
>
> *The government enforced a trust model on Slough in 2015 following an Ofsted report which found 'widespread and serious weaknesses'. The trust will focus solely on improving children's services and it is thought this model will lead to significant delivery improvements.*

Governance and delivery

Any new model of local government will require robust governance arrangements and strong leadership to drive a culture of change. The diagram below outlines key governance design principles that will need to be considered when implementing a new vision for a model of local government as outlined in the options described above.

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[57] https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/news/2016/07/norfolk-county-council-and-barnardos-to-develop-unique-strategic-partnership
[58] http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2015/10/01/sloughs-independent-childrens-services-trust-launches/

Streamlined governance structures	• Seek to streamline governance arrangements to minimise duplication. • Ensure there are appropriate forums for challenge and establish clear lines of reporting across organisations to enhance visibility. • Multiple unitary models will require Joint Steering Groups for those services delivered at scale which will be responsible for providing assurance of delivery.
Partnership working	• Governance arrangements will need to enable complex partnership working and ensure clarity around decision-making, authority, accountability and assurance. • Define processes for sharing learning and innovation to evolve outcomes across participating organisations.
System wide commitment	• Align strategies to ensure a system-wide commitment to an overarching vision. • Careful consideration is needed on how to manage individual contracts, align incentives and establish mechanisms to share financial risks and benefits.
Agile governance	• Governance arrangements should be designed so that they are flexible enough to adapt service models to new technology and innovations quickly. • Stakeholders will need to be careful of overdesigning the model and accept ambiguity so long as it is line with the overall vision.
Ensure buy-in	• Employees should be consulted throughout the service redesign process to ensure alignment between front-line staff and executive decision-makers. • Methods of resident engagement will also need to be considered. • Ensure communication strategy is consistent both internally and externally.
Executive team able to exert grip	• Ensure there is an appropriate level of executive oversight and clear routes of escalation. • Define accountability between participating organisations.

Criteria analysis

Approach

The following table provides a definition of the non-financial and financial criteria used in order to carry out the analysis of the options.

Options criteria	Definition
1. Delivers stable and improved outcomes for residents and businesses	• Improving outcomes in the short, medium and long term, taking into account the impact of future changes in demand and growth. • Maintaining service continuity and improving outcomes. • Designing and delivering services based on local need and, where appropriate, at scale to facilitate integration and alignment with partners through coterminosity wherever possible.
2. Protects council tax payers' interests on an equitable basis	• All residents receiving the benefit of local government reorganisation in terms of council tax rates. • Equitable tax and service harmonisation.

3. Locally affordable, representing value for money and can be met from existing local government resources	• This criterion considers: o Revenue position(s); o Transition costs; o Ability to meet the requirement of setting balanced budgets in the future; and o The use of available reserves on an equitable basis.
4. Capable of providing accountable and locally responsive leadership	• Capability of political and executive leader(s) to provide accountable and locally responsive leadership given the scale of the geography they operate across.
5. Provides the capacity for councillors to carry out their roles as community leaders and key influencers within their local areas	• Appropriate rural and urban democratic representation: in both rural and urban areas residents have access to councillors and those residents in rural areas are not disadvantaged by their geographic location. • Residents have clarity about who is representing them and where to go for support and advice. • Local decision-making is a key part of the vision, therefore all options have been designed to meet this criteria. • Democratic representation will need to be balanced with value-for-money for residents.
6. Provides future financial stability	• Councils are capable of operating under a reduced government grant-funding environment. • Future government funding reductions will be managed by transforming the way in which outcomes are delivered to better manage demand. This will be achieved by moving away from the paternalistic model of local government and changing the relationships between local government and residents. • Productivity and income generation will also be considered.
7. Provides a solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire, not just one part	• All local government options outlined in this document can provide a solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire when implemented alongside service transformation.
8. Supported by a broad cross-section of partners and stakeholders	• This criterion has not been assessed as part of this document and will be evaluated at a later date.
9. Facilitates the growth and devolution agenda	• Ability to facilitate economic growth. • Facilitates an increased focus on local government decision-making and regional partnership working to align priorities and funding streams.

Non-financial analysis

The following table provides a rating for each option against the non-financial and financial criteria set out below from 1-3 (3 being the highest scoring rating for each criterion). If there is minimal difference in the score, such as for criterion 9 below, all options are given the same score.

The criteria has been allocated an equal weighting, excluding the seventh criterion which has been identified as a condition all options for future local government should meet to be considered viable.

The eighth criterion will be evaluated at a later date. This document presents a strategic options case for local government reorganisation which will be used as a starting point to shape future discussions with stakeholders. Therefore, the district councils will embark on their local partner engagement programme following the release of this report.

Options criteria	Single-unitary model of local government (option 1)	Two-unitary model of local government (option 2)	Three-unitary model of local government (option 3)
1. Delivers stable and improved outcomes for residents and businesses	1	2	3
2. Protects council tax payers' interests on an equitable basis	3	2	1
3. Locally affordable, representing value for money and can be met from existing local government resources	3	2	1
4. Capable of providing accountable and locally responsive leadership	1	2	3
5. Provides the capacity for councillors to carry out their roles as community leaders and key influencers within their local areas	1	3	2
6. Provides future financial stability	1	2	3
7. Provides a solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire, not just one part	All three options meet this criteria		
8. Supported by a broad cross-section of partners and stakeholders	Not assessed as part of this review		
9. Facilitates the growth and devolution agenda	3	3	3
Total	13	16	16
Overarching rank	**Third**	**First**	**First**

1. Delivers stable and improved outcomes for residents and businesses
Under all three models of local government, functions will be delivered across a bigger scale where partnership working can be optimised, for example ASC and children's services will be delivered across the footprint of the four district councils as this reflects the boundaries of the two CCGs and takes into account their approach to jointly commissioning services across Buckinghamshire through a federated model. This will enhance the likelihood of service continuity and improvement for vulnerable residents given that existing services will be largely unaffected by reorganisation as they will be delivered across the same footprint. This is advantageous given the complexity that has resulted elsewhere where unitary governments have been formed and disaggregation was required. With any large-scale transformation

programme there is an element of risk and creating a single unitary organisation would be a much greater challenge, and carries a greater risk in terms of service disruption, than establishing a two or three-unitary model.

The single unitary council option is most likely to improve the financial position of local government in Buckinghamshire in the short term. However, larger local authorities which serve bigger populations run the risk of services becoming homogenous and less responsive to local needs. This is of particular importance given the pockets of deprivation outlined in the previous section. The three-unitary council option has been allocated the highest score (3) because it creates authorities covering smaller areas and containing fewer residents. By contrast the single-unitary option has been awarded the lowest score because it creates one authority to cover the entire Buckinghamshire geography.

The three-unitary council option provides the greatest level of political leadership accountability which will enable greater engagement with residents and bring decision-making closer to communities. Option 3, therefore, has the greatest potential to fundamentally change the relationship between local government and residents from a paternalistic model focused on service provision to one focused on co-production and promoting independence. This will improve the way outcomes are delivered to better manage demand and in the long term the three-unitary council option will provide greater financial and operational sustainability.

2. Protects Council tax payers' interests on an equitable basis

The single-unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) against this criterion. Under this model there will be a single basis for the council tax calculation across all four districts. Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks residents will be reduced to the level of council tax paid by Wycombe's residents which means more Buckinghamshire residents will benefit from reduced council tax rates than in any of the other options. For example, to achieve council tax harmonisation by going to the lowest level of council tax (Wycombe) in 2019/20, council tax would be frozen for 175k residents in Wycombe and 347k residents from the Chiltern, South Bucks and Aylesbury Vale areas would benefit from a reduction in council tax.

Under the two-unitary model there will be no change in council tax rates in Aylesbury Vale. Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks will become one unitary council and council tax harmonisation would be achieved by reducing council tax to the lowest level (Wycombe). 163k residents from Chiltern and South Bucks would receive a reduction in council tax.

Under a three-unitary model there will be no change in council tax rates for residents in Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe or South Bucks. Chiltern and South Bucks will become a unitary council and council tax harmonisation would be achieved by a reduction to the lowest level of council tax in South Bucks. 94k residents from Chiltern would receive a reduction in council tax rates.

3. Locally affordable, representing value for money and can be met from existing local government resources

All three options are locally affordable, represent value for money and perform similarly when considering the payback calculation. However, the single unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) in relation to this criterion. This is because greater economies of scale will be achieved through the consolidation of the County Council and four district councils into one organisation. The potential savings

achieved from all three options are greater than the transition costs and foregone council tax revenue in year one following the creation of the new unitary council(s) but the net saving is greater for the single-unitary model than under the two or three-unitary model. The transition costs for each option can be met from estimated unallocated reserves at 1 April 2016.

4. Capable of providing accountable and locally responsive leadership
The three-unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) in relation to this criterion. The number of political leaders and executives under this option will provide the greatest opportunity for locally responsive and accountable leadership which means decision-making will be closer to communities. This will be key to shaping new relationships with residents based on promoting independence and co-production rather than paternalism, and will lead to reduced demand and improved outcomes. Further, the three-unitary model boundaries more closely reflect natural communities than the other two options.

5. Provides the capacity for councillors to carry out their roles as community leaders and key influencers within their local areas
Under all three models there will be a reduction in the number of councillors predominantly due to the reduced number of local authorities. The role of local councillors will be central to achieving the modern and sustainable local government vision set out in this document as their role will be key to shaping new relationships with residents in order to reduce demand. The two-unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) against this criterion. This is because under this option there will be more councillors to engage with and represent local residents than the single-unitary model. The three-unitary model will provide the greatest level of democratic representation; however, given the financial challenges local authorities face, it is important to balance democratic representation with value-for-money to ensure future resources are prioritised on frontline services.

6. Provides future financial stability
The financial challenges faced by local authorities nationally and locally are so great that income generation, increased efficiency and improved productivity alone will not achieve long term financial sustainability. The three-unitary model has been allocated the highest score (3) in relation to this criterion. Under this option there will be more accountable political leadership and community engagement than the other options. This will enable local government, more so than the other options, to create new relationships with residents based on co-production and independence rather than paternalism and service provision. This will be essential in effectively managing demand and enhancing financial and operational sustainability in the medium to long term.

7. Provides a solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire, not just one part
The non-financial analysis found that all options have the ability to meet this condition when implemented alongside service transformation.

8. Supported by a broad cross-section of partners and stakeholders
As discussed above the eighth criterion will be evaluated at a later date.

9. Facilitates the growth and devolution agenda
Economic Development across all three options should be delivered across the area covered by the four district councils to enable the strategic benefits of planning economic development at scale to be realised. Each option has merit in relation to this criterion therefore all three options have been allocated the highest score (3). The merits of each option are described below:

- It will be easier to build relationships and collaborate with neighbours more so under a single-unitary council than options 2 or 3 as there will be less parochialism and fewer organisational interests to manage.
- Buckinghamshire is a poly-centric economy and a one-size-fits-all model could lead to diseconomies of scale. The distinct differences with regard to economic relationships between the north and south of the county support a two-unitary council.
- The number of political leaders and executives under option 3 will provide locally responsive and accountable leadership. Therefore, a three-unitary option would, more than any other option, allow senior leaders and executives to develop relationships with local SMEs and enable the authorities to tailor their business support programmes to local circumstances in order to support growth.

Summary

The total scores allocated in relation to the non-financial analysis indicate options 2 and 3 are more advantageous than option 1. The non-financial analysis recognises the benefits of scale in delivering short-term savings; however, in the long term there is a need to develop fundamentally different relationships with residents, moving to an outcomes-focused approach and shifting the role of local government towards supporting individuals, families and communities to secure their own wellbeing. This will require focused local leadership and more locally accountable decision-making. More criteria have been allocated the top ranking score (3) under option 3 (4 out of 7 criteria) than option 2 (2 out of 7). This is because option 3 provides greater local accountability. Therefore, on balance it would appear as if the three-unitary model is the most advantageous and provides the greatest opportunity to transform local government and achieve long-term financial and operational sustainability.

Financial analysis

Analysis of costs

The analysis includes reorganisation costs which cover:

- Income foregone from harmonising council tax;
- Reductions in senior staff headcount; and
- Change management for reorganising the councils.

The approach to the analysis of each is as follows:

- **Income foregone from harmonising council tax**
  Where UAs are formed by combining existing authorities there will need to be a process to harmonise council tax levels. By 2019/20 when the unitary councils are assumed to be formed it is estimated that there will be a difference of £41 per annum between the lowest average band D council tax (including the County Council tax of £1,305) in Wycombe District Council (£1,448[59]) and highest in Chiltern District Council (£1,489). The three options create different council tax differentials to harmonise. [60]

  Three options have been considered to harmonise council tax. Firstly, it is possible to freeze council tax for some payers at the high end and increase the council tax of others until everyone is on the same level then a universal council

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[59] Wycombe District Council includes a special expenses precept
[60] Council Tax rates for 2016/17 are based on CTR and CTB forms

tax increase can be applied. Secondly, council tax can be harmonised to the lowest current level on day one of the new council and then all council tax payers have the same percentage increase thereafter. Thirdly, council tax can be harmonised to the weighted average level. Whichever way this is modelled there is less council tax collected than if there was no change to the current structures. We have described the difference between status quo and the new structures as "income foregone".

Income foregone has been calculated by multiplying the tax base by the estimated band D council tax rate under the status quo to arrive at an estimated total council tax revenue collected figure. The figure has then been compared to the same calculation for each council tax harmonisation option. In all of the options modelled the income foregone is least over five years when harmonisation occurs to the lowest level of council tax. Under the three unitary model there is an increase in council tax revenue over the five years as a result of harmonisation on the assumption that two of the unitary councils (Aylesbury and Wycombe) will increase council tax by 3.99% from 2019/20 onwards and whilst there will be council tax income foregone as a result of Chiltern and South Bucks becoming one unitary council, there is a net increase in council tax revenue because of the Aylesbury and Wycombe effect being greater than the income foregone.

- **Reductions in senior staff headcount**
  Senior staff restructuring costs relate to redundancy payments and pension costs for those posts in tiers one (Chief Executive), two (Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Directors) and three (Senior Management/Heads of Service) no longer needed to run a reduced number of authorities or because local government functions will be delivered at a Buckinghamshire-wide level.

- **Change management for reorganising the Councils**
  The change costs are one-off costs to support the reorganisation change process, including setting up the new unitary councils, Buckinghamshire-wide functions (e.g. adult social care, children's services, economic development, transport and strategic planning), a single shared service back-office function and the integration of IT systems across multiple organisations.

Analysis of savings

The savings from reorganisation cover:
- Reduction in senior officer posts;
- Reduction in the number of members;
- Savings in corporate services;
- Service optimisation savings; and
- Property rationalisation savings.

The approach to the analysis of each of the above is as follows:

- **Reduction in senior officer posts**
  The savings in respect of the senior staff structure are the salaries and on-costs saved for the reduced numbers of senior staff posts required to run the new authority.

- **Reduction in the number of members**
  Member savings come from having fewer authorities and hence a requirement for fewer members.

- **Savings in corporate services**

Corporate services savings are achieved through the consolidation of these functions and the economies of scale typically achieved.

- **Service optimisation savings**
  The service optimisation savings are achieved through service consolidation and procurement savings, e.g. a single waste collection contract.

- **Property rationalisation savings**
  The savings from property rationalisation, consolidated purchasing of utilities and FM contracts.

The following table provides a summary of the high level revenue costs and savings on a (real) estimated for each option over a five-year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24:

Income foregone, costs and savings	Single-unitary model of local government £m	Two-unitary model of local government £m	Three-unitary model of local government £m
Income foregone			
Council tax harmonisation (lowest level)	8.7	1.1	-5.8
Total income foregone	**8.7**	**1.1**	**-5.8**
Costs			
Senior staff restructuring	5.0	3.9	2.8
Change management	9.3	10.4	11.4
Total costs	**14.3**	**14.3**	**14.2**
Savings			
Senior staff restructuring	26.8	20.5	14.8
Member costs	6.8	5.4	4.0
Corporate services	39.0	31.2	29.5
Service optimisation	24.5	19.6	18.5
Property rationalisation	6.6	5.3	5.0
Total savings	**103.7**	**82.0**	**71.8**
Net savings	**80.7**	**66.6**	**63.4**
Rank	**First**	**Second**	**Third**

Appendix C provides detailed assumptions underpinning the above income foregone, costs and savings figures.

Funding the transition

In the early years following the creation of any new council structure there would be a requirement for the authorities to fund income foregone as a result of council tax harmonisation and the cost of implementing the new structures, e.g. one-off change costs and staff exit costs (prior to year one of the new council structures being in place). The source of funding the foregone revenue/costs in the early years could be borrowing or council reserves. The table below shows the combined earmarked and unallocated reserves for each option according to each authority's Revenue Account Budget as at 31 March 2016[61].

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[61] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing

Revenue Account Budget 31 March 2016	Earmarked reserves £m	Unallocated reserves £m	Total reserves £m
Buckinghamshire County Council	128.7	19.6	148.3
Aylesbury Vale	24.1	3.3	27.4
Chiltern	5.0	4.2	9.2
South Bucks	2.2	3.5	5.7
Wycombe	38.9	8.6	47.5
Total	**198.9**	**39.2**	**238.1**

Payback period

Under all options payback is achieved in the second year with the first year (2018/19) being the year in which the shadow councils are formed and only change costs are incurred. Estimated savings do not transpire until 2019/20, at which point the savings are estimated to be in excess of foregone council tax revenue and reorganisation costs and are estimated to continue to do so for the five years analysed.

The unallocated reserves as at 31 March 2016 are significantly in excess of the change management costs that require funding in all options so there would be no requirement to borrow to fund these costs in this year if reserves remain at or around a similar level in 2018/19. If some of the savings assumptions discussed in this report were not achieved, e.g. corporate services, service optimisation and property rationalisation, or were achieved later, there is between £22m and £25m available from unallocated reserves over and above the estimated reorganisation costs in 2018/19 and 2019/20 depending on the option.

Initial disaggregation of funding from Buckinghamshire County Council on an equitable basis for each of the options explored

On the assumption that the Buckinghamshire County Council funding to be disaggregated is equivalent to the net budget requirement estimated by the County Council for 2019/20, to deliver the vision approximately 90 per cent of the County Council funding will need to be used for functions that will deliver outcomes for the whole of Buckinghamshire, for example, Adults Social Care, Children's Services, Economic Development, Transport and Strategic Planning. The remaining 10 per cent of the funding will need to be disaggregated on an equitable basis and shared if a two or three-unitary model is the preferred option for local government. At this stage a straightforward method for achieving equitable disaggregation would be on a per capita basis for each option but at outline business case stage a more detailed method would need to be considered that factored in the different needs and age profile of the population. By way of example, the following table shows the outcome of this straightforward per capita method using the estimated 2019/20 Buckinghamshire County Council net budget requirement figures and 2014 population statistics:

	Disaggregation of County Council budget
Net budget available for disaggregation	34.4
Single-unitary model:	
Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils	34.4
Two-unitary model:	
Aylesbury Vale	12.2
Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils	22.2
Three-unitary model:	
Aylesbury Vale	12.2
Chiltern & South Bucks	10.7
Wycombe	11.5

The detailed calculation for the above analysis is enclosed as Appendix D.

Conclusion and next steps

Conclusion

Our conclusion summarises the outcome of this report and indicates which option is most advantageous in terms of long-term financial and operational sustainability.

The analysis recognises the benefits of scale in delivering short-term savings. It is important to work at the appropriate scale to secure agglomerated growth opportunities for the economy and work should continue to consider the benefits of joint working and collaboration, perhaps as part of a devolution deal with Government, on the scale of the functioning economic geography. Additionally, functions such as ASC and children's services need to be planned at a scale which maximises the opportunities for integrated working with other public services and build resilience into systems of safeguarding.

In the long term there is also a need to develop fundamentally different relationships with residents, moving to an outcomes-focused approach and shifting the role of local government towards supporting individuals, families and communities to secure their own wellbeing. This will require focused local leadership and locally accountable decision-making. Where functions are planned at a county-wide or larger geography the need for local leadership to promote integrated working and community engagement will still be key. For example, whilst planning the integration of health and social care services at the county-wide scale is appropriate, the most transformational impact will come from promoting joint working between GPs, social workers and other community-based services. Therefore, the two or three-unitary authority option provides the greatest opportunity to transform local government and achieve long term financial and operational sustainability.

Next steps

Stakeholder engagement

In order to reach consensus on the most appropriate model for local government in Buckinghamshire the district councils will need to produce a stakeholder engagement plan and identify key stakeholders; these will include but are not limited to the County Council, LEPs, Thames Valley Police, the DCLG, MPs, health partners, and town and parish councils.

A key part of this will be engaging with the surrounding local authorities to identify whether opportunities exist and if there is a willingness to work across boundaries to deliver services at scale. If suitable opportunities are identified an extensive process of financial and service due diligence will need to be completed to mitigate any potential risk associated with integrating organisations.

Consider community engagement methods

This document has outlined a vision which is centred upon delivering universal functions locally through increased engagement with communities. This will enable more decisions to be made at a local level with regard to prioritising outcomes and the deployment of resources.

Parish and town councils may provide a forum for this enhanced community engagement in certain circumstances. However, it is likely that the population of town councils is too great to achieve the level of community engagement outlined in the vision. Therefore,

options will need to be explored to ensure there is an appropriate level of political accountability and representation across Buckinghamshire.

If a decision is made to implement a unitary model of local government, there will be a process of councillor rationalisation and alternative ward options will be explored as part of a boundary review. This will require extensive stakeholder engagement with existing parish and town councils. As part of this process consideration should be given as to whether High Wycombe Town has adequate political representation and accountability given that the area is currently unparished.

Appendix A: Performance

The following section of the report outlines the performance of neighbouring local authorities for key services where Buckinghamshire is facing significant demand challenges; adult social care, children's services and housing. It is important to consider the performance against these indicators when considering opportunities for cross-boundary working.

Adult Social Care

Social care related quality of life, 2014/15

Adult social care-related quality of life (2014/15)

Mean for all English authorities
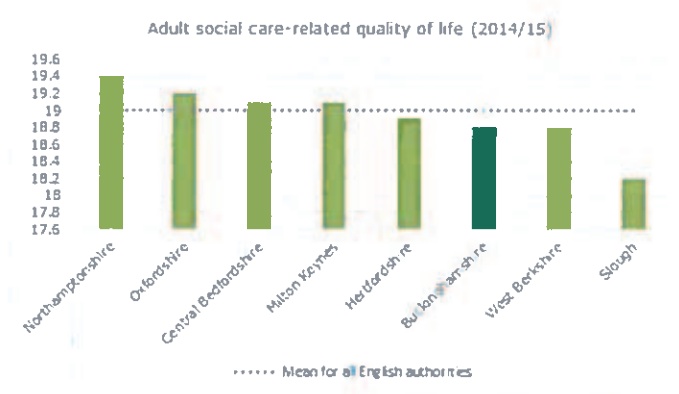
The graph on the left shows the social care related quality of life score. The maximum score is 24. The data is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

Buckinghamshire's performance against this indicator is below the average for England and the neighbouring counties, excluding West Berkshire and Slough.

Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support, 2014/15

Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support

Mean for all English authorities
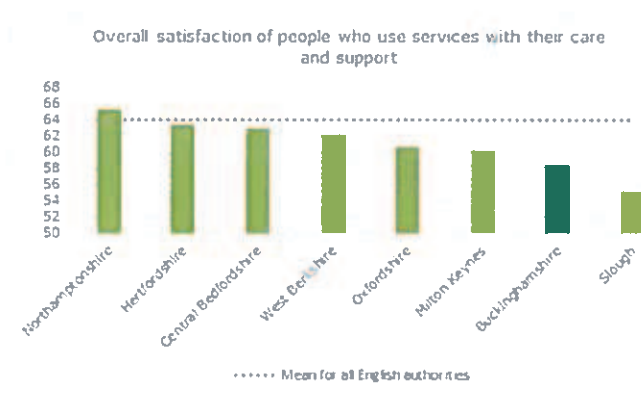
This is the overall satisfaction of people who use adult social services with the care and support expressed as a percentage. The data is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

The graph above suggests that adult social care users in Buckinghamshire are less satisfied with their care and support than they are elsewhere in the country. Buckinghamshire's performance against this indicator is below the average for England and all of the neighbouring counties, excluding Slough.

Delayed transfers of care from hospital, 2014/15

Delayed transfers of care from hospital per 100,000 population (2014/15)
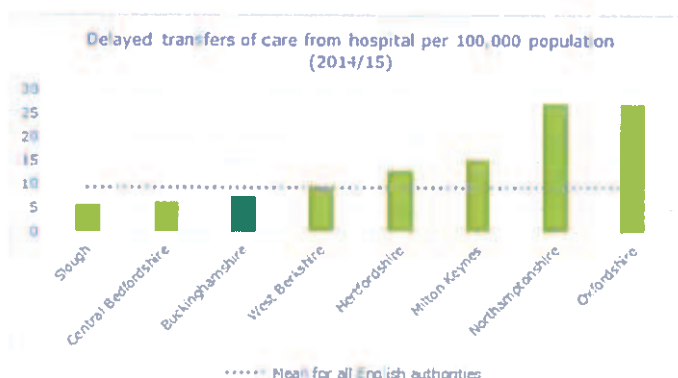
This is the number of delayed transfers of care from hospital per 100,000 population attributable to adult social care. The data is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

····· Mean for all English authorities

There are fewer delayed transfers of care in Buckinghamshire than the average for England and neighbouring local authorities, excluding Slough and Central Bedfordshire.

Long term support needs of older people met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, 2014/15

Long term support needs of older people met by admission to residential and nursing care homes per 100,000 (2014/15)
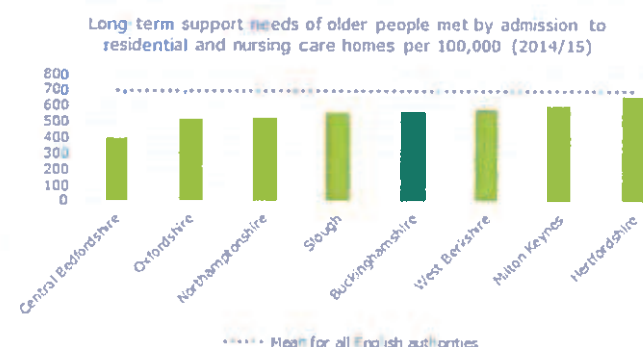
The graph on the left shows the number of older people whose long term support needs were met by admission to residential and nursing care homes per 100,000. The data is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

····· Mean for all English authorities

The chart above demonstrates that fewer older people in Buckinghamshire have their long term support needs met by admission to residential and nursing care homes than the English average, suggesting more people are enabled to be supported at home which is in line with good practice nationally.

Revenue expenditure per head adult's services, 2015/16

Revenue expenditure per head, adult's services (2015/16)
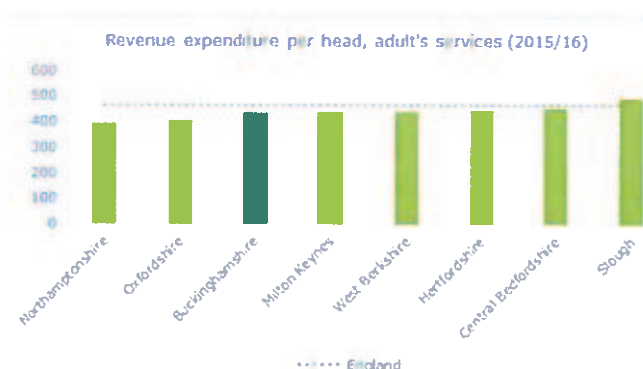
The graph on the left demonstrates the total revenue expenditure, per head of population (18 and over) in 2015/16, for adult's services and includes employee costs and running expenses for neighbouring local authorities. It is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

····· England

The chart indicates that revenue per head in Buckinghamshire is less than the average for England and less than its neighbouring local authorities, excluding Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire.

Strategic options case for modernising local government in Buckinghamshire
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Children's services

Ofsted inspections of children's social care, 2014 & 2015

The tables below summarises the results of the latest Ofsted inspections in Buckinghamshire and surrounding local authorities.

Inspection rating	Buckinghamshire*	Hertfordshire	Oxfordshire	Northamptonshire
Overall grading	Inadequate	Good	Good	Requires improvement
Children who need help and protection	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good	Requires improvement
Children looked after and achieving permanence	Inadequate	Good	Good	Requires improvement
Adoption performance	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Requires improvement
Experiences and progress of care leavers	Requires improvement	Good	Good	Requires improvement
Leadership, management and governance	Inadequate	Good	Good	Requires improvement
The effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board	Inadequate	Good	Good	Requires improvement

*Please note that the County has sought external advice and support to drive forward an improvement plan for children's services.

Revenue expenditure per head children's services, 2015/16

Revenue expenditure per head, children's services (2015/16)

Revenue expenditure per head, children's services (2015/16)
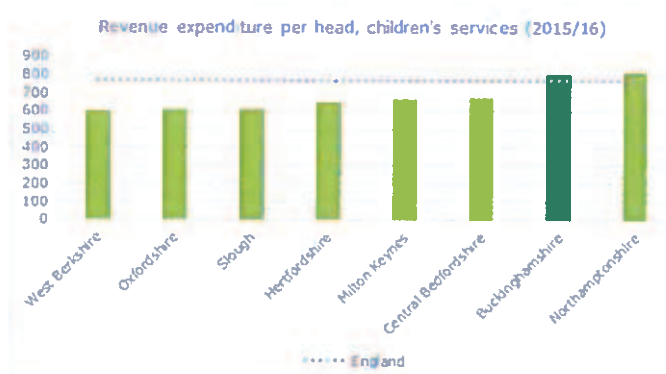
The graph on the left demonstrates the total revenue expenditure, per head of population (aged 0-17) in 2015/16, for children's services and includes employee costs and running expenses for neighbouring local authorities. It is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool which is based on General Fund Revenue Account Outturn Social Care data for 2015/16.

The chart indicates that revenue per head in Buckinghamshire is greater than the average for England and greater than neighbouring local authorities, excluding Northamptonshire.

Children looked-after rate per 10,000 children aged under 18, 2014/15
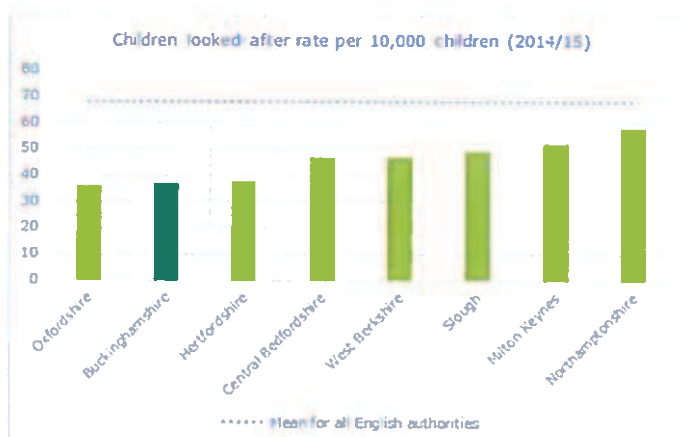
The chart on the left demonstrates the number of children looked after as at 31 March 2015, expressed as a rate per 10,000 children aged 0 to 18. The term 'looked after' includes all children being looked after by a local authority; those subject to a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989; and those looked after on a voluntary basis through an agreement with their parents under section 20 of that Act. The data is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

The graph indicates that the rate of looked-after children in Buckinghamshire is below the English average and below its neighbouring authorities, excluding Oxfordshire. This is surprising given that revenue expenditure per head in Buckinghamshire is greater than the national average and the majority of its neighbouring local authorities.

Looked-after children by placement provider, 2015
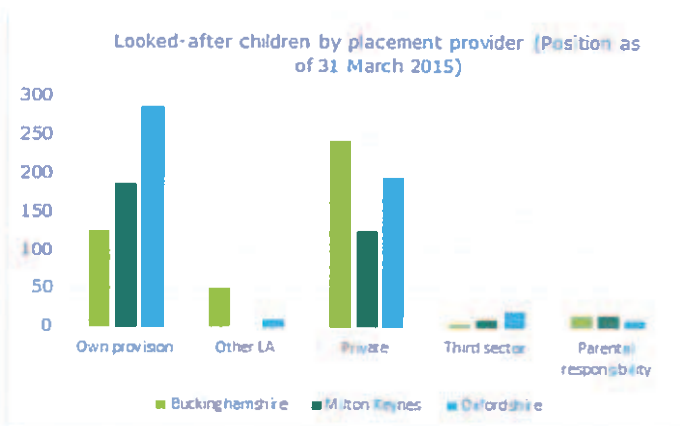
The graph on the left shows looked-after children by type of placement provider across Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire. The information is taken from the Department of Education local authority benchmarking data set.

The chart suggests that Buckinghamshire relies on private placements more than the neighbouring counties of Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes. Buckinghamshire also relies on other local authority providers more than Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire.

Percentage of looked-after children adopted in year, 2015

Percentage of looked after children adopted in year by local authority
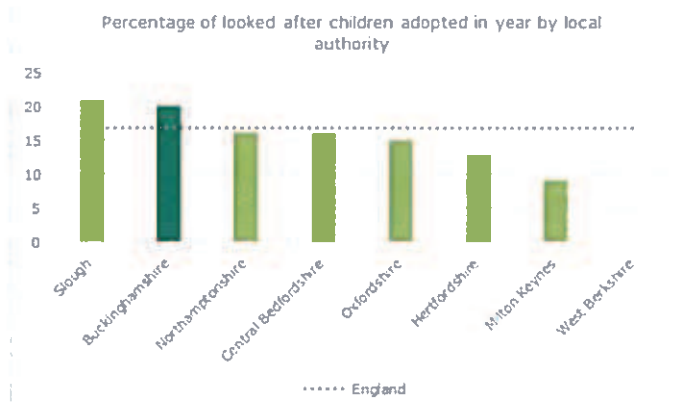
The graph on the left shows the percentage of looked-after children adopted in year for Buckinghamshire and the neighbouring local authorities. The information is taken from the Department of Education local authority benchmarking data set.

The chart suggests that Buckinghamshire is more successful at finding adoption homes for looked-after children compared to the neighbouring local authorities, excluding Slough. Indeed data suggests Buckinghamshire's performance against this indicator has improved in recent years.

Child protection cases reviewed on time, 2014/15

Child protection cases reviewed on time (2014/15)
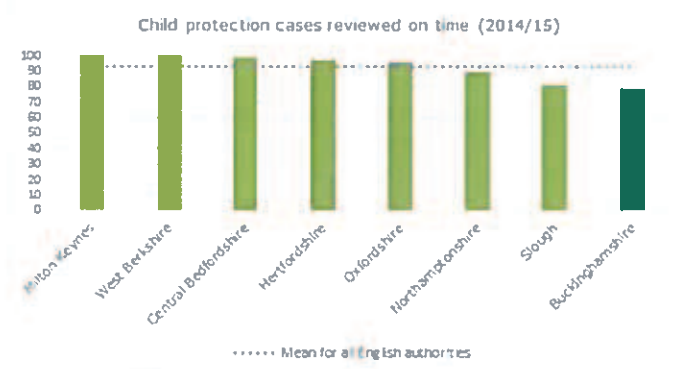
The graph on the left demonstrates the percentage of children with a child protection plan on 31 March 2015 who had a plan continuously for at least three months and had their plan reviewed within the required timescales. The data is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

The chart shows that Buckinghamshire's performance is below its neighbouring authorities and the English average in relation to this indicator, suggesting that there is room to improve the timeliness of case reviews.

Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation, 2013/14

Percentage of care leavers in suitable accomodation

...... Mean for all English authorities
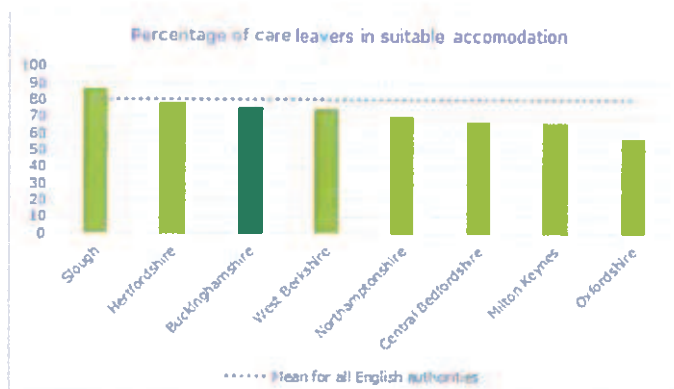
This indicator is the percentage of former care leavers aged 19 who were looked after under any legal status on 1 April in their 17th year, who are in suitable accommodation. Suitable accommodation must be safe and secure, and excludes emergency accommodation used in a crisis. The data is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

The chart demonstrates that Buckinghamshire's performance is below the English average for this indicator, suggesting there is room for improvement. The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation is greater than its neighbouring counties, excluding Slough and Hertfordshire.

Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training, 2013/14
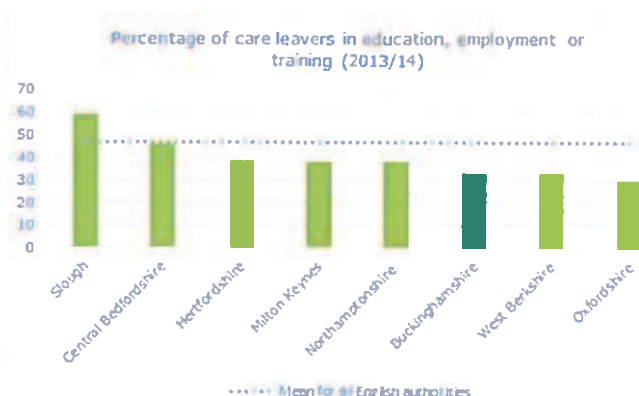
Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (2013/14)

...... Mean for all English authorities

The graph on the left demonstrates the percentage of former care leavers aged 19 who were looked after under any legal status on 1 April in their 17th year, who are in education, employment or training. The data is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

The chart demonstrates that Buckinghamshire's performance against this indicator is below the English average, suggesting that that there is room for improvement. The percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training in Buckinghamshire is below its neighbouring counties, excluding West Berkshire and Oxfordshire.

Outcomes for looked-after children

When benchmarking the outcomes for looked-after children in Buckinghamshire against the averages for England and the South East region there appears to be room for improvement in some areas such as educational attainment at GCSE level, as demonstrated in the table on the following page. However, in other areas, such as care leavers in suitable accommodation, Buckinghamshire's performance is above that of the national and regional average.

Outcome indicator	Buckinghamshire	England	South East
Percentage of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months at key stage 4 who have achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to C (2015)	17.5%	18.3%	17.6%
Percentage of children with at least one fixed period exclusion who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months (2014)	12.04%	11.22%	10.25%

Housing

Total revenue expenditure on housing services (GRFA only) per head of population, 2014/15
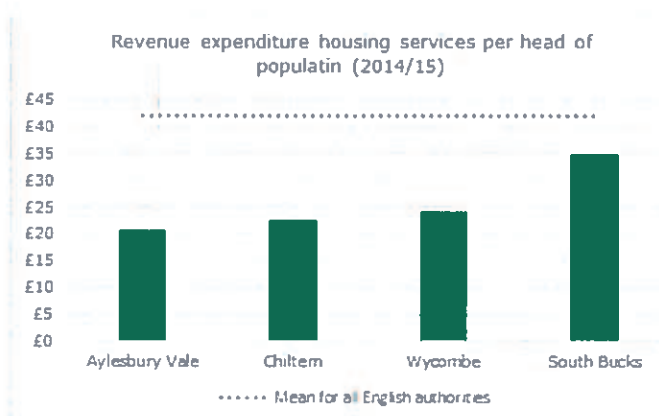
This is total revenue expenditure, per head of population. It includes employee costs and running expenses. It is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool which is based on local authority Revenue Outturn Service Expenditure for 2014/15.

The chart demonstrates that there is variation across the district councils in Buckinghamshire in terms of revenue expenditure per head. Revenue expenditure per head on housing services is greater in South Bucks and lower in Aylesbury Vale. Spend in all districts is below the average for England.

Appendix 2

Vacant dwellings as a percentage of all dwellings in the area, 2014/15
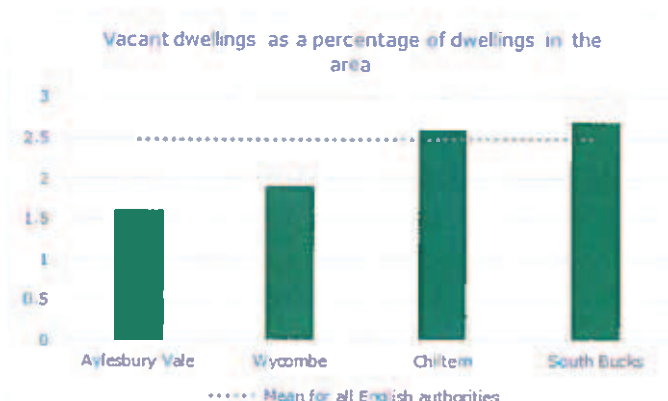
This is the percentage of vacant dwellings as a percentage of all dwellings in the area. It is taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

The graph demonstrates that there is variation in the percentage of vacant dwellings across the four districts. Chiltern and South Bucks have the highest percentage of vacant dwellings, both of which are above the average for England.

Households on housing waiting lists at 1 April, 2014/15
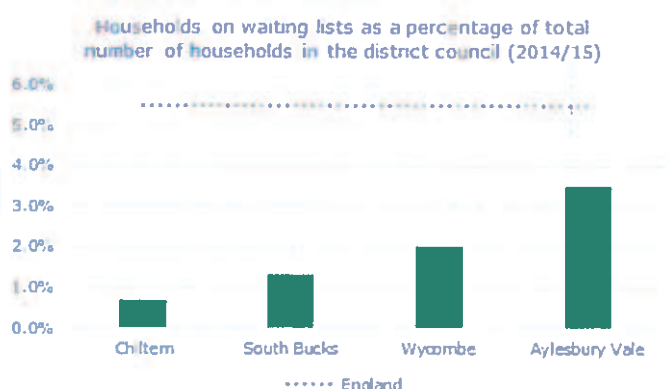
This is the total of households on the housing waiting list at 1 April 2014/15. It has been taken from the Local Government Inform Tool.

The graph shows that the number of households on housing waiting lists is below the England rate across all four districts. There are more households on the housing waiting list in Aylesbury Vale than any other district.

Strategic options case for modernising local government in Buckinghamshire
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Appendix B: Good practice examples

Good practice examples – health and adult social care

Kaiser Permanente[62]

Overview

Kaiser Permanente (KP) is the U.S.'s largest non-profit integrated healthcare system with over 9.6 million members and a focus on population health and prevention. KP uses data, available through its system-wide electronic health record, to understand its population's health needs. Hundreds of health education classes are offered at each of its medical centres, on topics ranging from stress management to diabetes care to quitting smoking. Physicians regularly encourage patients to improve their lifestyle, for example, they may "write a prescription" for a weight management or a menopause class rather than medication. All members are sent a copy of *The Health Wise Handbook* which provides information on hundreds of medical conditions, includes home care tips and advice about when to call your doctor or go to an emergency room. As part of these efforts, KP has established a range of Community Health Initiatives to support the development of place-based interventions to improve population health. These interventions typically focus on improving access to green spaces, promoting physical activity through creating bike paths and walking trails and improving access to healthy foods in schools, workplaces and deprived areas.

Nuka system of care, Alaska[63]

Overview

Southcentral Foundation is a non-profit health care organisation serving a population of around 60,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people in south central Alaska, supporting the community through the Nuka System of Care.

Nuka was developed in the 1990s after legislation allowed Alaska Native people to take greater control over their health services, transforming the community's role from 'recipients of services' to 'owners' of their health and social care system, and giving them a role in designing and implementing services.

The system incorporates patient-centred, multi-disciplinary teams providing integrated health and care services in primary care centres and the community. This is combined with a wider approach to improving family and community wellbeing that extends well beyond the co-ordination of care services, for example the Nuka's Family Wellness Warriors programme aims to tackle domestic violence, abuse and neglect across the population through education, training and community engagement.

Alaska Native people are actively involved in the management of the Nuka system of Care in a number of ways. These include community participation in locality-based advisory groups, the active involvement of Alaska Native 'customer owners' in Southcentral Foundation's management and governance structure, and the use of

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[62] Kaiser Permanente, The King's Fund
[63] Population Health Systems, The King's Fund, 2015

surveys, focus groups and telephone hotlines to ensure that people can give feedback that is heard and acted on.

Since the Nuka model was established there have been a number of positive results, including reductions in hospital activity:

- 36 per cent reduction in hospital days;
- 42 per cent reduction in urgent and emergency care services; and
- 58 per cent reduction in visits to specialist clinics.

First Contact Customer Service Centre (CSC), Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC)[64]

Overview

NCC has restructured its CSC to improve its efficiency and effectiveness and reduce front-door demand on its operational teams. Social care enquiries are initially handled by specialist Customer Service Advisors who use a range of tools and resources to assist 'triage' in the form of scripts, on-screen information, process flow charts and assessment forms. These aid advisors in determining whether direct referral is appropriate rather than referring up to the operational teams.

The Adult Access Service (AAS) deals with more complex referrals and undertakes a range of assessments previously completed within the operational teams.

A 'self-serve' option at first contact is also available to service users. The system provides people with the information they need to take control of their care and support and choose the options that are right for them. For more specialist advice, people can complete an online Contact Assessment which will provide a quicker indication of their care needs and eligibility for funded support.

Over 75 per cent of social care enquiries into the CSC are now resolved at the front end. This has reduced work-flow into the operational teams and has freed up professional staff to focus on more complex cases and provide the customer with a more timely and targeted response.

Supporting Lives, Suffolk[65]

Overview

Suffolk's vision for ASC is based upon the assumption that the communities in which people live can be developed so that citizens can assist their neighbours to live more independent lives through active engagement in the community and asset-based approached to delivering care. Suffolk provides three levels of adult social care support:

- Help to help yourself – 'My Life' website is a library of information, advice or signposting to help that is available within the community.

- Help when you need it, immediate short-term help – an integrated approach to enablement, given to a person in a crisis or to support them in recovery. A 'Short Term Enablement Plan' provides an integrated approach for customers.

- Ongoing support for those who need it – users are given the choice to take the support through a personal budget, which may be based on a direct payment

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system where customers arrange the services themselves, or through a managed account where the council manages the care for them.

A key element of the transformation has been to help staff, citizens and communities understand the need for change and engage with the new model. Practitioners are having new conversations with service users and as a result are finding more creative ways to address needs.

Over a four-year period Suffolk has delivered £38 million in savings in adult social care.

Gateway to Care, Calderdale[66]

Overview

Calderdale Council and the NHS have developed a new integrated front-end service called the Gateway to Care. The service provides the first point of contact between customers and adult social care and aims to help the customer find a solution to their presenting problem, focusing on prevention, early intervention and safeguarding. The service works to divert people away from formal care to community-based solutions or short-term help to build independence where appropriate.

There were 37,000 adult social care contacts to the service in 2013/14. Over 97 per cent of these people received short-term support without the need for a further social care or medical assessment. Calderdale attributes this to the fact that it is run by trained staff from health and social care, including nurses and social workers, who are experienced in finding the best solutions without the need for ongoing care.

The service gives staff time to work with people in a personalised way on the full range of solutions that may be available, thereby promoting independence in a way that safeguards people's best interests.

Connecting Care, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire interoperability programme[67]

Overview

The Connecting Care team saw a key blocker to the provision of high quality care was the lack of integrated patient data. Following the success of a view-only shared portal pilot, the team went out to tender to extend the breadth and depth of the model. The team started work with Orion Health in March 2013 and Connecting Care went live in December 2013.

17 partners are involved, including local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, hospital trusts, GP practices, community health services, mental health partnerships, the ambulance service and a regional academic health science network.

The programme uses the Orion Health Cross Community Care Record portal option to create a shared care record as it was felt to be the best option for the region given the disparate systems and range of organisations involved and the desire for a 'partnership of equals.'

Connecting Care brings together information from 11 separate information systems, enabling authorised professionals to log in and see a comprehensive summary of an

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[66] http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11779/LGA+Adult+Social+Care+Efficiency+Programme+-+the+final+report/8e042c7f-7de4-4e42-8824-f7dc88ade15d

[67] Integrated Digital Care Records – Enabling information sharing 2015

individual's health and social care data in a single electronic view subject to a role-based access/permission approach.

Key benefits of the programme include:

- *Admissions prevention* – The pilot illustrated that annual savings could equate to £1,036,288 from unplanned admissions. This saving is based on 10,000 people using information in Connecting Care.
- *Time savings* – The pilot indicates annual savings of £155,278 can be achieved through more efficient use of 'people time' as Connecting Care users spend less time calling other organisations for information. This saving is based on the assumption that one call per week can be saved per each professional user and has been calculated using an average NHS band 7 to 8 salary.
- *Reduced home visits* – The pilot suggests annual savings of £68,000 can be delivered by reducing unnecessary home visits. This saving is based on 10,000 people using information in Connecting Care and is based on the assumption that the average cost of a face-to-face assessment by a Community Nurse is £60.

Integrating health and social care records, Milton Keynes[68]

Overview

Following the successful implementation of the single patient record for local GP practices and PCOCs across Milton Keynes, NHS Arden and GEM sought to bring health and social care systems together.

Working with Milton Keynes CCG and Milton Keynes Council, NHS Arden & GEM CSU Clinical Systems team developed, implemented and managed a 12-month programme which set up a clinical IT system for multi-disciplinary teams to access patient records when patient consent was given.

This allows GPs to make electronic referrals to the MDT service, who will then be able to access patient records to allow them to determine the best and most appropriate support required to meet patient need. The records are updated and then sent back to the GP.

MDTs in Milton Keynes consist of agencies across the social care system including social services, Age UK, Diabetes UK, mental health services as well as other community and voluntary organisations. By having access to integrated care records, there is confidence that both health and social care professionals are working together.

Through integrated working, referrals are instantaneous resulting in quicker, proactive treatment which reduces A&E, hospital and out-of-hours admissions. By reviewing the processes required, the patient journey is more streamlined and clinical safety is improved and GPs are alerted when medication is due for collection for one of their patients. MDT actions are also logged within the patient record and are available to the GP practice to view.

Telecare and assistive technologies, London Borough of Hillingdon[69]

Overview

Hillingdon offers a community alarm service to residents aged 80 and over to support people to live independently in their own homes by providing reassurance that help is available in an emergency. The equipment ranges from basic alarms, which can be activated by pressing a button, to more sophisticated devices that can sense if there is a

[68] Implementing a single patient record across Milton Keynes, 2013
[69] Good practice in Local Government Savings, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2014

personal risk, for example when someone falls; it can also help prompt residents to remember to take their medication. TeleCareLine is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by experienced operators who will call responders in an emergency situation.

Similar telecare packages are offered free for the first six weeks as part of a reablement service. The telecare and reablement service achieved the financial savings target of £5.0m by March 2014.

Using capital resources, Portsmouth City Council[70]

Overview

Portsmouth City Council has used its capital resources to build a 92-bedded nursing home which is now run by the independent sector (Care UK). The provider is able to offer beds at a reduced price of £470 per week as Portsmouth has met the capital costs of the provision. This gives a net cost for nursing care of £360 per week. This is significantly lower than the rate of £700-plus that the council is paying for alternative provision. The business plan in Portsmouth estimates a £4 million saving over the 25-year lifespan of the project.

Good practice examples – children and young people

ChildStory, New South Wales, Australia[71]

Overview

ChildStory is a child welfare IT system built around individual children. It flips the traditional needs-based service delivery model of social service to make the child the focus of the system and one of its actual users. Placing the child at the centre of the system impacts how employees approach their work and leads to more respectful report writing.

One of ChildStory's unique capabilities is the "digital suitcase" which is a repository in which children and their caretakers collect photos, videos, documents, school reports and other digital memorabilia. Such items are often lost as children move around the system. The value of the virtual suitcase is enormous, both to children and to those responsible for them, and it fits neatly with ChildStory's system, allowing caseworkers to swiftly and easily track a child's relationship and support networks. The IT system reflects a major change in mind-set from a paternalistic model to one where individuals are actively engaged in their care.

Family Space, London Borough of Croydon[72]

Overview

The London Borough of Croydon built a family-focused website 'Family Space' for parents and professionals to enable easier access to a range of different sources of information about children's services locally. The council used ethnographic research, interviewing a number of local families to understand their current experiences and used the insight gleaned to develop a website that best served their customer's needs. The site brings together information and services delivered by the councils and other local providers and

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[70] http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11779/LGA+Adult+Social+Care+Efficiency+Programme+-+the+final+report/8e042c7f-7de4-4e42-8824-f7dc88ade15d

[71] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)

[72] London Borough of Croydon, Family Space

includes advice and information about a range of subjects, for example, finance, disability, child safety, special needs, staying healthy and social activities.

Family Space has also facilitated the development of communities of interest by linking parents with their peers. Family Space enables residents to build up their own networks of support and has led to increased resilience.

By encouraging more customers to access information online, the council has managed to cut their costs from their more traditional customer service operations. It saved £136,000 in handling customer enquiries in the first seven months. Following the same model and based on increased uptake, this means that a £450,000 saving was made in the 2013/14 financial year. Managing demand on the phone is estimated to be £32 more expensive per call and managing demand face-to-face is estimated to be £54 more expensive per enquiry.

Reducing high placement costs, Solihull[73]

Overview

Solihull implemented a programme to reduce the cost of placements for children in care. Previously external placements were secured on a spot-purchase basis by social care teams. This led to a large number of providers of residential and foster care placements, making both the development of relationships and performance management of providers difficult. In addition, the local authority foster care team had no specific targets for the number of carers required and the process for assessment was lengthy. As a result the capacity of in-house fostering services had not increased in line with the rise in demand for placements.

The programme involved a range of interventions, including:
- Creating a professional procurement service;
- Moving from a reactive commissioning approach to a planned commissioning strategy;
- Strengthening the authority's foster care service through a 'lean management' process to reduce the recruitment time;
- Introducing multi-dimensional foster care placements for children with complex needs who otherwise would have been placed in residential care;
- Providing support care for children on the edge of care;
- Offering short-term breaks for those children and young people with additional needs; and
- Efficient management of the external market.

The programme led to an 11 per cent reduction in placement expenditure and foster care recruitment time halved, leading to a 28 per cent increase in capacity of in-house foster care services.

Integrated approach to commissioning, Manchester City Council[74]

Overview

Manchester City Council delivered significant savings through an integrated approach to commissioning services for 'looked-after children' with an increased emphasis on increasing the availability and use of local foster care placements. The programme consisted of five work streams:
- *Reducing demand* – reducing the need for placements by developing effective early interventions such as multi-systemic therapy;

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[73] Reducing High Placement Costs, Solihull Metropolitan Council
[74] Good practice in Local Government Savings, Department for Local Government and Communities, 2014

- *Foster care* – recruiting an additional 100 foster carers;
- *Residential homes* – a phased withdrawal as able to meet demand through foster care placements;
- *Permanence* – speeding up the adoption process and improving services to care leavers including access to education, employment, training and housing; and
- *Contract efficiencies* – achieving efficiencies on existing contracts and re-commissioning services for care leavers.

The successful implementation of these work streams was expected to generate savings of up to £15 million over four years (2012/13 to 2015/16). By March 2014 seven residential care homes had closed.

Good practice examples – economic development, transport and strategic spatial planning

Personalised bus transportation, Washington DC[75]

Overview

Washington DC has introduced dynamic bus routes through a transportation start-up called Bridj which uses analytics to move commuters to their destinations. As the world's first smart mass transit system, Bridj delivers a fundamentally more efficient way of moving throughout the city. Powered by data and mobile tech, the company is able to optimise pick-ups, drop-offs, and routing based on need. Plus, since all rides are shared and each Bridj seats up to 14 passengers, fares cost only slightly more than the metro. However, on Bridj customers are always guaranteed a seat. Instead of fixed routes Bridj assesses where passengers live and work to offer personalised options. The service is provided through a simple App where users enter their destination, input the time they would like to leave and reserve a seat. Users then receive directions to a pick-up location where a Wi-Fi enabled Bridj bus meets them.

Reducing car ownership, Helsinki[76]

Overview

Helsinki has an ambitious transport vision: by 2025 it plans to eliminate the need for any city resident to own a private car. The city plans to combine public and private transport providers so citizens can assemble the fastest or cheapest mode of travel. The idea is to take a characteristically physical transportation system designed around vehicles, roads, bridges, subways and buses, and reverse it to revolve around digitally enabled individual mobility. Citizens will use their phones to arrange a rideshare, an on-demand bus, an automated car, special transport for children, or traditional public transport. From planning to payment, every element of the system will be accessible through mobile devices. Rather than paying for each leg of a trip, or requiring passes and memberships, Helsinki's citizens will simply pay by the route, kilometre or a set monthly fee.

The city has launched its Kutsuplus service, a fleet of on-demand minibuses that allows commuters to determine their own customised routes and schedule and pay for trips with a smartphone. Similar to the "maxi cabs" and "minibuses" in Hong Kong and collectivo routes found throughout smaller Latin American cities, these mini buses cost more than scheduled public transportation services but are far cheaper than taxis.

[75] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)
[76] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016) and K.Leon, 'Helsinki Mulls a Future Free of Car Ownership', *Triple Pundit* (2014)

Youth Offending Programme, National Grid[77]

Overview

The Young Offender Programme led by National Grid is a training and employment programme focused on the rehabilitation of offenders. It works with prisoners coming towards the end of their sentences, providing training and sustainable employment on release.

Offenders must be as good as those recruited through traditional routes. Retention rates are around 10 per cent better that those recruited conventionally and from those that joined the initial gas training programmes, 15 per cent have progressed to team leadership roles.

The Programme manages to keep the reoffending rate for participants in the gas/electricity sector to less than 7 per cent – substantially less than the 50 per cent national average reoffending rate for young offenders. Reducing reoffending is a serious concern as not only does it cost around £40,000 to keep someone in prison for a year, there are wider benefits in terms of enabling people to contribute to society and become an asset rather than a burden.

Good practice examples – environment and community

Alternative delivery model for environmental services, North Somerset[78]

Overview

The Directorate of Development and Environment at the council identified savings from three contracts it procured services for:
- Grounds maintenance;
- Arboriculture (tree maintenance); and
- Street cleaning.

Previously traditional contracts were in place which led to inefficiencies such as all streets being cleaned with the same frequency despite areas outside the town centre not requiring the same level of cleaning as those in the town centre. The council introduced a single combined contract which included a flexible and rapid team of staff who are deployed to tasks as they arise with no additional costs.

The new contract delivers annual savings of 27 per cent to the council, or £0.8 million.

Good practice examples – culture and leisure

Overview

Alternative delivery model for leisure services, North Dorset District Council[79]

The council has had to fundamentally review the services it provides, particularly discretionary services including leisure centres. Two different models have been pursued which focus on responding to local needs:
- The Riversmeet Leisure Centre in Gillingham is run by a community group, the Three Rivers Partnership, which means the council no longer has to contribute to running costs;

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[77] Youth Offender Programme, National Grid
[78] Good practice in Local Government Savings, Department for Local Government and Communities, 2014
[79] Good practice in Local Government Savings, Department for Local Government and Communities, 2014

- The Blandford Leisure Centre is managed by SLM Everyone Active which is a private company and allows the centre to obtain the greatest efficiencies by using the company's collective purchasing power.

The programme has led to annual savings of £200k for the council.

Good practice examples – digital technology

The most digitised government in the world, Estonia[80]

Overview

Estonia emerged from the Soviet Union in 1991 at the dawn of the internet age; as a result, unlike other governments, it is not burdened with legacy systems. It now boasts the world's most digitised government and is the first country to enable online voting. Citizens can complete just about every municipal or state service online and in minutes. Every citizen has a unique online identity, meaning he or she never has to fill out the same information twice when transacting with public sector services. What is more, systems are integrated meaning it takes citizens less than five minutes to complete their online tax returns as information is centrally collated by the government ahead of time. It is possible to formally register a company remotely and start trading within 18 minutes. Citizens can view their educational records, medical record, address, employment history and traffic offences online.

Data analytics, New York City[81]

Overview

Ney York City Department of Buildings inspects properties for unsafe conditions and structural hazards based largely on complaints received. In 2011 the city received almost 25,000 illegal conversion complaints, where landlords divide apartments into smaller units to accommodate more people than apartments can safely house. Dozens of people might occupy a space meant for five, a potential disaster in terms of fire safety, crime and public health. The Mayor's Office of Data Analytics build a predictive data model alongside the building inspectors to triage a list of properties for inspection. Previous follow-up complaints had led to 13 per cent requiring vacate orders. Following the introduction of the triage tool the share of complaints leading to vacate orders increased to 70 per cent. Improved building inspections lowered the risk for firefighters, as fires in illegal conversions are 15 per cent more likely to result in injury or death.

Pothole sensors, Boston and Google[82]

Overview

Potholes are symbolic of the interface between what government does and what the public wants. A number of government organisations have adopted digital approaches to effectively managing potholes, for example:

- Boston's Street Bump app allows drivers to monitor potholes with their smartphones. Before they even start their trip, drivers using Street Bump fire up the app, then set their smartphones either on the dashboard or in a cup holder. The app takes care of the rest, using the phone's accelerometer — a motion

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[80] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)

[81] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)

[82] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)

detector — to sense when a bump is hit. GPS records the location, and the phone transmits it to an AWS remote server.

- Google has invented technology which maps potholes through sensors attached to each car's shock absorbers. The data is transmitted from the sensors so that it can be used to analyse the condition of roads.

Neighbourhood-based staff, Bristol City Council[83]

Overview

Bristol City Council uses mobile technology to increase the efficiency of its mobile neighbourhood-based staff, reducing office-based hours, increasing reporting of local issues and reducing accommodation costs. 60 mobile officers were identified to receive tablet devices pre-loaded with the Looking Local's MyCouncil app which enabled the officers to complete their daily tasks without having to visit the office.

The cost of savings from staff reports via the app instead of the telephone were £2,256 in the 12 months, and for the public contacts, there was an estimated saving of £91,700 compared to telephone reporting. The reduced use of facilities formed part of a larger programme which is due to save the council an estimated £10 million over three years.

The company behind the app, Looking Local, is wholly-owned by Kirklees Council and is a not-for-profit-organisation. Looking Local channels registered 1.36 million sessions in 2013, nearly 60 per cent of them for transactional services, rather than flat content. Around 45 per cent of usage occurred outside normal business hours and around 25 per cent at the weekend. This indicates a saving from self-service as opposed to telephone reporting in the region of £0.8 million.

Offline accessible reporting app, Telford & Wrekin[84]

Overview

The council partnered with a specialist research and development company, Bronze Software Labs, to develop the 'Everyday Telford' cross-mobile application. A report from a member of the public automatically generates a work order which is actioned with no need for council intervention. The public can submit photos taken from their smartphone/tablet on any issue that they are reporting which also uses GPS technology to pinpoint the exact location. As a result of the 'Everyday Telford' app, the council has seen a marked increase in the number of reports from the public and response times have been improved. 2,311 reports have been received through the app without any involvement from the general public – this delivered a £5,000 saving in the first quarter of 2013/14.

Online self-assessment application for care services, Kent County Council[85]

Overview

Kent County Council worked with IT supplier Anite to develop an online self-assessment application for citizens seeking council care services. The application enables people to find out whether they are entitled to social care quickly and easily and the application has been integrated with the Council's back-office repository of social care records.

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[83] Bristol City Council, Looking Local
[84] Telford and Wrekin, Offline Accessible Reporting App
[85] Kent to launch an online self-assessment system - Computer Weekly 2006

Each time a client uses the online self-assessment tool, a 30-minute phone call with a social worker is avoided. The tool provides a decision on entitlement to care within seconds of the form being completed.

Digitalised transactions, Utah[86]

Overview

The state of Utah has digitised more than 1,100 of basic transactional processes, saving on average $13 dollars per transaction or about $500 million a year. Utah has also introduced paperless processes to public assistance benefits and 90% of recipients now use the state's MyCase portal which has enabled Utah to cut 300 administrative FTEs. In addition caseworkers now spend less time processing applications and forms, and more time working with families and individuals with complex needs.

Digital innovation, Barcelona[87]

Overview

Barcelona aims to become the world's smartest city powered by data streams through every part of the city, for example:

- Lampposts equipped with fiber-optic cables;
- Telecommunications towers capable of monitoring crowds, noise, weather and traffic;
- Sensor-powered trash bins which send signal trucks to empty them only when they are full;
- A network of sensors to manage irrigation of the city's green spaces that transmit live data on humidity, temperature, wind velocity, sunlight and atmospheric pressure;
- Citizens carry their digital identity on the city's MobileID smartphone app, which allows easy access to digital public services, for example, census registration; and
- Smart parking spaces send information on vacant spots directly to drivers' smartphones.

Reducing unemployment claims, New Mexico[88]

Overview

New Mexico has utilised predictive analytics to tackle fraudulent unemployment insurance claims. Officials at the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions recognised that a large portion of fraudulent claims were the result of small falsifications, rather than hard fraud. They employed behavioural-economics principles to nudge claimants to be more honest. One technique was to trigger pop-up messages at moments when people were most likely to be dishonest. Overall, claimants who saw pop-up messages were 31 per cent more likely to report earnings.

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[86] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)
[87] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)
[89] D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)

MK:Smart, Milton Keynes[89]

Overview

MK:Smart is a large collaborative initiative, partly funded by HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council for England) and led by The Open University, which is developing innovative solutions to support sustainable economic growth in Milton Keynes.

Central to the project is the creation of a state-of-the-art 'MK Data Hub' which supports the acquisition and management of vast amounts of data relevant to city systems from a variety of data sources. These include data about energy and water consumption, transport data, data acquired through satellite technology, social and economic datasets, and crowdsourced data from social media or specialised apps. Building on the capability provided by the MK Data Hub, the project is innovating in the areas of transport, energy and water management, tackling key demand issues.

In addition to these technical solutions, MK:Smart also comprises ambitious education, business and community engagement activities, including:

- An integrated programme of business engagement, aimed at supporting businesses that wish to take advantage of the innovation capabilities developed in MK:Smart. A key component of this activity is the Innovation and Incubation Centre (IIC) at University Campus Milton Keynes (UCMK), which provides training in data-driven business innovation and the digital economy, as well as hands-on support for business development, demonstration facilities, and an incubation space.

- A smart city education programme engaging a wide range of audiences, from local schools to higher education students and businesses. This programme provides advanced training covering digital technologies, business innovation and urban services to empower students and practitioners with the skills and competences needed to participate in the creation of a smart city.

- Engagement activity involving citizens in the innovation process, not just through an outreach programme, but also by engaging the community in innovation-centric decision-making processes through the establishment of a Citizen Lab.

Online access, East Riding of Yorkshire Council[90]

Overview

The council has delivered cost efficiencies by introducing community hubs with self-service kiosks and by developing a mobile-responsive website. The community hubs offer a range of council services, such as reporting a missed bin collection, booking a bulky waste collection, reporting a housing repair, and making council tax payments. As more customers self-serve, fewer staff are required to work in the community hubs which allows staff to focus on more complex queries. The programme has generated the following savings for the council:

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[89] MK:Smart website
[90] East Riding of Yorkshire Council online access

- Face-to-face staff savings over a three-year period of implementation of £91,500 (representing a reduction of 5.14 FTE) with further savings anticipated with the ongoing reduction in face-to-face and telephone contact.

- Additional income to the council through self-service payments reducing payment processing costs and maximising income opportunities, for example £250,000 through one self-service kiosk in the first six months of operation.

MyHarrow Account, London Borough of Harrow[91]

Overview

The online MyHarrow account gives customers access to quick and convenient registration for a range of services. Customers can access multiple services including viewing and paying Council Tax balances, checking details of their housing benefit, viewing planning applications, receiving alerts about a missed bin or an overdue library book. Overall, the council has seen a 40 per cent take-up of the online account, with 63,352 registered users. 70 per cent of enquiries are now via self-service and there has been a 65 per cent reduction in the average cost per enquiry. By moving electoral registration online, Harrow saved £280k on printing, postage and staffing on inputting data. In addition, the council has saved £1.55 million over four years across the website as a whole.

Good practice examples – shared support functions

Outsourcing back-office services, London Borough of Barnet [92]

Overview

Barnet established a Customer and Support Group partnership with Capita which covers all of the council's back-office services including: corporate procurement, customer services, estates, finance, human resources, information systems, revenues and benefits and transformation capability. Savings were secured through:
- A determined focus on procurement;
- Cost-reductions including the relocation of services to Capita's centres of excellence (providing economies of scale, expertise and resilience); and
- Radical service re-design.

Barnet also introduced an on-line citizen's portal and invested £2.3 million into data gathering and storage platforms to enable more sophisticated analysis of the needs of residents so that commissioning can be targeted towards these needs.

The Customer and Support Group partnership is expected to deliver better services by contracting for guaranteed standards and levels whilst reducing the operating costs by 45% in real terms over the lifetime of the partnership. The contract guarantees a saving of £125.4 million over ten years.

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[91] Online Electoral Registration through MyHarrow account
[92] Good practice in Local Government Savings, Department for Local Government and Communities, 2014

'One Council' approach, Kirklees[93]

Overview

Kirklees' 'One Council' programme has a number of elements including:
- A senior management review focused on reducing the number of directors, assistant directors and heads of service; and
- A business support review focused on reducing the number of secretarial staff;

The programme has resulted in more efficient systems processes and systems and reduced duplication which has generated £20 million in direct savings and an estimated £60 million in indirect savings.

Appendix C: Financial assumptions

The following tables provide a list of assumptions that have been made to determine the high-level costs and savings for the different options.

Costs

Assumption category	Assumption description and Source
Council tax	Publicly available data has been used on council tax base and average band D council tax rates for 2016/17 and based on the principal council element only for the county and the districts, i.e. excluding parish, fire and police precepts. In 2017/18 the council tax rates have been uplifted by 3.99% (including the 2% for additional council tax on top of the authority's existing refurendum threshold on the understanding that the additional council tax revenue collected is used for adult social care) for the County Council and 1.99%* for the district councils with the exception of Wycombe District Council which is assumed to freeze council tax at the 2016/17 rate until 2019/20. From 2019/20 onwards, which is when the new UA(s) are assumed to be formed, the council tax rates are assumed to increase by 3.99% annually. The 2016/17 average band D council tax rates[94] used in the calculations are as follows: • Buckinghamshire County Council - £1,160.19 • Aylesbury District Council - £150.81 • Chiltern District Council - £170.62 • South Bucks District Council – £148.00 • Wycome District Council - £137.65 The 2016/17 council tax base[95] used in the calculations are as follows: • Aylesbury District Council – 69,410 • Chiltern District Council – 43,560 • South Bucks District Council – 31,988 • Wycome District Council – 66,373 *It is the intention of Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council to revise their Council Tax policies and move from a 1.99% increase to a £5 increase.

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[94] Council Tax rates for 2016/17 are based on CTR and CTB forms and include special expenses
[95] Council tax base for council tax setting purposes in 2016/17

Change programme costs	The financial analysis assumes the following for each option:
	
	• Three-unitary model – creating three unitary councils will require (over a two-year change programme):
	
	   o 40 extra Council staff at £45k per annum (including on-costs) per member of staff to set up the county-wide services including a shared back-office service and the integration of IT systems.
	   o £1.9m of external consultancy support per annum to set up three new unitaries, integrate IT systems and set up the county-wide shared back-office service.
	
	• Two-unitary model – creating two unitary councils will require (over a two-year change programme):
	
	   o 35 extra Council staff at £45k per annum (including on-costs) per member of staff to set up the county-wide services including a shared back-office service and the integration of IT systems.
	   o £1.6m of external consultancy support per annum to set up two new unitaries, integrate IT systems and set up the county-wide shared back-office service.
	
	• Single-unitary model – creating one unitary council will require:
	
	   o 30 extra Council staff at £45k per annum (including on-costs) per member of staff to set up the county wide services including a shared back-office service and the integration of IT systems.
	   o £1.3m of external consultancy support per annum to set up two new unitaries, integrate IT systems and set up the county-wide shared back-office service
	
	• As this is a strategic options case and more detailed work on the costs of reorganisation will be performed at the outline business case and full business case stage, a contingency cost of £2m per annum has been included for each option for the first two years following reorganisation.

Senior staff restructuring (estimated cost of reducing the number of senior posts)	Publicly available data from each council on the pay policies and senior staff pay has been used. The assumed exit cost per head is £95k for senior staff. This is the proposed cap being set by HM Treasury for the total cost of all forms of exit payments (including pension payments) available to individuals leaving local government. This has been assumed as most senior staff are likely to reach this due to their pay and years of service. To inform the senior staff structure assumption for the proposed new structures, Wiltshire Council has been used as a reference point. Based on this, the assumption used in the financial analsysis assumes the following for each option:

Appendix 2

- • Three-unitary model – creating three unitary councils

There are currently 70 senior members of staff across the five councils. A total of 41 senior members of staff are required under the three-unitary model. The senior staff headcount will be reduced by 29 across the three-unitary model at a cost of £95k per member of staff.

- • Two-unitary model – creating two unitary councils

There are currently 70 senior members of staff across the five councils. A total of 29 senior members of staff are required under the two-unitary model. The senior staff headcount will be reduced by 41 across the two-unitary model at a cost of £95k per member of staff.

- • Single-unitary model – creating one unitary council

There are currently 70 senior members of staff across the five councils. A total of 17 senior members of staff are required under the single-unitary model. The senior staff headcount will be reduced by 53 across the single-unitary model at a cost of £95k per member of staff.

Savings

Assumption category	Assumption description Source
Senior staff restructuring (estimated savings from comparing current cost to new structure cost)	Publicly available data from each council on the pay policies and senior staff pay has been used. To inform the senior staff assumption for the proposed new structures, Wiltshire Council has been used as a reference point. The estimated current senior staff cost for the County and the five districts is £5.8m + 25% on costs per annum Based on this, the assumption used in the financial analsysis assumes the following for each option: • Three-unitary model – creating three unitary councils The combined cost of the three new organisations is assumed to be based on the following: 3 Chief Executives at £150,000 + 25% on costs per annum 9 Strategic Directors at £100,000 + 25% on costs per annum 29 Heads of Service at £70,000 + 25% on costs per annum The current senior staff costs for the three • Two-unitary model – creating two unitary councils The combined cost of the two new organisation is assumed to be based on the following: 2 Chief Executive at £170,000 + 25% on costs per annum 6 Strategic Directors at £110,000 + 25% on costs per annum 21 Heads of Service at £70,000 + 25% on costs per annum • Single-unitary model – creating one unitary council The senior staff cost for the new organisation is assumed to be based on the following: 1 Chief Executive at £190,300 + 25% on costs per annum 3 Strategic Directors at £120,000 + 25% on costs per annum 13 Heads of Service at £70,000 + 25% on costs per annum
Democratic	Publicly available data from each council on member allowances and expenses has been used to establish the expenditure incurred by members. The average amount of allowances and expenses paid to members of the five councils is £9,361 based on the latest publicly available data (a mixture of 2014/15 and 2015/16 data). Local Government Boundary Commission for England data on member-to-electorate ratios has been used to determine a reasonable member-to-electorate ratio for rural and urban unitary authorities. Under the current democratic structures for the five councils there are currently 236 members. Under the reorganised structures the financial analsysis assumes the following for each option:

	• Three-unitary model – creating three unitary councils with 150 members • Two-unitary model – creating two unitary councils with 120 members • Single-unitary model – creating one unitary council with 90 members No assumption has been made at this stage as to the distribution of the members in each option as this will be determined by a Boundary Commission review as part of the reorganisation process.
Corporate services	Strategic Financial Case reports for three local government reorganisations in England (for two tier to a single county unitary) which suggest Corporate Services, including ICT, savings are possible when combining authorities. As a percentage of total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from Revenue Account (RA) statistics, the estimated average saving across the proposed three Council reorganisations is 2.59%. The 2.59% has been applied to the total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from the RA statistics for 2016/17 for the five councils to calculate the estimated annual saving. It is assumed that in the first full year following reorganisation 33.3% of the estimated annual saving will be achived, 66% in year two and 100% in year three. In each year thereafter, 100% of the estimated savings is assumed to be achieved. It has been assumed that the single unitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two and three unitary options. Therefore, the followng adjustments have been made to reflect this: • Three-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.15. • Two-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10.
Service optimisation	Strategic Financial Case reports for three local government reorganisations in England (for two tier to a single county unitary) which suggest service optimisation efficiency savings are possible when combining authorities. As a percentage of total net service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from RA statistics, the estimated average saving across the proposed three authority reorganisations is 1.62%. The 1.62% has been applied to the total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from the RA statistics for 2016/17 for the five councils to calculate the estimated annual saving. It is assumed that in the first full year following reorganisation 33.3% of the estimated annual saving will be achived, 66% in year two and 100% in year three. In each year thereafter, 100% of the estimated savings is assumed to be achived. It has been assumed that the single unitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two

	and three unitary options. Therefore, the followng adjustments have been made to reflect this: • Three-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.15. • Two-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10.
Property rationalisation	Strategic Financial Case reports for three local government reorganisations in England (for two tier to a single county unitary) which suggest property rationalisation savings are possible when combining authorities. As a percentage of total net service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from RA statistics the estimated average saving across the proposed three authority reorganisations is 0.44%. The 0.44% has been applied to the total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from the RA statistics for 2016/17 for the five councils to calculate the estimated annual saving. It is assumed that in the first full year following reorganisation 33.3% of the estimated annual saving will be achived, 66% in year two and 100% in year three. In each year thereafter, 100% of the estimated savings is assumed to be achived. It has been assumed that the single unitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two and three unitary options. Therefore, the followng adjustments have been made to reflect this: • Three-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.15. • Two-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10.

Dates

Assumption category	Assumption description Source
Reorganisation year	2019/20
Shadow reorganisation year	2018/19

Appendix D: Disaggregation of Buckinghamshire County Council Revenue Budget

Population (2014)	
County	521,922
Aylesbury Vale	184,560
Chiltern	93,972
South Bucks	68,512
Wycombe	174,878

	BCC 2019/2020 Net Budget Requirement £m
Total net budget requirement	335.1
Functions delivered across Buckinghamshire under DC reserve	300.7
Total net budget to be disaggregated	34.4

		Population	% of total Bucks population	Equitable disaggregation of funding from BCC on per capita basis
Three-unitary model	Aylesbury Vale	184,560	35%	12.2
	Chiltern	93,972	31%	10.7
	South Bucks	68,512		
	Wycombe	174,878	34%	11.5
	Total	521,922		34.4

		Population	% of total Bucks population	Equitable disaggregation of funding from BCC on per capita basis
Two-unitary model	Aylesbury Vale	184,560	35%	12.2
	Chiltern	93,972		
	South Bucks	68,512	65%	22.2
	Wycombe	174,878		
	Total	521,922		34.4

		Population	% of total Bucks population	Equitable disaggregation of funding from BCC on per capita basis
Single-unitary model	Aylesbury Vale	184,560		
	Chiltern	93,972		
	South Bucks	68,512	100%	34.4
	Wycombe	174,878		
	Total	521,922		34.4

Appendix E: What each council does

Council services provided by district councils include:

- Household recycling and waste collection
- Local planning and building regulations
- Housing advice
- Licensing
- Environmental health
- Benefits
- Council tax collection
- Community safety
- Public car parks
- Parks and community centres

Council services provided by county councils include:

- Education
- Libraries
- Public health
- Transport
- Social services
- Trading standards
- Registrar of births, deaths and marriages
- Waste disposal

Parish councils may provide the following services:

- Allotment
- Dog and litter bins
- Street lighting
- Grass cutting
- Village halls
- Recreation grounds

The above lists provide an indication of the type of services provided by the different councils but each council provides a more comprehensive list of services.

Appendix F: Outline brief

Outline Brief for Modernising Local Government Business Case in Buckinghamshire – Version 3

This brief has been prepared jointly by the four district councils in Buckinghamshire, namely:
- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Chiltern District Council
- South Bucks District Council
- Wycombe District Council

Background

1. Buckinghamshire has a three-tier local government system, with one county council, four district councils and a large number of town and parish councils. Within Wycombe District, High Wycombe Town is unparished, with the Charter Trustees maintaining the town charter, which includes the election of the Town Mayor with ceremonial duties.

2. Buckinghamshire has a population of 522,000[96], excluding Milton Keynes which became a unitary council in 1997. The County has two of the largest district councils in the country, in population terms, with significantly higher growth plans in Aylesbury Vale compared to the other districts.

3. In September 2014, Bucks Business First published a strategic financial case for Local Government Re-organisation in Buckinghamshire, prepared by Ernst & Young, which examined the following options:

   1. One unitary council to replace the five existing councils;
   2. Two unitary councils, one in the north and one in the south of the County;
   3. One county council and one district council; and
   4. Creating new authorities outside County boundaries.

4. In December 2014, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire County Councils set out their proposal for the Tri-County Strategic Alliance, covering a population of 1.9m people. This was seeking to address the barriers to economic growth, focusing on infrastructure, economic development, integrated transport and public investment in education, skills and training. The initial focus of work has been to establish a Strategic Transport Forum.

5. In April 2015, Aylesbury Vale District Council published a unitary council business case of a two-unitary council structure in Buckinghamshire, prepared by Local Government Futures, with one based on the existing boundaries of Aylesbury Vale and one covering the combined areas of Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks District Council areas.

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[96] 2014 estimate.

6. In summer 2015, there were Buckinghamshire-wide discussions regarding the submission of devolution proposals to Government, which would have involved a commitment to governance reforms. In the event, no submission was made. More recently, the Bucks (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership has been advised by the Government, in preparing its submission for local growth fund 3 bids, of the need for stronger, reformed governance structures, implying that proposals that are aligned with mayoral Combined Authorities (or proposed Combined Authorities) will have an advantage.

7. In May 2016, Buckinghamshire County Council agreed to prepare an outline business case which explores the benefits of a single unitary council in Buckinghamshire, with an invitation to the four district councils and other strategic stakeholders to collaborate in discussions on how local government in Buckinghamshire might be modernised, on the basis of an "independent" review. This report is due to be presented to the County Council's Cabinet in September 2016.

8. At the Bucks (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Board (BTVLEP) meeting on 20 May 2016 Local Authority Board members were asked to press for agreement during current discussions to the BTVLEP leading on co-ordination of the independent review.

9. Local government reform investigations are also being undertaken in Oxfordshire, geographical neighbours to both Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe Districts.

10. The Government has not set out any process for determining unitary government proposals, although statements have been made that they would be willing to consider proposals if there is a consensus from partners in the local area.

11. Discussions regarding local government reform within Buckinghamshire have been held periodically over a number of years, but without any local consensus yet emerging.

Overall requirements from this brief

12. Apart from Aylesbury Vale, the other District Councils have not formed a definitive view on the need for local government reform within Buckinghamshire, nor the model that should be introduced if change is required.

13. To date, not all the unitary options have been explored for Buckinghamshire. This joint study is therefore being collectively commissioned by all four District Councils to ensure that all options are explored, so that there can be an informed debate on the future of local government in Buckinghamshire based on all the alternative solutions.

14. In undertaking this work the four councils are seeking to explore not just the financial savings and costs, but to equally highlight the service delivery and democratic aspects of operation, which your residents equally require from local government in Buckinghamshire.

15. The four District Councils are therefore issuing this joint brief to commission a report examining the strategic business case for creating new unitary government organisations as follows:

Option 1 - Buckinghamshire having a three-unitary council model based on the existing boundaries of Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe District, and the combined existing boundaries of Chiltern and South Bucks Districts;

Option 2 - Buckinghamshire having a two-unitary council model based on one covering the existing boundaries of Aylesbury Vale and one covering the combined existing boundaries of Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe Districts;

Option 3 – Buckinghamshire having a single-unitary council on the existing County boundary.

Option 4 - Any other potential variations, having regard to current developments, for example possible local government reform in Oxfordshire. This option to include exploring a combined authority model for specific functions covering Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, identifying those functions that can be most appropriately delivered to provide both service resilience and economies of scale, as well as how any governance structure would commission and manage services, such as social care. Alternatives for joint service provision also need to be considered as part of this option, for example linking with neighbouring unitary councils. Under this option, regard must be given to how any proposals would complement and enhance the unitary government options within Buckinghamshire, as outlined in options 1 – 3 above. The functions to be specifically explored, but not exclusively, are:

- Adult Social Care and Health
- Children and Families Social Services
- Transport – infrastructure and maintenance
- Strategic Planning in support of Local Plans
- Strategic economic development

The report should set out how the proposals for any combined authority would operate to manage services and functions it is responsible for and the relationship with unitary councils within Buckinghamshire.

16. This approach is necessary because of the need to provide a sustainable solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire, recognising that if a unitary council for one part of the county was created, the current two-tier model would not be viable for the remainder of Buckinghamshire.

17. The above options, along with others produced, will need to be evaluated against set criteria. The report produced therefore needs to be evaluated against the following criteria for each option (except criteria 8 which will be undertaken at a later stage):

1. Delivers stable or improved level of service to residents and businesses.
2. Protects District Council taxpayers' interests on an equitable basis between the four district areas.
3. Locally affordable, representing value for money and can be met from the Councils' existing resources.
4. Provides strong, effective and accountable leadership.
5. Ensures there is strong democratic representation for residents in terms of Councillor/elector ratios.
6. Provides future financial and operating stability.
7. Provides a solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire, not just one part.
8. Supported by a broad cross-section of partners and stakeholders.

9. Facilitates the growth and devolution agenda.

Detailed specification of work required

18. To prepare a written strategic business case by 30 September 2016 that provides independent analysis on the establishment of unitary government in April 2019 based on the options and evaluation criteria outlined in paragraph 15.

19. The report to include, based on explicit methodology and clear assumptions:

Assessment of impact of future changes

- An analysis of the population profile and the impact on resource-hungry services, specifically adult social care and children services.
- The impact of planned housing and economic growth as identified in the draft Local Plans for each District.
- Taking into account the rural and urban nature of the county of Buckinghamshire.

Financial viability and sustainability

- An analysis of the current and future funding situation for local government in Buckinghamshire on a council-by-council basis.
- Initial disaggregation of funding from Buckinghamshire County Council on an equitable basis for each of the options explored, either using data shared by the Buckinghamshire County Council or published data, using whatever is available within the timescale for the completion of this report.
- Financial operating viability of the proposed councils, with income and expenditure models for each option.
- The cost of creating new unitary councils under each option and repaying transition costs within five years, including the use of available reserves on an equitable basis, as well as contract disaggregation, potential employee severance costs and disaggregating and apportioning assets.
- Protecting District Council taxpayers' interests on an equitable basis between the four district areas.
- Projected council tax levels for the first five years of operation.
- Pension liability implications.

Service delivery

- The ability and opportunities to deliver county council services individually and/or collectively in partnership with other unitary councils in Buckinghamshire and/or another provider, including other unitary councils.
- Opportunities for further service improvement and rationalisation, recognising that projected transformation changes that would have been delivered by Buckinghamshire County Council and the District Councils by 2019.
- Opportunities for the harmonisation of fees and charges.

Democratic representation

- Ensuring there is strong democratic representation for residents of Buckinghamshire in terms of Councillor/elector ratios, based on current district council representation, recognising this completely removes the level of County Councilor representation.
- Various representation options need to be explored, with the financial implications outlined for each option.

Parished and unparished areas

- Assessment of further devolution opportunities to town and parish councils within a unitary model(s) of government.
- An analysis of the impact of the change on the unparished part of Wycombe District, namely High Wycombe Town.

Timescale

20. Wycombe District Council is leading on the procurement, on behalf of the other districts. A final report is required by the end of September.

Deloitte.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

Modernising local government report

JANUARY 2017

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Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

January 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is no dispute about the need for change in Buckinghamshire. But real change requires new thinking. A fresh approach, responding to the economies of the place and to the people who live and work there.

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS

"

*There is nothing wrong with change
if it is in the right direction.*
Winston Churchill

"

Buckinghamshire is naturally sliced in two by the topography of the Chiltern Hills. Its distinct communities have been artificially tied together for too long under the administration of an upper tier Council which in turn is obliged to serve two economic masters.

Neither urban nor a collection of market towns, Buckinghamshire is a long strip with no sense of connection between the residents of Buckingham and Burnham. It is fundamentally a divided place. The north is an open area with great potential for rapid growth: a rural vale centred around the towns of Aylesbury and Milton Keynes forming part of the Midlands. The southern communities are nestled in the Chilterns and along the Thames Valley and dominated by their proximity to London: a part of the commuter zone constrained by its green belt and its natural topography. Amersham and Chesham are served by the London Underground and are increasingly used as commuter towns. High Wycombe has pockets of deprivation, rising homelessness and ethnic and religious diversity.

The delivery structures of public services are divided by this geography. The Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) align with the district proposal. So do the local policing areas with a clear division across the natural boundary. The blue light services all recognise Milton Keynes as part of Buckinghamshire. There are no services which are delivered across the county administrative area, although partnerships have formed to help create a pass through the Chiltern Hills. The rivers, rail and roads also reflect the division between the north and south of the County. The poor connectivity between north and south is a product of the topography and emphasises the natural divide.

Milton Keynes, released from the county administrative constraint in 1997, has become the fastest growing city in Europe. Aylesbury could follow suit. The Cambridge to Oxford Corridor is one of the prime growth corridors for UK PLC in the coming decades.

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) recognises Aylesbury Vale as part of that geography and places Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale but – significantly – not the rest of Buckinghamshire – within the Corridor. A unitary Aylesbury Vale working in partnership with its neighbour, has the potential to emulate its success and maximise the potential for growth and increased productivity to the benefit of the UK as a whole.

In the south the pull to London is undeniable. A Council based along the Thames Valley would be able to advocate its cause with its natural partners and can fully benefit from its London and M40 corridor relationships to be part of its own functioning economic geography. The expansion of Heathrow and development of Crossrail will continue to make the south of the County desirable areas for new businesses and those seeking a UK base near London.

Meeting this demand within the constraints of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and green belt requires innovation and agility with a clear focus on developing the infrastructure to maximise land use and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

The new unitary Councils will be able to reshape the relationships with residents focussing on building resilience and independence. Sustainable local government can work alongside people and communities to assist them in securing their own wellbeing with emphasis on early intervention and prevention to reduce demands on hardstretched public services.

Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

Milton Keynes is a growing but yet relatively small unitary (population: 261.7k). The opportunity to share delivery with similar community needs has the potential to improve the resilience of Aylesbury and Milton Keynes. To the south, the increasing number of families being housed in Bucks from Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon to help with the London homelessness crisis requires a different sphere of close working relationships, looking towards London.

The County Council has shouldered the responsibility of delivering strategic services across this divided County. Strategic transport and infrastructure has been driven by the need to provide north/south connectivity. What is more important is connecting economies and communities to their natural neighbours - to the Midlands in the north, and the Thames Valley and London in the south. Social care administered across these different and unconnected communities has proved to be increasingly costly and has failed to realise the economies of scale a large population would ordinarily provide in areas with a clear social and economic centre.

Unsurprisingly the administration has struggled. It has struggled to improve the performance of its services; struggled to keep pace with the rapid growth of its northern neighbour and above all struggled to make ends meet.

An analysis of Buckinghamshire which concludes that reorganising the local government deck chairs will provide the solution is blind to the problems the County faces. An analysis which fails to acknowledge the significant role which Milton Keynes plays in this County is fundamentally flawed and an analysis which assumes that any new Council will be constrained by existing administrative boundaries lacks vision and the ability to engage in unfettered thinking. Real change requires new thinking: this is an opportunity to move beyond the status quo, to a structure that is fit for the future.

The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.
Albert Einstein

OUR SUBMISSION

We propose to abolish the five Councils that currently operate on a two tier basis. We believe that the best option is for three Councils across Buckinghamshire. This would create two new unitary Councils: one in the north (population: 188.7k) alongside the existing unitary of Milton Keynes (population: 261.7k) and one in the south to cover the area of the three southern district councils (population: 339.7k). Partnership working between the two northern unitaries can provide economies of scale for both councils. This proposal respects the economic geography and the communities of Buckinghamshire.

However, if there is a decision to support a one new unitary solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire the four districts believe that this should be to create two new Councils of fairly equal size which allow for appropriate economic and community based relationships. The proposal by the County Council would create two mismatched Councils (population: 528.4k and 261.7k) that cut through the middle of the economic geography.

[The districts proposal] Saves money while allowing disparate communities of North and South Bucks to be catered for most effectively
Della Fitzgerald, Secretary, Marlow Museum

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The options under consideration are as follows:

OPTION 1

ONE NEW UNITARY

One new unitary model based on the existing geography of the County Council administrative area and Milton Keynes. Under this model each of the two Councils would deliver the full range of services.

OPTION 2

TWO NEW UNITARIES

A two new unitary model based on the existing boundaries of Milton Keynes existing unitary Council, Aylesbury Vale proposed unitary and a proposed unitary covering the combined area of Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils. Under this option each Council would be responsible for the delivery of all council services. It is proposed that closer working between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale unitaries could realise efficiencies across both Councils. There would also be joint delivery of back office services across two or more of the three unitary Councils.

CRITERIA ANALYSIS

The following table provides a rating (1 or 2) for each option against the non-financial criteria (1 being the highest scoring rating for each criterion). For ease of comparison the same set of criteria have been used as the County Council business case. The criteria have been allocated with an equal weighting and the overarching score has been calculated by adding the scores of the first three criteria with the average score for the last four sustainability criteria. Where both models have equal merit they have both been allocated the highest score (1).

Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

Options criteria	One new unitary model	Two new unitary model
1. Service performance	2	1
2. Democratic leadership & accountability	2	1
3. Local engagement & decision making	2	1
Sustainability		
4. Economic growth	2	1
5. Skills and capacity	2	1
6. Engagement of supply chain	1	1
7. Co-terminosity with partners (partnership working)	2	1
Overarching score	7.75*	4*
Overarching rank	Second	First

* Scores calculated from the average of the sustainability criteria 4,5,6 and 7 plus the sum of criteria 1,2 and 3. *e.g. option 2 ((1+1+1+1 / 4)) +1+1+1 = 4*

The following table provides a summary of the high level revenue costs and savings (on a real basis) estimated for each option over a five-year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24:

Income foregone, costs and savings	One new unitary model £m	Two new unitary model £m
Total income foregone (Council tax)	8.7	1.1
Total costs (staff, reorganisation change costs)	14.3	14.3
Total savings (staff, democratic and efficiency savings)	95.9	72.8
Net savings	72.9	57.4

Note: A detailed breakdown of the financial analysis is included in the full report. Savings are against annual revenue outturn total service expenditure of £1.3 billion (based on 2015/16 RO data) and £6.8 billion over the five year period, assuming this level of annual expenditure is maintained.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The financial analysis concludes that a two new unitary solution could deliver savings of nearly £58m over five years to residents of Buckinghamshire. A new single unitary would deliver nearly £73m over the same period. These savings are against a total annual budget of £1,357m across the county i.e. £6,785m over five years.

The total scores allocated in relation to the non-financial analysis indicate option 2 is more advantageous than option 1. The financial analysis recognises the additional savings potential from option 1 but option 2 is the preferred overall option as it has the strongest delivery along with potential for significant savings.

OUR VISION

Given the challenges faced in Buckinghamshire systemic and innovative change is required to ensure that local government is sustainable and meets the changing needs and aspirations of residents. The vision is therefore built around the following principles:

1. Local government will be rooted in communities and residents will be empowered to participate in the design and delivery of services for their local area;

2. Administrative boundaries and democratic accountability will reflect real economic and community geographies to allow aligned planning, consistent prioritisation and place based action to improve outcomes for residents and ensure that the deployment of public money is optimised;

3. Community resilience will be enhanced by providing 'just enough' of the right services at the right time, thereby promoting independence and the capabilities of individuals, rather than perpetuating a paternalistic model of local government which increases dependency;

4. There will be clear focus on achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth that creates shared prosperity and promotes resilience and independence.

5. Collaboration and partnership working between public bodies will be enhanced by coterminous working, shared prioritisation and joint action;

6. Innovation in the use of data and technology and in the design and delivery of public services to best reflect and support the way people live their lives and improve effectiveness, productivity and efficiency.

—— ❙❙ ——

"The difference in scale between Aylesbury Vale and the rest of Bucks (e.g. Aylesbury Vale is one of the fastest growing areas in the country) requires specialist expertise to ensure that this is delivered in the most efficient and timely planned manner with a focus that would be lost as part of a larger authority."

Nick Cummins, Executive Director, Bromford Housing Association

—— ❙❙ ——

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Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

OUR AMBITION

One Direction - each council focussed on one economic geography

Even More Local - two councils provides greater local accountability

More Effective - the right services at the right time improves outcomes and builds resilience

More Efficient - thriving economies and resilient communities provide sustainability

Why our ambition makes sense for Buckinghamshire:

ONE DIRECTION

The north and south of Buckinghamshire are very different functional economic areas, with distinctive characteristics, challenges and opportunities. Two new unitaries in Buckinghamshire would allow each Council to pursue its own economic goals focused in just one direction.

Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes are part of the Cambridge to Oxford Corridor identified by the NIC as a priority area for national growth. By contrast, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe are part of the Thames Valley and West of London economy. National infrastructure investments such as Crossrail and the expansion of Heathrow in the south, and East West Rail between Cambridge and Oxford - along with the potential expressway, will further intensify this functional difference.

Buckinghamshire has been punching below its weight in terms of economic growth. In particular the key urban centres of Aylesbury and Wycombe have been significantly underperforming in terms of productivity and growth indices. Compared to the Thames Valley NUTS2 sub-region, growth across Buckinghamshire GVA was £1.4 billion lower from 1997 to 2014 missing out on 15,000 new jobs. Had it performed to the level of Milton Keynes it would have delivered additional GVA of £4.6 billion,

35,000 jobs and 5,000 businesses. Milton Keynes, separated from the County to become a unitary in 1997, is now consistently one of the most successful, fastest growing and sustainable cities.

The confusion of the LEP geographies would be resolved by two new unitaries, allowing the LEPs to support and drive growth with a clear focus and direction. At present, the administrative geography of the LEP boundaries hinders this clarity of thought and action. Bucks Thames Valley LEP (BTVLEP) was the last LEP to be formed in 2012. Aylesbury Vale had two years previously joined the South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP)- itself a natural evolution from the Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM) growth area. The Thames Valley Berkshire LEP would better reflect the Thames Valley economic area if it were to include the Chiltern Thames Valley - and offer real prospects for strong partnership working with Enterprise M3 LEP. This arrangement may also provide more sustainable and agile building blocks for future devolution deals based around real issues such as the NIC Cambridge to Oxford Corridor and Thames Valley / Heathrow hub.

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY MAP

EVEN MORE LOCAL

Two new unitary Councils means arrangements are even more local. Our proposal creates a new opportunity for more local involvement in decision making and true local accountability.

There is a need for local ward councillors to reclaim their community leadership role as the accepted and mandated voice of citizens. Councils supported by local councillors work hard to stimulate good local economic growth and engage with local communities encouraging them to reduce the demand on services and to step into the breach left by the withdrawal of publicly provided services. Councils, and councillors, will need new approaches to do this successfully, such as utilising less formal social networks, participatory democracy, better engagement with young people and a broader influencing role, rather than the more formal traditional structures associated with the public sector.

There are crucial roles for councillors not only in being civic entrepreneurs but also in providing visible civic leadership to enable and support the work of others. Councillors work hard to foster strong relationships and within local communities through partnerships, with Parish Councils, Town Councils and Community Associations; through their service on the boards of local voluntary organisations; their membership of local Business Improvement District Boards and through their wider engagement within their communities to identify individuals from all walks of life, and organisations from all sectors who want to play a role and to inspire others to do the same and more.

They need recognition and support, to help them enhance their role as key influencers and door-openers to other community leaders who can make things happen. Businesses create wealth, not the state, but local government can create the conditions for enterprise to thrive by engaging the private sector and universities to develop their distinctive economic assets. The challenge is to create a new relationship between the citizen and the state, rebuild trust and ensure good local integration between health, social care and other services.

> [The area] *"Splits into two natural geographical areas. More local, responds to local issues more effectively without the need for bureaucratic and time consuming "hubs". Less additional work and pressure is thrown on to Parish Councillors (who are volunteers) compared with the single unitary option. AVDC has a great record of innovating income streams for long term financial stability."*
>
> Clive Rodgers,
> Vice-Chairman, Swanbourne Parish Council

MORE EFFECTIVE

There is no disagreement that the delivery of services will be aided by the demise of the two tier system. A new Council will have the opportunity to write a new chapter. Officials at the Department for Education considered that Ofsted's 'inadequate' judgement in 2014 was at the more serious end of the spectrum of failure. (Red Quadrant Report February 2015). More than two years on, Ofsted are saying that the progress of improvement is too slow, and the service continues to fail to meet its own performance targets. Improvements should not be assumed from Local Government Reorganisation alone.

Even an investment into the services, as has been shown already, will not of itself bring about the necessary improvement. A reappraisal of why the recent investment in Children's Services by the County Council has failed to achieve the level of improvement expected by Ofsted will be required and a model developed which will enable the new Councils to achieve their performance targets. At the heart of this reappraisal will be a drive to focus professional resources on active engagement with children, families and communities and an enhanced approach to partnership working in localities building trust and a shared focus on outcomes amongst agencies.

Approaches must respond to the particular challenges faced in Buckinghamshire and the different communities within the County area. There are distinct differences between the make up of the communities in the two main towns of High Wycombe and Aylesbury which are apparent from the data about the two places. There are also different challenges faced in the different housing areas. For example across Buckinghamshire only 48% of children are placed within the Council's area compared to 75% in Milton Keynes. There is no shortage of housing in the north of the county whilst the south is experiencing price rises and housing shortages.

Design and delivery of local services will be sensitive to the particular needs of different communities. Improving effectiveness in Children's Services is all about providing just enough of the right service at the right time and targeting response where it is needed. A think family approach, building family and community resilience and developing our work force so that we continue to improve outcomes for families is the way forward. This must take place in a co-ordinated, integrated and, wherever possible, co-located way with partners. There must be highly effective leadership and management with a vision of continuous improvement and strong political and community support.

'This new opportunity for Children's Services will deliver the "Right services for Buckinghamshire children and families at the Right time," improving their outcomes and building both their resilience and that of their particular communities'.

Andrew Fraser, former Director of Children's Services, London Borough of Enfield

"Buckinghamshire is a very large and diverse county. North and South are vastly different and our needs and population are very different. We need closer connections and understanding.

Two unitary option - This would provide some economy of scale and retain the element of local representation and knowledge which we believe is extremely important"

Sharon Henson, Clerk/RFO, West Wycombe Parish Council

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Proposal for Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

MORE EFFICIENT

The financial analysis concludes that a two new unitary solution could deliver savings of nearly £58 million over five years to residents of Buckinghamshire. However, two new unitary Councils with a focus on economic growth emulating Milton Keynes, have the potential to enable both Councils to significantly improve growth and productivity. Additional GVA and house building have a direct financial benefit both in national revenue and for the Councils concerned. The change to unitary status will not bring about this growth unless there is a redirection of strategic focus - allowing the different areas of Buckinghamshire to operate within their own functioning economic geographies.

The vision of our proposal is about independence and delivering the right amount of help when needed. Low level intervention, coupled with effective early intervention has been successful in enabling people to live in their own homes for longer, for providing independence for people with long term conditions and empowering communities and the voluntary sector to play a role in providing early help and support to people in their own homes. This approach if rigourously pursued can reduce the number of people who require care outside their own homes. The budget analysis for Adult Social Care shows that £74.7 million (58%) was spent supporting service users no longer able to live in their own homes, a significant proportion of the overall spend and one which is subject to upward cost pressures now and in the future. Because of the high and rising cost of care, a small increase in the number of those able to remain in their homes with support would have an impact on budget spend.

Between April 2015 and August 2015, the cost of nursing placements for older people in Buckinghamshire increased by over 11% and for the provision of short term Respite Care for Older People increased by 23%.

These are people who are capable of living in the community but for whom respite is provided to relieve their community carers. Developing community support to relieve the strain on carers is one significant way that rising costs can be contained. Empowered communities and self sufficient individuals in control of their own lives need less and consume less public services.

We have successfully developed ways of earning additional revenue and reducing our own costs through innovation. Aylesbury Vale District Council's approach to digital delivery has been recognized as leading the way and there is real scope to extend the use of digital delivery into social care and health care. Aylesbury Vale have also pursued a policy of commercialism and targeted charges for added value services, where surpluses generated will be reinvested to support core activities.

Wycombe District Council has capitalised on its land values to provide a revenue stream through the effective development and management of commercial property. This approach provides an ongoing revenue stream which continues to support the delivery of other services.

Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils' have successfully partnered with each other including a joint. Chief Executive. This approach can be replicated under new structures to support effective partnering. Beyond this, expanding into new markets, which support the objectives of the councils, thereby providing added value and profits for reinvestment will help to support and protect services. A new approach to building thriving economies and resilient communities alongside innovation will create genuinely sustainable local government.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our proposed two new unitary model is capable of implementation on the same delivery timescale as the one new unitary proposal submitted by the County Council. The detailed work has been undertaken which would enable the first steps to be taken very quickly and shadow arrangements put in place to support the transition.

It remains important to recognise that the financial benefits realised from restructure will not be sufficient to avoid the need for ongoing transformation to continue. Political leadership and management must also continue to be focused on the urgent improvement work in Children's Services without being distracted by any decision towards transition to unitary status.

We have a track record of successfully bringing together two organisations into one with minimum disruption to delivery. We also have expertise in modernisation through innovation. We see this as an opportunity for real change and to design new councils fit for the future.

> *"The district councils are in a good position to support businesses and they need greater powers, such as control of highways, to make things happen more quickly.*
>
> *"The county council's proposals for one council – probably based in Aylesbury – with various hubs, committees, and town and parish councils doing different things in different areas is not a 'one stop shop'– it would be worse than the current situation."*

Peter Keen,
Chairman of bed manufacturer Hypnos

For more information visit:

Aylesbury Vale District Council
www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/mlg

Chiltern District Council
www.chiltern.gov.uk/unitaryupdate

South Bucks District Council
www.chiltern.gov.uk/unitaryupdate

Wycombe District Council
www.wycombe.gov.uk/mlg

PART A

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF OUR REPORT

Wycombe, Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks district councils have produced this report to set out the case for change and the service and financial benefits of reorganising local government in Buckinghamshire.

This section of the report provides:

- Context for local government reorganisation in Buckinghamshire;

- What does Unitary mean;

- An overview of Buckinghamshire public sector landscape;

- The geography for key public agencies.

CONTEXT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Any reorganisation of local government in Buckinghamshire should be designed to sit at the heart of wider public sector reform and transformation. Without this, consolidation of local government into a single tier, whilst providing important savings, will not create the improved outcomes and long term sustainability which residents require. Indeed, unless this happens there is a real danger that an inward-focused reorganisation of local government will get in the way of much-needed integration and transformation in the health and care system and other key aspects of public sector reform, without which the savings achieved will be more than consumed by cost pressures elsewhere. Set in the wider context, local government reorganisation should enable and accelerate reform across the public sector providing leadership of place and democratic accountability, in the face of rapidly rising demand for public services as a result of demographic change and continued resource constraint across the public sector. Reform should also be the catalyst to accelerate and unlock economic growth, which not only benefits the local area but can also provide much needed boost to the national dividend. Most importantly of all local government will need to reshape its relationship with the residents of Buckinghamshire, focusing much more on building resilience and independence rather than defaulting automatically to traditional forms of service provision. Sustainable local government will work alongside people and communities to assist them in securing their own wellbeing, with much greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention to avoid demand for hard-stretched public services.

WHAT DOES UNITARY MEAN?

Unitary Local Authorities have responsibility for all local government services within a defined geographic area. In recent years a number of areas have transitioned from tier structures to unitary models. The most recent unitary authorities were created in 2009 and include the establishment of unitary authorities in Bedfordshire, Cheshire, Northumberland, Shropshire, Wiltshire, Cornwall and Durham.

Unitary structures can bring together services which are delivered in silos and remove duplication within the two-tier system, such as back office services. Further, the removal of separate tiers of local government removes any potential confusion from the perspective of residents and businesses with regard to responsibility for service delivery. Unitary models can also provide a single point of accountability for strategic decision making on behalf of the entire area and a more joined-up strategic approach.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LANDSCAPE

Buckinghamshire has six councils: Buckinghamshire County Council, Milton Keynes Council (unitary authority), Aylesbury Vale District Council, Wycombe District Council, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council.

Buckinghamshire has 180 parish and town councils with a further 37 parish meetings, and a total population of 790,162. Milton Keynes is the only unitary Council in Buckinghamshire and has a population of 261,762. Aylesbury Vale is the largest district council with a population of 188,707. Wycombe District Council is the second largest district council with a population of 176,028. Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils have populations of 94,545 and 69,120 respectively.[1] Residents are represented by seven Members of Parliament, 57 unitary councillors; 49 county councillors and 187 district council members.

Surrounding unitary authorities include Central Bedfordshire with a population of 274,022, Bedford Borough Council with a population of 166,252, Wokingham with a population of 160,409, Slough Borough Council with a population of 145,734 and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead with a population of 147,708.[2] The

[1] Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015
[2] Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015

Appendix 3

London Borough of Hillingdon with a population of 297,735 is a neighbour on the Southern border. Surrounding top tier authorities include, Hertfordshire County Council, Northamptonshire County Council and Oxfordshire County Council. Surrounding local authority districts include South Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council South Northamptonshire Council and Wellingborough Borough Council.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF DELIVERY FOR KEY PUBLIC AGENCIES

Public service administrative areas within the ceremonial county of Buckinghamshire are currently delivered on different functioning geographies. We believe our proposal for two new unitary councils better fits with local functional administrative areas that already exist (as demonstrated on the maps that follow).

A new unitary, covering what is left of the ceremonial county of Buckinghamshire as proposed by the County Council, will we believe not represent the best outcome for our communities. This is because it does not reflect the more local administrative boundaries of our other public service providers on the ground.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

County Council Proposal

District Council Proposal

BLUE LIGHT SERVICES

Police: Thames Valley Police Constabulary covers Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire.

It has 12 local policing areas – four of which are within Buckinghamshire (see left). Policing at the local level reflects a more functional geography.

Fire: Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service cover the whole of the ceremonial county area.

Ambulance: South Central Ambulance Service NHS Hospital Trust covers the broadest geography and includes Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire.
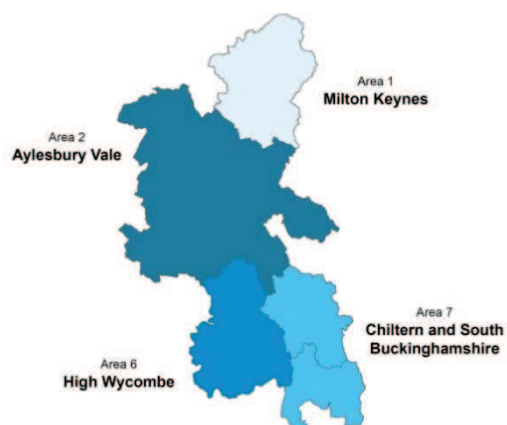
HEALTH SERVICES

Buckinghamshire is covered by **three Clinical Commission Groups** that are broadly co-terminous with the unitary and district boundaries as shown to the left (a bit of the MK CCG area extends into Aylesbury area to cover north of Leighton Buzzard and a bit of the AV CCG spills over to the west to include Thame).
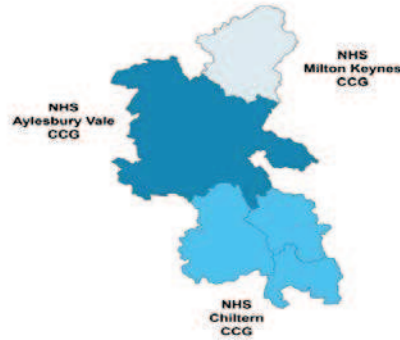
CCG Areas in Buckinghamshire

Strategic Planning for Health and Social Care (STP)

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ('BOB') have a shared **Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)**. This place-based, strategic plan demonstrates how key partners across the health and social care system will work together to drive transformation to meet future demand and close the health and wellbeing gap. The footprint of the STP covers a population of 1.8 million, seven CCGs, 16 foundation trusts and 14 local authorities. This footprint excludes Milton Keynes.

STP area for Bucks, Oxon and Berks

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

Bucks Thames Valley LEP

There are two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) which operate in Buckinghamshire to provide direction and co-ordination for economic development programmes across the region.

The **Bucks Thames Valley LEP** created in 2012 includes all four District Councils and therefore overlaps with SEMLEP which was already established.
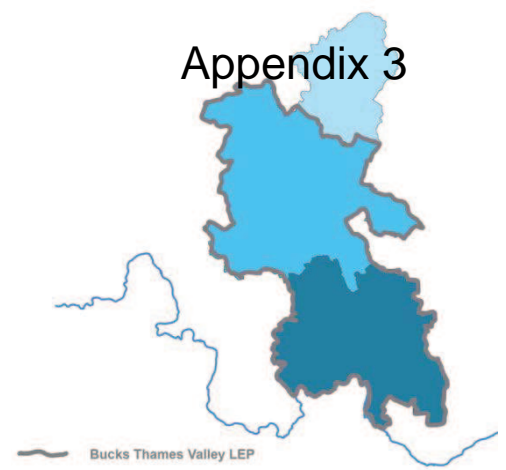
South East Midlands LEP

Aylesbury Vale District Council joined SEMLEP in 2011. SEMLEP and Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP) merged in August 2016 and now comprises: Aylesbury Vale District; Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Cherwell District, Corby Borough, Daventry District, East Northamptonshire District, Kettering Borough, Luton Borough, Milton Keynes, Northampton Borough, South Northamptonshire District and Wellingborough Borough Council.

SEMLEP Area (green outline)

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

Buckinghamshire is part of the England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance. This is a **partnership of nine Local Transport Authorities and four Local Enterprise Partnerships**. The alliance covers an area of 120,000 sq km between London, the Midlands and beyond. The area covered by the Strategic Alliance is home to 3.45 million people and 175,000 businesses, providing over 1.6 million jobs. The alliance has been formed to implement a new delivery model which is focused on providing strategic leadership to determine a single set of priorities for economic growth.[1]

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[1] http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/strategic-leadership.aspx

Appendix 3

WHY WE NEED CHANGE

The profile of Buckinghamshire is set to change over the next 20 years. If we are to be ready to embrace future economic growth opportunities – and an increasing and diverse population that will place demands on our services, public service transformation and change is required now. There is no dispute about the need for change and a detailed analysis of the need to change is set out within the Strategic Options Case document at page 30 onwards.

To deliver needed transformation and improved outcomes the geography that local government operates on in Buckinghamshire must change. Past success has been achieved in spite of challenges of current arrangements – and the new 'part-county' model that has been proposed by the County Council is not the right geography for the future. By setting local government in the context of real and functional geographies that make sense both physically and economically, we will be in a position to deliver better outcomes for our residents and businesses. Liberation from a historic county boundary model, as Milton Keynes achieved in 1997, will enable us to make a greater contribution to UK PLC and remove the potential for local governance conflict on the delivery of nationally important infrastructure schemes that are planned for opposite ends of our county. Creating two new unitary councils will focus us in the right directions and at the right functional geography to deliver: one direction and even more local for our communities and businesses.

Looking at Buckinghamshire as a whole masks the diversity that exists in our communities. Looking at Buckinghamshire without consideration of Milton Keynes is short sighted and masks the potential to build links on strong synergies that are already in place. Looking at Buckinghamshire as a whole masks the story of what is happening at a more local level – and stifles us.

Our Place

The Vale of Aylesbury and the Chiltern Hills that make up our Buckinghamshire landscape are attractive and desirable places for people to want to live in, work in and visit: but they are two distinctive places and have a different outlook that is fundamentally down to topography. **The Chiltern Hills form a natural spine that bisects our county.** Over a quarter of the Chiltern Hills area is protected as part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – with a third also designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The Vale of Aylesbury on the other hand is less constrained physically with its flat rural landscape has fewer development restrictions.
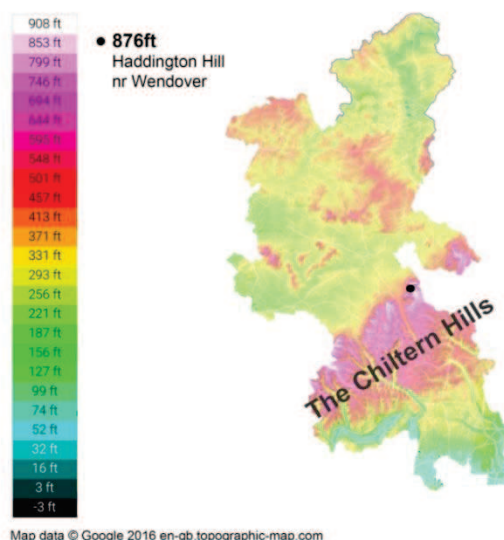
Map x1   The topography of Buckinghamshire

Our people

Buckinghamshire has a population of **528,400** [i] (790,132 including Milton Keynes (MK)) and has 216,690 residential properties (325,160 with MK).

Our updated Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) published in December 2016 shows that **by 2033**, our forecast population will have increased by 74,797. Taking on board additional market signals, this translates to a need for **45,383 new homes** - 5,585 more homes than the demographic forecast alone would predict. Factoring this uplift into our population projection, the growth forecast would suggest a more likely **increase of 85,000 people by 2033** - bringing Buckinghamshire's population to **613,400 by 2033** (16% increase). This projection does not include growth in Milton Keynes as it sits outside of our HEDNA. [Map x13 (and subsequent map references in this section) can be found in the Buckinghamshire Profile at Appendix 1].

The proposed **Northern Unitary** encompassing Aylesbury Vale has a higher working age population (58.4%) than the Southern Unitary area (56%) and **is attracting more mid-life adults from the UK and beyond**. From 2014 to 2015, natural population change and migration forecast 4,147 more people living in the vale (188,707). 1,200 of these arrived from outside of the UK – including a significant number of 20-34 year olds (600).

From 2014 to 2015, the population increased by 2,331 people in the proposed **Southern Unitary area** to 339,693. The migration contribution to this change is smaller (739 UK and 530 from outside of UK), but the mid-lifers that are joining our communities have more very young children (700 under 4s). The resident population in this area has an increasing number of over 65 and over 80 year olds too. [Map 1]

All areas in Buckinghamshire show an annual reduction in the under 20s reflecting moves away to study. Not all of our young people return to the area.

Our population is multi-cultural – with established communities having diversity that is unique to their location. For example, Wycombe is home to the largest population of **St Vincentians** outside of the Caribbean (2% of population); South Bucks is home to a large **Indian** community (7.1%) and both Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale are home to a growing community of people from **Pakistan** (7.6% and 3.1% respectively). Our BME population has increased in all areas and in some areas by more than half over the last ten years and this trend looks set to continue. Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern Hills BME populations are 10.4% and 15.3% respectively. The 2011 Census also told us that nearly half of our residents that said they were born outside of the UK arrived in the last ten years – mostly from Poland and Pakistan. Milton Keynes has the highest BME population in Buckinghamshire at 20%, with the largest communities from **Africa** (5.2% with Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Africa being well represented) and India (3.3%) [Map x2]

The **socio-economic** make up of our communities is split by geography. The Southern area has 35.9% of the population in higher and intermediate managerial and professional roles compared to 29.7% in Aylesbury Vale (25.4% in Milton Keynes). The proportion of skilled manual workers is higher in Aylesbury Vale (20.3%) and Milton Keynes (18.3%) with the high levels in Wycombe (18.8%) bringing the Chiltern Hills close behind (17.6%). More semi-skilled and non-skilled (24.2%) roles are found in Milton Keynes with 16.8% in Aylesbury and Wycombe. [Map x9]

Our economy and economic potential

Our residents are **economically active** (76.4 – 84.1%) with 9 – 13% of people self-employed (18% in the South). The **reasons for people not working are different across our communities**. Retired and looking after family are universal. **Long-term sickness**, although below the South East average (18.8%), features in the North Unitary area (16.7%; 3,300 people) and Milton Keynes (17.8%; 7,000 people) but not in the South Unitary area. **Workless households** are also recognised in the North Unitary area (11.4%, 6,900 people) and Milton Keynes (12.2%, 10,100 people) and reflect the South East average (12.2%). Our claimant counts and benefit claimants are all below the South East average of 1.1% and 8.6% respectively. [Map x8, 9, 10]

The area has adopted the term the 'Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain'. The UK Business Count tells us that there are **33,065 businesses in the two-tier area** and **47,145** with Milton Keynes [Map x11]

There is a very **strong micro-economy** (0-9 employees) across the area (86 – 90% of businesses or 40,950 of total). Aylesbury Vale has created **three Enterprise Zones** to attract inward investment. Key employment areas in the Southern area, such as Cressex Park in High Wycombe and Globe Business Park in Marlow face different challenges

with access and egress and an inability to grow due to land constraints. Milton Keynes has the highest number of large employers (250+ employees) at 95 (compared to 25 in the North unitary area and 45 in the south) – many of which are UK HQ. Our key economic and educational assets are shown in the diagram below. [Map x12 also]

Map x   Key economic and educational assets in Buckinghamshire

Key employment sectors vary across Buckinghamshire. The 'top five' sectors that we have in common are: wholesale and retail (17.8 – 22%); human health (8.4 - 13.7%); professional, scientific and technical services (8.2 - 12.9%); and information and communications (4.8 – 8.5%) and construction (4.1 – 5%). Aylesbury, Wycombe and Milton Keynes also have manufacturing as a sector (6.1 – 8.8%) [Map x10]

There is a productive economy which creates jobs. Our job density scores range from 0.75 jobs per person in the North Unitary area to **1.04 jobs per person in Milton Keynes**. The South Unitary area job density ranges from 0.8 to 0.96. However, the actual performance of businesses in the area across all innovation measures is disappointing, as demonstrated in the Benchmarking Local Innovation report produced ERC last year, where Oxfordshire was ranked the top area nationally, with the SEMLEP area coming third. Bucks TV on the other hand was 37th out of 45, marginally ahead of Humber and the NE & Highlands and Islands.

Although it is broadly an affluent area in the South East, with employment opportunities and low unemployment, there are communities that are more challenged and have pockets of deprivation in the towns of High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chesham in particular. Many of the rural areas also have challenges with access to housing and services which is due to their remoteness. Some people have more complex needs. [Map x4].

Nearly nine out ten of residents (86%) rate their health as good or very good but there are **health inequalities** linked to deprivation: life expectancy levels can reduce by up to 7.3 years for a man and 5.7 years for a woman depending on location of birth in Buckinghamshire. Life expectancy in Milton Keynes at 79.1 (male) and 82.6 (female) are both marginally below the England average of 79.5 (male) and 83.2 (female). 14% of our residents report a long-term health condition or disability that has an impact on their day-to-day life. [Map x5].

Finding and affording a home in Buckinghamshire is a challenge for many people. Using an average house price figure for Buckinghamshire of £401,983 (October 2016) masks a range from £321,729 in Aylesbury to £619,526 in South Bucks. Only Milton Keynes at £245,430 is below the South East average £312,509 [Map x13]. Affordability is a key issue for our residents and the need to provide affordable housing for key workers for example and social housing is a challenge. The increase in our ageing population also means that there is a growing need for 'extra care' accommodation, especially in the Southern area.

We can add more value to UK PLC

The key reason for change in Buckinghamshire now is so we can fully contribute to the Governments ambitious growth and infrastructure plans – both those being implemented now (HS2 / Crossrail) and those being planned for the future (Cambridge to Oxford Corridor and Heathrow expansion). The value that Buckinghamshire can add to UK PLC with respect to GVA is set out in the One Direction section of this report (page X below) – but in short, since 1997, Milton Keynes has outperformed Buckinghamshire significantly.

The strategies for planning infrastructure and economic growth and development are at opposite ends of the spectrum in north and south of Buckinghamshire. They need different focus - and different partnership arrangements to enact and sustain. The Southern area is a more natural match to the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP) area and Aylesbury Vale is already part of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) – with each new unitary area having **one direction** to focus in opens up opportunities for our communities, businesses and our relationship with Government to contribute more fully to UK PLC.

BTVLEP (grey outline)   SEMPLEP (green outline) Berkshire Thames Valley LEP (purple outline)

Looking North: future plans   **Looking South: future plans**
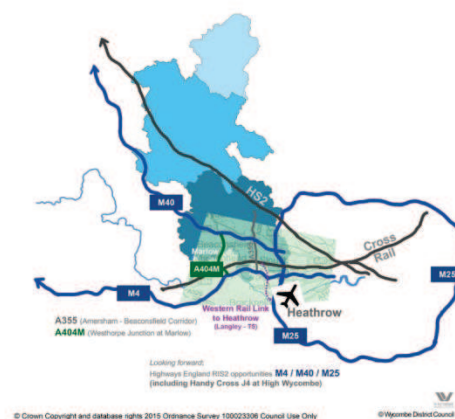
Why we need two new unitary Councils in Buckinghamshire.

Influence of London

Thames Valley economic area

South East Midlands LEP

Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

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Appendix 3

FINANCIAL PRESSURE ON AUTHORITIES

The 2015/16 Deloitte 'State of the State' report outlines the financial pressures faced by central and local government. The government's net liabilities have increased by £624 billion, 51 per cent, since 2009/10. This includes £314 billion of borrowing to fund the deficit and £167 billion of rising public sector pension liability. These financial pressures have led to a 37 per cent real terms reduction in funding over the past five years for local government in England. At the same time, demand for services including social care and housing has risen and will continue to rise. Since 2005 the number of people aged 85 and over – and most likely to require social care support – has gone up by a third, and two out of every five councils in England will have more children ready to start primary school in 2016 than they have places. The report also highlights how local authorities may struggle to deliver their medium-term financial plans. The National Audit Office (NAO) reported concerns in 2014 as to whether 52 per cent of single and upper tier authorities would be able to deliver their medium-term financial plans. As councils are legally required to set balanced budgets there is no precedent for financial failure in local government. This means financial difficulties might only become evident when services fail, with potentially distressing consequences to the public.

The Local Government Association (LGA) published a future funding outlook report. The latest version of that report published in June 2015 predicts that there will be a £6bn gap in 2016/17 between the funding available and the spending required to deliver local council services at 2014/15 levels. The report projects the funding gap will increase to £10.3bn by 2018/19. Social care and waste management spend is predicted to absorb a rising proportion of the resources available to councils resulting in a 35 per cent reduction of other services by the end of this decade.

All authorities in the area face financial challenges and the delivery options considered in this proposal represent an opportunity to ease some of these pressures. The section below outlines the current and future funding situation for local government in Buckinghamshire on a council-by-council basis.

The main sources of funding for local government are:

- Central government grants
- Business rates
- Council tax
- Fees and charges
- Investment income

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX

Changes to the way in which local government is funded in England will mean councils are facing sharp reductions in the amount of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) they have historically received with the RSG expected to end for all councils by 2020/21 as part of finance reforms to localise business rate retention. Under the current business rate retention scheme there is a system of top-ups and tariffs to redistribute funding from local authorities that collect more in business rates than their identified need, to those who do not collect enough for their needs, i.e. councils may receive additional income or will make a contribution from the rates they collect.

Another significant element of funding from central government is the New Homes Bonus grant paid by central government to councils to reflect and incentivise housing growth in their areas by rewarding councils with a payment equivalent to six years' council tax for each additional new home they add. However, a government consultation published in December 2015 proposed to reduce the amount to four years' council tax for each new home the draft Finance Settlement published December 2016 confirmed the government's intentions in this area.

The following tables summarise the funding (RSG, estimated business rates, the New Homes Bonus scheme and council tax) for each council based on their respective Medium Term Financial Plans, Statement of Accounts, four-year DCLG settlements and New Home Bonus grant allocations:

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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£23.7m	£8.08m	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£40.7m	£41.5m	£42.8m	£44.1m
New homes bonus	£3.6m	£3.2m	£2.4m	£2.3m
Council tax*	£245.1m	£259.3m	£274.2m	£290.0m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£1.6m	£11.0m

*Council tax increase by 3.99% each year including the 2% Social Care precept.

AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£1.6m	£0.6m	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£3.7m	£3.7m	£3.8m	£3.9m
New homes bonus	£8.3m	£7.9m	£6.1m	£5.8m
Council tax*	£9.7m	£9.9m	£10.2m	£10.6m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£20k	£700k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£0.4m	£0	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.5m
New homes bonus	£1.0m	£1.1m	£0.9m	£0.8m
Council tax*	£7.3m	£7.5m	£7.7m	£7.9m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£414k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year.

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SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£0.4m	£0.1m	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£1.0m	£1.0m	£1.1m	£1.1m
New homes bonus	£1.5m	£1.1	£0.8m	£0.8m
Council tax*	£4.7m	£4.9m	£5.1m	£5.2m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£170k	£410k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year.

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£1.5m	£0.6	£0.1	£0
Estimated business rate income	£3.1m	£3.1m	£3.2m	£3.3m
New homes bonus	£3.7m	£2.3m	£1.8m	£1.7m
Council tax*	£8.8m	£9.0m	£9.0m	£9.0m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£460k

*Council tax freeze from 2017/18 onwards

MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£26.5m	£17.4m	£11.5m	£5.5m
Estimated business rate income	£48.3m	£46.8m	£47.8m	£47.8m
New homes bonus	£12.4m	£9.5m	£7.2m	£6.9m
Council tax*	£102.7m	£108.3m	£113.8m	£119.6m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£0

*Council tax increase by 3.99% each year including the 2% Social Care precept.

Appendix 3

CORE SPENDING POWER

Core spending power measures the core revenue funding available for local authority services. The government's 2015 spending review set out the expected available revenue for local government for the period up to 2019/20 to assist councils with the planning of service delivery in this period. The components that make up the spending power calculations for each are:

- Council tax requirements (excluding parish precepts)
- Additional council tax available from the adult social care 2% precept
- Additional council tax available to district councils – the greater of £5 or 2%
- Better Care Fund payments
- New Homes Bonus payments[2]
- Rural Services Delivery Grant
- Transitional grant to ease the pace of RSG reductions in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The following table shows the estimated spending power of the six councils for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20:[3]

	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Buckinghamshire County Council	351.4	352.2	355.5	366.6
Aylesbury Vale District Council	24.4	24.4	21.6	21.7
Chiltern District Council	10.4	10.4	10.3	9.9
South Bucks District Council	7.8	7.6	7.2	7.0
Wycombe District Council	17.5	17.2	15.8	15.7
Milton Keynes Council	191.5	189.3	188.0	192.7
Total	**603.0**	**601.1**	**598.4**	**613.6**

SALES, FEES AND CHARGES

The six councils each have separate policies to charge for some of the services they provide in order to recover the cost of providing them. With the funding landscape shifting considerably there is more pressure on the councils to consider charging for services that are currently not being charged for or increasing charges subject to the constraints of legislation where they exist to improve outcomes and support budgets to deliver the outcomes. The income earned from sales fees and charges over the past two years by the six councils as reported in the Revenue Outturn (RO) Statistics for 2014/15[4] and 2015/16[5] is as follows:

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3 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-spending-power-provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2016-to-2017
4www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2014-to-2015-individual-local-authority-data-outturn
5 www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2015-to-2016-individual-local-authority-data-outturn

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	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
Buckinghamshire County Council	57.1	49.0
Aylesbury Vale District Council	17.2	23.6
Chiltern District Council	7.7	8.0
South Bucks District Council	5.5	6.6
Wycombe District Council	9.3[6]	9.6
Milton Keynes Council	34.9	46.3

INVESTMENT INCOME

As funding from central government is being sharply reduced it has become critical for councils to develop financial strategies that include investment plans to earn commercial income or investing in schemes that in the longer term will allow outcomes to be achieved more efficiently.

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6 Wycombe District Council has identified an error in their RO submission for 2014/15 where the sales fees and charges amount should be £9.3m rather than the 14.9 included in the RO.

Appendix 3

OPTIONS ANALYSIS

This section of the report describes the two options for local government in Buckinghamshire that have been developed. It also outlines the information and approach used to undertake the financial and non-financial analysis of these options.

APPROACH

To support the case for change and for ease of comparison with the County Council proposals the same criteria as the County Council have been used. The following table provides a definition of the non-financial and criteria used in order to carry out the analysis of the options.

Options criteria	Sub-criteria	Sub-criteria definitions
Service performance	- Achieving and delivering the best possible services to residents, service users and customers. - Service standards and value for money.	- The number of organisations that need to work together to deliver services. - The level of aggregation, disaggregation, and integration required, including the proportion of population affected. - The potential for change in volume, frequency and characteristics of services delivered.
Democratic leadership and accountability	- Democratic participation and accountability. - Ability to influence the decision making process	- Clear understanding by residents, businesses and elected members of the democratic pathway. - Whether individuals, families and communities have clarity about who is representing them and where to go for support.
Local engagement and decision making	- Delivery of services that are responsive to local needs	- Flexibility to move resources to where they are needed the most. - Maintaining and/or creating natural communities.
Sustainability	- Coterminosity with partners	- The degree of coterminosity with other parts of the public sector. - The number of organisations that need to work together to deliver services.
	- Economic growth	- The ability to facilitate strategic (planning and delivering services across organisations) - Improving Gross Value Added. - Ability to improve economic planning with partners. - Ability to influence key policy areas such as housing, transport, planning and rate reliefs etc.

| | - | Skills and capacity | - | The impact on public sector skills and capacity. The ability to influence skills to support business growth. |
| | - | Engagement of supply chain (business supply chain) | - | Local and national; business and supply chain engaged in innovation and creative service delivery. |

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS APPRAISAL

OPTIONS ANALYSED

The options under consideration are as follows:

OPTION 1 – ONE NEW UNITARY COUNCIL

One new unitary council model based on the County Council administrative area and Milton Keynes. Under this model each of the two councils would deliver the full range of services.

OPTION 2 – TWO NEW UNITARY COUNCILS

A two new unitary council model based on the existing boundaries of Milton Keynes existing unitary council, Aylesbury Vale proposed unitary council and one new unitary covering the combined area of Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils. Under this option each Council would be responsible for the delivery of the full range of services. It is proposed that closer working between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale unitaries could realise efficiencies across both Councils. There would also be joint delivery of back office services across two or more of the two new unitary council

NON-FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The following table provides a rating for each option against the non-financial criteria from 1-2 (1 being the highest scoring rating for each criterion). For ease of comparison the same set of criteria have been used as Buckinghamshire County Council in their business case for unitary local government. Like the County, the criteria have been allocated an equal weighting and the overarching score has been calculated by adding the scores of the first three criteria with the average score for the last four sustainability criteria. Where both models have equal merit they have both been allocated the highest score (1).

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Options criteria	Single new unitary model of local government (option 1)	Two new unitary model of local government (option 2)
1. Service performance	2	1
2. Democratic leadership & accountability	2	1
3. Local engagement & decision making	2	1
Sustainability		
4. Economic growth	2	1
5. Skills and capacity	2	1
6. Engagement of supply chain	1	1
7. Co-terminosity with partners (partnership working)	2	1
Overarching score *	7.75	4
Overarching rank	**Second**	**First**

* scores are calculated from the average of the sustainability criteria 4, 5, 6 and 7 plus the sum of criteria 1,2 and 3

1. **Service performance**

    Both options would benefit from closer working and greater collaboration between related functions such as housing and children's services. There are greater long-term benefits with regard to service delivery under the two new unitary model. This option has been allocated the highest score (1) as this model would allow for authorities in the north and south to develop their own specific priorities which are reflective or local interests and develop local-based commissioning. This would enable the authorities to focus on their respective strengths and concentrate the delivery of services around the different demographic and socio-economic characteristics in the north and south.

    The single new unitary option has been awarded the lowest score (2) because the existing County geography crosses the natural border of the Chiltern Hills creating challenges for delivery across all services. Whilst in the short term this option is likely to be less disruptive to service provision, the proposal cuts across the key economic connections of the northern economy which will have a significant impact on delivery of housing. The proposal as set out in the business case does not articulate how it is intended that the model will bring about the required improvements which are necessary in the delivery of the key services to improve performance and outcomes.

2. **Democratic leadership & accountability**

    Both options would benefit from a single political and executive function overseeing all local authority services. However, the leadership under one new unitary authority would be less local. The elected members would be operating remote from the communities they serve. There is a risk of the leadership becoming disconnected from local issues under this model.

    The two new unitary model has been allocated the highest score (1) in relation to this criterion because decision making for all services will be located in the areas affected. There will be greater opportunity for residents to take part in decision making. The number of political leaders and executives under this option will provide the greatest opportunity for locally responsive and accountable leadership. This option has the

greatest potential to fundamentally change the relationship between local government and residents from a paternalistic model focused on service provision to one focused on co-production and promoting independence.

3. **Local engagement and decision making**

   Under both models there will be a reduction in the number of councillors due to the reduced number of local authorities. The two new unitary model provides closer accountability between the Councils, their elected members, residents and communities, both geographically in terms of accessing members, meetings and services as well as actual democratic representation at a local level. The role of local councillors will be central to achieving the modern and sustainable local government vision set out in this document as their role will be key to shaping new relationships with residents in order to reduce demand. The two new unitary model has been allocated the highest score (1) against this criterion. This is because under this option there will be more councillors to engage with and represent local residents than the new single unitary model and there is a clear model set out as to how engagement will be effective.

4. **Economic growth**

   Different parts of the county are part of separate functioning economic geographies. The two new unitary (option 2) allows each authority to set coherent plans and priorities based on the growth opportunities, assets and needs of each economic area and align investment plans over the long term with less potential for conflicting priorities shifting focus on a regular basis and like Milton Keynes this will lead to a step change in growth and productivity. Under the two new unitary (option 2) there would be a greater opportunity for senior leaders and executives to develop relationships with local SMEs which would enable the authorities to tailor their business support programmes to local circumstances in order to support growth. Therefore, the two new unitary (option 2) has been allocated the highest score (1).

5. **Skills and capacity**

   The main driver of growth is the SME sector and it is crucial that the council's build credible relationships at a senior level to maximise influence and contribution through investment, aligning skills programmes and business support. A two new unitary model would be in a better position to do this and be more responsive to the needs of local SMEs. Therefore, the two new unitary option would be in a better position to deliver the skills pipeline required for growth which has led to it being allocated the highest score (1) in relation to this criterion.

6. **Engagement of supply chain**

   Both options have merit when considering this criterion and have therefore been allocated the highest score (1). Greater economies of scale could be achieved through the consolidation of the County Council and four district councils into one organisation under the new single unitary option. Efficiencies could also be achieved under the two new unitary model through the sharing of back office and corporate services. Under the single new unitary option a single procurement process would provide more strategic control both financially and operationally. Under the two new unitary model the authorities would have closer engagement with local providers and a greater opportunity to support local businesses and economic growth.

7. **Co-terminosity with partners**

   The two new unitary model would enable closer engagement between the councils and CCGs, the police and local voluntary and community sector organisations in comparison to the single new unitary model. The two new unitary model has been allocated the highest score (1) because it aligns service, partnerships and natural economic boundaries with a logical geography based on how people live their lives in the respective communities and this creates the best arrangements for transformation in both service delivery across the public sector and positively influencing demand by building capacity in communities.

NON-FINANCIAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The total scores allocated in relation to the non-financial analysis indicate that a two new unitary model (option 2) meets the criteria set out better than the one new unitary model (option 1).

- The non-financial analysis recognises that one new unitary would achieve benefits of scale in delivering short-term savings; but the model proposed under Option 2 is more likely to bring about the necessary improvements in service delivery through the provision of local agile leadership, delivering the right services at the right time and working with partners and communities in co-production of effective solutions.

- There is a strong case that Option 2 will provide greater accountability and transparency as well as carrying out decision making at a local level.

- Engagement will be carried out more effectively within the Option 2 model in a way that will reflect good practice in engagement, will be inclusive to allow as many people as possible to play a role and will allow communities to be involved at all stages of the process.

- The Option 2 model clearly demonstrates that the two functioning economic geographies in Buckinghamshire are better served by Leadership that has a single focus and one that allows strong partnerships to be formed without fear of conflicts.

- The model in Option 2 has also demonstrated that there is genuine co-terminosity with partners which will enable the building of stronger relationships and allow services to benefit from joint working.

The analysis demonstrated that the two new-unitary model will better serve the communities of Buckinghamshire.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

FINANCIAL CONTEXT

The new funding model for local government together with shifting patterns of demand require significant transformation in the role of local government and relationships it has with communities and other key partners.

A two new unitary model is founded on putting in place a shared infrastructure for service delivery which will reflect new modern thinking in terms of customer engagement and digitalisation of services. This will improve customer access and convenience, reduce costs and exploit the strengths that we have locally.

CASE STUDY ON SHARED WASTE COLLECTION

Chiltern DC and Wycombe DC successfully procured a joint waste collection service contract from March 2013 delivering savings of £1.5m per annum across a population of 271,000. This contract has provided significant customer benefits and helped increased recycling rates to **55%.** Further savings were realized through a single contract management team and customer services offer. This is currently being enlarged with the South Bucks DC team being combined with the shared contract management team, with the intention to have a single contract covering all three districts due to be procured from 2020, supported by a joint customer service approach across the three authorities for the waste service.

With a two new unitary option we will build on the existing successful relationships and structures in place with parish and town councils. The structures will be clear, reflect local need and avoid the creation of additional levels / hubs which experience has shown do not empower communities or change the relationship between providers and users of public services. We are clear that we want to put residents at the centre of decision making with strong capable

local political leadership. Our case has shown that there are clear differences between the north and south of the County which two new unitaries can address in a cost effective, modern and inclusive way.

CASE STUDY ON PARISH COUNCIL JOINT WORKING

In Aylesbury Vale, the Council has been innovative in ring-fencing 20% of its New Homes Bonus for Parish use. Initially unique in local government, it chose to let a panel of parish council and district representatives allocate this funding to parish led schemes.   From village halls, cycle ways and traffic calming it has improved the lives of thousands of parishes' residents affected by housing growth. Significantly, by letting them determine local priorities and supporting them with tangible resources they are actively engaged in this process.

One size does not fit all and by building on existing strengths and collaborating where it makes sense, whilst recognising differences and the need to meet these with locally driven solutions the two new unitary model provides the balance our communities need and deserve.

Whilst any organisation created through re-structuring will be an entirely new organisation, size will be a critical factor in terms of tackling issues differently. Organisations which are too large will be unable to adapt, will be too remote from the issues they seek to solve and will spend too long restructuring. Consequently, they are more likely to end up replicating existing, broken, models of delivery. The case for a two new unitary model is compelling in Buckinghamshire given the Social, Economic and place making challenges. Under a two new unitary model the created organisations will be smaller and more agile. The shared experiences of managing change and joint working gained by the districts will be inherited by the new organisations.

ANALYSIS

This section presents a high level analysis of the potential costs and savings which might be achieved by creating one or two new unitary solution. If the arguments and financial analysis presented in either this or the County Council's submission were to move to implementation, then both cases would need to be worked up in more detail to refine the assumptions, costs and savings. Reflecting that the analysis is high level, a degree of caution has been built in to the analysis, thereby providing a contingency in the event that the actual experience varies negatively from the assumptions used here.

Many of the assumptions used in this analysis share the same shared delivery structures proposed within the County Council's report and so are also supported by their analysis and their external testing.

The assumptions used have also been benchmarked and tested against other, externally available, experience on forming new unitaries in order to confirm their validity.   In some areas this has identified that the assumptions used in the County Council's proposals appear to be overly cautious and where this strongly felt to be the case higher assumptions have been used.

The significant deviations from the County Council's model are around the additional Governance structures and costs of Democracy. For People services like Adult Social Care and Children's Services, there are also additional roles over the one new unitary approach. Whilst this adds cost, it provides greater resource and focus on the transformation of these vitally important services.

Additionally, reflecting the compelling economic and growth based differences in the two areas, the proposals for two new unitaries include provision for additional resource for Place services.

In the majority of other areas the model is predicated on shared delivery structures, but varied to provide additional intelligent client resources in some areas to reflect the unique differences underpinning the North and South of the County.

Influence of Milton Keynes Unitary Council in Buckinghamshire

The analysis recognises that the Buckinghamshire proposals presented here does not cover the entirety of the County of Buckinghamshire. Milton Keynes Council was created as a unitary council in 1997 with a population of circa 220,000 and occupies the northern most quarter of the County. Despite its size upon creation, Milton Keynes has performed well as a unitary in this time, delivering significant GVA to the economy and is meeting the needs of its residents and businesses.

Adopting the County Council's proposals will deliver two mismatched unitaries by size and by geography. Aylesbury Vale's economic and housing growth characteristics show strong similarities with those of Milton Keynes and this is borne out in the live to work journeys made by their two respective groups of residents. The south of the County on the other hand looks towards the Thames Valley and North / West London.

A north / south unitary solution which encompassed the whole of the County of Buckinghamshire could:

- Address the disparity in relation to size,

- Improve the sustainability of the created organisations,

- Build on the experience gained by Milton Keynes,

- Speed the process of transformation and reduce the cost

- Align the geographies with the National Infrastructure Commission work

- Improve the focus of housing delivery and economic growth

There are clear potential opportunities and gains from considering a wider geography that need to be considered and explored in a wider, holistic, sustainable unitary solution for the region. Given the timeframe, this has not been possible in detail at this stage. However, ignoring this factor in any decision made weakens both the long term strength and contribution to the wider economic growth agenda.

VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

A detailed analysis was commissioned in 2015 by LG Futures on whether an Aylesbury Vale and rest of Bucks unitary solution would produce viable councils.

The principal questions posed within this report and its conclusions were as follows:

Starting point	
Can resources and expenditure be disaggregated in a reasonable and equitable way?	• The disaggregation of resources and expenditure indicates expenditure and resources would be balanced between the two unitaries. Neither would have a significant surplus or deficit.
Do any of the proposed authorities begin with an unfair or unmanageable deficit in year 1?	• There is some scope to refine the datasets to improve robustness but this is unlikely to materially change the overall conclusion.

Council tax convergence Can council taxes for all residents be converged into a single rate within 5 years without placing an unreasonable financial burden on residents?	• Council taxes can be converged within 5 years with relatively small overall changes in council tax. • Council taxpayers in Aylesbury Vale would see no change in council tax. The largest increase in council tax would be for residents of Wycombe who would experience a 1.9% increase in council tax over 5 years.
Repay transitional costs within 5 years Can the costs of setting up the new unitary councils be repaid within 5 years? Can this be demonstrated with reasonable certainty and with a reasonable margin for error?	• Estimates for transitional costs and savings have been estimated based on benchmarks from other LGR business cases. • Payback can be achieved within 2 years on this basis. • More work needs to go into the specifics of the business case estimates.
Optimum size and/ or structure for delivering savings and efficiency What is the optimum size for a unitary council, and can a reasonable case be made that the proposed structure has more economies than diseconomies of scale?	• Both of the two unitaries would be reasonable compared to other single-tier councils in England. Aylesbury Vale would be at the lower quartile and Bucks UA would be at the upper quartile. • There is no evidence that larger local authorities are more efficient or what the optimum "size" is for an authority.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS

The analysis includes estimated reorganisation costs which cover:

- Income foregone from harmonising council tax;
- Reductions in senior staff headcount; and
- Change management for reorganising the councils.

The approach to the analysis of each is as follows:

- **Income foregone from harmonising council tax**
  Where UAs are formed by combining existing authorities there will need to be a process to harmonise council tax levels. By 2019/20 when the unitary councils are assumed to be formed it is estimated that there will be a difference of £41 per annum between the lowest average band D council tax (including the County Council tax of £1,305) in Wycombe District Council (£1,448[7]) and highest in Chiltern District Council (£1,489). Bringing together the three districts in the South creates council tax differentials which will need to be harmonised. [8]

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[7] Wycombe District Council includes a special expenses precept

[8] Council Tax rates for 2016/17 are based on CTR and CTB forms

Three options were considered in the Strategic Options Analysis report to harmonise council tax. Firstly, it is possible to freeze council tax for some payers at the high end and increase the council tax of others until everyone is on the same level then a universal council tax increase can be applied. Secondly, council tax can be harmonised to the lowest current level on day one of the new council and then all council tax payers have the same percentage increase thereafter. Thirdly, council tax can be harmonised to the weighted average level. Whichever way this is modelled there is less council tax collected than if there was no change to the current structures. The difference between status quo and the new structure has been described as "income foregone".

Income foregone has been calculated by multiplying the tax base by the estimated band D council tax rate under the status quo to arrive at an estimated total council tax revenue collected figure. The figure was then compared to the same calculation for each council tax harmonisation option. In all of the options modelled the income foregone is least over five years when harmonisation occurs to the lowest level of council tax. Under the two new unitary model there is an increase in council tax revenue over the five years as a result of harmonisation on the assumption that both unitary councils will increase council tax by 3.99% from 2019/20 onwards.

There is a high degree of certainty around the Council Tax calculation effects, as these are based on firm plans which have been published by each of the authorities. The proposed approach is clearer for residents to understand and is politically the most palatable and would help minimise the new unitaries starting from a position of negative public reaction.

The income foregone of £1.1m under the one new unitary model compares favourably to the calculated £8.7m foregone in a new one unitary proposition over five years. After three years under two new unitaries there is no income forgone and council tax harmonisation increases Council Tax revenue to the new councils from that point onwards. Whereas, under the one new unitary model all five years result in income foregone.

- **Reductions in senior staff headcount**
  Senior staff restructuring costs relate to redundancy payments and pension costs for those posts in tiers one (Chief Executive), two (Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Directors) and three (Senior Management/Heads of Service) no longer needed to run a reduced number of authorities.

- **Change management for reorganising the Councils**
  The change costs are one-off costs to support the reorganisation change process, including setting up the new unitary councils, a single shared service back-office function and the integration of IT systems across multiple organisations.

ANALYSIS OF SAVINGS

The estimated savings from reorganisation cover:
- Reduction in senior officer posts;
- Reduction in the number of members;
- Savings in corporate services;
- Service optimisation savings; and
- Property rationalisation savings.

The approach to the analysis of each of the above is as follows:

- **Reduction in senior officer posts**
  The savings in respect of the senior staff structure are the salaries and on-costs saved for the reduced numbers of senior staff posts required to run the new authorities.

- **Reduction in the number of members**
  Member savings come from having fewer authorities and hence a requirement for fewer members.

- **Savings in corporate services**
  Corporate/back office services savings are achieved through the consolidation of these functions and the economies of scale typically achieved. Across the Councils there is experience of delivering savings in this area. Under the one new unitary model the assumption would be for essentially shared back office functions delivered by an appropriate mix of joint in-house and outsourced arrangements. Therefore, the costs of transition to this arrangement and its recurring costs would not be materially different from what would be the case for a one new unitary.

- **Service optimisation savings**
  The service optimisation savings are achieved through service consolidation and procurement savings, e.g. a single waste collection contract. To date the districts have already achieved a material degree of service consolidation, and a significant degree of in-house knowledge and experience exists around how to deliver successfully these changes. A programme of consolidation and transformation would have three key improvement aims:

  - Quality of service and meeting customer needs within the context of a Customer Service Strategy

  - Creating resilient sustainable services

  - Delivering efficiency gains and financial savings

- **Property rationalisation savings**
  The savings from property rationalisation, consolidated purchasing of utilities and Facilities Management contracts. The focus of this work stream would be on how property assets should be utilised for the administration of services and customer delivery. This part of an overall property strategy would link closely with the Customer Services strategy. It is anticipated from work already undertaken by the Districts that with the changes around shift and appropriate mobile working the requirement for property space will significantly reduce. The approach to the delivery of back office services will have a material impact on property. The property strategy around service operational assets (Leisure facilities, Depots, etc) will be driven by factors that essentially would not be influenced by the model of local government, and therefore in this business case has a neutral effect. There will also be supplementary benefits from the property rationalisation activity in terms of ability to accelerate other important priorities such as housing delivery, which have not been costed into the table below.

The following table provides a summary of the high level revenue costs and savings (on a real basis) estimated for each option over a five-year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24:

Income foregone, costs and savings	One new unitary model of local government £m	Two new unitary model of local government £m
Income foregone		
Council tax harmonisation (lowest level)	8.7	1.1
Total income foregone	**8.7**	**1.1**
Costs		
Senior staff restructuring	5.0	3.9
Change management	9.3	10.4
Total costs	**14.3**	**14.3**
Savings		
Senior staff restructuring	30.1	23.0
Member costs	4.3	0.6
Corporate services	31.7	25.3
Service optimisation	24.5	19.6
Property rationalisation	5.3	4.3
Total savings	**95.9**	**72.8**
Net savings	**72.9**	**57.4**

Appendix B provides detailed assumptions underpinning the above income foregone, costs and savings figures.

FUNDING THE TRANSITION

In the early years following the creation of any new council structure there would be a requirement for the authorities to fund income foregone as a result of council tax harmonisation and the cost of implementing the new structures, e.g. one-off change costs and staff exit costs (prior to year one of the new council structures being in place). The source of funding the foregone revenue/costs in the early years could be borrowing or council reserves. The table below shows the combined earmarked and unallocated reserves for each option according to each authority's Revenue Account Budget as at 31 March 2016[9].

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[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing

Revenue Account Budget 31 March 2016	Earmarked reserves £m	Unallocated reserves £m	Total £m
Buckinghamshire County Council – Actual Balances	128.7	19.6	148.3
Aylesbury Vale – Actual Balances	24.1	3.3	27.4
Chiltern – Actual Balances	5.0	4.2	9.2
South Bucks – Actual Balances	2.2	3.5	5.7
Wycombe	38.9	8.6	47.5
Less Minimum Working Balance and Contractual Commitments	**(35.9)**		
Total	**198.9**	**39.2**	**238.1**

Not all of these Reserves can be called upon as some represent minimum assessed levels of working balance and some will represent sums set aside for earmarked liabilities which, it is expected, will be called upon within the years prior to, or shortly after reorganisation.

PAYBACK PERIOD

Under the two new unitaries proposal payback is achieved in the second year with the first year (2018/19) being the year in which the shadow councils are formed and only change costs are incurred. Estimated savings do not transpire until 2019/20, at which point the savings are estimated to be in excess of foregone council tax revenue and reorganisation costs and are estimated to continue to do so for the five years analysed.

PART B

Draft

A ROADMAP FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE:

A NEW MODEL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This section sets out the road map for a different future for local government in Buckinghamshire. It outlines our vision which is at the heart of our new delivery model and describes where we want to get to. It articulates our ambition for the place and the people who live or spend time here and it explains, using the five statutory tests as a guide, how we will get there.

VISION

Local government reorganisation should enable and accelerate reform across the public sector, providing leadership of place and democratic accountability. Most importantly of all local government needs to reshape its relationships with residents focussing much more on building resilience and independence. Sustainable local government will work alongside people and communities to assist them in securing their own wellbeing, with much more emphasis on early intervention and prevention to avoid demand for hard-stretched public services. It should also provide a better focus for encouraging and enabling growth.

AMBITION

Given the challenges faced in Buckinghamshire systemic and innovative change is required to ensure that local government is sustainable and meets the changing needs and aspirations of residents and businesses. The vision is therefore built around the following principles:

1. Local government will be rooted in communities and residents will be empowered to participate in the design and delivery of services for their local area;
2. Administrative boundaries and democratic accountability will reflect real economic and community geographies to allow aligned planning, consistent prioritisation and place based action to improve outcomes for residents and ensure that the deployment of public money is optimised;
3. Community resilience will be enhanced by reframing the relationship between local government and residents so that it is focussed on promoting independence and harnessing the capabilities of individuals, rather than a paternalistic model which increases dependency;
4. Collaboration and partnership working between public bodies will be enhanced by coterminous working, shared prioritisation and joint action;
5. Innovation in the use of data and technology and in the design and delivery of public services to best reflect and support the way people live their lives today and improve effectiveness, productivity and efficiency.

SUMMARY

One Direction : each council focussed on one economic geography

- There are two distinctive economic geographies in the north and south respectively. Each is part of wider, nationally significant economic areas.
- Two tier local government has held back growth and productivity. This reorganisation must not repeat the mistakes of the past. It must unleash the full economic potential of the two economic geographies.
- The confusion of the LEP geographies and focus is hindering rather than supporting growth. Economic performance is significantly below par and this reorganisation must take the opportunity to address this.

Even More Local: two councils provides greater local accountability

- Two councils will provide genuine local accountability and build stronger partnerships in local communities.
- Elected members mandated as community leaders in governance structures that provide clarity around accountability to communities and places that make sense to local people.
- Effective engagement with communities focussed on empowering them and unleashing the full capacity and capability of local people.

More Effective: the right service at the right time improves outcomes and builds resilience

- Delivery focussed on providing 'just enough' of the 'right services at the right time' to improve outcomes and build resilience.
- This is all about promoting independence and self-sufficiency.
- Design and delivery of local services will be more sensitive to the particular needs of different communities.

More Efficient: thriving economies and resilient communities provide sustainability

- -Thriving economies will provide greater public resources and more capacity and capability to address local issues.
- -Empowered communities and self-sufficient individuals in control of their own lives need less and consume less public services.
- -Structural change coupled with this new approach to building thriving economies and resilient communities will create genuinely sustainable local government.

Appendix 3

ONE DIRECTION

Our aim and ambition is to create two of the most successful and productive locations in the UK for business and housing growth, in attractive environments where people and businesses want to be – truly great places to grow.

We will plan for and help deliver over 45,000 new homes by 2036 across the two economic areas and support fast employment growth with 33,000 new jobs in the same period.

As two of the most strategically well placed areas in the country, we will optimise the areas latent potential and fully harness its assets and the contribution it can return to the local area, wider region and UK PLC and start to close the underperformance gap that exists.

Our role in local government is about enabling the area to thrive into the future, providing the long term strategic direction and effective solutions to existing issues and ensuring we achieve our full potential. In the context of creating successful places to live and work, the goal is to create communities and environments that are dynamic, responsive and sustainable.

Under two new unitaries Aylesbury Vale will achieve one of the highest rates of housing growth in the UK, more than most metropolitan cities and matching if not exceeding levels in adjoining growth areas of Bicester and Milton Keynes in the last 5 years. It will lead the actual delivery of new housing, with the recent garden town designation for Aylesbury, whilst the Southern area will grow within its constraining geography building on its clear relationship with London and the Thames Valley.

We will have a clear focus on achieving positive outcomes for our economic areas and work closely with those neighbouring economies that we have a symbiotic relationship with.

Wycombe DC's approach to commercialism in the property regeneration (as recognised in the"2016 MJ Awards") will be continued and rolled out within the new Southern unitary. We will have successful partnerships and collaborations with key agencies and government partners to achieve results on the ground and effectively engage with local communities and businesses.

We will have a clear compelling vision and delivery plan for the long term future of the area and innovative approaches to getting things done. We will create the right conditions for sustained economic and housing growth in our areas.

Aylesbury Vale's approach to the Commercial Council can continue to drive forward the concept on behalf of the local government sector and create the delivery model that is scale-able across all aspects of local government. Aylesbury Vale was iESE's Council of the Year 2015.

Working together, we will have efficient and effective services and systems, that are accountable, connected with the customer, whether that be business, resident or government and be agile in responding to and making the most of opportunities such as the East West rail scheme, the Cambridge – Milton Keynes- Oxford corridor in the north and Heathrow/Thames Valley Hub and Cross Rail corridor to the south.

Appendix 3

PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES…WHAT'S STOPPING US FROM ACHIEVING OUR AMBITIONS?

The north and south of Buckinghamshire are very different functional economic areas, with distinctive characteristics, challenges and opportunities. Most of Aylesbury Vale is part of the Milton Keynes Travel To Work Area (TTWA), and links very closely to part of the region, whilst the area to the south, looks to the Thames Valley and west of London and is part of the High Wycombe, Slough and Heathrow TTWAs.

The current two tier arrangements, that attempt to join the two areas artificially together, are actually hampering the performance of both areas in achieving the key ambitions set out in chapter 1. This is true in relation to growth, strategic planning, skills development, infrastructure planning, investment strategies and on the ground delivery.

Because of the very distinct differences and challenges/opportunities between the north and the south, at present there is no coherent economic strategy that exists for the geography that Bucks CC currently operates across. The County Council no longer provides an economic development function as an authority and has instead provided funding to a variety of different organisations to deliver some economic activity across the area and this has meant a dilution of impact and overall strategic focus.

As a consequence, the whole of the administrative area currently covered by Bucks County (and in particular the key urban areas of Aylesbury and High Wycombe), have been significantly **underperforming in terms of productivity and growth indices.** The table below sets out the extent of the opportunities lost to the area and wider economy.

Geography	GVA 1997 (£m)	GVA 2014	GVA growth 1997-2014	Productivity (Jobs) 2004-14	Business LEU (2010-16)	Bus LEU (Scale up)	
						Sm10 -49	Med50 - 249
England	665,544	1,377,851	107%	+8.0%	+18.3%	+9.7%	+6.3%
Berks, Bucks & Oxon (NUTS2)	37,404	80,076	114%	+6.0%	+14.8%	+8.4%	+6.3%
Buckinghamshire	7,578	14,774	95%	+0.1%	+14.1%	+8.6%	+0.8%
Milton Keynes	4,030	10,294	155%	+17.9%	+29.0%	+12.8%	+8.2%
Potential dividends if Bucks grows at NUTS2 level		£1,443m	+19%	+15120jobs	+230 LEU	N/A	+35 LEUs
Potential dividends if Bucks grows at MK levels		£4,550m	+60%	+35020jobs	+4,925LEUs	+142 LEUs	+47 LEUs

Sources: All latest ONS & NOMIS data

Over the recent past, Buckinghamshire is estimated (by ONS data) to have underperformed the Thames Valley (TV) NUTS2 sub-region, of which it is a part (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire). By 2014, GVA is £1.4bn per annum lower than that if Bucks had matched average Thames Valley growth since 1997. 15,120 new jobs (since 2004) and 230 new businesses (since 2010) would have been created at average NUTS2 levels of performance. The comparisons with MK are even more striking. Divergence of £4.6bn pa GVA by 2014, 35,000 jobs and almost 5,000 businesses.

Looking at the information presented in the highly respected Benchmarking Local Innovation report (produced by Enterprise Research Centre in 2015), there is also clear evidence that the level of innovation is far from where it should be for those businesses in the Bucks Thames Valley (TV) area.

As the table below indicates the Bucks TV area is not in the top half for any of the innovation measures and is far and away the worst performer in the London mega-city region. A single new unitary construct would only serve to continue to reinforce this poor performance. Two new unitary Councils on the other hand would enable the two economic areas to be properly integrated into their respective LEP geography, so the Southern area would become

part of the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and immediately be part of an eco-system and agglomeration including Reading University and the Business Enterprise Research and Development (BERD) giants of Thames Valley. Aylesbury Vale is unequivocally part of SEMLEP and would have access to the most innovative city in the UK and universities like Cranfield, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and the Open University, all arguably larger than the two Higher Education Institutions in Buckinghamshire.

We have estimated that if the two economically coherent and growth-oriented unitaries of Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern Hills can achieve just a 2% additional growth rate over the one new unitary construct, then the additional benefit to the Treasury is in the order of £100m per annum.

Figure 13: Ranking of local economic areas by innovation benchmarks

ENGLISH LEAS	Product/Service	New to market	Process	Strategy/Marketing	R&D	Collaboration	Overall
Oxfordshire LEP	1	5	1	2	1	1	1
Greater Cambridge & Peterborough	5	10	5	1	2	2	2
South East Midlands	3	6	7	3	9	6	3
Gloucestershire	2	17	12	7	6	3	4
Enterprise M3	4	1	21	12	7	4	5
Dorset	10	2	3	11	13	21	6
Tees Valley	8	15	2	10	12	14	7
Coast to Capital	18	3	11	4	18	8	8
Swindon and Wiltshire	7	9	4	5	5	38	9
Liverpool City Region	16	25	14	8	10	13	10
Northamptonshire	9	16	6	33	3	20	11
Cheshire and Warrington	15	22	13	16	14	22	12
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	19	26	8	6	37	7	13
Coventry and Warwickshire	24	23	23	17	11	9	14
Lancashire	6	33	16	22	16	15	15
Black Country	14	30	19	34	8	5	16
Leicester and Leicestershire	11	35	10	21	4	29	17
Thames Valley Berkshire	17	11	30	35	17	10	18
Hertfordshire	37	7	28	14	22	24	19
Greater Manchester	26	19	18	38	25	11	20
Heart of the South West	21	18	31	18	15	34	21
Derby, Derbyshr., Nottingham, Notts.	20	31	37	9	19	23	22
North Eastern	23	8	29	31	24	26	23
Leeds City Region	22	28	24	32	21	16	24
London	32	20	22	23	23	25	25
Worcestershire	39		26	13	31	12	26
Sheffield City Region	27	29	15	26	20	30	27
Greater Birmingham and Solihull	25	4	27	29	33	32	28
East Wales	12	36	34	20	32	28	29
South East	28	24	33	19	27	31	30
Solent	33	14	32	41	26	17	31
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	29	13	17	27	40	40	32
West of England	34	34	9	15	44	33	33
West Wales & The Valleys	35	37	20	28	28	27	34
SW Scotland	40	12	35	30	34	45	35
The Marches	38		39	37	35	18	36
Buckinghamshire Thames Valley	30	27		39	36	36	37
Humber	44		42	25	38	19	38
NE & Highlands & Islands	13	40	40	45	30	35	39
York and North Yorkshire	45	21	36	36	39	39	40
Greater Lincolnshire	31		41	24	45	41	41
New Anglia	43	38	25	40	41	37	42
Eastern Scotland	36	32	43	42	29	44	43
Northern Ireland	41	39	38	43	42	42	44
Cumbria	42			44	43	43	45

The evolution of the LEPs in this part of the country also further evidences the real economic geography of the area. In 2010, AVDC joined the South East Midlands LEP, as Aylesbury Vale is part of the natural 'functional economic area' of SEMLEP. SEMLEP itself, was a natural evolution and extension of a government designated growth area (Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM) and had also co-operated in working on the original 'Oxford to Cambridge' arc proposals. After the first wave of LEPs had been approved, it was clear that certain parts of the country were not represented by a LEP, including the "white space" of southern Buckinghamshire and BTVLEP was the last LEP to be established in 2012. In 2013, SQW were commissioned to help facilitate a review of the LEPs position in Aylesbury Vale. One of the conclusions by SQW in December 2013 was:

> **"*In case AVDC is forced to choose between LEPs, the strongest strategic alignment and rationale regarding functional economic geographies is for AVDC to be part of SEMLEP.*"**
>
> SQW LEPs report 2013

BTVLEP is, by some distance, the smallest LEP economic geography in London and the Greater South East (GSE). The resident population is 37th out of 38 LEPs and almost 30% smaller than Oxfordshire's - the next smallest London and GSE LEP. BTV GVA (of £14.8bn) is sixth smallest of all LEPs and almost 40% smaller than Oxfordshire - the next smallest in London and GSE. Most critically, Buckinghamshire has lowest level of self-containment of any of the 38 LEPs - 58% - and this has fallen steadily over the years (e.g. from 66% in the 2001 census).
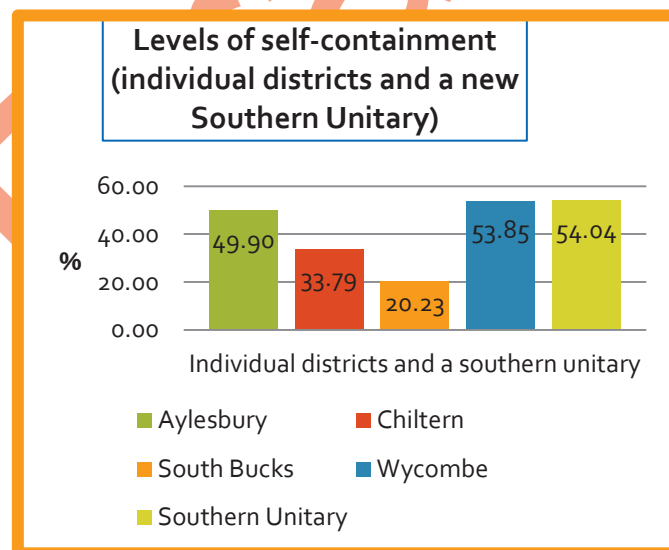
What is striking about the self-containment illustration is that the +/-50% self-containment levels achieved are almost entirely accounted for by the urban centres of Aylesbury and High Wycombe in their respective districts. There is almost no net 'county dividend' from commuting between the north and south of the county.

The recently issued Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor Interim Report by the National Infrastructure Commission also confirms that Aylesbury Vale is clearly part of an economic and housing area that relates to this corridor, rather than a Bucks wide area.
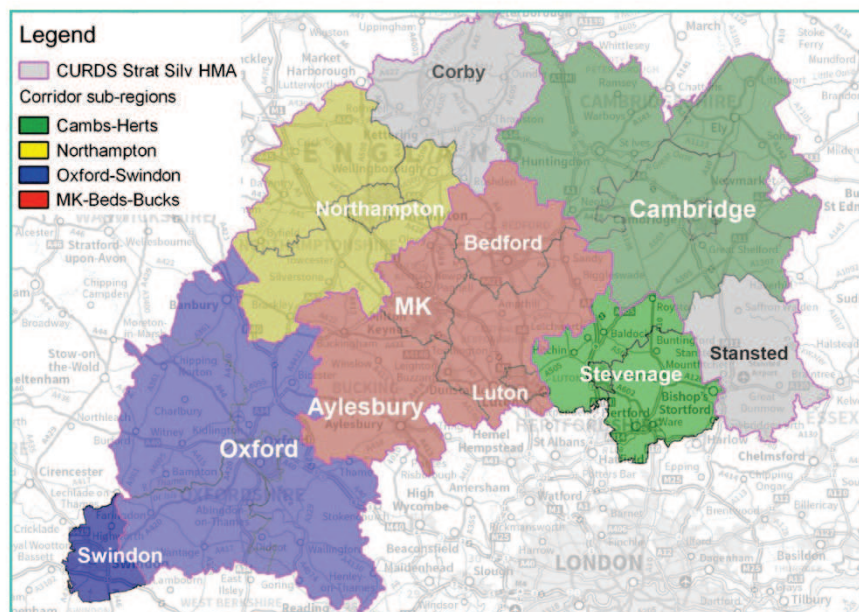
NIC Interim Report (Dec 2016) Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor; p33 Source: Savills.

The lack of a clear and outcomes-focused economic development strategy for the county area is all too apparent and can be evidenced by the poor performance of BTVLEP in terms of growth related outcomes. BTVLEP have difficulty in being able to identify and get collective "buy in" to the mission critical issues that need intervention across the boundary of administrative convenience that BTVLEP operates across. The scale of BTVLEP is also an issue as almost the smallest LEP in the country; its effectiveness is also impaired by the attempts to work across two economic areas with very different needs.

There are also two clear transport corridors reflecting this economic geography. The south of the county is closely integrated into the transport infrastructure of London and the Thames Valley. The north by contrast looks to transport infrastructure connections more on an east-west axis towards MK. The existing county-wide transport strategy fails to sufficiently recognise and reflect the needs of both geographies and for many years the area has suffered from a lack of investment in pro-active strategic transport planning because of the inability to prioritise across the two functional economic areas because of political balancing acts, which dilute the overall impact.

One of the very real challenges that the district councils in Buckinghamshire face is the disconnected input into the planning process by Bucks County Council. This is in relation to the strategic contributions preparation of the new local plans and also development management. This is having a serious impact on the delivery of major housing and employment schemes across the area and the ability to secure planning decisions in a timely fashion. Their input into strategic planning also has the potential to undermine the preparation of robust and soundly evidenced local plans.

The most recent example of this relates to the county councils perspective on green belt release as reported in the Planning Weekly news in December 2016. The strategic planning approach that seems to be promoted by BCC in relation to the green belt is clearly in conflict with central government guidance to local authorities needing to meet their own housing need, including releasing appropriate sites from the green belt where unmet need is an issue. This has the potential to undermine the preparation of local plans for the area and create uncertainty about future housing delivery.

In summary, there are three principle reasons why in the past we have not been able to optimise the areas full economic potential on a local and more regional scale:

Buckinghamshire underperforms in terms of local growth because it is entirely the wrong level of geography to provide leadership and governance of relevant Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA's)

The County Council level leadership and governance of its functional economic areas is hampered by being pulled in two different directions, which has led to a lack of strategic coherence and prioritisation

These systemic problems mean that the county council have been unable to optimise the potential of the two functional areas and has struggled to create a coherent long term economic strategy

LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE PAST

The deconstruction of Buckinghamshire in the late 1990's is probably the most positive, beneficial example of local government reform not just locally, but nationally, in recent decades.

The liberation of Milton Keynes (MK) from the 12th century construct of 'Bucca's home' (Buckinghamshire) has delivered the UK's most successful and fastest growing city, led by a dynamic, creative unitary council. In 1997, MK became a unitary council, assuming responsibilities for services previously provided by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC). The city is consistently one of the fastest growing, highest performing, smartest and most environmentally responsible in Europe.

Buckinghamshire is not similar to areas like Cornwall and Wiltshire which have most recently moved to unitary status. These areas are both sparsely populated rural counties (around 150 persons per square kilometre). Their largest settlements are Truro (around 20,000) and Chippenham (around 45,000) respectively. They are very distant from major metropolitan centres (apart from the M4 corridor area of north Wiltshire). They have productivity levels at 76% and 89% of UK average (compared to Buckinghamshire at 117%). The critical mass savings issue is clearly more pertinent in very sparsely populated rural counties with no major anchor urban centres.

RISKS OF THE ONE NEW UNITARY PROPOSAL

The county council's "Business case for modernising local government in Buckinghamshire" is virtually silent on the substance of local growth strategy and economic geography. The omission of any recognition throughout the county council submissions of the major urban centres (Aylesbury, High Wycombe) and other prominent towns as specialist, distinctive drivers of growth is a reflection of the failure to appreciate or to acknowledge the success that Milton Keynes has achieved in relation to growth.

One new unitary will continue to have divided economic objectives, conflicting priorities and as a result will not be able to maximise these thriving economic areas. The proposal submitted by BCC provides very little evidence of how it will focus on the unique challenges and opportunities of the two economic areas, how the transport and housing needs will be met, particularly in relation to the major growth opportunities in Aylesbury Vale and how it is possible to accelerate the delivery of housing and employment to meet local and wider needs but also contribute to the wider opportunity offered by the East-West Growth Corridor. Joining these economic areas together artificially for the convenience of the administrative boundary of the county simply won't work and is not in the local or national interest.

In short, Buckinghamshire is one of the most porous economic geographies in the UK, and a member of two quite distinctive functional economic areas - South East Midlands and Thames Valley. On a best fit basis, unitary local authorities would recognise this, rather than augment the already divisive leadership and governance of economic geographies.

MOVING TO THE FUTURE

We are now at a stage where the further deconstruction of Buckinghamshire County into two new unitary councils to operate alongside and, where appropriate, in partnership with Milton Keynes is appropriate.

Buckinghamshire has not only been holding back the crucial Thames Valley sub-region of London and the Greater South East, but MKs 'liberation' has been followed by sustained growth performance that far outstrips that of the residual administrative county. The additional benefits that could have accrued locally had the key urban centres of Aylesbury and High Wycombe been permitted to shape and control their own destinies, in the same way as Milton Keynes, is of national significance.

Liberating Aylesbury and High Wycombe as urban anchors of two new unitaries can create the next version of 'Milton Keynes' in terms of local growth, innovation and fiscal contributions to the UK. Major intervention priorities in growth sectors like film and media, advanced automotive engineering, space etc., all are parts of much wider initiatives and clusters (like London and Hertfordshire's film sector, the Stevenage to Portsmouth space corridor, or South East Midland's 'Motorsport Valley').

There is nothing 'wrong' with BTVLEP's approach in the face of these challenges, and pan-boundary collaboration is to be welcomed. But, the two new unitary option provides a much better fit of local authorities to Functional Economic Areas (FEA). This would therefore strengthen public-business leadership and governance (probably SEMLEP and Thames Valley Berkshire LEPs) of these crucial economic geographies.

The approach proposed by the district authorities would however enable the area to fully unlock the potential of the area thereby making the maximum contribution to the local areas, region and national economy. It would mean there would be clear prioritisation and accountability to be wholly responsible for the place making and shaping proposals for the functioning economic areas and to move this forward in a timely joined up fashion.

The focus of the economic development activity by the councils would continue to be clearly focused on delivering outcomes on the ground, with business intensification and regeneration in the south and place-making and accelerating major growth and housing opportunities in the north. Two new unitaries would strengthen the relationships with BBF, through the much better fit with business and commercial markets.

Bucks LEP is the smallest (and most porous) of all the LEPs and there are serious doubts about its effectiveness and long term sustainability. The option to have two new unitary councils for the current two tier area would enable a review of the overlapping arrangement and to consider whether Bucks LEP should be absorbed within the existing LEP arrangements in terms of SEMLEP for the north and the Greater Thames Valley LEP for the south.

This arrangement would provide more sustainable and agile building blocks for future devolution deals based around real issues, such as the NIC Cambridge to Oxford corridor and Thames Valley/Heathrow hub.

There are also wider benefits of the two new-unitary proposal in particular to London and the Greater South East. (GSE). If London is to remain Europe's premier world city, the 'mega-city region' needs to enable, support and contribute to London and GSE's development.

The leadership and governance of the 'mega-city region' (MCR) outside London itself comprises eleven LEPs, and well over 100 LAs. Of the LAs, 20 are unitaries, and eleven are administrative counties. This level of complexity makes the planning and management of MCR growth challenging. Rationalisation and coherence is important. The recent merger of SEMLEP and NEP has been helpful. A major concern with a Buckinghamshire Unitary will be that, far from simplifying the MCR growth landscape (as the SEMLEP-NEP merger did), if complicates it further. A Buckinghamshire Unitary looks 'both ways' - to West Anglia AND Thames Valley radial growth corridors - causing tensions both locally and sub-regionally.

A far superior configuration would be a unitary Aylesbury Vale in SEMLEP contributing unambiguously to the NW/West Anglia and the O2C corridors, and a unitary Southern Buckinghamshire in TV Berkshire, contributing unequivocally to Thames Valley and M40 corridors.

Post the two unitary option, the number of LAs with which London MCR has to contend has reduced from five two-tier to two single purpose; and the number of LEPs has reduced from eleven to ten - both now amongst the ten largest LEP economies in England. Rather than adding to complexity and tension, this solution promotes rationalisation and coherence.

One other major set of issues concerns joint arrangements. It is quite right that Buckinghamshire should seek and foster joint arrangements to improve the well-being of local communities. Existing joint arrangements referenced include:-

The BOB (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire west) Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP) for health provision in the county

The England Economic Heartlands Alliance - transport authorities and LEPs from Oxfordshire to Cambridgeshire that effectively focuses on east-west connectivity along the O2C corridor

The Greater Thames Valley 6-LEP consortium (GTV6LEP) of BTV, Coast2Capital, Enterprise M3, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and TVB LEPs

The LEP High Technology Group (of BTV, SEMLEP, Oxfordshire, Coventry & Warwickshire, Leicester & Leicestershire LEPs) working collaboratively on Silverstone and advanced automotive engineering.

There are many other sets of arrangements of this character which could be referenced. The point is that NONE of these groups would be diminished by a two new unitary reform in Buckinghamshire, and most of them would be strengthened by a sharper focus on the differential offers and opportunities of the north and south of the county.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This consideration of the appropriate arrangements for local government is a once–in-a-generation opportunity to reorganise local government into better building blocks to respond to the wider economic challenges facing Aylesbury Vale and the Chiltern Hills areas in the future. The economic performance of this part of the region is at a crucial stage of development and any proposed reorganisation of local government needs to ensure that the prospects of optimising the contribution that the two very distinct economic areas can make to the local and national economy are pro-actively managed and delivered.

The proposals for a third runway at Heathrow and London's growth will clearly need to be a focus for the new southern unitary and ensuring that local communities can harness the opportunities that this can bring for the local economy whilst also preserving the key elements that have made the area a successful place to live and work.

Similarly the two key national infrastructure projects of East West Rail and the new Cambridge to Oxford Corridor will be "game and place changing" projects that will require the new Aylesbury Vale Council to be able to be an active and key player in the new NIC Governance arrangement. As an all-purpose Council for the functional economic area, it would be able to provide sufficient support and activity to maximise the potential of these projects from a growth and housing delivery perspective.

This section presents the high level economic and local growth rationales for the establishment of two new unitary councils in the administrative county of Buckinghamshire. The case draws on government and ONS data, and expert

analysis, to reflect on the work done by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and the four district councils (DCs) to propose structural local government reform (LGR) options.

The argument for a two new unitary option anchored by the major urban centres of High Wycombe and Aylesbury is compelling.

Firstly, the example of the last major LGR in Buckinghamshire - the 1997 establishment of Milton Keynes (MK) as an unitary council - is a striking endorsement of this model. Had Buckinghamshire achieved levels of economic performance akin to MK since LGR, the local and national economy would be at least £4.5bn GVA, 35,000 jobs and up to 5,000 businesses better off. Second, Buckinghamshire is even holding back the crucial Thames Valley sub-region. Performance compared to Berkshire and Oxfordshire shows deficits of over £1.4bn GVA and 15,000 jobs.

A significant reason for this underperformance is the pull of two distinctive and different functional economic corridors on the north and south of the county. Aylesbury Vale is unambiguously part of the North West Radial vector out of London and the Oxford to Cambridge corridor. Wycombe and Southern Buckinghamshire is part of Thames Valley and the Berkshire FEAs.

This two-facing economy has been exacerbated by sometimes weak and complacent County Council strategic leadership, and has left the BTVLEP struggling to produce a coherent economic narrative.

The appropriate precedents for unitary councils in Buckinghamshire are NOT Cornwall and Wiltshire - as referenced by BCC, nor is the proposal comparable to the small unitaries proposed in Bedfordshire as those Councils are very different from Buckinghamshire. Nor is Buckinghamshire like Cheshire. It is an area next to the County's capital with two large towns and potential for significant growth. These unitaries would have a strong economic future. The Southern Buckinghamshire unitary would be the sixth largest in England by 2020, and Aylesbury Vale would be a top-30 unitary in population terms.

Perhaps most importantly, though, the clear economic focus and purposes of the two unitaries - on two distinctive, nationally-significant and rapidly growing economic geographies west and north-west of London - will assist in rationalising and strengthening leadership and governance of the London mega-city region (MCR). It will replace five two tier councils with two unitaries with clear economic direction. It will enable further rationalisation of LEPs into SEMLEP and TV Berkshire - ensuring both are nationally top-ten LEP geographies in size and scale.

Economic rationale is not the only consideration for LGR - but it would be perverse to progress a BCC proposition that actually makes local growth coherence more complex and divisive.

The proposal to have two new all-purpose unitary councils would create a new, innovative form of local government that has the customer at the heart of its business model and is truly accountable to its local communities – a true social enterprise.

A two new unitary proposal would mean a clear line of sight from the Government to the two economic areas in terms of focus and activity on priorities, for example better growth delivery in Aylesbury Vale and work on east-west corridor, particularly in partnership with the other SEMLEP unitary councils. It would mean a dedicated focus on resolving issues and priorities for the two economic areas, with the ability to direct sufficient resource and energy into the priority projects to deliver increased productivity and growth.

The creation of unitary authorities provides an exciting opportunity to match administrative geography with economic geography, as far as it is practicable. These administrative boundaries need to be enduring. They need to be rooted in the empirical evidence of the current economy, but they need also to reflect future growth opportunities, particularly in the case of Aylesbury Vale.

Buckinghamshire got its name in the 12th century from 'Bucca's home'. The 1997 LG reform is probably the best thing that happened for local growth to MK in the last generation.

The BCC case for a single administrative county unitary is fatally flawed on economic grounds. It runs high local risks of continuing complacent growth performance falling between two of the most dynamic growth corridors in the UK. These local risks will have a negative impact on London MCR, GSE and therefore national economic performance in a period of unprecedented challenge. There must also be concerns of public and business trust in delivery of the BCC approach, the relative modesty of its ambition, and the potential for services distraction and disruption during a fraught transition period.

If Government wishes to encourage and support LGR in the administrative county, the overwhelming economic rationale will be to develop the one new unitary option focused on the NW and TV radial growth corridors within the London MCR.

The four district councils have already put together a significant proposal, with strong supporting material. This is underpinned by the real world MK example of genuinely transformational growth.

It is time for the rest of 'Bucca's home' to move into the 21st century.

Appendix 3

EVEN MORE LOCAL

Introduction

Two Councils across any given area as oppose to one will mean that the governance and decision making will be more local. Two new unitary Councils based in the locality of the people they serve and providing a one-stop shop for local government services presents an exciting new opportunity for local involvement in decision making and true local accountability.

The proposed model:

- Provide genuine local governance not just on Planning matters but on all matters which are the responsibilities of the **new Councils**.

- Maintain a level of **elected Members** which will facilitate a new role for Members as the accepted and mandated leaders of their Communities

- Build on the strong relationships that currently exist with **Town and Parish Councils**

- Develop a **Community Together** approach which works to empower communities and engages them not just in decision making, but right through from identifying the issues to delivering the solutions.

The governance arrangements will support the vision and objectives of the unitary councils. In particular they will be designed to ensure that:-

- Decision-making is streamlined, accountable, transparent and efficient

- Democratic representation lies at the heart of local communities providing strong leadership and responding to local needs

- There is effective and innovative partnership working at all levels to deliver joined up services and empowered communities

New arrangements will seek to minimise local bureaucracy, achieve more efficient use of resources, ensure that decisions can be scrutinised and support community involvement in democratic processes.

Two New Councils

It is important that local accountability and community engagement are at the heart of any proposed model for the future of Modernised Local Government in Buckinghamshire but the majority of decisions will continue to be taken by Members centrally based in civic offices.   Whilst webcasting can be used as yet there is no proposal for distributed democracy using digital technology. This means that wherever those offices are located those Members engaged in the day to day decision making will continue to travel as County members do currently, to and from their homes and the communities they serve. Whilst they do so their ability to carry out significant roles within their local communities is impaired. The democratic deficit which will occur when the number of Councillors is significantly reduced will be felt in communities. Two Councils will provide the necessary counter to this by making decision making more local.

The issues of a place like Dorney located as it is on the borders of Slough will be of little consequence to a Councillor who represents Buckingham on the borders of Milton Keynes. To approach an issue in debate that is likely to ensure the needs of both areas are met will continue to require compromise or an inevitable sense of bias and schisms even within the same political group.

Reorganisation should enable and accelerate reform across the public sector providing leadership of place and democratic accountability. Wherever it exists the two tier system presents challenges for both upper and lower tier Councils but in Buckinghamshire this has been compounded by a strategic administration with a geographic boundary which builds inherent conflicts, makes the creation of a single strategic direction and purpose an impossibility and therefore continually sub optimises economic and community outcomes.

Dorset County Council has recently published its own case for the division of the County of Dorset which has broad consensus. The proposal sets out the reasons why the one new unitary proposal would not work. These arguments are equally applicable to Buckinghamshire and are set out below.

- A single council for the area the size of the Dorset area would have less of a sense of identity than the two-unitary options, and could be less accountable to local residents. It is likely that the two-unitary options, by covering smaller geographical areas, would be able to serve their communities better.

- Such a wide variation of rural and urban areas would not be best served by a single large unitary council covering the whole of Dorset.

- If we change council structures, we would make sure that all households served by a new unitary council eventually pay the same — a process called council tax harmonisation. The issue of council tax harmonisation becomes more difficult across one large unitary council because of the significant difference between the current lowest and highest council tax levels.

- There is a one-off complexity and costs involved in combining services from all nine councils into one unitary council.

- Discussions with central Government (Department of Communities and Local Government) indicate that we would need to make an exceptional case for a unitary council with a population of more than 600,000.

All of these statements are true of Buckinghamshire except the last. The current population falls within the 600,000 and that will also be the case in 2019. There is consensus across Buckinghamshire that housing growth should increase under a unitary governance model. It is our case that this will be significantly greater if there are two new unitary Councils across the area driving individual economic agenda. However either way it is likely that the percentage population rise for Buckinghamshire is likely to go up with estimates including migration and market signal uplift now suggesting population to be 540,000 – 550,000 by 2019 and therefore the current two tier area will reach 600,000 much sooner than is currently anticipated and by 2033 will be significantly larger. Even by estimates based on previous growth it would be the first of the unitary County areas to reach that population.

Unitary	Population 2011 Census	Population 2015 (Est)	% Change	Order in which Councils will reach 600,000
Buckinghamshire	505,283	528,400	4.58	*1*
Cornwall	535,300	549,404	2.63	2
Durham	513,200	519,695	1.27	4
Northumberland	316,000	316,028	0.01	6
Shropshire	306,129	311,380	1.72	5
Wiltshire	470,981	486,100	3.21	3

Whilst there are differing views about the optimum size for a unitary the Secretary of State has recently indicated an optimum range which would have a lower limit of 300,000 population. We understand that a new unitary Council based on the size of Aylesbury would fall below this level. Whilst we recognise that there is likely to be guidance on optimum size it is also necessary to take into account the particular circumstances of the place. Aylesbury is a

growing unitary which both the single new unitary and two new unitary options say is likely to increase with the advent of unitary status. Whilst Aylesbury Vale continues to grow, although it would be below the suggested minimum in the optimum range, Aylesbury Vale is already larger than a significant number of existing unitaries. Many of these smaller unitaries perform well in relation to social care delivery, particularly in the area of children's services.

Chart 1 - English Single-tier local authorities - population (mid-2013)
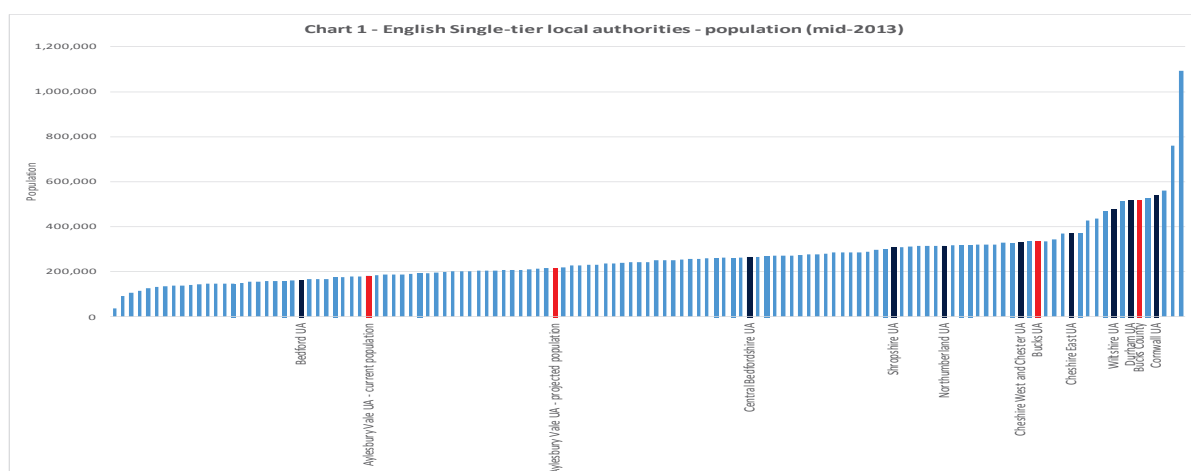
It is our case that growth would be significantly greater than current forecasts (and the 2013 charts above) and in addition to the population rise, this will bring financial benefits to the Council which will put it in a very different financial situation from small unitaries which have already been created. As a top 30 unitary, it would by no means be at the lower end of existing unitaries in any event but the combination of the proposed partnership with Milton Keynes, the track record of the Council both in relation to commercial approaches and digital delivery but above all the likelihood of significant growth in population and income would provide Aylesbury with resilience not available to other unitaries.

It follows that whilst Aylesbury continues to grow although it is currently below the minimum size for a unitary, significant growth and partnership with its neighbour will provide the necessary resilience for this thriving place. There are smaller unitaries many of who perform well in relation to social care delivery, particularly in the area of children's services.

Elected Members

The proposed unitary for the County administrative area would have the highest number of electors per Councillors of any unitary County as shown in the chart below. This is not just an issue of numbers but creates a democratic deficit which will distance Councils from communities. There is a recognition that localism envisaged a new role for local Councillors [10].

Unitary	Population 2015 (Est)	Number of Councillors	Ratio
Buckinghamshire	*528,400*	*98*	*5392*
Wiltshire	486100	98	4960
Northumberland	316,028	67	4717
Cornwall	549,404	123	4667
Shropshire	311,380	74	4208
Durham	519,695	126	4125

Local government faces unprecedented financial cuts - deeper than any other sectors. There are in addition significant rises in population and a demographic shift which places more demand on our services; there are more reductions in

income and difficulties in recovery; there has been a period of low economic growth; social polarisation between local communities; significant re-organisation in areas like education and health; and the ever rising demand for services. All these factors combine to place significant strain on the capacity of local councils to deliver.

Local councillors can champion the views of people and communities and provide local democratic leadership. They can also stimulate good local economic growth and engage with local communities, encouraging them to reduce the demand on services and to step into the breach left by the withdrawal of publicly provided services. Councils, and councillors, will need new approaches to do this successfully, such as utilising less formal social networks, participatory democracy, better engagement with young people and a broader influencing role, rather than the more formal traditional structures we associate with the public sector.[10]

Councillors can foster strong relationships through partnerships and within local communities, with Parishes, Town Councils, and Community Associations; through their service on the boards of local voluntary organisations; their membership of local Business Improvement District Boards and through their wider engagement within their communities to identify individuals from all walks of life, and organisations from all sectors who want to play a role and to inspire others to do the same and more. There is a need for Local ward councillors to reclaim their leadership role as the accepted and mandated voice of citizens. They need recognition and support, to help them enhance their role as key influencers and door-openers to other community leaders who can make things happen.

Businesses create wealth, not the state and local government can create the conditions for enterprise to thrive by engaging the private sector and universities to develop their distinctive economic assets. In a decade of low growth, where the old models of funding have gone, councils can become a vital part of micro- economic policy, especially to create and support good growth with socially responsible approaches to employment and economic wellbeing and support local philanthropy. Polls suggest that the public know that they need to do more, with many willing to do so, but equally they cannot do so without well-functioning public services. The challenge is to change the nature of the relationship between the citizen and the state, rebuild trust and ensure good local integration between health, social care and other services.

Under the Cities and Devolution Act 2016 powers can be given to councils or collections of councils that reflect the way local economies and markets work. In a decade of low growth and austerity, attempts to rebalance the economy geographically will only succeed if local areas can take more control over their own destiny. This requires new and vibrant public- private ventures that enable councils to become more enterprising and businesses to become more civic. These types of arrangements rely on the strength of the relationships between elected members, and other community leaders, across the region.

It is proposed that we would have a pattern of wards based on existing District wards which will provide elector member ratios from 3500 – 4500. This level of representation is a significant reduction on the existing level provided through the two tier model but which is consistent with other new unitaries and maintains a level which is capable of enabling members to carry out the new roles necessary to take forward our vision for working together with our Communities in the future. Job roles for Members will also be set out and expectations on the role of Members articulated. Members will be supported by the two new councils to carry out these roles, and this will include the use of ward budgets to support community initiatives.

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[10] This is articulated in the LGA brochure on Political Leadership, the report of the Commission on the Future of Local Government and the DCLG report Councillors on the Front Line.

Town and Parish Councils

There are currently 180 Town and Parish Councils across the whole of Buckinghamshire and a further 37 parish meetings together with the unparished area covered by High Wycombe Town Committee. This provides a bedrock of local representation, and whilst not all parish councillors are elected they are subject to the ballot box and accountable to their communities. This network provides genuine local community representation. It is our proposal that the two new Councils will build on existing relationships to ensure that the contribution that is made to the local area by Town and Parish Councils is valued and supported. With this relationship there is ample scope to continue to provide a tailored approach to devolved services which enables Councils that wish to do so to take on the delivery of key services where they have the capacity and desire to do. However it also recognizes that one size does not fit all and devolution may not be desired by all. There is scope for joint commissioning to support parishes to deliver services under Council wide frameworks for street lighting or grounds maintenance which have the financial benefits of scale but gives each community a choice about what it needs.

To support this approach key features of future community engagement are likely to be:-

- Parish and Town Council Conferences

All parish and town councils would be invited to submit suggested topics for discussion and debate, and the new Council can also add topics to the agenda.

- Charter for Town and Parish Councils

This would set out clearly how the unitary council would engage and consult with town and parish councils. It would also include a memorandum of understanding on how the devolution of powers and transfer of assets would be achieved.

Area Panels

- Existing community based forums and meetings would be brought together and combined into Area Panels. These area panels would not be a standing meeting but would meet as and when the meetings were required for example during a period where the relevant area was facing a specific change or redevelopment; where there was a community interest in carrying out a targeted piece of work to tackle an issue or where there was a specific project which an area wanted to take forward such as celebration or festival. These would be constituted as formal meetings to enable action to be agreed and taken and they would be supported by the Council, but would arise in response to local need. Town and Parish Councils would be invited to use these panels as a means by which they could drive forward initiatives they are keen to promote within their area.

Community Together approach

The Community Together model is an essential part of our vision for how the two new Council's will create the right conditions for people to take collective responsibility for their futures in a climate of declining public resources.

There are a number of reasons for the proposed approach:

- the high expectations of consumers used to a digitally-enabled 24 hour society;

- the inability of local authorities to sustain previous patterns of service delivery with fewer resources;

- the recognition that residents can be a key resource in ensuring that individuals remain independent;

- resilient communities are more likely to withstand external shocks (economic or otherwise).

Community Together is about a repositioning of the Council from delivering top- down services, to recognition that communities, with the Council and other partners working collaboratively, can develop services and solutions in response to local needs, which can also lead to additional capacity.

The new Councils will be responsible for promoting and guiding change but the model set out requires collaborative working across all sectors. Therefore our partners will also be an important player in realising this shift.

The figure below sets out the existing approach to community engagement, Community Together, adds a 5th way of working – Beyond Doing With.
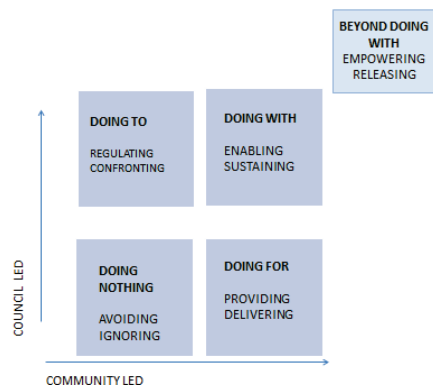
Much of the traditional delivery of public services falls into the 'doing for' domain where citizens are in a passive role and in a culture where citizens expect their local authority to play a significant role in meeting their needs. This way of working can be expensive, may be relatively unresponsive to changing needs and does not necessarily empower citizens. It is also no longer sustainable.

'Doing with' is more about collaboration and encourages citizens and communities to become more involved. It places people at the heart of service design and delivery and can bring the innovation, efficiency and sharing of responsibility and risk that comes with the most effective collaborations. It involves a culture change that will help to strengthen resilience. 'Beyond doing with' is about strong community leadership, engagement and empowerment.

This change requires stronger rather than looser leadership and decision making from the Council. Community *Together* will see the Councils acting as both strong leaders in decision making and as an enabler of community action to build resilience, increase self-sufficiency and, consequentially, reduce demands on services.

This model proposed is one where the new Councils will be involved with new community initiatives on a time- limited basis. 'Doing with' must generate the self-sufficiency that leads projects and services into an independent and sustainable state - 'beyond doing with'.

The role of Ward Members within their communities has always been vital to the work of the Council and is critical to the success of *Community Together*. Members already act as champions for their wards. The proposal in *Community Together* would be in embedding the second role and in providing resources and a model to help Members in their enhanced leadership role.

The Process of Engagement

The research and accepted practice, together with recommended engagement tools in community engagement recognises that engaging with communities requires thought and planning. There are however broad principles which will support successful engagement.

- Allow for all levels of engagement from commenting, to advising, to participation in decisions to influencing outcomes and in the delivery.

- It should take place in ways that are engaging and welcoming to all, with materials which are accessible to the majority, with additional support for those that need it.

- Provide an opportunity for differences to be resolved without confrontation

- Engagement should recognize that people are more likely to be effectively engaged if it is limited and focused on a task to maintain interest and motivation.

There are many different forms that engagement can take but empowering individuals requires a move away from traditional committees, boards, forums and hubs. The weakness of formal Meetings as a tool for engagement are widely recognised as

- They are unlikely to be representative of the community because not everyone has the time or inclination to attend

- Attendance is often low unless people feel personally or deeply concerned

- Some people are likely to feel inhibited in large groups

- Traditional formats can limit audience contribution and lead to conflict

- It can lead to unhelpful media publicity particularly where tensions arise

For empowerment to be effective there is a need to work within communities, to allow them to take the lead empowering key individuals within communities to act as pioneers so that others will follow.

CONCLUSION

Two new unitary councils will provide closer decision making. A higher number of Councillors will provide a strong democratic mandate to carry out the roles of Community Leaders. Our model for delivery will support the existing extensive network of community based organisations to act in the interests of their communities and where they wish to do so to take on additional responsibilities through devolved powers. Our model also sets out a clear role for Members as community leaders supporting and enabling more informal local arrangements through supporting local businesses, schools, GPs and voluntary organisations to come together for the wellbeing of their communities. Finally our model will empower communities themselves to have a full role in designing and delivering solutions to local issues.

Even More Local because ...

ACCOUNTABLE – Elected representatives can be held to account through the ballot box, Details of local councils, parish councils and elected members are publicly available and published for all to see

TRANSPARENCY – People know who is taking which decisions and who is responsible for decision making in their area. The delegation schemes are clear and decisions are taken in public meetings with information available to everyone.

EFFICIENCY – There are minimum tiers of decision making and decisions can be taken swiftly with minimum number of processes necessary to give effect to a decision. The costs are kept to a minimum.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP – The arrangements enable the brokering of informal relationships to support and enable delivery of services and to mobilise community activity into effective support to sit alongside publicly provided services

The two tier system has been an impediment to the improvement and modernisation of key services. It has created an unhelpful barrier between leisure and public health; between community safety and youth services and between housing and children's services which would not exist in a single tier structure. Unitary Councils can look differently at the delivery of services and enable a broader preventative approach designed to ensure a single access point for those who require support; a pathway that aims to support people in the community outside statutory systems for as long as possible and services which focus on outcomes. This analysis focuses on the delivery of one key service and how two new unitary Councils will be able to improve performance through a different approach based on the child, their family and their community.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE

Children's services in the two tier area are delivered by the County Council. They are delivered through area arrangements with teams based in Aylesbury, Wycombe and Amersham. The current delivery model recognises the need for localised approaches but has continued to have Corporate Leadership from a County wide structure.   The leadership and management has made explicit its determination to improve the reputation of Children's Services but has struggled to bring about the improvements necessary.

In June 2014 the Service was inspected by Ofsted and found to be one of only four authorities nationally who were inadequate in each of the three key judgements. 'Officials at the Department for Education considered that the 'inadequate' judgement was at the more serious end of the spectrum of failure' (Red Quadrant Report February 2015) and took the decision that 'external intervention was required to ensure that children's services in Buckinghamshire were improved to the required standard' (Red Quadrant Report February 2015). The Department for Education appointed Red Quadrant to conduct an independent review of the County Council's improvement plan.   The report noted that in the immediate aftermath the Council focused on defending itself against the criticism and the Council 'missed the opportunity both to accept responsibility publicly for the inadequacies outlined in the report and to spell out its commitment to the children and families in Buckinghamshire'.

By November 2014 the Council had recognised the imperative and set out an improvement plan to be reviewed quarterly by Cabinet. The Red Quadrant report expressed concern that the proposed Improvement Plan did not have sufficient focus on outcomes

'Each work stream has a set of success measures … they comprise a set of key performance indicators that are collected by the council and are useful in indicating progress or are proxies for progress in many areas of the plan. Improving outcomes for children was not the major feature, with little indication of how the processes are affecting outcomes for children'

The report was completed in February 2015, at the same time that the first of the agreed quarterly monitoring reports was presented to Cabinet. It stated that the political 'response has been reactive rather than proactive and we have concerns that the scrutiny process is not rigorous enough to anticipate and address future issues in good time'. In June 2015 there was a further quarterly update, but this appears to be the last in 2015.   In the June 2015 a Corporate Performance Report was presented to Cabinet. .

'The Chief Executive commented that the Council would only be able to maintain current performance and would be unable to strive for increased performance due to the difficult situation' (referring to the Council's financial situation).

Our inspections this year show that, regardless of context, providing outstanding services is possible and that good is a standard that any local authority can achieve and maintain

OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT 2016

A single 'quarterly' monitoring report was presented to Cabinet in January 2016 there have been no further reports. In August 2016 Ofsted published a monitoring report on the progress of the Improvement Plan which concluded that the local authority is making progress but this has mainly occurred in the last six months and in some areas this progress is still too slow. This has not been reported to Cabinet.

The one new unitary Business Case makes it clear that they believe the improvement plan for Children Services has been delivered and has been successful.

'Following an inadequate Ofsted rating for children's safeguarding services in 2014 the multi-agency Children's Improvement Board has overseen a focused improvement journey resulting in improvements to services for children and their families'. (County Council Business Case)

In (outstanding authorities) senior leaders and elected members are well informed and operate within a mature culture of respectful challenge. An absence of complacency leads to a strong culture of continuous learning, professional accountability and responsibility.

OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT 2016

In December 2016 the Council's performance on Children's Services was reported to the Council's Select (Scrutiny) Committee. Across all indicators performance showed that 59% were below target, with a further 18% slightly below target. For example in relation to repeat referrals whilst the national average is 24% the position in Bucks is 35% (against their target of 25%), 85% of re-referrals are for the same concern. Whatever the cause high levels of repeat referrals indicate waste and missed opportunities to improve outcomes for vulnerable children in the system which will contribute to the rising costs of the service.

Higher performing local authorities spend their money more effectively, investing wisely in the best services and bringing costs down. The evidence from inspection suggests that investment in early help is associated with stronger outcomes for children.

OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The Red Quadrant report identified from the outset that the County Council improvement plan was at risk of failure because the focus on process will run the risk of distracting those working directly with families away from the professional role they have in talking to children and working with and supporting families.

Social workers need time to spend with the children and families on their case list. They need a place of work that makes it possible for them to exercise their profession at the highest level. They need managers who trust and challenge them in equal measure.

OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT 2016

It is expected that with the appropriate focus, the external assessment of Children's services will continue to recognise improvements but this will be from a very low base and has been the result of an extended period of investment. There has been significant investment as well as overspends on the Children's Services budget to fund the necessary efforts to satisfy inspectors that progress is being made.

It is recognised that in order to shift from a reactionary to a preventative service investment is required until the benefits of prevention can be realised. The County invested £2.6 M to fund the Improvement Plan in 2014 with a further £0.5M in 2015 and £0.35m in 2016.

The Council has invested just under £1m of this in 'Front Door and Early Help'.   However the One Year review of Early Help shows that only 16% of children in receipt of the service are new to children's services with 25% known to the service for 10 or more years. The County Council has announced that it is cutting spend on its Prevention Matters programme from £4,878,000 pa to £2,878,000 pa by 2018/19. Prevention programmes have long time horizons to deliver their full impact and cutting preventative services is likely to lead to cost rises in acute services at a later date.

There is no disagreement that in the long term the delivery of services will be aided by the demise of the two tier system. A new Council will have the opportunity to write a new chapter. But improvements in outcomes for Children should not be assumed from the process, and the transition will provide a distraction from the improvement plan. Continued focus will be needed to ensure that short term improvements are sustained into the future.   Even an investment into the services, as has been shown, will not of itself bring about the necessary improvement.   A reappraisal of why the investment in Children's Services has failed to achieve the level of improvement expected will be required and a model developed which will enable the new Councils to contain costs and to deliver the performance required both by inspectors and to meet their own targets.

A CASE FOR CHANGE

It is our case that as long as leadership and management continues to be remote from delivery and delivery itself is hampered by the diversity of challenges presented within this collection of disconnected communities the improvements brought about by the immediate focus and injection of resource will not be sustained.   A different model of delivery which starts with the child will be necessary. This is much more likely to occur in and be capable of delivery under the local management of two smaller Councils. Two new unitaries will have a greater focus on the improvement of services. They can be more agile and innovative and cross working with co-terminus partners will be simpler. Two unitaries will have flatter management structures with more contact between leaders and the front line; this leads to a team approach across the organisation with teams understanding the broader objectives of services and supporting them to enable delivery.

Two innovative and commercially successful unitaries will be able to invest in prevention and early intervention and the advantages of much greater economic growth through appropriate focus will enable investment to be maintained.

Two unitaries will understand that the quality of externalised services is just as important to residents as directly delivered services. Best practice strategic commissioning and procurement approaches will be applied to stimulate the right provider services in local areas together with not for profit arrangements and voluntary intervention and where arrangements are in place ongoing work with providers will take place to support their growth and development to modernise in accordance with changing practice.

The proposed two unitaries are closely aligned with local policing areas, CCGs, and have the benefit of being local for schools, Doctor's surgeries and local hospitals that are at the front line of delivery. A new local Council could also build on existing strong partnerships with third tier councils, local VCSOs, faith groups, resident associations and sports clubs, all of whom have community services of their own and will help to ensure that support is provided within communities. Voluntary sector bodies that help and support the delivery of statutory services also recognise the need for delivering services on a north and south model for example there is a Women's Aid in both Aylesbury and Wycombe and a Citizen's Advice Bureau in each of those places as well as a third also located in the South of the area.

Two unitaries will continue to have strong networks outside of the area to support better service delivery. Homeless residents in the south have to be placed outside the area through necessity but our networks make sure that the receiving authority knows about them and their needs. We can use these networks to place children within 20 miles of their homes.

District housing authorities have also built strong relationships with other Councils like Brent to better understand the influx of residents into the County. Brent Council make increasing numbers of homeless placements in the County and have worked with the housing authorities to help the receiving Council area respond. In the future this relationship will need to have active involvement from Children's Services. Brent Council placed 28 homeless families that are known of in Wycombe alone during 2015/16. This has increased to 28 placements in the first six months from April 2016 and there are other London Boroughs who place in both Wycombe and the rest of the southern area to tackle the homelessness crisis in London.

Where local authorities place families needing accommodation into the area there will need to be strong relationships with those southern authorities to ensure that the transition for children does not place them at risk. Buckinghamshire because of its long thin geography has a high number of housing and social care neighbours with whom relationships have to be maintained. Brent Council is not a neighbour but the presence of London on its southern borders requires a particular focus on additional relationships with other Councils to respond positively to the proximity of a capital city with a homelessness crisis to ensure the safety of children is always the priority.

The IMD analysis shows that in Buckinghamshire, the highest levels of deprivation are in the north of the County in Aylesbury and Milton Keynes and so a different focus is required in that area to ensure that those children get the best start in life. Deprivation in the south is focused on wards with higher proportions of ethnically diverse residents. There are two Prevent priority areas in the Thames Valley Police area, these are Wycombe and Slough. Almost all referrals are for Islamist related extremism and the majority within the County area are from Wycombe. There have also been a number of trials of Wycombe residents for terrorist related incidents. In contrast the north has greater issues with Far Right Extremism. Youth gang culture is more prevalent in Wycombe and there are links with gangs in Slough. There are more missing children in Wycombe and Early help referrals show that Wycombe has a significantly higher proportion of referrals from Asian/Mixed families than Aylesbury even allowing for the higher percentage of the population. A detailed analysis of the differences between the North and South is set out within the Buckinghamshire Profile section.

The focus of two local Councils will mean that Children are appropriately tracked as they cross the border into the area and that both those children and the resident children are appropriately supported having regard to the needs of the individual children and families within their cultural communities. The analysis that has taken place of other two tier areas has not been of a place with the geography of Buckinghamshire, with populations focused in large towns and on the doorstep of the capital city. These differences argue for a different solution for Buckinghamshire.

DELIVERING COST EFFECTIVE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Improving Children's Services is all about the right service available at the right time, a think family approach, building family and community resilience and developing the work force so that outcomes for families are improved. This must take place in a co-ordinated, integrated and where possible co-located way with partners. There must be highly effective leadership and management with a vision of continuous improvement and strong political and community support.

Major costs in Children's Services are:

- Looked After Children and their placement costs.
- Child Protection and other statutory work.
- Work force costs.

With increasing demand for services, it is more cost effective and better for children if there are effective Early Help and Prevention Services. This must be a whole system approach with partners to reduce the need for expensive statutory interventions.

Many authorities have developed effective ways to manage the demand for Looked After Children through senior managers chairing weekly placement panels. These have reduced rates of Looked After Children while managing risk. Placements with family and friends, adoption, special guardianship orders and planned returns home all need close scrutiny.

More effective joint commissioning placements for children are cost effective such that there is a proactive approach to the market. Commissioning across a range or group of Councils has also proved to be more cost effective. Investment in local fostering campaigns has reduced placement costs while providing more placements closer to home. Across the two tier area only 48% of children are placed within the Council's area compared to 75% in Milton Keynes.

Many Authorities have developed multi-agency teams to work intensively with children and young people on the "Edge of Care", these have reduced admissions. Some Authorities have integrated services with the National Troubled Families approach; this gives a whole family focus and has reduced the need for statutory intervention from a range of partners.

There are a number of indicators of children's behaviour that increase the likelihood of them requiring to be Looked After and this must be a real focus for the deployment of resources across the partnership so that children are protected before requiring a Child Protection Plan or care and that these factors are resolved at an earlier stage. Those children on Child Protection Plans need a strong focus with regular reviews held on time to avoid drift.

An effective Early Intervention Strategy must be agreed and embedded with partners including the Voluntary and Community Sector, schools, children's centres, youth services, housing, and the range of organisations. Family and community resilience can be developed through parenting programmes especially where parents can mentor others. With a strong focus on co-ordinated front line practice and processes, unnecessary referrals and assessments can be reduced. If all parts of the multi-agency system are clear on the services available and the threshold criteria for each service, then the right services will be available at the right time at the right level.

Work force costs can be managed by an effective recruitment and retention strategy, a reliance on agency Social Workers increases costs and the lack of a consistent work force has a detrimental impact on children's outcomes. Staff performance must be rigorously managed. Teams can be restructured, integrated and increasingly multi-agency which makes them more cost effective in delivering outcomes. There will be

opportunities for sharing, training and development. Above all good effective management and leadership create effective services. There will also be opportunities for reducing costs through new technology in a range of ways. The use of shared capital assets is both cost effective and improves partnership working as evidenced in many Children's Services.

All of the above must be supported through a highly agile performance management framework which includes budget management. This should include forward forecasting with the ability to take advantage of piloting new models of service through targeted funding opportunities etc. Performance must be subject to regular management and member scrutiny and challenge with a strong emphasis on outcomes for children rather than process. A detailed model for the delivery of efficient and effective Children's Services in Buckinghamshire is set out at Appendix D.

CONCLUSION

There are significant challenges in Children's Services, and despite the sharp wakeup call of the 2014 inspection the improvement has been slow, and performance continues to fail to meet targets. There are reasons why the re-referral rates are high, why the Early Help and prevention has failed to target families at the right stage, and why despite the focus on need for improvement, plans are already in place to cut preventative services. The prognosis for sustainable improvement coupled with the delivery of cost effective services under the current arrangements is not positive.

A different approach is needed; an approach focused on the particular communities, on individual children and families and one which puts strong social work practice at the heart of improvement. A plan which is focused on windfall savings from the move to unitary to prop up performance for a few more years will not be sustainable. The only way to bring about sustained improvement is to provide a clear vision and model for a different approach; agile leadership, focused on relationships with particular communities and to work effectively with neighbours. Above all the whole system needs to be much more sharply focussed on securing positive outcomes for children. Unless these changes are made the cost of delivering Children's services across the whole County will continue to rise, early intervention will not be effective, performance standards will not be met, the migration of families into the area will continue to come as an unwelcome surprise and as a result children will continue to be at risk of harm.

A two new unitary approach, with a better understanding of and more engaged with their communities, with much stronger partnership working at a local level, better engaged with surrounding authorities, with greater leadership focus and agility will provide a stable platform for this necessary transformation to take place and improved outcomes to be sustained long term.

MORE EFFICIENT

Efficient does not mean spending the least money, it is about optimising the outcomes for local people within the resources available by delivering effective services that residents both want and need at the lowest cost.   Providing a homogenised, low cost, service across the widest possible area does not reflect the differences that exist within an area and is therefore not by definition the most efficient .

Whilst scale does allow the potential for costs to be reduced, (if not controlled), the consequence is that all residents effectively receive a service specified on the average needs of the wider area and, in doing so, the uniqueness of individual areas and their requirements are ignored.

Two new unitary councils, whilst costing marginally more, will have the enormous advantages of being in touch with the communities they serve coupled with the agility, flexibility and responsiveness that only smaller organisations can demonstrate.   These factors combined, enable services to be commissioned, delivered and monitored effectively and, through a deep rooted understanding of the customers, for local revenue streams to be developed in line with the services that local residents want and value.

The inherent problem faced by large organisations is not the price that they can negotiate for services, but the waste that derives through not properly understanding needs and not being able to control the costs effectively. Remoteness from the point of delivery and long chains of management weaken accountability and the effective monitoring of the actual value delivered.   Consequently, significant amounts of the limited resources controlled by large organisations are not spent effectively. So, whilst unit costs might be lower, this is often not matched by corresponding better value.

The Section of the report on One Direction highlights this issue.   The section identifies that in attempting to address the Economic Needs of the whole Buckinghamshire area, there are lost opportunities in both the North and in the South, which could be achieved through the pursuit of economic objectives specific to the needs of each area. The consequence of this is lost opportunities and economic growth being achieved that is well below that which should reasonably be expected from this area.

This lost growth also has a value to the councils in terms of lost Business Rates and Council Tax Income. The value of this lost Business Rates growth to the councils, ignoring the impacts of Council Tax (which has an associated impact in terms of demand for services), is estimated at £24 million over the 5 years of the modelling within this report.   If this deficit was rectified then the modelling of the financial savings / gain from two new unitary councils, which both focused on growing their respective economies, instead of averaging resources less effectively, might look like those in the table below.

Income foregone - costs and savings	County Council based one new unitary	Two new unitary councils based on place and FEAs
Total Income foregone (Council Tax)	8.7	1.1
Total costs (reorganisation etc.)	14.3	14.3
Total savings	95.9	72.8
NET SAVINGS	72.9	57.4
Business rates growth dividends @1% pa	0	24.0
NET local finance surpluses	72.9	81.4

If economic growth achieved its potential then, if calculated on a cumulative basis, the net savings from two new unitary councils would exceed that of those modelled for the one new unitary.

An organisation which costs less, does not necessarily, produce better value for its residents or for the economy. The proposal presented here is predicated on better value being achieved, not just in core service delivery, but also in better outcomes for the wider areas through a better, deeper, understanding of local needs and therefore a clear, sharp, focus.

This report sets out some key areas where performance and outcomes will be improved;

- Wider Economic and Housing Growth Output
- Better Outcomes
- Digital Transformation
- Commercialism
- Joint Working

Wider Economic and Housing Growth

Two new unitary Councils with a clear focus on creating two of the most successful and productive locations in the UK for business and housing growth and being able to achieve their full potential as Milton Keynes has been able to, is fundamental to the unitary proposal presented here. As detailed in the One Direction section, these new authorities have the potential to enable both Councils to significantly improve growth and productivity. This has **a direct financial benefit both in national revenue and for the Councils concerned**. For example, just 2% pa additional growth amounts to additional GVA of around £300mpa. If government receipts are conservatively estimated at 33% GVA, this amounts to £100mpa of benefit to the Government. Looking locally, the county collects around £162m of business rates. If business rates rose faster in line with the additional growth, then this would amount to an additional £1.6mpa for each additional percentage added. If, in addition, home building also delivered more rapidly, the councils were to receive the benefits of additional council tax and some NHB benefits, based on County Council tax base forecast at around £217m by 2019, each additional percent would raise £2.2m subject to changes to NHB. This is additional resource which could be directed to meet the impacts of housing growth and the rising cost of services.

Councils have a role to play in terms of providing facilities and infrastructure for growing areas, and district councils such as Wycombe and Aylesbury have been progressive in this respect, but properly equipped and

supported an exponentially greater volume of economic growth could be achieved by the private sector in these areas and thus far actual delivery has fallen well short of that which should realistically be expected.

The change to unitary status will not bring about this growth unless there is a redirection of strategic focus, allowing the different areas of Buckinghamshire to operate within their own functioning economic geographies.

Better Outcomes

Due to increasing demand for adults social care there is an urgent need to embrace much needed transformational change in Buckinghamshire. Two new unitary councils working with Milton Keynes to provide just enough of the right care at the right time will promote and maintain independence, improve outcomes and impact positively on present and future demand for adult social care services. Doing this over a smaller geography coterminous with partners such as CCGs will better support integrated working and achieve greater transformational benefits when compared to one unitary council replicating existing practice.

The county budget for adult's social care in 2016-17 is £126.4m and this is expected to rise every year to £134.3m in 2020-21, accounting for approximately 40% of the total county budget. However, over the four years the cumulative impact of demand pressure is expected to be £27.0m and achieving a budget of £134.3m in 2020-21 is highly dependent on £12.2m of service efficiency savings, generating additional income of £5.1m and service reductions of £2.1m. The following table summarises the county budget plans for adult social care for the next four years by service area:

	2017/18 Budget £m	2020/21 Budget £m	+ (increase) / - (decrease) change	% change
Older People including Mental Health	48.5	55.8	7.2	14.9%
Learning Disabilities	41.2	43.2	2.0	4.9%
Physical & Sensory Disabilities	9.9	11.7	1.7	17.5%
Assessment & Care Management	11.5	11.6	0.2	1.7%
Social Isolation	-	0.1	0.1	0.0%
Adult Mental Health Needs	5.7	5.8	0.1	0.9%
Joint Commissioning	0.0	0.0	0.0	100%
Supporting People	1.8	0.1	- 1.7	-94.2%
Digital and Strategic Options Appraisals	- 0.4	- 1.0	- 0.5	130.3%
Centrally Managed Budgets	0.2	- 0.2	- 0.4	-174.4%
Business Intelligence	1.6	1.2	- 0.4	-23.0%
Commissioning & Service Improvement	1.5	1.3	- 0.1	-10.0%
Specialist Services	3.5	3.4	- 0.1	-3.8%
Strategic Commissioning ASC	1.4	1.3	- 0.0	-3.6%
Localities & Safer Communities	0.0	-	- 0.0	-94.2%
Total	**126.4**	**134.3**	**7.9**	**6.3%**

The biggest pressure on adults social care budgets over the four years in Buckinghamshire is expected to come from older people services with a planned budget increase of £7.2m, demand pressures alone of £13.1m but only £4.2m of service efficiency savings planned. Between April 2015 and August 2015, the cost of nursing placements for older people in Buckinghamshire increased by over 11% and the provision of short term Respite Care for Older People increased by 23%. These are people who are capable of living in the community

but for whom respite is provided to relieve their community carers. Developing closer community support to relieve the strain on carers is one significant way that rising costs can be contained, but these areas responsible for prevention and community engagement work appear to be the ones subject to proposed reductions.

Analysis of the county budget for 2015/16 shows that £74.7 million (58% of the total adults social care budget) was spent supporting service users no longer able to live in their own homes, a significant proportion of the overall spend and one which is subject to upward cost pressures now and in the future. Because of the high and rising cost of care, a small increase in the number of those able to remain in their homes with support would have an impact on budget spend. Two new unitary councils better connected with partners and to their communities will provide the best model for achieving this outcome

Digital Transformation

Key to the success of the future Unitary Councils will be the transition to effective Digital Services. Residents and businesses demand online access to services wherever possible. Good digital services are a key enabler of efficiencies and excellent customer service. The proposal presented here is supported from the experience gained by the existing districts in this area, with strong customer insight based on a local focus and connection with residents and businesses who have embraced digital service delivery.

In contrast to the pre-internet days few people now want to visit Council Offices to deal with the Council no matter how close it may be to their homes – they are just too busy getting on with their own lives. Many prefer the internet, using computer, tablet or smart phone as the medium to seek information about council services and to transact rather than having to make telephone contact.

They are used to dealing with online services, 24 hours a day 7 days a week, for all other needs in their life, shopping, insurance, utilities, entertainment etc., that the idea of having to attend an office (possibly taking time off work to do so) to conduct routine or even complex business with the Council face to face or on the telephone is alien to them.

As well as responding to Customer expectations, effective digital services enable transformation of council service delivery and for councils to organise themselves on the basis of how the customer interacts with them rather than the traditional "silo" service model favoured by many traditional councils right up to the present time

It is proposed that the Digital Services for the new Unitary Councils are delivered on the IT "Cloud" model whereby IT services are drawn down from Internet based service providers as required. This model has already been proven at Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC). AVDC were one of the first Authorities to move to the "Cloud" following adoption by the Council of a Cloud First strategy in 2011/12 with the objective of becoming IT Infrastructure free by 2017.

AVDC looked for innovation and a different approach and was the first authority to move its IT infrastructure to Amazon Web Services in 2013 / 2014. By autumn 2015, AVDC had a fully enabled customer "My Account" operational. In the 12 months following implementation 30,000 customers signed up online for accounts. In a District of 75,000 households this represents a 40% take-up in 12 months.

Not only has the Digital Platform enabled easier access to Council services but it has enabled a Transformation Programme to move the council to becoming more commercial in its approach and enabled the shaping of services to reflect the way in which the customer deals with the Council rather than the way in which the Council manages its services. All customer facing services have been brought together into one

group and organized to deal with differing *types* of transaction, e.g. fully digital, digital-assisted, specialist expert services. Savings achieved have enabled AVDC to bridge the funding reductions necessitated by changes in the local government funding model without cutting services and indeed, enabled services to be provided 24x7. A new resident can register for the Electoral Roll and Council Tax, apply for and be granted Single Person discount, order waste bins and special services online without any requirement for further contact with the Council. These transactions are fully automated and no human interaction, other than random validation, is required.

The transformation programme, which is nearing its conclusion, has run over a period of 15 months and has identified savings of £5m per annum (from an overall budget of £45 million gross spend) and given the Council invaluable experience in implementing transformational change.

This is the model we propose is adopted for the new Unitary Councils in Buckinghamshire.

THE DIGITALLY ENABLED RESIDENT

Customer Focus sessions run during the implementation of Aylesbury Vale District Council's Online Digital Services evidenced that the vast majority of residents do not want to journey to Council offices during office hours to deal with the Council.

The tables below shows the reductions in contacts using the traditional means of email and telephone since AVDC automated key transactional processes in October 2015.

Email Contact

Service Area	October 2015	October 2016	Increase/Decrease
Council Tax	1443	966	⭕ 33.05%
Recycling & Waste	936	262	⭕ 72.00%

Telephone Contact

Service Area	October 2015	October 2016	Increase/Decrease
Benefits	2813	2533	⭕ 9.95%
Council Tax	3549	2557	⭕ 27.95%
Environmental Health	827	720	⭕ 12.94%
Recycling & Waste	1606	1325	⭕ 17.50%

Some 92% of residents in Buckinghamshire have access to the web. Of those that do not (predominantly the elderly) most have contact with someone who can assist them. The savings made through digital enable the council to focus on face to face contact with those that really want and need it.

Aylesbury Vale's staff are actively incentivised to "nudge" customers to use Web services and assist customers to engage digitally. The impressive take-up of the online customer account (40% in 12 months) is evidence of the desire by the public for such services. Aylesbury Vale's oldest account holder is 92 years of age, disproving the claim that only the young utilize digital services. To assist the customer, AVDC run an out of hours online "web chat" service to facilitate web transactions

Business Customers and Parish Councils can interact via the web but can also be serviced by dedicated Account Managers – an example of where Aylesbury Vale has been able to redirect resource to those customers who need a bespoke service or where it might not be appropriate to rely exclusively on digital services. This is driven by customer insight and this would be something more effectively achieved in the one new unitary model. To facilitate the required growth in housing development Aylesbury Vale has also pioneered account managers for major developers to help developers submitting major planning applications navigate through the system avoiding unexpected delays.

FUTURE STRATEGY
It is expected that future strategy and future savings of the new Unitary councils are predicated on the delivery of a new Digital Strategy which will build on the work to date to create a single "Connected Knowledge" platform bringing all Council information in to one place. Amongst a range of further developments this strategy will release the councils from the model of running IT on a Microsoft Windows platform. All council systems will be available from any device which runs a web browser such as a tablet, smartphone, Chromebook, etc. thereby enabling increased flexibility at reduced cost.

A further recent move is in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) where Aylesbury Vale is developing services in both AI Engines and Voice Activated services such as Amazon Echo and it is believed that this area of technology will develop rapidly and enable better services and further significant savings to be achieved. AI Engines can automate the process of responding to (initially) simple queries and have the potential to make tangible savings in front line services. This technology exists and is in use in the private sector where customers generally do not realise that they are dealing with an AI robot rather than a human being. Voice Activated devices have the potential to both simplify transactions for the technologically familiar population ("Alexa which bin will be collected this week", "Alexa have any Planning Applications been submitted in my street?") but also to provide services to those who cannot use IT equipment ("Alexa, could you ask the council to send in someone to help me") and could, potentially, make voice requests for Council Services.

All of these developments will be available to the new unitary councils and will provide the platform for rapid development and implementation of an innovative Digital Services platform for the residents of the new unitary councils enabling both improved services but at a reduced cost freeing up funding for key services where human interaction is required such as social care and Children's services. The greater understanding of the respective communities will enable these digital services to be tailored to specific needs so as to ensure no section is ignored or disadvantaged.

HOW WOULD WE EXPECT SERVICE DELIVERY TO BE DIFFERENT
It will build on the already proven work carried out on Cloud Business Systems for all services. This will be a focused and driven programme, which would be implemented rapidly.

It is expected that the core elements of the IT strategy will be expanded to encompass all Unitary Council services through close working with existing innovative IT partners who, in the main, already have experience of working with Unitary Councils. We would propose to do this by;

1. Engaging with supplier partners to develop the strategy and develop Digital services in the period of the Shadow Authority
2. Work with those innovative suppliers to identify novel opportunities to deliver Social Care and Children's' Services. We will develop and implement an aggressively timed programme to implement the changes and realise the benefits linking it to an organisation and staff development programme.
3. Recognise the trend for schools to adopt Academy status and offer Cloud based services as "IT in a box" both for educational support IT and internal School support services e.g. finance, HR, Payroll etc. (the districts are already commercialising the type of service to offer to third parties) and would seek to collaborate with organisations, such as Bucks Learning Trust to better understand and develop these products.
4. Recognise that the ageing legacy digital services in the County Council and some other areas will take longer than two years to migrate to the Cloud in their entirety and where migration is impractical will work in integrating the legacy services to the Cloud Platform.

The unitary councils would expand online services in all areas and bring innovations such as out-of-hours webchat, Artificial Intelligence and Voice Activated Services which tailor uniquely to the needs of their respective residents.

Whilst Digital Transformation is expected to be at the heart of the change and efficiency programmes which will transform services in the new organisation it is made clear that no individual, group or community will be left behind and the IT strategy will be designed to ensure that it does not marginalise or disadvantage those customers who for various reasons a digital only approach is not appropriate.

Commercialism

Commercialism would also be at the heart of the organisations, thereby recognising that the existing funding model for local government will not support, no matter how efficient, the service delivery demanded by a growing population.

One cornerstone of the business model for the new councils will be targeted charges for added value services. With local government struggling to meet it statutory obligations, it is likely to become the norm that services over and above the basic level of statutory provision should attract a fair charge. The surpluses generated from these will then be reinvested to support core statutory activities.

For example; Aylesbury Vale is a council with a publically stated ambition of becoming Council Tax free. It intends to do this through the generation of new income streams derived from its commercial activities and commercial ambition. To achieve this, it would need to generate an additional £10 million of new, net income. If the Council was only dependent upon maximising the income from the existing and traditional services delivered by councils then this would be an unrealistic target. However, the Council has committed itself to developing new commercial ventures based around commercial development and satisfying the needs of its residents which sit beyond the usual range of Council services. Whilst new services, these might still align to the values the council holds and would satisfy the needs of those individuals who are cash rich but time poor. Whether this is Gardening service aligned to Garden Waste collection or care services for those who can remain in their own

homes, but just need a little extra support, there are many opportunities to satisfy the residents' needs for a competitive fee. The surpluses from these activities can be used to preserve and re-invest into services for those who are less financially able to help themselves. If these ambitions were embraced and translated into a unitary organisation then the opportunities for income generation could grow exponentially

Commercial skills amongst staff will be a necessity in most areas of the Council's activities as even in statutory and non-charging areas many business concepts can be applied equally in driving down cost, increasing knowledge of customers and increasing productivity.

Beyond this, expanding into new markets, which align with and support the objectives of the Councils, providing added value and profits for re-investment will help to support and protect valued services.

The existing districts already have a considerable track record of doing this with successful property development and investment portfolios, a broadband company and a subscription based Service Company for households and businesses. These are both award winning and nationally recognised as great examples of imaginative and entrepreneurial ventures which represent the future for local government financial stability.

For example, AVDC has created two new companies, 'Limecart' and 'Incgen', whose function is to create innovative new services for our Residents and Businesses that they will value and be prepared to pay for. These two vehicles work in conjunction with local companies as their delivery partners to grow the local business sector, rather than competing directly with it. After a period of product development and customer engagement these commercial vehicles are now selling subscription based packages directly to residents.

The drive towards commercialism is partly driven by financial challenges but more importantly by a desire to keep pace with the increasing expectations and needs of our Communities. The new unitary organisations will need to realise that to succeed they will need to look for new commercially driven funding sources and redesign existing services in order to understand where the value element exists. It is only through diversification into new market areas will the council of the future survive and thrive.

Commercial and trading organisations perform best when they understand their customers' needs and can engage with them fully in order to satisfy them. In this respect smaller organisations perform more strongly as they are able to make this bond with their customers. One of the greatest strengths that councils' have as commercial organisation is their relationship with their residents and the strong sense of trust that their residents have in their councils. This is the unique differentiator versus the private sector and is the single most important factor which enables councils to compete effectively in new markets (especially service based services). The experience developed and gained will be invaluable in maximising commercial income generating opportunities in these new unitary organisations.

The other area where more agile councils have a unique advantage is the area of commercial property development. Their understanding of the growth in their communities and the facilities that these communities will require enables them to predict, target and often to facilitate the provision of commercial property assets in their areas. Not only does their role in enabling commercial

infrastructure support growing communities it also enables the councils to use their access to low cost borrowing to produce commercial returns, which in turn supports core council services.

Districts have been at the forefront of new commercial development in recent years, (a bi-product of their understanding of local needs and their affinity to these communities) and have undertaken massive programmes of development supporting wider regeneration programmes and promoting commercial growth in their areas.

Like most Councils Wycombe DC recognised that a continuous programme of cost reduction in itself would not address the budget constraints or aspirations for low tax levels for residents and has responded by developing an income growth strategy which delivers benefits far wider with investment across the district, which delivers on jobs, housing, key infrastructure which is essential for the future of the district which has been neglected by infrastructure providers.

For example, Wycombe District Council has recently completed the large scale redevelopment of Handy Cross, at the cost of £47 million providing both a new modern leisure centre, let commercial property investment (£750k pa rent) and a regional coachway to support the growth and connectivity of the district. The Council has been active in regenerating key strategic sites, supporting additional housing, providing infrastructure and through its shop buy backs ensuring that it continues to have a vibrant town centre. The Council has also invested in Commercial Property and funded further developments to improve its revenue base. This approach has also secured jobs in the local economy.

By working with the Business Community the Council has been active in supporting the creation of two new BIDCO's to support both High Wycombe Town Centre and the Marlow Industrial Estate (Globe Park) protecting and growing jobs. This has enabled the Council to re-direct resources to support the local economy whilst local businesses have worked together to fund key improvements.

Aylesbury Vale District Council has invested over £100 million in the Aylesbury Canal basin area to provide a modern 1,200 seat theatre, a University campus teaching facility and a Waitrose and Travelodge scheme. This has provided the catalyst for extensive growth and investment in the Town centre providing new facilities, restaurants and leisure activities for Aylesbury's rapidly expanding population.

Joint Working and Track Record in Delivery

The existing district councils have a significant track record of delivery and joint working which it is anticipated will transfer to and assist in the design and transformation of the services provided by the two new unitary councils. Joint working between the new unitary councils will be a key feature of the proposed delivery of efficient services and the existing districts have considerable experience of joint working.

For example Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils have been undertaking a programme of joint working for over four years, and have reached the stage of:

- A single senior management team
- All service delivery is by joint teams
- All staff are on a single set of terms and conditions

- Service delivery is supported by a single unified ICT infrastructure

The joint working has focused on meeting three objectives.

- Improved service resilience
- Improved customer service
- Improved efficiency and financial savings

Savings to date from joint working are over £1.7m per annum.

Its success has been achieved by engaging all staff in the work of joining teams together, supported by a small in-house project management team drawing on appropriate methodologies that have been successfully deployed in other organisations. Maximising the use of internal skills and knowledge has meant that the whole process of creating shared teams has been delivered with less than £150k of expenditure on external consultants.

The views of customers and users formed an important part of the process, and this avoided deploying a "one size fits all" solution. The closeness of the authorities to their local communities makes it easier for them to identify and respond to local needs. Over the period of the joint working, customer and user satisfaction with services has not declined.

The effective involvement of members in providing a clear strategic direction to the joint working, and inputting to the work of establishing joint teams, has been very important. This relies on having members who understand their communities and how different services impact on those communities.

The Councils also have been effective in managing major external contracts for some of their services that have delivered efficiency and improved services. These included:

- Waste services (Jointly with Wycombe District Council) – BIFFA/SERCO
- Revenues & Benefits – Northgate
- Leisure Services - GLL

The successful management of contracts has been achieved through being clear with contractors what outcomes are required, and allowing them to use their skill to deliver them. Having an open as possible working partnership arrangements, facilitates dealing with issues that will always arise in a collaborative way, and encourages improvement and innovation. The aim is to focus on the service not the contract. Success has also been achieved in part by ensuring the contractor understands the particular characteristics of the area and its communities, something that would be very difficult to achieve with County wide contracts.

The councils also have experience in alternative and community based delivery vehicles as a means of enabling service delivery within the communities directly concerned with that service area. Not only does this engage the residents, but with the necessary support and assistance this

also transfers elements of traditional council costs into the community, thereby reducing the burden on the wider taxpayers.

Examples of CIC's created by Wycombe DC to run local services include Woodlands Management (now a Mutual 'Chiltern Ranger'), Wycombe Museum (newly formed Trust), Sport Development (services transferred to an existing Trust) each protecting services whilst generating significant savings and creating a sustainable future for valued discretionary services.

Conclusions

Buckinghamshire is at a pivotal decision point which will affect the lives of its residents and its prosperity for decades to come.

Failure to recognise the unique needs of the area, split along its economic geography, will perpetuate the years of lost opportunity already recorded. This has manifested itself in lost Growth within Buckinghamshire as a result of resources being targeted in accordance political expediency, instead of those areas which will deliver the greatest economic impact. Only by recognising and not ignoring these differences will the true economic growth potential of these areas be unlocked.

Blurring areas will result in averaged, and therefore sub-optimal, service outcomes over areas of demonstrably different needs and with very different challenges. Spending more, or less, than is required to satisfy these distinct needs will result in waste. Efficiency isn't the measure of how much is spent, but what is achieved with what has been spent and how outcomes are improved as a result. Building a sustainable model will rely on value generation which will be more easily achieved with a focus at the right level, building on existing achievements. Two new smaller unitary councils will be able to clearly understand and articulate the needs of their areas and target resources to their priority areas more precisely.

Failure to think differently and failure to focus on outcomes in favour of a simplistic decision to only concentrate on the amount spent, will not resolve the underlying issues and problem. More money into the same broken model will only delay the same, inevitable, outcome where services are first rationed and then ultimately turned off.

The two new unitary councils proposed in this report will build on the track record of achievements by the existing districts of innovative solutions, digital transformation and true commercialism to fundamentally redesign the way services are delivered, needs are met and how local government is funded for the next generation.

Five tests for local government reorganisation

It is understood that DCLG will consider proposals for local government reorganisation in Buckinghamshire against five key tests and the extent to which these tests would be met. Our analysis demonstrates that the two new unitary option is the highest scoring option according to the County Criteria. The model is also stronger than the new single unitary in each of the following key test areas.

- Deliver improved services and outcomes for local residents

- Demonstrate improved value for money and efficiency

- Deliver significant cost savings, and show that the cost of change can be recovered over a fixed period

- Support stronger and more accountable leadership

- Demonstrate the new model is sustainable in the medium to long term, both in service delivery and financial terms

Conclusion

Fundamental to successful, sustainable public services is a strong, growing and productive economy. We have set out in this report how we will realign local government in Buckinghamshire to reflect functioning economic areas, creating a ' one direction' approach to growth that enables coherent planning and unfettered prioritisation and investment to accelerate growth and productivity. Not only will this mean that our contribution to UK PLC improves markedly but inclusive economic growth will significantly reduce dependency and demand for hard pressed public services.

Government have set five tests for local government reorganisation. Namely that it should:

1. **Deliver improved outcomes for local residents.**

Our 'more local' approach will get local government much closer to our residents and the communities they live in, will build stronger partnerships to accelerate public sector reform and integration, will build even stronger relationships with our town and parish councils and better engage the voluntary sector. This will allow services, across all local government functions, to genuinely reflect the distinctive needs of our different communities leading to 'more effective' services delivering much better outcomes. Nowhere is this more important than in services to children and young people. More emphasis on professional social work and outcomes for children through a sharper focus on the child, the family and the community underpinned by much stronger partnership working with key agencies will deliver the step change which is so urgently needed in Buckinghamshire.

2. **Demonstrate improved value for money and efficiency.**

This comes from far more than simply being the cheapest. The challenge is to improve outcomes for less money. Our approach will focus hard on efficiency and productivity on an ongoing basis but will also promote wider public sector reform at a local level allowing alignment of priorities and resources so that public money

goes much further. Furthermore through our enhanced model of community leadership and by optimising economic growth we will promote the resilience and independence of our citizens, enable them to do far more for themselves and co-produce public value with them rather than simply delivering homogenous services. We will accelerate already impressive approaches to innovation, digitisation, shared services and commercialisation to both improve services and reduce costs. By putting all of these things at the heart of a new relationship with our residents we believe we can set new benchmarks in value for money and efficiency.

3. **Deliver significant cost savings and show that the cost of change can be recovered over a fixed period.**

Our proposal for two new unitary councils will deliver £57.4 million of net cost savings over the 5 year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24 and the cost of change, including the harmonisation of council tax, will pay back in year 2 of that period.

Although we recognise that demonstrating cost savings is essential, we believe that the financial benefits realised from our model will be far greater than the cost savings we have set out. There will be significant additional costs benefits from different ways of working and economic growth than has been evidenced within the costing model.

4. **Support stronger more accountable local leadership.**

Elected members in both their executive and representative roles are central to our model of locally accountable leadership. The optimum number of members, with appropriate governance arrangements that promote efficient, local decision making across all functions, building on already strong local relationships are key ingredients for success. Our model also recognises the role of our Town and Parish Councils in strengthening local accountability. Our 'community Together' approach will build on these foundations and will empower residents to influence not just decision making, but the design and delivery of services that meet the particular needs of our different communities.

5. **Demonstrate that the new model is sustainable in the medium to long term, both in service delivery and financial terms.**

More effective local services (just enough of the right type at the right time), tailored to the needs of our different communities, stronger partnership working, engaging our communities and residents to promote resilience and independence and thereby reduce demand for public services are all vital elements of our approach to sustainable local government. Add to this a much more coherent approach to inclusive economic growth within real functional economic areas, producing additional resources and reduced demand and a locally accountable leadership model which builds innovation, efficiency and productivity into the DNA of our two new councils and we will deliver the most sustainable model of local government available to the people of Buckinghamshire.

APPENDIX A: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE PROFILE

Draft

APPENDX 1

Buckinghamshire Profile

This section sets out the key characteristics of Buckinghamshire as a place – with a primary focus on the people that make up our communities and the businesses that drive our economy. When looked at as a whole, it may appear that Buckinghamshire is a broadly homogenous place to live and work, with characteristics that are in line with what you would expect in the South East of England. When you look at a more local level you can appreciate the diversity within our communities, in our geography and in our economies: this is shown in blue text on the pages that follow. The evidence supports two new unitary councils to enable us to be focused in **one direction** on our different economic geographies, be **even more local** and **more effective** and **more efficient**.

Map 1   Location of Buckinghamshire

Map 2   Our changing population: 2014 - 2015 and looking ahead to 2033
MK population forecast figures to be added

Aylesbury Vale:

✓ More working age people

✓ Biggest UK migration and international migration increases in Bucks

Population 2015

(less MK)

528,400

Forecast to 2033 #

603,400

+ Market Signals uplift

613,400

Wycombe / Chiltern / South Bucks:

✓ More under 4s due to migration (700)

✓ More working age in Wycombe

✓ Increasing over 65s

✓ Increasing over 80s

Milton Keynes

261,732
2,517 increase

Demography:
< 10: **15.4%**
< 20: **27.3%**
Working age: **60%**
> 65: 12.8%
> 80: 3%

Net migration:
UK internal: - 60
International: 665

261,732

2,487 more people in a year

188,707

4,147 more people in a year

2033 forecast:

214 - 226k

~ **37,650**
more people ##

339,693

2,331 more people in a year

2033 forecast:

375 - 376k

~ **37,100**
more people ##

North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
188,707 **4,147 increase**	339,693 **2,331 increase**	176,028 **1,150 increase**	94, 545 **573 increase**	69,120 **608 increase**
2033 Forecast: 213,948 – 226,357	**2033 Forecast:** 375,033 – 375,789	**2033 Forecast:** 192,924– 194,134	**2033 Forecast:** 101,427 – 103,242	**2033 Forecast:** 78,867 – 80,228
Demography: Under 10: **13.2%** Under 20: 25.2% Work age: **58.4%** Over 65: 16.4% Over 80: 4.2%	Demography: Under 10: 12.7% Under 20: 24.9% Work age: 55.9% Over 65: **19.2%** Over 80: **5.5%**	Demography: Under 10: **13.0%** Under 20: 25.2% Work age: **57.4%** Over 65: 17.4% Over 80: 4.7%	Demography: Under 10: 12.6% Under 20: 25.2% Work age: 53.6% Over 65: **21.2%** Over 80: **6.1%**	Demography: Under 10: 12.3% Under 20: 23.6% Work age: 55.9% Over 65: **19.2%** Over 80: **6.4%**
Net migration: Internal: **2,186** International:**1,200**	Net migration: Internal: 739 International: 530	Net migration: Internal: - 147 International: 334	Net migration: Internal: 379 International: 101	Net migration: Internal: 507 International: 95

Source: 2015 mid-year estimates (MYE) from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and HEDNA Assessment Update (Dec 2016)
based on 2014-based SNPP and 10-year migration trend forecasts # # less market signals uplift

Map 3 Our Communities: Cultural heritage

Aylesbury

Top 5 countries of birth:

- Pakistan (1.3%)
- Ireland (0.7%)
- Poland (0.7%)
- India (0.7%)
- South Africa (0.5%)

Wycombe

Top 5 countries of birth:

- Pakistan (3.1%)
- Poland (1.2%)
- India (0.9%)
- The Caribbean (0.9%)
- Ireland (0.7%)

South Bucks

Top 5 countries of birth:

- India (2.6%)
- Ireland (1.3%)
- United States (0.9%)
- South Africa (0.7%)
- Germany (0.7%)

46,136 people born outside of the UK

18,832 people born outside of the UK

46,643 people born outside of the UK

Milton Keynes

2011 Census pop: **248,821**

Ethnic groups:
White: 80%
199,094 people

BME/other: 20%
49,727 people

Top 5 countries of birth:

- India (1.7%)
- Poland (1.5%)
- Zimbabwe (0.9%) #
- Pakistan (0.8%)
- Nigeria (0.8%)

Africa = 5.4%

Chiltern

Top 5 countries of birth:

- Ireland (0.9%)
- India (0.8%)
- South Africa (0.7%)
- Poland (0.6%)
- United States (0.6%)

North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
2011 Census pop: **174,137**	2011 Census pop: **331,166**	2011 Census pop: **171,644**	2011 Census pop: **92,635**	2011 Census pop: **66,867**
Ethnic groups: White: 90% 156,079 people BME/other: 10.4% 18,058 people (9,684 in 2001)	**Ethnic groups:** White: 84.6% (280,591 people) BME/other: 15.3% (55,055 people)	**Ethnic groups:** White: 81% 139,477 people BME/other: 19% 32,167 people (19,678 in 2001	**Ethnic groups:** White: 91.5% 84,749 people BME/other:8.5% 7,886 people (4,078 in 2001)	**Ethnic groups:** White: 84% 56,365 people BME/other: 16% 10,502 people (4,105 in 2001)
Religion: Christian: 62% Other: 6% (4% = Muslim)		**Religion:** Christian: 57% **Other: 11%** (8.8% = Muslim)	**Religion** Christian: 63% Other: 6% (2.5% = Muslim)	**Religion** Christian: 62% **Other: 11%** (4.7% = Sikh) (2.5% = Hindu) (2.5% = Muslim)

Source: Census data collected on 27 March 2011 from the Office of National Statistics (ONS)

Map 4   Our Communities: Areas of deprivation

Four of the **20% least deprived** districts' in England

Milton Keynes Unitary	North Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
9,900 (18%) children live in low income families **Milton Keynes overall:** 12 areas within the least deprived 10% 31 areas within the most deprived 30% 9 areas in the most deprived 10% **Domains:** • Income • Employment • Education, skills and training • Barriers to housing and to services • Crime	*However* 10% (3,400) children live in low income families. **Aylesbury Town area:** • Education, skills and training (1.9 - 10.5) • Crime (3.7 - 13.4) • Income (15.3 - 17.3) • Employment (17.4) **Rural areas:** • Barriers to housing and to services (0.1 - 5.3)	*However* 11% (3,700) children live in low income families **High Wycombe Town area:** • Education, skills and training (9.2 - 14.7) • Income (13.9 - 14.7) • Employment (19.8) **Rural areas:** • Barriers to housing and to services (0.7)	*However* 7% (1,300) children live in low income families. **Chesham Town area:** • Education, skills and training (13.1) • Income (17.2) • Crime (15.7) **Rural areas:** • Barriers to housing and to services (3.8 - 7)	*However* 9% (1,100) children live in low income families. **Burnham / Iver area:** • Crime (2.6 - 8.5) **Rural and <u>urban</u> areas:** • Barriers to *housing* and to services (9 - 14)

Source: Public Health England Health Profiles (published Sep 2016) and 2015 IMD Data (DCLG) and analysis reports from Buckinghamshire Business First and MKInsight.org

Map 5 Our Communities: Health

North Unitary

Census Health rating:

Good / V Good: 86%

Fair: 11%

Bad: 3%

Very bad: 1%

(1,358 people)

*MK marginally below England average:
M 79.5 F 83.2*

Life expectancy:

M: **79.1**

F: **82.6**

Milton Keynes

Census Health rating:

Good / V Good: 85%

Fair: 11%

Bad: 3%

Very bad: 1%

(2,333 people)

Health inequality: #

M: 7.3 years lower

F: 5.7 years lower

Health inequality: #

M: 7.3 years lower

Life expectancy:

M: 80.6

F: 84

South Unitary

Census Health rating:

Good / V Good: 86%

Fair: 10.5%

Bad: 2.7%

Very bad: 0.8%

(2,544 people)

Health inequality: #

M: 6 years lower

F: 4 years lower

Chiltern:

M: 81.8

F: **86.7**

Wycombe:

M: **82.1**

F: 84.9

S Bucks:

M: 81.6

F: 85.5

Health inequality: #

M: 7.3 years lower

F: 5.7 years lower

Health inequality: #

M: 5.9 years lower

Life expectancy in deprived areas v England average

Milton Keynes Unitary	North Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 14% (34,538 people)	Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 14% (23,654 people)	Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 13% (22,526 people)	Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 13% (12,448 people)	Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 14% (9,300 people)
Health Profile # Better: 9 / 26 No diff: 13 / 26 Worse: 4 / 26 • GCSEs achieved (4) • Excess weight in adults (14) • Life expectancy at birth (female) (23) • Infant mortality (24)	Health Profile # Better: 21 / 27 No diff: 4 / 27 Worse: 1 / 27 • Breast feeding (8)	Health Profile # Better: 22 / 27 No diff: 5 / 27 Worse: 0 / 27	Health Profile # Better: 25 / 27 No diff: 2 / 27 Worse: 0 / 27	Health Profile# Better: 21 / 27 No diff: 4 / 27 Worse: 1 / 27 • KSI roads (25)

Source: Public Health England Health Profiles (published Sep 2016) and 2015 IMD Data (DCLG) and Census data collected on 27 March 2011 from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) #31 Health Profile indicators of which 27 (where data available) are comparable to the rest of England (rated against average score).

Map 6 Our Communities: Education

	South East	GB
NVQ4+	39.8%	37.1%
NVQ1+	88.5%	84.9%
None	6.3%	8.6%

Milton Keynes

16-64 population:
168,500 people

NVQ4+ 35.5%
(59,100 people)
NVQ3+ 50.7%
NVQ2+ 71.2%
NVQ1+ 84.7%
(141,100 people)

No qual. 9%
(15,100 people)

Open University
University Campus MK
MK College Campus x 2

71.2%

NVQ2+
GCSE A – C

78.2%

NVQ2+
GCSE A – C

University of Buckingham

Aylesbury:
NVQ4+ 43.7%
NVQ1+ 90.8%
None   7.1%
(8,300 people)

Aylesbury College
University College Aylesbury Vale

Wycombe:
NVQ4+ 48.4%
NVQ1+ 90.4%
None   5.2%
(5,700 people)

81.4%

NVQ2+
GCSE A – C

Amersham & Wycombe College

Buckinghamshire New University

Amersham & **Wycombe** College

National Film and Television School

Chiltern:
NVQ4+ 52.4%
NVQ1+ 93.9%
None   ~
(sample size too small)

South Bucks:
NVQ4+ 53.5%
NVQ1+ 90.8%
None   ~
(sample size too small)

North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
16-64 population: 119,200 people	**16-64 population:** 205,700 people	**16-64 population:** 109,300 people	**16-64 population:** 55,000 people	**16-64 population:** 41,400 people
NVQ4+ 43.7% (50,900 people) **NVQ3+** 62.2% **NVQ2+** 78.2% **NVQ1+** 90.8% (105,600 people)	**NVQ4+ 50.0%** (102,900 people) **NVQ3+** 67.8% **NVQ2+** 81.4% **NVQ1+** 90.4% (186,000 people)	**NVQ4+** 48.4% (53,000 people) **NVQ3+** 66.6% **NVQ2+** 80.7% **NVQ1+** 90.4% (98,900 people)	**NVQ4+ 52.5%** (28,400 people) **NVQ3+** 58.8% **NVQ2+** 81.8% **NVQ1+** 90.9% (49,300 people)	**NVQ4+ 53.5%** (21,500 people) **NVQ3+** 76.7% **NVQ2+** 86.9% **NVQ1+** 93.9% (37,800 people)
No qual. 7.1% (8,300 people)	**No qual. 2.7%** (5,700 people)	**No qual. 5.2%** (5,700 people)	**No qual. ~** (sample size too small)	**No qual. ~** (sample size too small)

Source data: ONS Annual Population Survey (July 2015 – June 2016), NOMIS

Map 7 Our Communities: Economic activity

Milton Keynes: 76.8%

In employment 73.9%

(128,000 people)

Employees   65.1%

Self employed   9.2%

Unemployed   4.8%

(6,400 people)

76.8%

128,000
economically
active

Aylesbury: 83.2%

In employment 80.9%

(98,300 people)

Employees   67.4%

Self-employed 12.9%

Unemployed   3.2%

(3,300 people)

83.2%

101,200
economically active

Chiltern: 82.3%

In employment 80.9%

(46,800 people)

Employees   62.9%

Self-employed   18.0%

Unemployed   3.0%

(1,400 people)

Wycombe: 84.1%

In employment 80.5%

(96,600 people)

Employees   68.4%

Self-employed 11.9%

Unemployed   4.1%

(4,000 people)

82.8%

177,500
economically active

South Bucks: 76.4%

In employment 74.3%

(32,300 people)

Employees   65.1%

Self-employed   9.2%

Unemployed   3.6%

(1,200 people)

Comparators:

	South East	GB
Active	80.8%	77.9%
Employee	77.7%	73.8%
Self-employed	11.6%	10.3%
Unemployed	4.1%	5.1%

Source data: ONS Annual Population Survey (Jul 2015 – Jun 2016), NOMIS

Map 8 Our Communities: Economic inactivity

Milton Keynes: 23.2% (39,100 people)

Reasons:
Student ✔
Looking after family / home ✔
Retired ✔
Long-term sick ✔
(17.8%)

Workless Households 12.2%
(10,100 people)

Claimant count	1.4%
Benefit claimants	**9.5%**

(16,030 people)

Aylesbury: 16.8% (19,700 people)

Reasons:
Student ✔
Looking after family / home ✔
Retired ✔
Long-term sick ✔
(16.7% 3,300 people)

Workless Households 11.4%
(6,900 people)

Claimant count	0.8%
Benefit claimants	**6.7%**

(7,900 people)

23.2%
39,100
people

16.8%
19,700
people

17.2%
36,800
people

Chiltern: 17.7% (9,600 people)

Reasons:
Looking after family / home ✔
Sample size too small for other categories

Workless Households ~

Claimant count	0.7%
Benefit claimants	5.7%

(3,110 people)

Wycombe: 15.9% (17,500 people)

Reasons:
Student ✔
Looking after family / home ✔
Retired ✔

Workless Households ~

Claimant count	1.0%
Benefit claimants	**6.9%**

(7,580 people)

South Bucks: 23.6% (9,700 people)

Reasons:
Looking after family / home ✔
Sample size too small for other categories

Workless Households: ~

Claimant count:	0.7%
Benefit claimants:	5.5%

(2,280 people)

Comparators:

	South East	GB
Inactive	19.2%	22.1%
Long term sick	18.8%	22.5%
Workless households	12.2%	15.3%
Claimant count	1.1%	1.8%
Benefit claimants	8.6%	11.5%

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (Jul 2015 – Jun 2016), NOMIS; ONS Claimant Count (Nov 2016); ONS workless households (Jan – Dec 2015); ONS Benefit Claimants (May 2016)

Map 9   Our Economy: Employment by occupation class and mean pay levels

MK Socio economic groups:

AB   25.4%
C1   32.1%
C2   18.3%
DE   **24.2%**

Milton Keynes

Job Density: 1.04

175,000 jobs

[FT 74%   PT 26%]

SOC 1-3 43.3% (55,300)
SOC 4-5 19.8% (25,300)
SOC 6-7 16.1% (21,100)
SOC 8-9 **20.3%** (25,900)

Mean Annual Pay:
£30,368

Aylesbury Vale

Job Density: 0.75

73,000 jobs

[FT 71%   PT 29%]

SOC 1-3 54.6% (53,700)
SOC 4-5 20.4% (20,100)
SOC 6-7 13.9% (13,700)
SOC 8-9 11.1% (10,900)

Mean Annual Pay:
£31,871

Chiltern

Job Density: 0.8

35,000 jobs

[FT 69%   PT 31%]

SOC 1-3 **68%** (31,800)
SOC 4-5 18.5% (8,700)
SOC 6-7 7.7% (3,600)
SOC 8-9 5.7% (2,700)

Wycombe

Job Density: 0.89

97,000 jobs

[FT 69.5%   PT 30.5%]

SOC 1-3 50% (46,400)
SOC 4-5 **21.4%** (19,900)
SOC 6-7 **19.6%** (18,200)
SOC 8-9 9% (8,300)

Mean Annual Pay:

Wyc: **£36,963**

C: **£39,759**

SB: **£44,135**

South Bucks

Job Density: 0.96

36,000 jobs

[FT 70%   PT 31%]

SOC 1-3 57.7% (18,600)
SOC 4-5 19.7% (8,700)
SOC 6-7 13.1% (4,200)
SOC 8-9 9.5% (3,100)

Standard Occupation Class (SOC)

1-3   Senior executives; directors; professional and technical
4-5   Administrative, secretarial and skilled trades
6-7   Caring; leisure; sales and customer services
8-9   Plant/machine operatives; elementary occupations

North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
Social Grade:	Social Grade:	Social Grade:	Social Grade:	Social Grade:
AB 29.7% Higher managerial /admin /professional	**AB** 35.9% Higher managerial /admin /professional	**AB** 32.7% Higher managerial /admin /professional	**AB** **41.0%** Higher managerial /admin /professional	**AB** 38.0% Higher managerial /admin /professional
C1 33.2% Junior mgmt. / clerical	**C1** 31.8% Junior mgmt. / clerical	**C1** 31.7% Junior mgmt. / clerical	**C1** 31.0% Junior mgmt. / clerical	**C1** 33.4% Junior mgmt. / clerical
C2 20.3% Skilled manual	**C2** 18.3% Skilled manual	**C2** 18.8% Skilled manual	**C2** 15.6% Skilled manual	**C2** 17.0% Skilled manual
DE 16.8% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension	**DE** 14.6% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension	**DE** 16.8% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension	**DE** 12.4% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension	**DE** **11.7%** Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (Jul 2015 – Jun 2016), NOMIS; ONS Job Density (2014) and Social Grade from latest National Readership Survey

Map 10   Our Economy: What our residents do for work and job density

Aylesbury Vale

Top 3 employee jobs by industry:

G Wholesale/retail   **17.8%**

O Human Health   13.7%

N Admin/Support   11.0% =

P Education   11.0% =

Milton Keynes

Top 3 employee jobs by industry:

G Wholesale/retail   **18.7%**

N Admin/Support   9.6%

M Profess/Scientific   9.0% =

O Human Health   9.0% =

Job Density: **1.04**

Job Density: **0.75**

Chiltern

Top 3 employee jobs by industry:

G Wholesale/retail   **20.0%**

M Profess/Scientific   12.9% =

O Human Health   12.9% =

Wycombe

Top 3 employee jobs by industry:

G Wholesale/retail   **22.0%**

M Profess/Scientific   11.0%

O Human Health   9.8%

Job Density: **0.8**

0.89

0.96

South Bucks

Top 3 employee jobs by industry:

G Wholesale/retail   **19.4%**

M Profess/Scientific   11.1% =

O Human Health   11.1% =

I Accom/Food   8.3% =

J Info /Comms   8.3% =

North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
C Manufacturing: 8.2%	C Manufacturing: 5.6%	C Manufacturing: 6.1%	C Manufacturing: 2.4%	C Manufacturing: 4.9%
F Construction: 4.1%	F Construction: 4.9%	F Construction: 4.6%	F Construction: 5.0%	F Construction: 4.9%
G W/sale/retail: 17.8%	G Wholesale/retail: 19.8%	G Wholesale/retail: 22.0%	G Wholesale/retail: 20.0%	G Wholesale/retail: 19.4% 1
I Accommod./Food: 6.2%	I Accommod./Food: 6.2%	I Accommod./Food: 6.1%	I Accommod./Food: 5.7%	I Accommod./Food: 8.3% 3 =
J Info /Comms: 4.8%	J Info /Comms: 7.7%	J Info /Comms: 8.5%	J Info /Comms: 7.1%	J Info /Comms: 8.3% 3 =
K Finance/Insurance: 2.1%	K Finance/Insurance: 1.9%	K Finance/Insurance: 1.8%	K Finance/Insurance: 2.3%	K Finance/Insurance: 1.9%
M Prof/Scientific: 8.2%	M Profess/Scientific: 10.8%	M Profess/Scientific: 11.0%	M Profess/Scientific: 12.9%	M Profess/Scientific: 11.1%
N Admin/Support: 11%	N Admin/Support: 6.5%	N Admin/Support: 7.3%	N Admin/Support: 4.3%	N Admin/Support: 8.3%
P Education: 11%	P Education: 9.0%	P Education: 8.5%	P Education: 14.3% 2	P Education: 6.9%
Q Human Health: 13.7%	Q Human Health: 10.2%	Q Human Health: 9.8%	Q Human Health: 12.9%	Q Human Health: 11.1%

Source: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (2015); ONS Job Density (2014)

Map 11   Our Economy: Business in Buckinghamshire

14,080 businesses

Milton Keynes
Key large employers:

- Mercedes Benz
- Home Retail Group
- Network Rail
- Suzuki
- Red Bull Racing

Milton Keynes

Micro (0-9)
83.5% (11,760)

Small (10-49)
12.5% (1,765)

Medium (50-249)
3.3% (460)

Large (250+)
0.7% (95)

Aylesbury
Key large employers:

- Biffa Municipal
- Orange Genir
- SLR Consulting
- The Freemantle Trust
- Arla
- Silverstone

10,502 businesses

Chiltern
Key large employers:

- GE Healthcare
- Trinity Mirror Group South
- Asquith Nurseries

Wycombe
Key large employers:

- Dreams
- Biffa
- Softcat
- Taylor Wimpey
- Hovis Ltd
- Whistl

22,590 businesses

South Bucks
Key large employers:

- Pinewood Group PLC
- Martin Baker Aircraft Company Ltd
- Intercontinental Hotels Group
- Stoke Park

North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
Total businesses: **10,520**	Total businesses: **22,590**	Total business': **10,450**	Total businesses': **6,605**	Total businesses: **5,530**
Micro (0-9) 88.3% (9,295)	**Micro** (0-9) 88.1% (19,895)	**Micro** (0-9) 86% (8,995)	**Micro** (0-9) 90.8% (5,995)	**Micro** (0-9) 88.7% (4,905)
Small (10-49) 9.6% (1,010)	**Small** (10-49) 9.9% (2,210)	**Small** (10-49) 11.2% (1,170)	**Small** (10-49) 7.9% (515)	**Small** (10-49) 9.5% (525)
Medium (50-249) 1.8% (190)	**Medium** (50-249) 2% (440)	**Medium** (50-249) 2.5% (260)	**Medium** (50-249) 1.3% (85)	**Medium** (50-249) 1.7% (95)
Large (250+) 0.2% (25)	**Large** (250+) 0.2% (45)	**Large** (250+) 0.2% (25)	**Large** (250+) 0.2% (10)	**Large** (250+) 0.2% (10)

Source: ONS Interdepartmental Business Register (2016) NOMIS: Businesses = local units (totals vary on Nomis due to rounding)

Map 12   Our Economy: Our key economic assets in Buckinghamshire

Silverstone
Enterprise Zone

Open University HQ

University of
Beds UCMK

The National Bowl
Stadium: MK and Arena: MK
MK Business Centre
The Atterbury Lakes Centre

MK College
Campus x2

University of
Buckingham

Bletchley Park

Westcott
Enterprise Zone

Aylesbury College

University College
Aylesbury Vale

Woodlands
Enterprise Zone

Amersham &
Wycombe College

Cressex
Business
Park

Buckinghamshire
New University

National Film and
Television School

Amersham &
Wycombe College

Globe
Business
Park

Dorney
Lake

Pinewood

● Key economic assets

● Universities

● Colleges

Map 13 Our Economy: Housing Growth
DRAFT MK housing forecast figures to be added

Average house price:
£245,430
8 x salary

Milton Keynes
Not included
in our HEDNA

Milton Keynes

% change to house
price to this time last
year: 6.6%

Mean salary:
£30,368

Aylesbury
HEDNA allocation
(subject to Local Plan
redistribution based on
capacity):

19,250 homes
1,700 from Wycombe
5,800 from C and SB

= 26,750 homes

**MAJOR
HOUSING
GROWTH**

Average house price:

£321,739
10 x salary

Chiltern / South Bucks
HEDNA allocation
(subject to Local Plan
redistribution based on
capacity):

13,309 homes
5,800 to Aylesbury

= 7,505 homes

Wycombe
HEDNA allocation
(subject to Local Plan
redistribution based on
capacity):

12,824 homes
1,700 to Aylesbury

= 11,124 homes

Average house price:
£522,190
13 x salary

HEDNA housing growth to 2033: **45,383 new homes**

North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
Average house price: £321,739	Average house price: £522,190	Average house price: £390,858	Average house price: £556,187	Average house price: £619,526
% change to this time last year: + 12.2%	% change to this time last year: : 12%	% change to this time last year: : 11.7%	% change to this time last year: : 12.6%	% change to this time last year: 12.2%
Mean salary: £31,871	Mean salary: £40,286	Mean salary: £36,963	Mean salary: £39,759	Mean salary: £44,135
Price v Salary: 10 times	Price v Salary: 13 times	Price v Salary: 11 times	Price v Salary: 14 times	Price v Salary: 14 times
Source: HEDNA Update (Dec 2016); ONS earning and working hours (2016); Land Registry House Price (Oct 2016)				

Map 14   Our Place: Accessibility

We are well connected to the motorway and rail networks in Buckinghamshire which makes us a desirable place to live and do business. The tube line connecting Chesham and Amersham through to London make these popular commuter towns. High Wycombe train station on the Chiltern Line has a direct service to London Marylebone that takes just 23 minutes – making this the station with the most usages in Buckinghamshire.

Station usage: entries and exits

High Wycombe

Beaconsfield

Gerrards Cross

Aylesbury

1 million

2 million
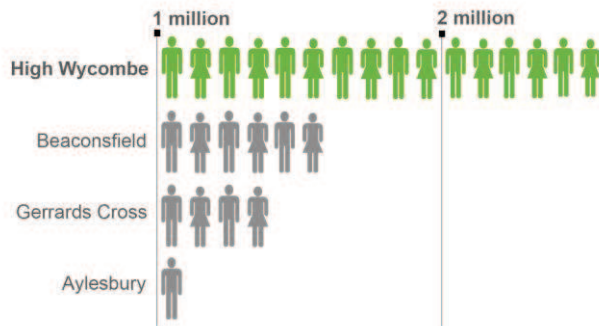
Source: Chiltern Railways Jan 2016

Map 15 Our Place: Accessibility around Buckinghamshire

That said, the challenges for more local trips in and around Buckinghamshire, whether that be by car or by public transport are often challenged by the Chiltern Hills factor. Two new unitary councils will enable us to be **even more local** and to keep travel for our residents – and our elected members on council matters closer to home.

North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
87% households have / have access to a car or van	88% households have / have access to a car or van	86% households have / have access to a car or van	89% households have / have access to a car or van	89% households have / have access to a car or van
		Marlow to Milton Keynes:	**Chesham to Ivinghoe:**	**Burnham to Buckingham:**
		61 miles	12.6 miles	57.6 miles
		Car: 1.15 hours	Car: 23 minutes	Car: 1.30 hours
		Public transport: 2.11 hours	Public transport: 1.56 hours	Public transport: 3 hours

Source: Google maps trip planning

APPENDIX B: FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS

The following tables provide a list of assumptions that have been made to determine the high-level costs and savings for the different options.

Costs

Assumption category	Assumption description and Source
Council tax	Publicly available data has been used on council tax base and average band D council tax rates for 2016/17 and based on the principal council element only for the county and the districts, i.e. excluding parish, fire and police precepts. In 2017/18 the council tax rates have been uplifted by 3.99% (including the 2% for additional council tax on top of the authority's existing refurendum threshold on the understanding that the additional council tax revenue collected is used for adult social care) for the County Council and £5 for the district councils with the exception of Wycombe District Council which is assumed to freeze council tax at the 2016/17 rate until 2019/20. From 2019/20 onwards, which is when the new UA(s) are assumed to be formed, the council tax rates are assumed to increase by 3.99% annually. The 2016/17 average band D council tax rates[11] used in the calculations are as follows: • Buckinghamshire County Council - £1,160.19 • Aylesbury District Council - £150.81 • Chiltern District Council - £170.62 • South Bucks District Council – £148.00 • Wycome District Council - £137.65 The 2016/17 council tax base[12] used in the calculations are as follows: • Aylesbury District Council – 69,410 • Chiltern District Council – 43,560 • South Bucks District Council – 31,988 • Wycome District Council – 66,373

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[11] Council Tax rates for 2016/17 are based on CTR and CTB forms and include special expenses

[12] Council tax base for council tax setting purposes in 2016/17

| Change programme costs | The financial analysis assumes the following for each option:

Two new unitary model – creating two new unitary councils will require (over a two-year change programme):

     ○ 30 extra Council staff at £45k per annum (including on-costs) per member of staff to set up the county-wide services including a shared back-office service and the integration of IT systems.
     ○ £1.3m of external consultancy support per annum to set up two new unitaries, integrate IT systems and set up the county-wide shared back-office service.

    • One new unitary model – creating one new unitary council will require:

     ○ 30 extra Council staff at £45k per annum (including on-costs) per member of staff to set up the county wide services including a shared back-office service and the integration of IT systems.
     ○ £1.3m of external consultancy support per annum to set up two new unitaries, integrate IT systems and set up the county-wide shared back-office service

    • More detailed work on the costs of reorganisation will be performed at the full business case stage, a contingency cost of £2m per annum has been included for each option for the first two years following reorganisation. |
| | |

Savings

Assumption category	Assumption description Source
Senior staff restructuring (estimated savings from comparing current cost to new structure cost)	Publicly available data from each council on the pay policies and senior staff pay has been used. To inform the senior staff assumption for the proposed new structures, Wiltshire Council has been used as a reference point. The estimated current senior staff cost for the County and the five districts is £5.8m + 40% on costs per annum Based on this, the assumption used in the financial analsysis assumes the following for each option: • Two new unitary model The combined cost of the two new organisation is assumed to be based on the following: 2 Chief Executive at £170,000 + 40% on costs per annum 6 Strategic Directors at £110,000 + 40% on costs per annum 21 Heads of Service at £70,000 + 40% on costs per annum

	• Single new unitary model The senior staff cost for the new organisation is assumed to be based on the following: 1 Chief Executive at £190,300 + 40% on costs per annum 3 Strategic Directors at £120,000 + 40% on costs per annum 13 Heads of Service at £70,000 + 40% on costs per annum
Democratic	Publicly available data on member allowances and expenses from comparable Unitary Councils in England has been used to establish An assumption for member allowances and expenses of £15,000. Under the current democratic structures for the five councils there are currently 236 members. Under the reorganised structures the financial analsysis assumes the following number of members: • Two new unitary model – creating two unitary councils 59 members in the north unitary council and 80 members in the south unitary. • Single new unitary model 90 members in the unitary council In the north unitary the number of members would remain the same as in the currently Aylesbury Vale District Council and these members would represent the same wards under the north unitary as is currently the same. Therefore, no Boundary Commission review would be required under the north unitary council. In the one newunitary and the south unitary the distrubution of members will be determined by a Boundary Commission review as part of the reorganisation process.
Corporate services	Strategic Financial Case reports for three local government reorganisations in England (for two tier to a one newcounty unitary) which suggest Corporate Services, including ICT, savings are possible when combining authorities. Using the information from these studies it is assumed that as a percentage of total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from Revenue Account (RA) statistics, the estimated average saving across the proposed two Council reorganisations is 2.10%. The 2.10% has been applied to the total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from the RA statistics for 2016/17 for the five councils to calculate the estimated annual saving. It is assumed that in the first full year following reorganisation 33.3% of the estimated annual saving will be achived, 66% in year two and 100% in year three. In each year thereafter, 100% of the estimated savings is assumed to be achieved. It has been assumed that the one new unitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two

	new unitary option. Therefore, the followng adjustment has been made to reflect this: • Two new unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10
Service optimisation	Strategic Financial Case reports for three local government reorganisations in England (for two tier to a one newcounty unitary) which suggest service optimisation efficiency savings are possible when combining authorities. Using the information from these studies it is assumed that as a percentage of total net service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from RA statistics, the estimated average saving across the proposed two authority reorganisations is 1.62%. The 1.62% has been applied to the total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from the RA statistics for 2016/17 for the five councils to calculate the estimated annual saving. It is assumed that in the first full year following reorganisation 33.3% of the estimated annual saving will be achieved, 66% in year two and 100% in year three. In each year thereafter, 100% of the estimated savings is assumed to be achived. It has been assumed that the one newunitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two unitary option. Therefore, the followng adjustment has been made to reflect this: • Two new unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10
Property rationalisation	Strategic Financial Case reports for three local government reorganisations in England (for two tier to a one newcounty unitary) which suggest property rationalisation savings are possible when combining authorities. Using the information from these studies it is assumed that as a percentage of total net service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from RA statistics the estimated average saving across the proposed two authority reorganisations is 0.35%. The 0.35% has been applied to the total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from the RA statistics for 2016/17 for the five councils to calculate the estimated annual saving. It is assumed that in the first full year following reorganisation 33.3% of the estimated annual saving will be achived, 66% in year two and 100% in year three. In each year thereafter, 100% of the estimated savings is assumed to be achived. It has been assumed that the one newunitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two unitary option. Therefore, the followng adjustment has been made to reflect this: • Two new unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10

Dates

Assumption category	Assumption description Source
Reorganisation year	2019/20
Shadow reorganisation year	2018/19

Draft

APPENDIX C: MODEL FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Proposed Service Delivery Model

We want all our children to be safe, confident and happy, with the opportunities to achieve through learning and reach their full potential as they become adults.

We recognise that the current context of reduced public spending, growing population and the challenges for our communities.

We acknowledge that we need a step change in the way that we meet the different needs of our communities; we now have the opportunity to achieve this. We are clear about our priorities and will work in partnership to address them. We will be community focussed but outward looking keen to engage in purposeful partnership with neighbouring councils and further to share best practice and work together within a culture of continuous improvement.

Our objectives are:

- Help families to deal with challenges and develop resilience, embrace opportunities and stay together whenever possible.
- Make sure all children attend school regularly so they can achieve and excel with the support of the best teachers.
- Support children and young people through transitions to become adults who contribute positively to society.
- We will improve the physical, emotional and mental health of children, ensuring the best start in life and long term healthy lifestyles.

We want children and families to thrive and be resilient. Our aim is that all children and young people live in families where they are safe, confident and happy and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and strengthen their community.

Supporting the family to maximise their wellbeing is at the centre of our approach: Empowering and enabling the family by providing the right services, in the right measure at the right time, when a problem is first identified, ensuring children can thrive, is our goal. We will build on the Government's Troubled Families agenda by using a whole family approach, keeping the child at the heart of our work, building resilience and enabling families to achieve positive outcomes and a positive future through efficient, effective and economic partnerships with the family at their core.

We want families to:

- be resilient, thrive and strengthen their community
- preserve family life wherever possible
- have the best physical and mental health and wellbeing
- support children in their learning and education
- be as economically self-sufficient as possible
- live free of crime and domestic abuse

We will achieve this by working closely with partners across Council services, including Adult Services, the Clinical Commissioning Group and its providers, the voluntary and community sector – including Parent Champions – and the Police and by making best use of our collective resources.

We will align our priorities through our strategic partnerships ensuring a more local focus in order to effectively engage with the different issues and challenges that arise in our different communities. Active strategies with effective implementation through embedding culture change and robust performance management will maximise coterminous, integrated multi-agency teams co-located when possible. We will need to ensure this includes joint commissioning with that of other partner agencies. Building on and developing new relationships with schools, colleges and early years' settings will be important. Teams will need to undergo some retargeting, restructure and realignment while maintaining professional lines of accountability.

There will be new opportunities to developing council wide support services including strategy, policy, performance and finance. All of which must be providing comprehensive data, analysis, feedback and future forecasting in order to deliver ever better and more cost-effective services.

There will be a shared responsibility for vulnerable children and those in need of protection and a very strong focus on delivering the necessary improvements in Children`s Social Care identified elsewhere in the document.

There will need to be a strong emphasis on Early Help and Prevention in order to achieve better outcomes for our children, families and communities. Reduce the need for expensive statutory interventions or unnecessary assessments and referrals allowing best practice in direct work with the most complex and high risk children and young people. In this way, scarce resources can be targeted most effectively.

An Early Help and Prevention Model agreed across the partnership with Health, Housing, Adult and Mental Health Services, Police the Community and Voluntary Sector and the whole system will be agreed to ensure complete alignment of effort, identification and understanding.

Different children, young people and families have different needs. Some children will flourish in a family accessing universal services which are available to everyone, such as health visiting, children's centres, schools and leisure services. Others will require more targeted intervention to tackle emerging additional needs, such as family support services, or additional help and support at school. Some families will have more complex issues which require either a multi-agency response from targeted services, or specialist services from children's social care, youth offending teams or specialist health services.

We will assess the need for early help services by utilising The Local Safeguarding Children Board Threshold Guidance, which is a tool designed to inform practitioners, volunteers and those working with children, young people and families in how to assess and identify a child's level of need and how to access the right level of support. "The Right Service at the Right Time"

Our approach to providing the services will be informed by this and delivered following shared training in a way to enable practitioners across different disciplines to work collaboratively and in partnership with families and children.

There could be 4 Thresholds of need:

- Universal Parent/Carer meeting child's needs with support of Universal Services E.g. Health Visitor, School or Early Years
- Early Help Children with additional needs e.g. extra help at school, developmental, speech and language.
- Targeted Early Help Children with multiple or complex needs targeted youth support, mental health, youth justice, edge of care

- Children`s Social Care and Specialist Children in Need, Child Protection, Looked After Children, Mental Health

Effective universal services will enhance families' unique qualities, strengths and skills to encourage them to cope with future challenges. We will work with families in a way that empowers and motivates them to develop routines, relationships and coping strategies so that they can respond as positively as possible to any future difficulties.

Targeted and specialist support services to families have to be time-limited. We will empower families by giving those tools, skills and information that they will be able to use for themselves, after their support programme has ended and they no longer have a lead practitioner working with them. Before lead practitioners stop working with a family, they will have helped the family to establish longer term support networks in their community - whether through children's centres, school, family and friends and the voluntary and community sector, including services such as Parent Engagement Panel.

A parent engagement panel (PEP) is a network of parents and carers, who share ideas, give each other support, take part in events and activities and represent the views of parents in consultations and meetings with the council. Parents and carers who would like to gain further skills and knowledge can take part in parent champion training. Parent champions offer support to other parents or carers in their communities and volunteer in a range of organisations. They can offer important support for parents and carers when their family finishes a more intensive intervention programme with the council, health or police or voluntary sector.

PEP offers community support and information for vulnerable families, and helps to raise aspiration and family resilience by equipping families with new skills and knowledge to support their own and other families. PEP is particularly valuable in engagement of BME communities and new arrivals. There can be cultural barriers to safeguarding and improving outcomes for children families and communities. Dialogue leading to shared understanding and clarity over the information, advice, guidance and support available from both statutory and community and voluntary agencies helps take up of services and greater community awareness of issues relating to safeguarding. These may include issues of CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), Radicalisation, Forced Marriage and Domestic Abuse. Such initiatives can reduce the overrepresentation of some groups involved with statutory services and provide.

Empowering families means listening to what they have to say, respecting their views, priorities, goals and aspirations – and also listening when they have something to tell us about the way we have provided our services. We will listen to families throughout our working relationship with them, and we will also ask them to give us feedback on how we have provided our services.

We will only turn around the lives of families needing support and facing complex and multiple disadvantages if front line staff have the competencies and tools to work effectively with them. This means practitioners across all agencies having access to the right training, information and guidance at the right time which equips them for taking an effective whole family approach to working with families

We recognise the important role that Children's Centres play in providing support to families with children under the age of five. By broadening the remit of Children's Centres, we will develop 'Family Hubs', which will provide holistic support for families with school age children, encompassing:

- Health and child development
- School readiness
- Employment support and access to childcare
- Parenting

- Support for families with more complex needs
- Early identification of Special Educational Needs

We will take a collaborative approach to co-locating and delivering services using a lead professional and Team Around the Family model.

Providing support around the health and develop of children aged 0-5 will still form a large part of the work undertaken by these hubs, as it is known that it is in the early years that this support has the biggest impact on long-term outcomes. However, we will expand the offer to include wide-ranging family support for local communities.

We will ensure that all agencies recognise their responsibility to think in terms of the whole family, in order to provide holistic support. Rather than individual agencies working with individual family members in isolation, agencies will work as part of a team around the family, recognising the needs and aspirations of all family members, and supporting them to make positive changes. Families' information will be shared with other relevant agencies once explicit consent is given, with exception to child protection concerns where no consent is necessary. Practitioners will help family members consider all the issues impacting on their family life and what their priorities are for change, in order to create an action plan with the family. This will be used to measure progress over time, so that everyone is working toward measurable improved outcomes for the whole family we want to be providing family focused and outcome based services long into the future, and will work are work to embed this way of working so that we can continue to work holistically with families despite future funding reductions.

To coordinate an effective multiagency approach, professionals will agree a lead practitioner who will act as a single point of contact for the family. They will be someone that the family can trust, who is able to engage and support them in making positive choices and in effecting change. The lead practitioner could be from the family's children's centre, school, health service provider, or a family support service. If a specialist or statutory service is working with the family – for example if there is a child protection case or a youth offending order – the practitioner from that service will take the lead.

In order to ensure children do not "slip through the net" when being referred to services for children, to reduce inappropriate referrals and ensure the most effective use of scarce resources a new front door to services for children and family's will be developed. Building on the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) model a separate MASH would operate in each of the Unitary Councils. We will further develop the Family Support Panels currently operating such that key agencies attend daily and others on specified days of the week. This will enable all referrals requiring more than a single agency service to be subject to a multi-agency view as to the need according to the thresholds identified above. This would become a single point of entry (SPOE} for each Council and partnership.

A SPOE is designed to make it easier for professionals and agencies to access relevant early intervention and support for a child, young person or family who requires targeted or specialist services. The SPOE includes the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), with representation from key agencies; parent support, housing, education welfare, social care, police, Troubled Families and Health Services. These professionals will jointly risk assess referrals and decide which services need to be involved and which agency should take the lead. The SPOE would be managed by experienced social care professionals who would ensure any referrals meeting the threshold for children`s social care is passed to them in a timely way. Inappropriate referrals to children`s social care would be eliminated and children and families would receive the right service at the right time. They would be helped before difficulties became crises specialist services would be able to target their work with the most complex high risk children and young people Early Help can provide a step down from statutory

services and will provide earlier identification of neglect, the most common cause for formal child protection plans.

We are mindful of the increasing issue of Domestic Abuse and will ensure appropriate engagement in the SPOE. We also recognise an increasing level of need around social and emotional mental health for our families. We therefore propose to incorporate the "Thrive Model" into our service delivery, which brings services together in a way that is more responsive to the needs of children and young people. When implemented this model has received very positive feedback from professionals, including schools all welcoming the simplicity of having one place to refer concerns without being "bounced from one team or agency to the other"

Protocols, data sharing, performance management, quality assurance systems with response times etc. would be developed. Governance would be through a combination of the multi-agency Safeguarding Board, Departmental Management Team, Council Management Board, Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council.

The costliest interventions for children are Looked After Children (LAC) placements, effective commissioning including cross council, investment in carer recruitment campaigns, and the development of "Edge of Care" services for young people can all reduce costs, but clearly quality must be maintained. It is also vital to have a clear focus on the gatekeeping of LAC and effective planning so that children do not drift but move on to permanent or long term placements, supported housing or exit care through a planned return home. Many authorities have implemented panel systems. Chaired by a Senior Social Work Manager at AD level a weekly panel agrees or directs alternatives to admissions to care, care proceedings, reviews other admissions, scrutinises and challenges planning, placement, outcomes etc. this should complement the work of the offline reviewing officers. Key partner agencies can be present to ensure appropriate tripartite funding across children`s social care, education and health. These processes deliver efficiencies that can be reinvested into early help and prevention while developing best practice.

Children in receipt of Child Protection Plans need constant scrutiny of progress, with smart and realistic timescales, reviews must be held on time with good multi-agency attendance with conference chairs escalating any concerns. In the same way, Children in Need plans require regular and timely reviews of progress. Effective work with Children with Disabilities is crucial to ensure family support and respite is available to prevent family breakdown resulting in the need for high cost placements often at distance from home and trusted networks.

Work force costs can be managed by an effective recruitment and retention strategy, a reliance on agency and temporary staff increases costs and the lack of a consistent work force has a detrimental impact on children's outcomes. Permanent Senior Management posts are necessary to develop a high performing team Consistent front line managers are needed to ensure consistent practice and compliance with procedures. Poor practice must be challenged. All staff need the tools for the job including regular high quality, training and professional development, regular appraisal, access to research, best practice models, clear accountabilities, manageable workloads with a culture of support and sense of direction from leaders who are visible and encourage clear communication right through the system A good work environment evidences the Council and its partners cares about staff who deal with difficult challenges on a day to day basis. The use of shared capital assets is both cost effective and improves partnership working as evidenced in many Children's Services.

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APPENDIX D: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The governance arrangements will support the vision and objectives of the unitary councils. In particular they will be designed to ensure that:-

- Decision-making is streamlined, accountable, transparent and efficient
- Democratic representation lies at the heart of local communities providing strong leadership and responding to local needs
- There is effective and innovative partnership working at all levels to deliver joined up services and empowered communities

New arrangements will seek to minimise local bureaucracy, achieve more efficient use of resources, ensure that decisions can be scrutinised and support community involvement in democratic processes.

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

Currently across Buckinghamshire County Council and the 4 District Councils there are 236 elected councillors at principal authority level (County and District Councils) serving a population of 528,400. This equates to a ratio of 1 principal authority member to 2,238 potential electors. In Milton Keynes there are 57 Members serving a population of 261,732. This equates to a ratio of 1 member to 4,592 potential electors.

In addition there are over 1000 town and parish councillors representing 168 town and parishes councils with a further 39 in Milton Keynes. Moving to a north and south unitary model will provide an opportunity to streamline decision-making processes, reduce local bureaucracy and provide clearer accountability for the provision of services. However, it will also be vital to ensure that elected members are available to support and engage with their local communities and represent the views and needs of local residents, organisations and businesses. It is also important that local Members can engage with residents at a local level and still have the opportunity to take part in decision making on the strategic management of the Council whether as part of the Executive or Scrutiny arm of the Council. The poor transport links between the north and south of the county will disadvantage members travelling from the extreme areas if there is a single administrative centre in either Aylesbury or High Wycombe.

A reduction in the number of elected members at principal council level would achieve cost-savings. However local Members in receipt of a basic allowance represent value for money where they operate as effective community leaders and engage with their communities and individuals within communities directly. They have the potential to work across business, parish councils, community groups and the voluntary sector as individuals without the need to set up another tier of local consultative bodies. A reasonable balance therefore needs to be struck between agile and cost-effective decision-making arrangements and robust and responsive democratic representation for local communities. An analysis has been carried out which would provide this balance.

Council Size
It is proposed that there will be 59 Councillors in Aylesbury Vale Unitary Council and 80 Councillors in the Southern area. This would provide an electoral ratio across the northern council of 3200 potential electors per Member. In the South the population of 339,693 potential electors would have a ratio of 4246 per Member.

This reflects the greater rural nature of the Northern Unitary. The allocation of boundaries in the North is based on the District Council existing ward boundaries.

In the South an exercise has been conducted which allocates the electors on the register between the existing district areas according to the number of electors on the register in that area. The allocation has been done to keep variances to a minimum and a maximum variance of 50% has been achieved. This will ensure that the Council can be implemented on existing district boundaries without the need for an immediate electoral review by the LGBCE.   However, given the variances in the South an electoral review would be triggered.

By comparison the County Council has simply doubled the number of members using the existing County Divisions across the electoral area without any regard to electoral numbers or variances. The result has been that in some areas it is arguable that the proposed elector numbers are not capable of being implemented.

The LGBCE guidance states that

'the accessibility of elected members to their electorate should be, as nearly as possible, equal. This can only be quantified by reference to the numbers of electors.' The guidance goes on to explain the circumstances in which they consider the lack of equality is notable and a review is triggered.

- More than 30% of a council's wards/divisions having an electoral imbalance of more than 10% from the average ratio for that authority; and/or

- One or more wards/divisions with an electoral imbalance of more than 30%; and

- The imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.

The variances in South Buckinghamshire in the County Council's model are extreme. There are variances of +80% in one ward compared to variances of -60% in another. So that one member may be representing 3000 Members where another may be representing 13000.

An Electoral Review would therefore be required before the implementation of the County proposal and the business case appears to acknowledge the need for this to happen at page 94 of the Business Case. The final decision on the number of elected members would be subject to a formal review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England within their published timetable.

WORKING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Ensuring that decisions are taken at the most appropriate level, that local communities are engaged and empowered and services are joined up and meet local needs will be a key focus of the new governance arrangements. The approach is set out in the section **Even More Local.**

Key features of future community engagement are likely to be:-

- Parish and Town Council Conferences
  Liaison meetings with parish and town councils already take place across the 4 districts to discuss service provision at both district and county level. Building on these existing relationships, the Conference could meet up to 3 times a year and give Parish and Town Councils an opportunity to meet with senior Members and officers of the Council to discuss and raise matters. All parish and town councils would be

invited to submit suggested topics for discussion and debate, and the Council would also add topics to the agenda.

The venue for Conferences would move around the council area and could be hosted by a town or parish council. Chairmen and Clerks of each council would be invited to each Conference meeting. Depending on the nature of the business at each Conference, the Leader of the unitary council or a Cabinet Member would be invited to attend to respond to any matter on the agenda, together with relevant officers.

The unparished area of High Wycombe Town is currently represented by the High Wycombe Town Committee which is a committee of the Council but operates to serve the unparished area in the way that a parish and town council would. This arrangement could continue as it does now under the new unitary arrangements but this is for the new unitary to determine. High Wycombe Town has Charter Trustees, who were set up to maintain the continuity of the Town Charter. Their duties are limited to ceremonial activities such as the election of the Mayor and preserving the Charter and this can continue under the two new unitary system.

- **Charter for Town and Parish Councils**
  This would set out clearly how the unitary council would engage and consult with town and parish councils. It would also include a memorandum of understanding on how the devolution of powers and transfer of assets would be achieved. There is already a strong track record of shared and partnership working between local and principal councils across the county and 4 districts, including asset transfers upon which to build the Charter. This is already a tried and tested approach elsewhere.

- **Area Panels**
  Existing community based forums and meetings would be brought together and combined into Area Panels. These area panels would not be a standing meeting but would meet as and when the meetings were required for example during a period where the relevant area was facing a specific change or redevelopment; where there was a community interest in carrying out a targeted piece of work to tackle an issue or where there was a specific project which an area wanted to take forward such as celebration or festival. These would be constituted as formal meetings to enable action to be agreed and taken and they would be supported by the Council, but would arise in response to local need.

The Committees would provide a further opportunity for Parish and Town Councils to raise issues, and also for any community or voluntary organisations and individuals to engage with the Council, present suggested agenda items and matters of concern for discussion, and to meet with Members direct. The meetings would be held in the relevant area to enable as many local residents and organisations to attend as possible.

Representatives from the local community and relevant local organisations would be invited to participate and could also be co-opted on to any working groups.

These are indicative of various approaches to community engagement that would be developed in detail and subject to full consultation.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The proposal will be to adopt a Leader and Cabinet form of governance. A leader with 8 cabinet members is considered appropriate for a two unitary model. Cross-cutting cabinet portfolios will be introduced to prevent silo working with the exception of children's service and social care which requires a focussed approach.

The size and range of portfolios will be a matter for detailed consideration once a decision on unitary structure is taken but would cover a combination of the following main services :-

Children and Young People	Leisure and recreation	Community Safety
Strategic Planning	Economic Development	Highways Transport planning
Finance and resources	Public Health	Waste collection and disposal
Transformation	Commercialisation	Sustainability
Education and skills	Environmental Health	Adult services
Property and regeneration	Housing	Emergency Planning
Culture	Environment,	Property and parking
Communities and partnerships	Customer services	

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION

Councils that adopt a Leader and Cabinet form of governance are required to have at least 1 overview and scrutiny committee with powers to review and scrutinise decisions or actions of cabinet and other committees of the council.

There are some examples of unitary councils with only 1 overview and scrutiny committee. However, it is not considered that this provides sufficient opportunity for non-cabinet members to carry out an effective scrutiny role at unitary level with the breadth of services provided, particularly in the areas of children and adult social care. It is therefore envisaged that 4 committee would be constituted covering the following areas:-

- Children's Services
- Social Care, Health and Housing
- Sustainable Communities
- Corporate Resources

The suggested arrangements for community engagement through regular Parish and Town Council Conferences, Area Action Forums and convening democratic boards for specific issues would also provide a robust level of local scrutiny.

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

In order to reduce local bureaucracy and stream line decision-making the number of council committees will be kept to a minimum. Regulatory committees dealing with planning and licensing applications are required to apply national and locally adopted policies to their decision-making. Where these policies differ across council areas the committees need to align to the plan area.

In terms of planning policy there are currently 4 local plan areas for each current district council, although a joint local plan is being developed for Chiltern and South Bucks councils. In a two unitary model it would be necessary to have 3 planning committees; 1 for the Aylesbury Vale area and 2 for a southern unitary (one covering the current High Wycombe district area and 1 for the current Chiltern and South Bucks Districts).

The statutory statements on Licensing of Premises and Gambling can be developed for each of the new unitary council. Therefore one main Licensing Committee and a Licensing Sub-Committee to hear appeals will be sufficient for each new unitary council.

An indicative list of all committees for each unitary council, including statutory committees would therefore be:

- Council
- Cabinet
- Planning Committee (x1 for Aylesbury Vale and x2 for southern unitary)
- Licensing Committee
- Licensing Sub-Committee
- Audit and Governance Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Rights of Way Committee
- Schools Forum
- HR and Appointments Committee
- Appeals and Complaints Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees (x4)
- Corporate Parenting Committee
- Parish Conference
- Area Action Forums (x 3 for Aylesbury Vale and 5 for southern unitary)
- Pensions Fund Committee
- High Wycombe Town Committee (for Southern Unitary only)

This indicates that an Aylesbury Vale unitary would have 21 committees and a southern unitary would have 24 committees. This would be a significant reduction in the overall number of committees and meetings held across the current 4 districts and county council with a consequential saving in administrative costs.

COUNCILLOR ROLES

The roles needed in a new unitary council are very similar to those in the existing authorities, except that the Cabinet has a wider portfolio of functions and this is mirrored in the areas covered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Planning Committee would take on both existing district and county planning function.

There would be a Council Chairman to represent the Council at ceremonial occasions. Agreement would need to be reached with Milton Keynes Council on which authority hosted the Clerk to the Lord Lieutenancy following any reorganisation

A set of role profiles for each position in the new unitary councils would be developed in consultation with stake holders including:-

- Individual councillors – this will articulate the role of members as Community Leaders
- The Cabinet Leader
- Cabinet portfolio holders
- Chairman of the Council
- Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- All other Chairman and Mayors, as appropriate.

Key roles and expected behaviours for all members would be:-

- To participate constructively in the good governance of the Council
- To act at all times in accordance with the Council's ethical and other codes of conduct and with high standards of honesty and integrity
- To develop open government by encouraging active community and individual participation in the governance of the area
- To represent effectively Ward interests and engage with social media
- To manage and assist with constituents' enquiries and representations making full use of digital technology
- To promote the interests and sustainability of the community in order to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Council area
- To represent the Council or the Ward on outside bodies
- To undertake training and development as appropriate in order to enhance corporate and personal effectiveness

APPENDIX E: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The chart below shows an indicative plan for implementing the reorganisation split into 3 phases: design and planning, transition management and delivering transformation. These phases are explained further below.

Design and Planning

During this phase new operating models for the new councils would be designed with associated implementation plans and consultation undertaken with stakeholders. These need to be clear and coherent, owned by stake holders and explain what services the future councils would deliver; how they would be organised; how the support functions would be managed; where they would be based; how performance would be managed; and what technology they would rely on.

This phase enables the councils to consider the capabilities required in the future, the organisational structure for each of the new councils and cultures they want to foster. Subsequently more detailed implementation planning would need to be undertaken to establish how these new arrangements would move forward into actual operation.

Transition Management

Once the design and planning stage is complete the transition from the existing to the new council structures would need to begin. Decisions would need to be taken on the scale and pace of this change. The timeframe in which the councils would like to achieve the anticipated benefits will be a critical consideration here.

Delivering Transformation

This phase would take place after the vesting of the new unitary authorities. It would see further benefits being delivered as a result of the new councils refining their approach to transformation and the day-to-day management of services. A formal date for completion of the transition programme would also be decided.

Also identified on this high level implementation plan are 4 work streams covering programme management and governance; technology and property; people and culture; and the service offer. The key issues to be addressed within each work steam as set out below:-

Programme Management and governance

This work stream would procure and establish the programme management arrangements required to deliver the reorganisation project on time and within budget. It would also establish the member oversight arrangements for the design and delivery of the new councils and provide necessary support.

Technology and property

This work stream would look at the key assets and enablers that the future council would need in order to deliver services effectively. The future technology architecture would need to be designed to support the transition to a new operating model and there would need to be a clear understanding of the phasing and pace of technology change required.

Decisions would also need to be taken about the physical locations that the new councils would occupy. This could involve investment in same cases but this is likely to be offset by savings made from surplus space elsewhere.

People and Culture

This work stream would identify activities required to support the transition of staff to a new model of operation as defined by the organisational structures of the new councils and their working practices. The new councils would need to consider what kind of culture they want to develop, as well the initiatives they would put in place to support staff and the pay/salary structures.
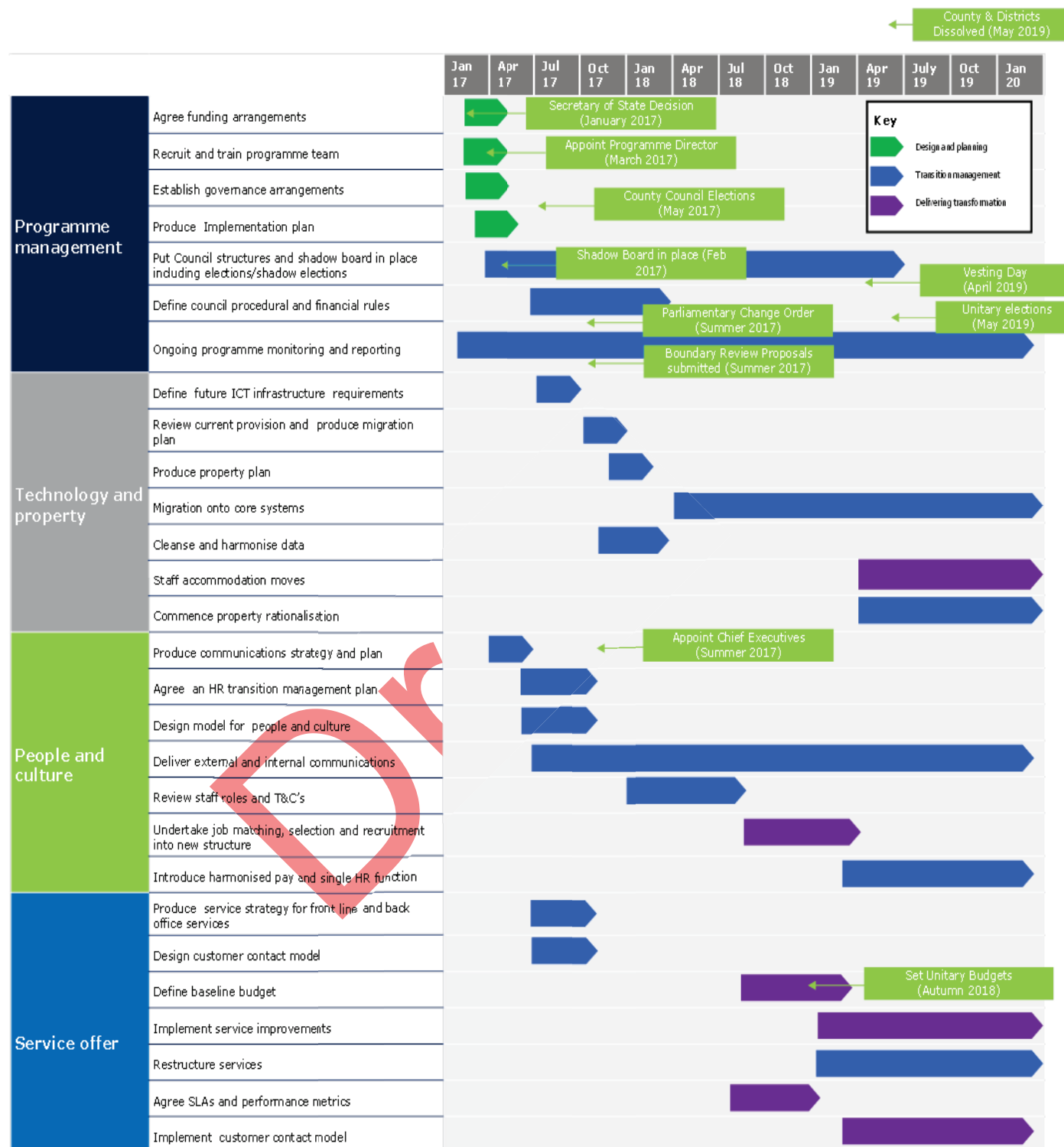
Services Offer

This work stream would develop customer service strategies and focus on front line delivery, ensuring there is seamless transition to the new council for customers and that ambitions for performance standards are set at a high level.

Key Dates

The plan has also been overlayed with key dates which identify milestones in implementation as follows:

16 January 2017	Report on unitary options considered by each Council
January 2017	Submission to the Secretary of State
January – March 2017	Secretary of State Decisions
February 2017	Shadow Board in Place
March 2017	Appointment of Programme Director
May 2017	County Council Elections
June 2017	Draft orders laid before Parliament
July 2017	Draft orders debated and agreed
July 2017	New structures exist legally
July-Sept 2017	Appoint Chief Executives
October 2017	Electoral Review starts
May 2018	Proxy council established
October 2018	Electoral Review reports back
April 2019	New Councils take over services and former Councils abolished
May 2019	Elections to new council/s

County & Districts Dissolved (May 2019)

	Jan 17	Apr 17	Jul 17	Oct 17	Jan 18	Apr 18	Jul 18	Oct 18	Jan 19	Apr 19	July 19	Oct 19	Jan 20

Key
- Design and planning
- Transition management
- Delivering transformation

Programme management

- Agree funding arrangements — Secretary of State Decision (January 2017)
- Recruit and train programme team — Appoint Programme Director (March 2017)
- Establish governance arrangements
- Produce Implementation plan — County Council Elections (May 2017)
- Put Council structures and shadow board in place including elections/shadow elections — Shadow Board in place (Feb 2017)
- Define council procedural and financial rules — Vesting Day (April 2019)
- Ongoing programme monitoring and reporting — Parliamentary Change Order (Summer 2017) — Unitary elections (May 2019) — Boundary Review Proposals submitted (Summer 2017)

Technology and property

- Define future ICT infrastructure requirements
- Review current provision and produce migration plan
- Produce property plan
- Migration onto core systems
- Cleanse and harmonise data
- Staff accommodation moves
- Commence property rationalisation

People and culture

- Produce communications strategy and plan — Appoint Chief Executives (Summer 2017)
- Agree an HR transition management plan
- Design model for people and culture
- Deliver external and internal communications
- Review staff roles and T&C's
- Undertake job matching, selection and recruitment into new structure
- Introduce harmonised pay and single HR function

Service offer

- Produce service strategy for front line and back office services
- Design customer contact model
- Define baseline budget — Set Unitary Budgets (Autumn 2018)
- Implement service improvements
- Restructure services
- Agree SLAs and performance metrics
- Implement customer contact model

Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

Business Case September 2016

Buckinghamshire
Council

Contents

Executive Summary

Buckinghamshire is an attractive county. It is a successful place to do business, contributing £14.8bn in Gross Valued Added (GVA) to UK economy and ranking 3rd in terms of GVA productivity.

The county enjoys low unemployment, higher-than-average household incomes and good health outcomes, yet we also have a number of challenges. This paper sets out why there is a compelling case for change.

Appendix 4

Change is essential for future growth in Buckinghamshire

The profile of Buckinghamshire is set to change significantly over the next twenty years. Emerging local plans identify a need for 50,000 new homes by 2033. Buckinghamshire is becoming even more multi-cultural and diverse. The population over the age of 65 is increasing, as are levels of disability, leading to significant pressures on services.

Past success is no longer a guarantee of continued prosperity. The need for change has become all the more apparent in recent years, a period that has seen rapid changes in attitudes and expectations amongst residents and businesses alike, together with rapid increases in demand. Future public services need to be fit to meet these challenges.

Services provided by the public sector are increasingly unaffordable, particularly in the context of fiscal constraint. By the end of 2016/17, the county council will have delivered £145m savings since April 2010. Collectively, the county and district councils have to deliver further savings in excess of £30m by 2020. Traditional approaches are not sustainable.

The role of the public sector is being transformed, driven by a growing demand for a new form of civic leadership that works with communities to realise a shared vision for their future, whilst being a powerful advocate in partnership and sub-regional arrangements. Residents want better quality services that are easier to access, and they want a real say in services and decisions that affect them. Ambitious town and parish councils want greater responsibility for assets and services so that they can tailor these to community needs. We want to play our part in relieving the acute pressure in the housing market alongside providing sustainable infrastructure for our communities.

The resources and energy tied up in coordinating five individual councils in a relatively small county not only frustrates the effective use of public resources but also prevents the agile leadership that is critical to meet the mid 21st century challenges of shaping sustainable communities, delivering new homes and jobs, devolving power to communities, promoting economic prosperity and ensuring the health and wellbeing of residents.

Now is the time for change

The current configuration of local government within Buckinghamshire is no longer fit for purpose. Furthermore, it is not affordable. Reform will take time but, if implemented now, is achievable within existing resources and manageable without jeopardising the performance of front line services. Any delay brings further risks to the sustainability of essential services and the successful delivery of growth across the county, whilst the capacity to manage a recovery strategy will diminish.
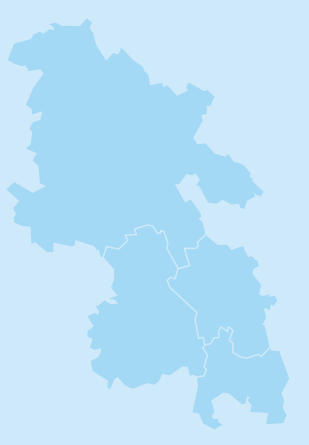
> **"No change" is the highest risk strategy.**

The options

Unitary government offers significant benefits for residents, communities and businesses in Buckinghamshire. Other Local Authorities who have made this transition have identified a variety of opportunities, including cost savings, service improvements and growth.

Three options have been considered for the future configuration of local government in Buckinghamshire based on the economic geography of the areas that make up Buckinghamshire, travel to work patterns, the urban and rural nature of the county, and population size. A detailed appraisal of these options has been undertaken and externally validated by Grant Thornton. The options considered are as follows:
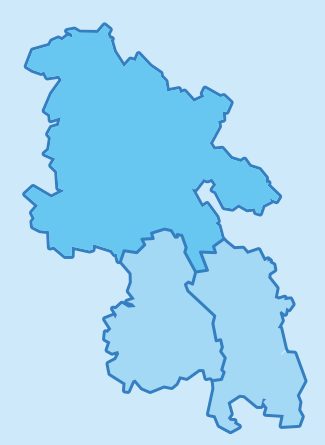
One Unitary

A county wide unitary responsible for delivering the full array of local authority services across Buckinghamshire

Two/Three Unitary

Would either see the county divided into North and South, or would follow a similar division to the current district boundaries

Three Unitary with Combined Authority

Three unitary authorities with strategic services pooled into a combined authority that would deliver these services county wide – for example health and social care, strategic planning and transport

The financial assessment

Option	Reasons	Rank
Option 1 - One Unitary Authority	Net 5 year revenue savings of £45.4m (£18.2m annual) - 4.7% *	1
Option 2a - Two Unitary Authorities	Net 5 year revenue savings of £17.3m (£10.3m annual) - 2.7% *	2
Option 3 - Three Unitary Authorities + Combined Authority	Net 5 year revenue savings of £11.1m (£5.4m annual) - 1.4% *	3
Option 2b - Three Unitary Authorities	Net 5 year revenue savings of £5.6m (£5.5m annual) - 1.4% *	4

* of estimated net budget requirement

The non-financial assessment

The options have also been evaluated against a set of non-financial criteria, based on discussions with senior civil servants at the Department for Communities and Local Government, together with similar studies that have been undertaken elsewhere within the country. In summary:

- **Option One:** *A single county-wide unitary model would achieve the highest annual revenue savings for investment in local priorities, whilst offering clear accountability, simplified arrangements for partners, and a strategic focus to maximise opportunities for communities and businesses. The challenge would be to develop a model that balances strategic coordination with local need;*

- **Option Two:** *A multiple unitary model offers clear accountability, together with a focus on the distinctive characteristics and challenges in different parts of the county and delivery of modest savings. However, the multiple unitary options would increase complexity for local partners and present risks in terms of the disaggregation of critical child and adult safeguarding services. This option would not provide the scale and capacity to offer significant efficiencies or longer term sustainability;*

- **Option Three:** *A 'Combined Authority' option offers a potential model for balancing the benefits of multiple unitaries with county-wide scale for strategic services such as social care and strategic planning. However, this model offers the lowest level of savings and risks recreating the issues of a two tier system, with reduced local accountability. A major challenge would be designing the governance arrangements to allow quick and effective decisions and balance potentially conflicting interests to mutual benefit. The 'Combined Authority' model is untested in the context of replacing a two-tier system.*

The non-financial appraisal is summarised in the matrix below.

Option	Service Performance	Democratic Leadership & Accountability	Local Engagement & Decision Making	Sustainability				Average sustainability score	Total score	Non-Financial Rank
				Economic Growth	Skills & Capacity	Engagement of supply chain (business and supply chain)	Coterminosity with partners (partnership working)			
Option One: Single Unitary	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1.25	6.25	1
Option Two: Multiple Unitary	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	2.75	9.75	3
Option Three: Combined Authority Option	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1.75	7.75	2

1 - high scoring, 2 - medium scoring, 3 - low scoring

The conclusion

The options appraisal has identified that a single county-wide unitary model offers the greatest likelihood of meeting the needs of Buckinghamshire in the future. Key benefits highlighted in the options appraisal were:

- **a single point** of accountability and responsibility for the quality of all local authority services within the area, supported by a single executive function

- **simplified** arrangements from the perspectives of the public, partners and businesses

- **opportunities** to improve the conditions for economic growth by bringing together related services such as spatial planning, housing, transport and infrastructure

- **enhancement** of existing county-wide social care and safeguarding services through closer connection with related services such as housing, leisure and benefits

- **protection** of a robust platform for further health and social care integration

- **ability** to maximise the investment over the longer term in preventative services

The key challenge identified with this option would be to provide confidence to residents that a large single unitary council would be able to respond to distinctive local needs, respect local identity and put decision-making in the hands of local communities.

Blueprint for a new county-wide single unitary council for Buckinghamshire

Our proposition is to abolish the county council and the four district councils and establish a brand new, county-wide single unitary council at the forefront of modern local government, committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all local residents, designed to engage effectively with each of the multiple communities county-wide, and to develop a prosperous and sustainable future for Buckinghamshire.

This section sets out a blueprint for what a new council could look like. This is for illustrative purposes; ultimately it will be for a brand new council to design its own vision, priorities and operating model.

A new vision

Our vision for the future of Buckinghamshire is to provide a new form of civic leadership fit for purpose in 2020 and beyond, one that gives local people a stronger say in the choices that affect them and enables each local community – from Buckingham to Burnham – to realise its own shared vision for the future.

Our vision is to redefine the role of the public sector from one of control and top down dialogue to one of enabling and facilitating initiative, innovation and ambition, whilst at the same time strengthening the safety net for the most vulnerable and removing the gaps that people can slip through.

Our proposal is for a brand new form of local government which builds upon the strong track record of the four district councils and the county council, whilst seizing the opportunity to design and establish new structures that ensure interests are represented at the right level, so that decisions can be taken to deliver the best outcomes.

To date it has not been possible to achieve a consensus between the county council and the district councils on the preferred end state of any reorganisation. Our proposition has been developed to reflect what we have heard from residents, businesses, parish and town councils and other key stakeholders.

Appendix 4

Our ambition for a new county-wide single unitary council for Buckinghamshire:

- **Single voice** – *speaking up on behalf of residents, businesses and partners*
- **More local** – *delivering an innovative locality based structure built on the ambition of our town and parish councils who are leading the way both locally and nationally, local area planning committees, and new, legally constituted Community Boards with decision making powers*

- **Better quality** – *improving the quality, cohesiveness and accessibility of services, with local delivery enabled by a network of multi-agency Community Hubs*
- **More efficient** – *moving £18m of council tax payers money each year away from management overheads and investing it in priority, front line services*

Single Voice

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire, aligned with key partnership structures already in place such as the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group Federation, would have the strategic accountability to deliver a place shaping agenda, seizing the opportunities of growth as the catalyst for change.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire, with a single strategic voice, would be able to be a powerful advocate for ensuring that the opportunities and needs of Buckinghamshire shape the emerging sub-national agenda and the commitment (through the National Infrastructure Commission) to address barriers to growth. It would be able to build upon the initiative that has created England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance – an emerging Sub-National Transport Board – using the ability of its civic leaders to develop momentum and deliver a change agenda. It would have the professional skills required to deliver an ambition for Buckinghamshire in a way that has not previously been possible.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be better for businesses, working in partnership to set the long-term direction and create the conditions that allows businesses to thrive, with a focus on investing in skills, transport infrastructure, encouraging business growth and playing to the strengths of the county's economy, particularly those sectors that will shape the lives of our residents in the future.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to maintain the excellent quality of education across Buckinghamshire, sustain the momentum in transforming health and social care, and improving children's services, and lead whole system integration to meet the growing demands of a changing population.

By reducing from 236 two tier Councillors to 98 single tier Councillors, a new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire could deliver clearer local accountability, with a saving of £1.2m.

More Local

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would have the confidence to enable greater empowerment at a local level. Through the implementation of new, stronger and well-resourced local area structures, transparency and accountability of decision making could be strengthened and the delivery of things that matter most to residents could be managed wherever possible at the local level. Key features could include:

a new devolution **offer to town and parish councils**, with flexible opportunities and support to enable them to take on responsibility for services and assets currently run by county and district councils and to deliver these far more locally – with packages tailored according to local ambition and priorities;

5 **local area planning committees**, which ensure that decisions on planning issues continue to be taken at a local level;

19 **new local 'Community Boards'**, which give local councillors the authority and the resources to take local decisions on the issues that affect local people.

Better Quality

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would clarify accountability and enable customer needs to be managed simply and holistically, taking a customer focused approach to supporting need at every stage of life to improve outcomes for all.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to deliver a **single point of contact and a single website** for residents, businesses and town and parish councils. The county council currently receives 680 telephone calls per month from residents trying to access district council services, with an annual cost of £34k. A single telephone number, with clear links to town and parish councils, would put an end to this frustration for residents.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to use its resources to develop a network of **multi-agency community hubs**, enabling residents to access services from a place local to them.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to eliminate duplication and deliver faster, leaner decision-making, ensuring that Buckinghamshire remains a place in which entrepreneurs want to create the future.

More Efficient

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire provides the greatest potential to cut bureaucracy and release efficiency savings for investment in local priorities, whilst ensuring at the same time that the safeguards valued by local communities are maintained.

A new county-wide unitary council would be able to deliver **£18.2m ongoing annual net revenue savings**. One off transition costs of £16.2m would be affordable within existing resources and repayable within three years. Council Tax equalisation is achievable within five years, and would cost £2.2m in year one. A return on investment of **£45m (282% over the 5 year period) in net revenue savings would be achievable over the first five years of the new council**.

Together, the five councils hold up to **£1bn** in assets. A recent property review highlighted the potential for net capital receipts of up to £48m by rationalising the county council's assets alone. This could be significantly enhanced by looking at the opportunities across the wider public estate.

A new county-wide unitary council would be able to ensure that the total reserves currently held by the five councils (**£285m as at 1 April 2016)** are effectively deployed to manage risks and invested in delivering the priorities of our residents, communities and businesses.

Council tax can be equalized at the lowest level in the first five years of a unitary, meaning council tax payers in Chiltern, South Bucks and Aylesbury Vale districts would have their bills reduced to the level paid in Wycombe district.

A single unitary council would not only be able to maximise the resources available to local government but would release efficiencies across county-wide partners, including housing associations and local charities, who allocate considerable resource in navigating their way through the different operating models of five councils.

Transition to Transformation

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be built on the strong track record of the legacy councils, which collectively have the delivery credentials to underpin this vision, together with recent relevant experience of local government reform in areas such as Wiltshire, Durham and Shropshire.

The transition plan illustrates that a new county-wide unitary council could be in place by 1 April 2019. The establishment of a new council would be phase one of a journey, not the end in itself. It would provide a building block for a future which will be connected to growth in the region and in the UK as a whole, and offer the potential for developing a devolution deal with government in the future.

The implementation of a major change project inevitably comes with transitional costs as well as potential short term risks to service continuity. The costs will be significantly outweighed by the long term gain to local residents and businesses. Risks can be systematically mitigated, as demonstrated by evidence of successful change already managed by the councils in Buckinghamshire, and from the experience of other new county-wide unitary authorities.

Public sector reform is essential for the future of Buckinghamshire and now is the time for change

Appendix 4

What will a new county-wide single unitary council mean?

For residents

- Less confusion about who does what
- Simple access to all services - one phone number, one website, local community hubs
- Consistent quality of service throughout Buckinghamshire
- Joined up, integrated services tailored to local needs
- Resources targeted at individuals/communities in need to maximise life chances
- Services for all residents, and particularly the most vulnerable, protected and enhanced during a period of change
- Less taxpayers money spent on management overheads and more on front line services
- More influence at local level to tackle community issues and shape local services
- Stronger, clearer local leadership through single tier elected councillors
- Strong voice for Buckinghamshire at a national level

For businesses

- Collaboration at a strategic level on issues such as use of Business Rates
- Single interface with local government for the Local Enterprise Partnership/business community
- Single account for businesses in accessing council services such as planning, licensing, trading standards
- Streamlined inspection regime with speedy decision making and reduced red tape

- A council using its resources and buying power to add value for business growth
- A single Buckinghamshire wide tourism offer
- Opportunity to discount business rates in certain parts of the county through enterprise zones to stimulate growth and start-ups

For parish and town councils

- Opportunities for more devolved accountability, resources and choice
- Local decision making on services, assets and choices specific to a locality
- Support with capacity, expertise, infrastructure and technology
- Single contact point for accessing support and advice from the unitary council
- Single consultation on all unitary council decisions that impact on the locality through Community Boards
- An end to the tensions between two-tier councils

For the voluntary and community sector

- Easier to do business - one council to work with in partnership
- Streamlined opportunities for accessing capacity building support
- Streamlined decision making on local funding through the new Community Boards
- Stronger engagement at a strategic level through a new Cabinet/Voluntary and Community Sector Forum and at a local level through participation in the new Community Boards

For elected members

- Influence over the full range of local government responsibilities in their local area
- The resources and decision making authority to quickly resolve issues
- Investment in training, development and support
- Stronger, clearer strategic leadership through one Executive
- Opportunities to represent Buckinghamshire in regional and national partnerships

For council employees

- One vision and one set of values
- Improved opportunities for career progression and opportunities for specialist work
- Larger teams, with increased capacity and resilience against absence
- Greater opportunities to resolve issues for customers first time
- The data and information needed to work effectively

For partners

- Less complex partnership working landscape, with aligned boundaries
- Single local government authority to talk to
- Efficiencies through collaboration at scale on a Buckinghamshire platform
- Consistent set of messages from local government in Buckinghamshire about priorities
- Single voice to represent Buckinghamshire's interests at national and regional levels

For central government

- Single council to talk to on public policy issues – including devolution, business rates, housing growth
- Sustainable local government model that minimises reliance on central government funding whilst ensuring ongoing investment in essential front line services
- Value for money service delivery and efficient use of public sector resources and estate.

A

Part A

The Need for Change

Buckingham Public Services Landscape

Local government

The county of Buckinghamshire has been an administrative unit for over 125 years. The current distribution of responsibilities between the county and district councils dates back to the 1974 reorganisation of Local Government, although there have been some changes in responsibilities since then (such as the move of Public Health responsibilities to the county council from the NHS in April 2013). Local Government comprises:

Buckinghamshire County Council	**49**	elected county councillors
Aylesbury Vale District Council Chiltern District Council South Bucks District Council Wycombe District Council	**187**	elected district councillors

168 parish and town Councils cover all areas of Buckinghamshire, with the exception of the unparished area of High Wycombe.

The county, district and town/parish councils have a combined net budget of £394.5m of which £331.7m is spent by the county council and £50.4m by the four district councils. Together, the parish and town precepts raised £12.4m in 2016/17. Buckinghamshire currently generates £162m in business rates, £50m of which is retained by the county and district councils.

Across the county and district councils, 21% of councillors are accountable for 86% of the local government resources.

Local Public Sector Spend (net budget requirement 2016/17)

Health Service
£520m | 49%

Blue Light Services
£137m | 13%

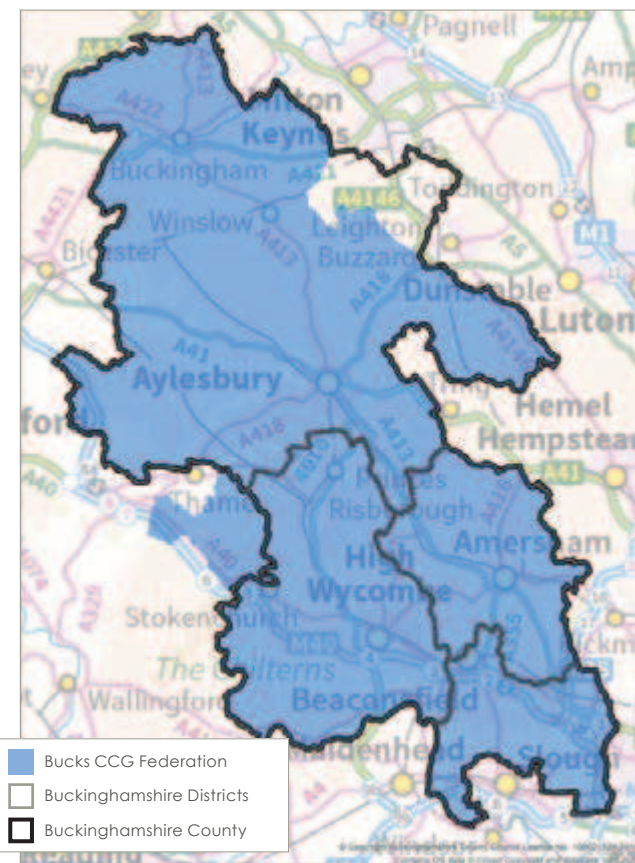**Local Government**
£395m | 38%
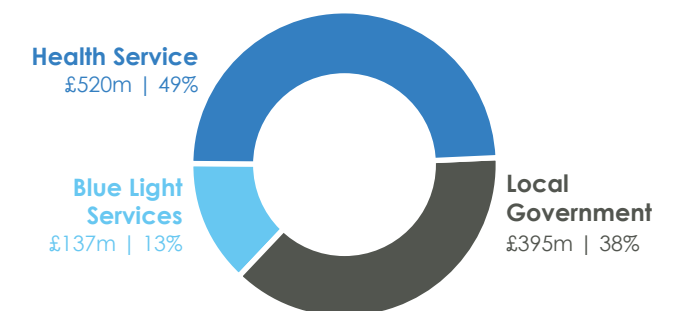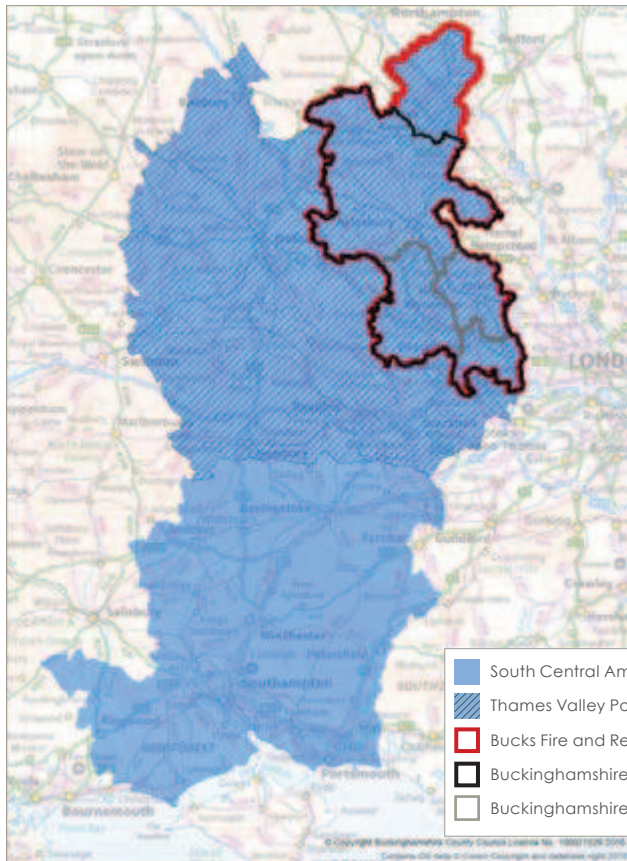
Blue light services

Buckinghamshire is served by:

- **Thames Valley Police constabulary** (Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes Berkshire and Oxfordshire)

- **Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service**

- **South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust** (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire)

Legend:
- South Central Ambulance
- Thames Valley Police
- Bucks Fire and Rescue
- Buckinghamshire County
- Buckinghamshire Districts

Health Services

Health services are provided by

- **Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Federation** – Aylesbury Vale & Chiltern CCGs have recently decided to create a federated 'one team' approach in order to improve patient care and save money by avoiding duplication and improving efficiency.

- **Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust**

- **Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust** (Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire)

- **Health Watch Bucks** is the independent champion for residents working to shape and improve health and social care services across the county.

Legend:
- Bucks CCG Federation
- Buckinghamshire Districts
- Buckinghamshire County

"Our strong relationships with our communities, member practices and partner organisations have enabled us to work as an integrated health and social care system in order to improve health and wellbeing across our population. We will continue to build on this and ensure that as far as possible our work and services become even more aligned across Buckinghamshire"

Aylesbury Vale CCG Annual Report 2015

Skills

As a result of the recent Thames Valley Area Review, Amersham and Wycombe FE College and Aylesbury FE College have agreed to combine to create a single FE College on Buckinghamshire geography. This will provide the strategic capacity to work with partners in tackling the skills shortages in Buckinghamshire, linked to the unfolding growth agenda.

Business & Economic Development Infrastructure

Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP) is a business-led 'partnership of equals' between local government and the private sector, focused on building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the county, including through securing Local Growth Funds and engaging with government on strategic infrastructure requirements. The county and district councils all occupy seats on the BTVLEP Board.

Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) is a business-led business focused organisation which exists to support businesses in the County to reach their full growth potential. It provides an information and support hub for new, established and growing businesses across Buckinghamshire. There are 32,050 businesses in Buckinghamshire and currently almost 9,000 are Buckinghamshire Business First members. 62% of the county's private sector workforce is employed within those member companies. 50% of the BTVLEP Board are BBF directors and BBF is recognised by Government as the BTVLEP Growth Hub.

Buckinghamshire Advantage is a limited company which acts as the operational arm of BTVLEP on the delivery of its capital schemes, ensuring local growth funds are invested to maximum effect. It also promotes and delivers capital projects helping Buckinghamshire's economy develop sustainably.

Voluntary & community sector infrastructure

Community Impact Bucks (CIB) is the umbrella organisation providing support services to over 900 local charities and voluntary and community groups across Buckinghamshire. CIB is also the nationally accredited Volunteer Centre for Buckinghamshire. CIB receives financial support from both county and district councils.

Heart of Bucks is the Community Foundation for Buckinghamshire which promotes charitable giving and provides project funding for local charities and not-for-profit organisations.

The Clare Foundation supports voluntary sector organisations in becoming more efficient and effective through programmes, mentoring, shared best practice and networking forums

Local councils infrastructure

Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils (MKBALC) is the membership organisation representing the needs of parish and town councils across the historic county.

Appendix 4

Strategic Partnership Working

The key public service providers in the county all operate across a Buckinghamshire geography and strong strategic partnership arrangements are firmly embedded on a Buckinghamshire platform.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health & Wellbeing Board and the Buckinghamshire Healthy Leaders Group already provide a forum for progressing the joint commissioning of services between local government and the NHS. The Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP) footprint includes Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Councils. There is a strong relationship between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the independent Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Boards for Children and Adults. The Boards also include representatives from both county and district councils.

Children's Improvement Board

The Buckinghamshire Children's Improvement Board was established in response to the 'inadequate' OFSTED rating received by the county council and the Safeguarding Board in 2014. The multi-agency Board has overseen a focused improvement journey, achieving significant improvements to services for children and their families, including a stronger partnership approach. It will be important to ensure that the improvement momentum is sustained and that partners continue to work effectively together with the shared ambition of keeping children and young people in Buckinghamshire safe, healthy and happy.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

The Buckinghamshire Safer and Stronger Communities Board operates as a county-wide crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP). The district councils also operate district based CDRPs.

Natural Environment Partnership

The Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership brings together partners to work together in driving positive change for the natural environment. The Partnership includes representatives from both county and district councils.

England's Economic Strategic Alliance

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance is a partnership of nine Local Transport Authorities and four Local Enterprise Partnerships, working together with the shared aim of addressing identified barriers to economic activity and raising productivity to match, and where possible exceed, that of our global competitors. The Alliance represents a population of 3.35 million, with an economy valued at £92.5bn.

Buckinghamshire County Council has taken a leading role in the development of the Alliance. The Leader of the county council currently chairs the Joint Leaders Board, and the county council also hosts the officer support.

The initial focus for the Alliance has been the development of an overarching transport strategy. The partners have established a Strategic Transport Forum and are currently working on a proposal for a statutory sub-national transport body which could see the devolution of responsibility for national and regional transport infrastructure and for bus and public transport, together with the funding to support local bus services and highways improvements previously undertaken by the Highways Agency. The Alliance also has an ambition to tackle priorities such as digital infrastructure, energy networks, waste and water. In time, this Alliance may provide the partnership working to underpin a potential Combined Authority and devolution deal.

The Case for Public Service Reform

A Changing County

Buckinghamshire is an attractive and relatively affluent county. It is a successful place to do business, contributing £14.8bn in GVA to UK economy and ranking third in terms of GVA productivity. The county enjoys low unemployment, higher-than-average household incomes and good health outcomes, yet we also have a number of challenges.

The profile of Buckinghamshire is set to change significantly over the next twenty years. By 2033, there could be an additional 60,000 plus residents, plus a further 50,000 houses if the emerging local plans are approved. The lower and mid-range socio economic groups are increasing, whilst the higher socio-economic groups are decreasing. The population over the age of 65 is increasing, as are levels of disability. Buckinghamshire is becoming even more multi-cultural and diverse.

Past success is no longer a guarantee of continued prosperity. The need for change has become all the more apparent in recent years, a period that has seen rapid changes in attitudes and expectations amongst residents and businesses alike, together with rapid increases in demand.

Set against this backdrop the role of strong and effective strategic leadership is critical if we are to seize the opportunities of growth and balance these with the need to protect and enhance the quality of what makes Buckinghamshire the special place it is. It is vital that the model of local government is able to transform to provide this leadership for the future.

Sustainable Services

Changes in public expectation and demand are increasingly placing pressures on our public services that make them unaffordable in the medium to long term. Research conducted by Ipsos Mori identifies that, whilst residents may not fully appreciate the extent of the challenges, they accept that there is simply not enough money to go around and the need to do things differently. Fiscal constraint is impacting not just on local government but also on other critical public services providers, such as health services, as well as the voluntary and community sector, placing pressure on the system as a whole.

Appendix 4

All councils in Buckinghamshire have worked hard to drive efficiencies in back office services, innovations in delivery and income generation opportunities in order to relieve the burden on both national and local taxation.

However, it is increasingly apparent that this strategy will just not be sufficient to deliver sustainable public services for the future. By the end of this current financial year, the county council will have delivered annual savings totalling £145m since April 2010. The county and district councils are already facing further savings in excess of £30m over the three years from 1st April 2017.

Bringing together the two tier system provides significant opportunites to streamline functions and design services to meet future, rather than historical, needs. Experience in those counties that have established unitary authorities provides clear evidence that savings will be significant, and greater than originally forecast. Two years after the creation of Wiltshire Council, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Leader of the Labour Opposition Group which had opposed the creation of the unitary council said "the projection that merging the former Wiltshire councils would produce considerable savings has happened, cushioning the blow of government funding cuts".

Customer Expectations

The two tier system has long been seen as overly complex and ineffective at managing end to end customer demand. Repeatedly we hear that no one would design such a system today – for example, where county council public health responsibilities for addressing such long term issues as obesity and healthy lifestyle choices are split from the district council decision makers who determine priorities for leisure and housing.

Residents continue to be confused about the respective roles of different councils and the reason for the split of responsibilities. 78% of people believe that the county council is responsible for rubbish collection and 64% think that they are also responsible for sports and leisure, when both of these functions are the responsibility of the district councils (Buckinghamshire County Council Reputation Tracker April 2013). The county council receives an average of 680 calls per month for district related services, at a cost of £34k pa, creating a dis-jointed and confusing customer journey.

As the pace of technological change continues, so the need for reform in public service delivery becomes all the more pressing.

78% people believe that the County Council is responsible for rubbish collection

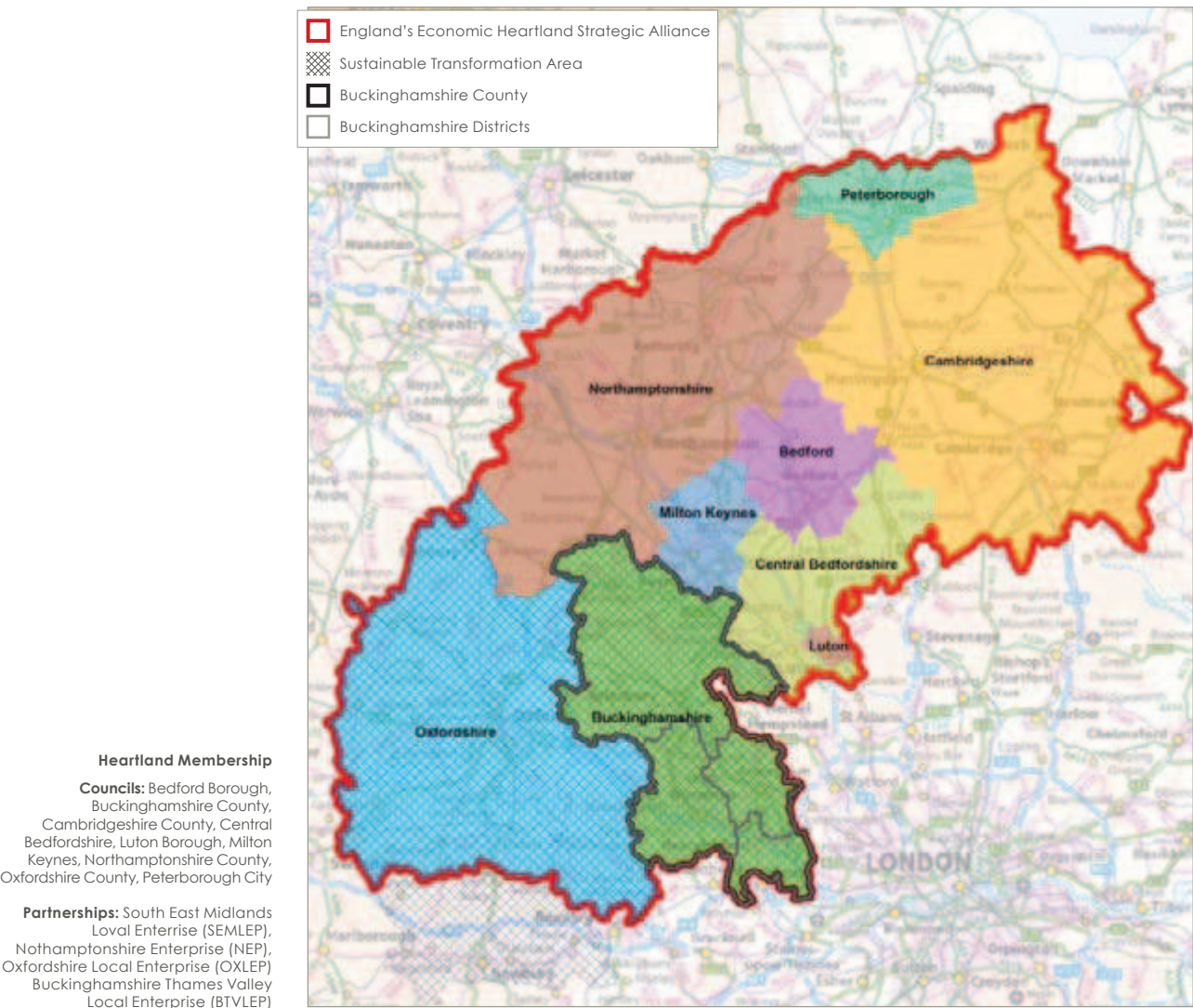**64%** think that they are also responsible for Sports and Leisure

The number of council managers has reduced significantly over the past five years, but those who remain have to spend time trying to broker agreements across separate policy frameworks and independent decision making bodies, to try and manage the risk that vulnerable people could fall through the gaps in services. For example, many of Buckinghamshire's adult social care clients receive one or more benefits administered by the district councils yet they have to provide information to both county and district councils and this data is not used proactively to promote their independence and reduce the need for intensive social care services.

Public Service Landscape

Across public services, the meaning of what is strategic and what is local is rapidly being redefined. Representing the interests of Buckinghamshire residents increasingly means being a powerful advocate in a complex network of partnership and integration arrangements on a bigger geography – from the Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP) footprint for health and social care to England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance. There are also growing opportunities for scaling up public services across traditional boundaries to drive efficiencies and service improvements.

At a more local level, the increasing shift towards community empowerment has led to a move by the county council to devolve services to communities, and in particular to town and parish councils, putting local services in the hands of local people. 86 of the 168 town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire have taken on county council services through devolved arrangements. Roles and responsibilities in the current 'three tier' system are called further into question by the changing landscape of national devolution

Legend:
- England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance
- Sustainable Transformation Area
- Buckinghamshire County
- Buckinghamshire Districts

Heartland Membership

Councils: Bedford Borough, Buckinghamshire County, Cambridgeshire County, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Borough, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire County, Oxfordshire County, Peterborough City

Partnerships: South East Midlands Loval Enterprise (SEMLEP), Nothamptonshire Enterprise (NEP), Oxfordshire Local Enterprise (OXLEP) Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise (BTVLEP)

which places Buckinghamshire in the context of a larger regional geography. For example, the Government has recently tasked the National Infrastructure Commission with reviewing the governance needed to enable integrated planning and infrastructure decision making across the wider Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford region. England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance, the partnership of nine Local Transport Authorities and four Local Enterprise Partnerships, will be key to giving Buckinghamshire a strong voice in future governance arrangements.

Bringing together the two tier system provides the opportunity for better strategic decision making on issues such as strategic planning, housing, transport and closer integration of health and social care, together with better local decision making reflecting different local priorities.

Consensus

Everyone is in agreement that a change is needed. The debate now is about designing the right model for future public services in Buckinghamshire.

In May 2016, Buckinghamshire County Council took the decision to carry out a review into the options for modernising local government and invited interested parties to collaborate in this process. We have greatly appreciated the very positive response from a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders, and their willingness to engage with us in this debate, sharing their views, experiences and aspirations for Buckinghamshire.

Local employers have a genuine concern over the sustainability of the current system as evidenced by the fact that Buckinghamshire Business First, on behalf of the business community, independently crowd-funded and commissioned a report into the financial case for reorganisation in September 2014.

The Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership is clear that reform is necessary, particularly given recent government policy. The current governance arrangements fail to drive the unified team approach needed to drive economic and housing performance. The business community are keen to work with the public sector to reach the best future outcome.

The current arrangements make no sense from a resident perspective. This quote is drawn from the discussions with local residents, presented in the research report provided by Ipsos Mori (Local Government Reorganisation in Buckinghamshire, September 2016)

"Our local authorities need to look to rationalise their organisations and make the best use of taxpayers' money for the benefit of businesses and residents alike"

Guy Lachlan Buckinghamshire Business Group

"I think we all agree that a unitary authority makes sense. I'd like to keep the local parish and town councils. They'd have to have a real say, not like now, but have a real say in what happens in their communities."

Female resident Buckingham

One parish councillor's comment on the online survey conducted across parish and town councils summed up many of the responses:

"I do not see that much works well within the 3 tier government system. It is antiquated and needs changing. Local residents are usually very vague about which group handles which responsibility and thus have to chase around each one to find out."

Parish Councillor

Whilst the four district councils declined the county council's invitation to collaborate on the development of this business case, they have acknowledged the need for a debate on the future delivery of public services in Buckinghamshire. In September 2016, the leaders of the four district councils announced that they had commissioned Deloittes to undertake a separate review into the future of local government in the county.

A Buckinghamshire verge cut by the contractors of three different authorities was described as 'complete madness' by a local councillor.

Now is the Time for Change

The current structure is not fit for purpose for current challenges, nor is it sustainable in terms of managing the future needs of residents or businesses. In Buckinghamshire, the opportunity is not just to release resources to cushion the reduction in funding, but also to lever positive growth for the future.

Now is the time for change.

Buckinghamshire's Future Needs from the Public Sector

Buckinghamshire is an attractive county with rich heritage and landscape. Over a quarter of the county is included within the Chiltern area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a further third covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt. The county enjoys good transport links, particularly to London. Buckinghamshire has a long heritage as an entrepreneurial county. It plays an important role in the overall economy of the UK, ranking 3rd among England's 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships in terms of GVA productivity.

Many parts of Buckinghamshire are relatively affluent with low unemployment, higher-than-average household incomes and good health outcomes. The workforce is highly skilled and levels of educational attainment are generally high. There is a strong sense of community spirit - with many residents actively participating in community life and engaging with local issues. There is also a strong sense of pride in the local area, although there are different challenges faced by rural and urban communities. A detailed profile of Buckinghamshire is at Appendix 1.

The profile of Buckinghamshire is set to change significantly over the next twenty years which brings significant challenges and opportunities for the local public sector.

A Changing County

Buckinghamshire has a population of 528,000 residents, made up of approximately 212,000 households.

ONS projections show expected population growth of 66,000 people between now and 2031. However this projection does not take into account recently emerging local plans which suggest that approximately 50,000 new homes will be built over the next 15-20 years. Early estimates suggest that the total population increase could be up to 120,000 people over this period.

The lower and mid-range socio economic groups are increasing, whilst the higher socio-economic groups are decreasing. We experience a net loss of young educated adults, but net gains of families with children and mid-life adults. The population over the age of 65 is increasing, as are levels of disability.

Buckinghamshire

Aylesbury

Amersham

High Wycombe

Denham

66k | expected population growth between now and 2031

**50k** | new homes will be built over the next 15–20 years

In 2016 the 65+ age group in Buckinghamshire accounted for 18% of the population – by 2031 we expect this to have increased to 23%. This accounts for 62% of total population growth over this period. By far the biggest increase will be observed in our 'oldest old' – the 80+ age group. The gap between disability-free and total life expectancy is increasing. The average total life expectancy for a man in Buckinghamshire is 81.4, with the average disability-free life expectancy for a man being 68.6 – meaning 12.8 years of limited life; a woman in Buckinghamshire can expect 16.7 years of limited life.

Buckinghamshire is becoming even more multi-cultural and diverse. By 2031, 20% of the population will be from black and minority ethnic groups, with some areas such as High Wycombe and Aylesbury, having significantly higher BME populations than others.

These changes, along with shifting behaviours are resulting in increasing demand for some services – including children's and adults' social care, supported transport, school places, specialised and supported housing, and health services.

A new model of public services will need to engage effectively with diverse local communities to respond to their differing needs and help them to shape the future of their surroundings. Innovative new models of delivery will be needed to meet the growing

A different Buckinghamshire
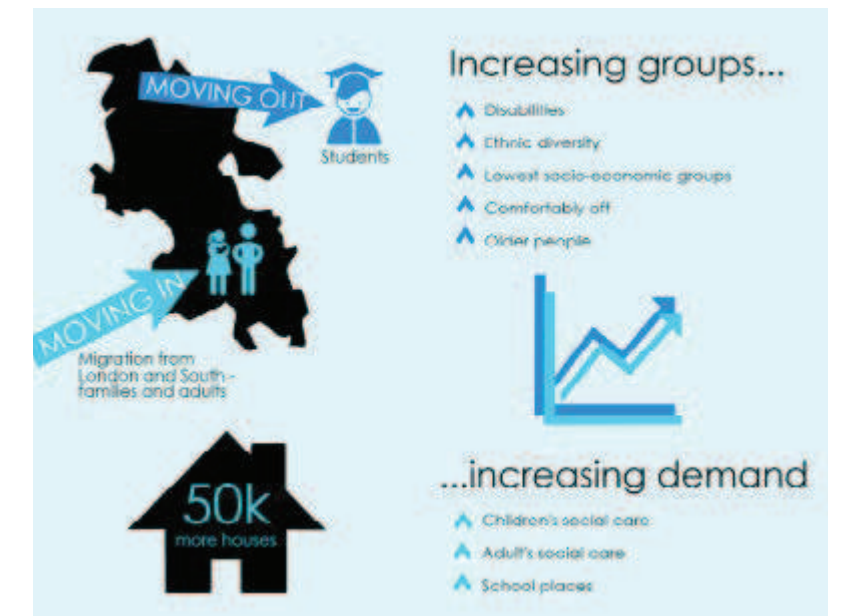
demands on services within reducing financial resources and to encourage and support communities to do more for themselves.

Resident Priorities

Road maintenance is consistently identified by residents as the public service most in need of improvement, followed by maintenance of pavements and bus services. There are 3,199km of highways across Buckinghamshire, 44% of which are classified. Current estimates indicate that an investment of £108m over a four year period would be required in order to bring the classified roads up to a reasonable standard and then maintain them in that condition. A further £28.3m would be required to fully restore the 2,461km of footpaths. A new model of public services must listen and respond to resident's priorities and deliver improvements to key services such as roads and pavements.
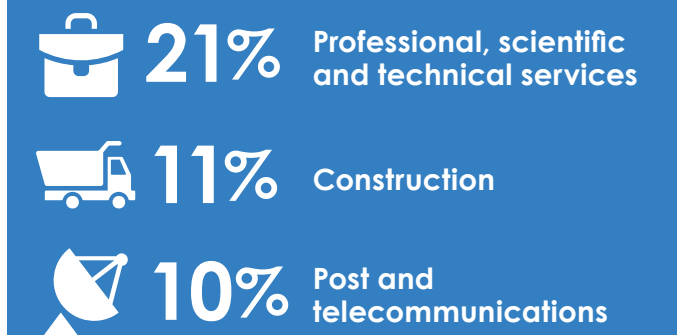
Economic Growth

Buckinghamshire is widely recognised as the 'Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain', with more new businesses starting up and succeeding than anywhere else in the UK. Buckinghamshire is a small firm economy with the highest proportion of firms employing fewer than five people, at 75.8% of all firms. The most prominent local business sector is professional, scientific and technical services (21% of local businesses),

followed by construction (11%), then post and telecommunications (10%).

40% of our small firms (with less than 5 employees) are located in rural parts of Buckinghamshire – and these businesses experience more barriers to growth than many, including a lack of affordable housing; poor business infrastructure); a shortage of key services; a more restrictive labour market (characterised by a lower skilled, ageing workforce); a shortage of business networks; planning constraints; and a lack of access to business support and suitable finance.

Prominent local business sectors

21% Professional, scientific and technical services

11% Construction

10% Post and telecommunications

The Buckinghamshire LEP evidence base identifies a number of challenges including a lack of high-growth business start-ups, lack of early-stage business accommodation, and weak specialist business networks. The impact of Brexit on inward investment and business start-ups is yet to become clear, but seizing the opportunities and minimizing any transitional risks will clearly be a priority going forward.
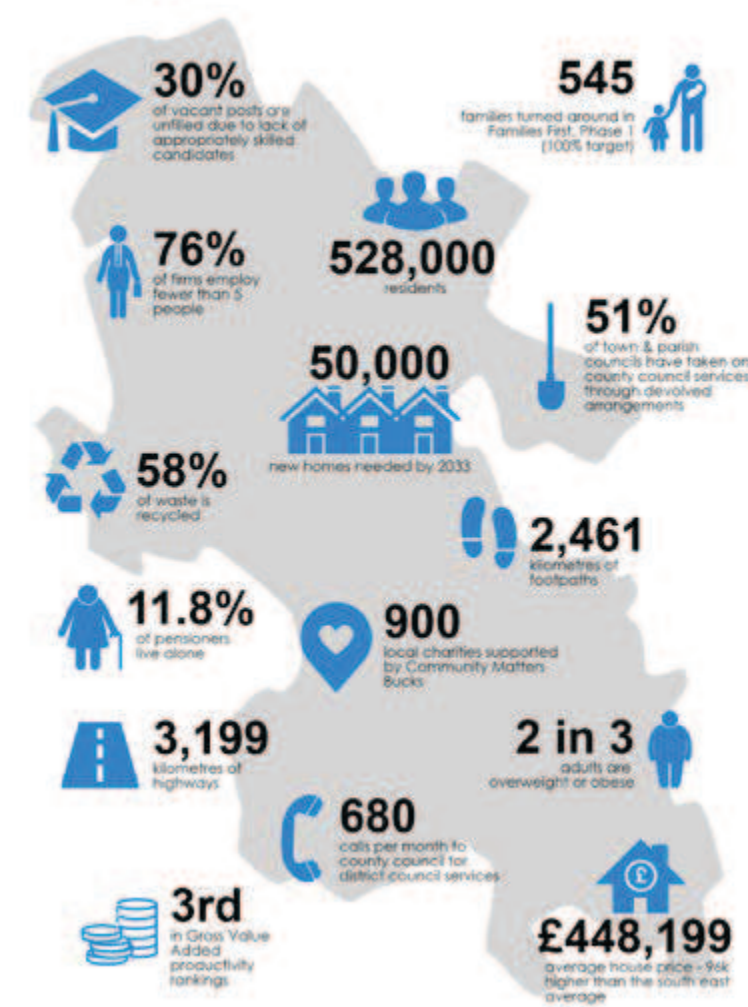
The National Infrastructure Commission has been tasked with bringing forward proposals and options for the long-term infrastructure priorities to unlock growth, jobs and housing within the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor over the next 30 years. The remit for this work includes a review of the governance needed to enable integrated planning and infrastructure decision making across the wider area in a timely manner.

The councils themselves are on a journey to becoming much more commercial, and developing their own business activities such as ValeCommerce, a company established by Aylesbury Vale District Council, and Buckinghamshire County Council's commercial investment property portfolio, both designed to create income streams for the respective councils. As well as generating income, such initiatives help instill a better understanding of business disciplines within the council, which helps council staff better understand the challenges faced by business

Business growth will be critical to the future success of the county. We have listened to business, and they have told us clearly what they need from their council. A new model of public services must make Buckinghamshire a better place for business to succeed – including building alliances to invest in

infrastructure such as broadband, road and rail, business accommodation, and skills. Joined up decision making and accountability is needed for those issues that are fundamental to promoting economic growth – strategic planning, employment sites, housing, transport and infrastructure - to provide a whole place approach. A unified 'Team Bucks' approach – working across the BTVLEP, Bucks Business First, Skills Hub and Bucks Advantage supported by the Business Community and the public sector – is critical to deliver economic and housing outputs for Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire in numbers

30% of vacant posts are unfilled due to lack of appropriately skilled candidates

545 families turned around in Families First, Phase 1 (100% target)

76% of firms employ fewer than 5 people

528,000 residents

51% of town & parish councils have taken on county council services through devolved arrangements

50,000 new homes needed by 2033

58% of waste is recycled

2,461 kilometres of footpaths

11.8% of pensioners live alone

900 local charities supported by Community Matters Bucks

3,199 kilometres of highways

2 in 3 adults are overweight or obese

680 calls per month to county council for district council services

3rd in Gross Value Added productivity rankings

£448,199 average house price – 9k higher than the south east average

Skills

Buckinghamshire faces both skill shortages and skill gaps. We experience a substantial daily loss of skilled people who commute to higher paid jobs in London – around 37% more people commute out of Buckinghamshire as commute in – meaning that local businesses struggle to secure the skills that they need. A further challenge is the 'brain drain' of educated young adults leaving the area – Buckinghamshire has a comparatively small proportion of people aged 24-30.

30% of vacant posts across public and private sectors are unfilled due to a lack of appropriately skilled applicants (compared to national average of 23%), and employers have particular shortages in the technician, higher level, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) skills required for local 'plan for growth' sectors (including engineering, digital/ IT, life sciences and medical technology, high performance technologies, creative industries, construction, and built environment). A critical issue for the future will be ensuring the availability of an appropriately skilled workforce, which keeps pace with the unfolding growth agenda in Buckinghamshire.

A new model of public services must work closely with the LEP. The new Buckinghamshire FE college and schools to respond to a significant gap in skills for local employers and play its part in ensuring that young people develop the skills that business need.

Housing

Average rents and house prices in Buckinghamshire are higher than national and regional averages. The average price of a house in Buckinghamshire is £448,199 – compared to £352,120 across the South East. The affordability ratio in Buckinghamshire (average house price to average earnings) is 13:1, considerable higher than the England average (8:1).

The demand for social housing significantly exceeds availability and although homeless acceptances in Buckinghamshire (1.75 per 1000 households) are lower than the national average (2.5 per 1000 households), there are increasing pressures on homelessness services – over the last three years homeless acceptances in Buckinghamshire have increased at almost three times the rate of those in England as a whole. Given the disproportionate growth in the population of elderly residents over the next twenty years, there is also an increasing need for additional 'extra care' accommodation which is not currently being met by the housing market, with a shortfall of some 6700 places predicted by 2035.

Finding solutions to affordable housing will be critical to tackling the skills shortages, as well as the shortage of key workers in public services such as social work and education. A step change in housing supply will require a step change in the local planning and development management process.

A new model of public services must get more of the right sort of houses built, lining up housing and planning strategies to make sure housing is provided to meet the needs of specific groups, including for social housing, for service users with support needs and solutions for older people, and to maximise use of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

Environment

Buckinghamshire's beautiful natural and historic environment is valued by residents, businesses and visitors alike. A period of unprecedented growth will inevitably place pressure on the local environment, and the benefits it provides. It is essential that growth is managed sensitively and intelligently, providing much needed infrastructure, homes and jobs whilst still protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environment and the positive benefits it brings to the wellbeing of our communities.

A new model of public services must encourage sustainable growth to protect the environmental and historic assets of the county, and mitigate the impact of development, including through rural design, sustainable transport options, green infrastructure, energy, water and flood management. Challenges will include developing the county's resilience to environmental change, including extreme weather and flooding, and maximising the use of greenspaces and countrywide to promote health and wellbeing. Continuing to drive the programme to mitigate the impact of High Speed 2 will be a top priority.

Children and Young People

Resilient and successful children and families lead to resilient and successful communities which in turn drive county-wide social and economic growth and prosperity. The education system in Buckinghamshire is highly regarded and children generally enjoy good standards of health and wellbeing. There are however variations in educational and health outcomes across different groups of young people. Demand for services for children with special educational needs and disabilities and for children in need is increasing faster than population growth and is expected to increase still further as a result of housing growth.

Following an 'inadequate' OFSTED rating for children's safeguarding services in 2014, the multi-agency Children's Improvement Board has overseen a focused improvement journey, resulting in improvements to services for children and their families. Strong partnership working is now in place across public, private and voluntary sectors around a shared ambition to make Buckinghamshire a great place for all children and young people to live, be safe, to learn and achieve successful and fulfilled lives.

A new model of public services must continue to put children and young people at the heart of what everything it does. In the context of a changing education landscape, this will include building on existing good relationships with all education providers to champion educational excellence and aspiration for all children and young people, together with ensuring that sufficient investment is leveraged to build new schools, including through S106 contributions. A key priority will be to build upon the strong foundation of partnership working to lead whole systems approaches that sustain the improvement momentum, invest in resilient families and protect children and young people from harm.

Health and Wellbeing

Buckinghamshire is generally affluent and this is reflected in health outcomes that are better than the national average. However, there are still concerning levels of unhealthy lifestyles which are driving an increase in long term conditions. For example, 2 in 3 adults are overweight or obese. The prevalence of long term conditions, many of which are preventable, are expected to increase over the next five years, with the greatest increase expected in diabetes and cancer.

There are significant health inequalities in Buckinghamshire, with the most disadvantaged 20% of people experiencing poorer health outcomes, including infant mortality, premature mortality, hospital admission for a range of conditions (including coronary heart disease, circulatory disease, heart failure, stroke and diabetes).

Significant progress is being made towards integration of services between the county council and the Health Trusts on a Buckinghamshire platform. In 2014, approximately £104.3m of services commissioned by the county council and the CCGs were reviewed and a funding gap of £11.9m was forecast by 2018/19. The Integrated Care Commissioning Strategy defines a partnership between health and social care that will address the funding gap and provide person centred care to support people to live independently for longer, through the development of joint plans and pooling of budgets e.g. Better Care Fund (BCF). Work with partners to integrate prevention into care pathways and front-line activity is already a key priority, with initiatives such as Prevention Matters and Making Every Contact Count training programme becoming an important enabler.

A new model of public services must ensure that growing communities are designed in a way that will improve health outcomes. This will include mobilising all those services which impact upon the wider determinants of health to maximise the collective impact, including public health, leisure and environment provision. A key priority will be to lead an ambitious and innovative programme of whole system integration of outcomes across services for vulnerable adults and children to invest in prevention and early intervention and reduce long term demand.

Best Practice Case Study – My Care Record

Through effective partnership working between health and social care services, My Care Record has launched in Buckinghamshire - an electronic view of a client's GP record that can be accessed locally.

My Care Record allows medical and social care professionals to access up-to-date GP records so they can make the right choices about the care and medical attention needed. The information in My Care Record will save time and could also be life-saving in some circumstances. Before My Care Record, people would have to wait for information to be sent from GPs during surgery hours, which could cause delay in providing treatment, care or medication.

Sharing this crucial information will help health and social care staff to work more closely together, creating a much smoother experience for people who need both health and social care services.

Community Safety

After a number of years of decreasing crime levels, crime increased by 12% across the county between 2014/15 and 2015/16, reflecting a wider trend across the Thames Valley. The hidden nature of some emerging areas of crime such as modern slavery, exploitation of vulnerable individuals and groups, and cyber (internet) crime means that the understanding of who is at risk is becoming more complex.

A new model of public services must work with partners at both strategic and local levels to tackle community safety priorities, including domestic violence, safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism and radicalisation and combatting child sexual exploitation.

Options Appraisal

Introduction

A strategic options appraisal for future models of unitary local government within Buckinghamshire has been undertaken. The report (published separately) was developed by the county council and validated by an independent third party. It provides an estimate of financial costs and savings and considers the non-financial benefits and limitations of each option. This section includes a summary of the findings.

Types of Reorganisation

Unitary Authorities

A Unitary Local Authority has responsibility for all council services delivered within a defined geographical area. The financial and non-financial benefits of the unitary model of local government are well established, and recent years have seen a number of areas transition from two-tier structures to various forms of unitary local government.

The last new unitary authorities were created in 2009:

- Bedfordshire County Council was abolished and two new unitary authorities were created

- Cheshire County was replaced by two new unitary authorities (East Cheshire and West Cheshire)

- Five other counties (Northumberland, Shropshire, Wiltshire, Cornwall and Durham) were replaced by single unitary authorities covering the previous county council areas

Further unitary moves were halted by the coalition government when it was formed in 2010, but have recently been reinvigorated by the Cities and Devolution Act 2016. Public debates about unitary structures of local government are currently taking place in many two tier areas across England.

Combined Authorities

Combined authorities are a relatively new form of local government structure, introduced by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and strengthened by the Cities and Devolution Act. To date there have been seven Combined Authorities formed in England.

Combined authorities are created voluntarily and allow a group of authorities to take decisions on strategic issues they feel are better considered collectively. One of the key drivers for combined authorities is to collaborate across larger geographies to deliver services at greater scale.

Existing combined authorities are primarily focused on economic growth, transport and regeneration – although changes to legislation in the Cities and Devolution Act 2016 enabled them to perform any statutory function of the member local authorities. Combined authorities, as in Manchester, are generally built on a history of strong collaboration at a strategic level, which must be considered as part of a reorganisation in Buckinghamshire. It is important to note that there are currently no examples of combined authorities delivering social care and people related services successfully.

In January 2015 the Communities and Local Government Select Committee commissioned an investigation entitled 'Devolution: the next five years and beyond' which focused in particular on whether the Manchester model of devolution is suitable for other areas. The report suggested caution regarding the applicability of the Manchester model to other

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areas, given that it could "not be easily lifted and dropped on to other city regions, where the physical and economic geography may differ" and that the Government could not "simply roll out the same model everywhere".

It is important to recognise that all existing combined authorities have been implemented to aggregate and coordinate functions across metropolitan unitary authorities, rather than to manage the disaggregation of services from a predecessor county council.

Options Under Assessment

The options selected for consideration are based on:

The economic geography of the areas that make up Buckinghamshire

Travel to work patterns

The urban and rural nature of the county

Population size

The options under consideration are as follows:

One Unitary

A county wide unitary responsible for delivering the full array of local authority services across Buckinghamshire

Two/Three Unitary

Would either see the county divided into North and South, or would follow a similar division to the current district boundaries

Three Unitary with Combined Authority

Three unitary authorities with strategic services pooled into a combined authority that would deliver these services county wide – for example health and social care, strategic planning and transport

For the purposes of this evaluation, the creation of either two or three new unitary authorities without a combined authority is being considered as a single option (option 2), as the non-financial implications are broadly similar in both cases. Our financial analysis differentiates between the likely costs and savings available under the variants of this option.

Option three describes the creation of three new unitary authorities and a Combined Authority. For the purposes of this analysis we have assumed that the combined authority would take responsibility for delivery of social care and safeguarding services, including public health, as well as strategic planning and transport. These services have been selected over other choices due to the geography of Buckinghamshire and a clear separation of services and responsibilities based on current skills and expertise.

Key Findings

Population Size

Throughout this year, guidance has been supplied by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to individual authorities that the optimum population size for reorganisation is in the range of 300,000 and 700,000 people and that "although this 'range was not absolute, Ministers would 'ask searching questions' of proposals outside of this band'.[1] The table below sets out the population sizes by geography in Buckinghamshire, the options and whether they broadly align with recommended criteria.

Option	Boundary	Population 2015	Population 2031	Within recommended limits?
1	County-wide Buckinghamshire Unitary	528,300	594,925	Yes
2.1	North Bucks unitary	188,700	222,888	No
	South Bucks unitary	339,600	372,03	Yes
2.2	North Bucks unitary	188,700	222,888	No
	Wycombe unitary	176,000	192,388	No
	Chiltern & South Bucks unitary	163,600	179,649	No

*Table shows population figures from 2015 ONS Mid Year Population Estimate

Financial Analysis

The financial analysis has considered the likely costs, savings, financial standing and risk which are estimated to arise under each of the three options and have been scored on the basis of:

- **Return on Investment:** based on the cost of transition, potential to generate savings and the pay-back period;

- **Financial standing:** based on risk, ongoing value for money (VFM) and financial sustainability for each option
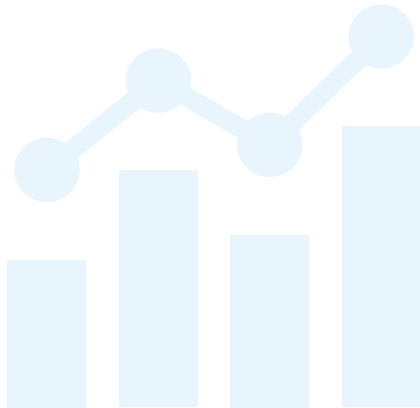
[1] M. Smulian, 'DCLG to Unitary Bidders: Aim for Minimum Population of 300,000', Local Government Chronicle (16 March 2016).

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The table below ranks the options from 1–3, with 1 representing the highest level of savings and 3 being the lowest:

Options	Score	Reasons
Option 1: Single Unitary Authority	1	Greatest level of annual revenue savings (£18.2m) for a similar total investment cost. Return on investment (ROI) is estimated at around 99% (of initial costs) with an estimated overall £45.4m net saving (equivalent to ROI of 282%) over the five year period that is significantly higher than for the other options. Pay-back is estimated at 2.2 years following go-live. The level of savings potential would help to contribute significantly to the financial health and stability of the local government structure in the county. The scale of (net) savings that is estimated would be significantly larger than the current funding gap in 2019-20, although achievable towards the end of period.
Option 2.1: Two Unitary Authorities	2	2nd highest level of annual revenue savings (£10.3m) for an investment of £16.1m; with ROI of 54% and a net saving of £17.3m over the five year period. However savings and the impact of council tax harmonisation are not expected to accrue evenly. As a result return on investment and pay-back is expected to be quicker in a North Unitary than in the South. In addition the level of savings within the five year period is not significant in the context of existing funding pressures within the local government structure.
Option 2.2: Three Unitary Authorities	3	This option scores the lowest with savings of £5.5m (from an investment £15.5m) resulting in 33% ROI. Pay-back for the smallest Unitary is anticipated to exceed the five year period with an overall net saving of £5.6m over the five year period across all three unitaries. This would not be sufficient to contribute significantly towards the existing funding pressures within the current structures. In addition risks around financial resilience are estimated to be greater including, for example the ability to manage high risk Social Care budgets.
Option 3: Three Unitary Authorities + Combined Authority	4	Although the lowest level of savings (£5.4m) for reasonable high investment cost £10.9m, the model suggests that a combined authority offers a higher potential return on investment (46%) and net cumulative savings of £11.1m than in the Three Unitary option. However as above, the level of savings is not significant in the current financial climate and pay-back for the smallest Unitary is anticipated to exceed the five year period. The Combined Authority would have a more significant budget in relation to the management of high risk services such as Social Care; however this would be subject to agreement between the contributing authorities. Excluding the Combined Authority elements of their budgets, the model suggests that the size of the Unitary Authorities would be significantly smaller than any existing comparable Unitary.

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In conclusion, option one presents the greatest potential level of ongoing savings. These savings are a conservative estimate of what could be achievable through the consolidation of existing organisations. Once all services are brought together there will be additional savings opportunities that can be gained from economies of scale, adoption of best and optimum practices in service delivery, innovation and transformational investment.

A single unitary authority would also be able to take a strategic approach to service delivery and investment across the whole of Buckinghamshire and in doing so, be better placed to manage any financial risks, as well as take full advantage of financial opportunities that may arise.

Options two and three would offer less scope for consolidation and lower economies of scale. Cost and savings are anticipated to accrue differently across the unitary councils within these models with a stronger case being apparent for a North Unitary than for the comparable South or South East /South West

options. Under a three unitary model (both with and without the Combined Authority) it is estimated that the South East Unitary would not be able to achieve payback of transition costs and council tax harmonisation within the five year period.

The demand-led services of Adult and Children's Social Care represent by far the greatest service risk amongst any of the services currently undertaken by the districts and the county council. Disaggregation of these services would represent a significant financial risk. Under option three the ability of a combined authority to mitigate this potential risk is untested; furthermore the limited level of organisational consolidation within this option limits the level of savings potentially available.

The modelling suggests that only the Single Unitary option would provide sufficiently significant net savings over the five year period to contribute to the significant financial risks within the current financial climate within local government.

Non- Financial Analysis

For our non-financial analysis, we have considered a wide range of criteria based on the evidential requirements of the Department for Communities and Local Government, and sought to learn from similar studies that have been undertaken elsewhere within the country. The table below sets out the relative rankings that our appraisal has determined for these criteria, from 1–3 (1 being the highest). The sustainability section represents one rank overall and all criteria have been equally weighted:

Option	Service Performance	Democratic Leadership & Accountability	Local Engagement & Decision Making	Sustainability				Average sustainabilty score	Total score	Non-Financial Rank
				Economic Growth	Skills & Capacity	Engagement of supply chain (business and supply chain)	Coterminosity with partners (partnership working)			
Option One: Single Unitary	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1.25	6.25	1
Option Two: Multiple Unitary	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	2.75	9.75	3
Option Three: Combined Authority Option	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1.75	7.75	2

1 - high scoring, 2 - medium scoring, 3 - low scoring

Appendix 4

On the balance of available evidence, our finding is that option one offers the greatest likelihood of better meeting the needs of Buckinghamshire in the future. A single unitary authority for Buckinghamshire would provide a single point of accountability and responsibility for the quality of all local authority services within the area, supported by a single executive function. This would greatly simplify arrangements from the perspectives of the public, partners and business, enabling quicker decisions taken with full democratic accountability and scrutiny.

A single unitary would also improve the conditions for economic growth by bringing together related services such as spatial planning, housing, transport and infrastructure and allowing strategic decisions over the widest possible scale, working to a single plan. Sharing the same boundaries with partners would minimise the complexity of public sector working compared with the other options.

This model would offer an enhancement of existing county-wide social care and safeguarding services through closer connection with related services such as housing, leisure and benefits and a greater ability to match resources with need than would be achievable under the other options. It also provides the most robust platform for further health and social care integration.

The greater financial scale of a single unitary would also maximise the ability of the organisation to invest over the longer term in preventative services.

The key challenge with this option would be to provide confidence to residents that a large single unitary council would be able to respond to distinctive local needs, respect local identity and put decision-making in the hands of local communities.

Option Three was the second-highest ranking. A combined authority would offer the potential for effective joint decision-making on a county-wide basis by multiple new unitary authorities and could also allow some services, such as social care, to continue to be provided across Buckinghamshire without being disaggregated. However, the success of a combined authority would turn on its ability to make decisions quickly and effectively and to balance potentially conflicting interests to mutual

benefit. The constitution and governance arrangements of a combined authority would be critical in order to achieve this. These issues would be particularly testing if, as proposed, the combined authority was required to make decisions on resource allocation for social care services as it is likely that the patterns of need and funding would not be equal across member authorities. At this point there are no precedents for a combined authority achieving this effectively; the model is untested.

Finally, there would be important considerations around the democratic accountability of decisions taken by a combined authority, especially if it is decided that a directly-elected mayor is not an appropriate option for Buckinghamshire.

Option two was consistently the lowest-ranked option. The main disadvantage of this option is the significant risk, complexity and cost likely to be associated with the disaggregation of social care and safeguarding services. It is well documented that existing smaller unitary authorities can struggle to bear the financial burden of these services especially when met with spikes in demand for high-cost placements.

A key further drawback is the likely weakness in joint decision-making and leadership in the absence of a formal vehicle for achieving this. Inevitably, decisions on issues affecting all new unitary authorities would continue to be required, especially relating to the economy, infrastructure and transport. Without a well-governed combined authority, multiple unitary authorities in Buckinghamshire could struggle to avoid deadlock on big decisions that involved competing interests and might not be able to move at a pace expected by regional and national partners and stakeholders.

Conclusion

The preferred option reached by this appraisal is for a new single unitary authority for Buckinghamshire which delivers the greatest possible level of financial savings, reduces complexity and provides a single point of accountability to the public and partners. The one unitary model allows the new authority to be an active participant in wider public service reform within and beyond the county and provides the opportunity to design and implement at scale a comprehensive offer to communities and local councils.

It is important to note that all unitary options under consideration would entail the dissolution of all existing councils, and the creation of new unitary authorities for which fresh electoral arrangements would be required. No existing organisation can therefore determine what new organisations could or should do. A new unitary authority or authorities, once established, would own and determine their own priorities.

Buckinghamshire's future includes significant population growth and a change in its demographics; whilst maximising the benefits this offers, the local economy must continue to thrive and prosper through a period of uncertainty and opportunity, contributing to a positive and sustainable environment. Public service reform must be developed in a way which supports local needs in the wider national context, and at a time of exciting new possibilities through technology.

Taking into consideration the financial and non-financial benefits, challenges and mitigating actions for each model, the finding of this options appraisal is that a new unitary council for Buckinghamshire offers the best solution to current and future challenges.

Buckinghamshire now has a choice.

Appendix 4

B

Part B

Blueprint for a New Council

Blueprint for a new council

Our proposition is to abolish the county council and the four district councils and establish a brand new, county-wide single unitary council at the forefront of modern local government, committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all local residents, designed to engage effectively with each of the multiple communities county-wide and to develop a prosperous and sustainable future for Buckinghamshire.

Appendix 4

A New Vision

Our vision for the future of Buckinghamshire is to provide a new form of civic leadership fit for purpose in 2020 and beyond, one that gives local people a stronger say in the choices that affect them and enables each local community – from Buckingham to Burnham – to realise its own shared vision for the future.

Our vision is to redefine the role of the public sector from one of control and top down dialogue to one of enabling and facilitating initiative, innovation and ambition, whilst at the same time strengthening the safety net for the most vulnerable and removing the gaps that people can slip through.

Our proposal is for a brand new form of local government which builds upon the strong track record of the four district councils and the county council, whilst seizing the opportunity to design and establish new structures that ensure interests are represented at the right level, so that decisions can be taken to deliver the best outcomes.

The rest of this document sets out what we see as an exciting vision for the aims and ambitions of a new council. However this is for illustrative purposes; it would be a brand new council, with newly elected members, and it would be for that council to decide its own vision, priorities and operating model.

A brand new council - built on best practice from existing five councils

Aims

Single Voice – strong, visible and accountable strategic leadership, speaking up with a single voice for Buckinghamshire on behalf of residents, business and partners

More Local – local communities empowered to shape their own future, with improved involvement of local people in the choices that affect them

Better Quality – services that are simple to access, efficiently delivered, and meet the needs of residents, communities and businesses, with faster, leaner decision making

More Efficient – significant cost savings delivered and invested in priority outcomes, adding value for both Council and Business Rate Tax payers; appropriate commercial activities developed to reduce the need for grant and taxpayer funding

Ambition for Buckinghamshire

A new, county-wide single unitary council will be able to lever its scale, resources and leadership capacity to use the substantial growth agenda as the catalyst for positive change. Working collaboratively with public, private and voluntary sector, these opportunities could include:

Place Shaping

A new, county-wide single unitary council could use its strategic leadership to engage all stakeholders in defining a long term, strategic vision for the future shape of Buckinghamshire and achieve a truly integrated and co-ordinated programme of investment in infrastructure, skills, services and environment to create the conditions for people to flourish and achieve; designing communities reflect the wider determinants of health and promote wellbeing for all.

Harmonious Communities

Drawing on the skills and experiences of the legacy councils – for example through the Chesham project – a new, county-wide single unitary council could promote a new definition of social inclusion within a rural county facing significant demographic changes.

Buckinghamshire is a place where residents are generally positive about the local area. Most residents agree their area is one where people from different backgrounds get on well together (79%) and that people treat one another with respect and consideration (69%). The ambition could be to maintain that sense of harmonious communities in the context of major growth.

Children at the Heart of Buckinghamshire

Partners in Buckinghamshire have a shared ambition to keep children and young people in Buckinghamshire safe, healthy and happy to that they fulfil their potential. A new, county-wide single unitary council could provide the strategic leadership to ensure that the interests of children and young people are at the forefront of all of our minds in the way that we plan for the future. This could include running a "Future Bucks" Children's Conversation to involve children and young people, and their advocates, in the conversation about planning for the future, and the roll out of a Child Friendly community scheme, building on the Leeds model. All Members of the new council could receive a comprehensive induction programme to enable them to act as Champions of Children.

Wycombe District Council has a strong track record in planning and delivering regeneration schemes for the district. The current Town Centre Masterplan project is designed to improve access for individuals with mobility impairments, as well as strengthening the role of the town centre as a focus for employment, shopping and leisure activities. Through the regeneration of the town, changes to the road network will be made to make the area more "pedestrian-friendly", including changing the traffic flow around the town centre and improving the streets and pedestrian spaces in the town centre.

Economic Prosperity

Working in partnership with the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, a new, county-wide single unitary council could use its resources and its scale as leverage for economic prosperity – for example:

- Delivering on infrastructure provision for communities and businesses
- Intervening in the market so that developments achieve community outcomes
- Developing Buckinghamshire as a centre of expertise in Assistive Technology
- Developing a brand new technical pathway into employment, in alliance with schools, local employers and universities, including a rapid expansion of local apprenticeship provision
- Maximising the value of open data to drive growth in the digital economy
- Public sector investments that complement that of the private sector and are delivered in a timely and cost effective manner

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Best Practice Case Study – Aylesbury Woodlands Development

Situated next to Arla Dairy factory, Woodlands is a 220 acre site which has been granted Enterprise Zone status by the Government.

Buckinghamshire Advantage, the infrastructure delivery arm of Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, is promoting the mixed use development which will provide, housing, commercial premises and extensive community, social and transport infrastructure.

The scheme provides a model for the way in which public services can be proactive in stimulating balanced sustainable development to promote employment growth, respond to local housing pressures and deliver community infrastructure.

Governance and Local Democracy

Local members will provide a pivotal link between a new, county-wide single unitary council and the residents and businesses of Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire Council would need to support councillors to ensure that they have the capacity and capability to carry out an expanded community leadership role. Local Members will:

- work together on Community Boards to listen to local residents and businesses, influence the decisions of Buckinghamshire Council so that they respond to the needs and ambitions of local communities, and carry out scrutiny of local public service delivery
- work together with their empowered local town and parish councils to integrate locally delivered services with those delivered by Buckinghamshire Council and other public organisations
- play a formal role with all other Buckinghamshire Council Members in approving the budget and other strategic polices, as well as debating the big issues affecting Buckinghamshire
- carry out formal duties linked to the other core business of the new Buckinghamshire Council which could include:-
  - Cabinet: A Cabinet of 10 members is envisaged for the first term of the new council. This is larger than would be required for 'steady state' but would provide the capacity required for the successful implementation of a major change programme. The new council could consider reducing this number in its second term
  - Scrutinising the work of the executive and partners at a strategic level - a single unitary council would enable more robust scrutiny on behalf of local residents rather than the current artificial constraints of looking at council services of 5 separate bodies in isolation. Scrutiny would be carried out at two levels - strategically and locally – by non-executive councillors on a cross-party basis. Locally scrutiny would take place through the proposed Community Boards which will be explored in more depth in the following section
  - Statutory decision making committees, such as Strategic Planning Committee, Licencing, Rights of Way etc.
- play a civil, community and ambassadorial role for Buckinghamshire, including representing Buckinghamshire Council on partnerships

Further details of council structures and the roles of local members are included at Appendix 3.

Supporting Local Members

A new, county-wide single unitary council could support all councillors to fulfil their roles effectively through providing high quality training and development, policy and administrative support:

- A dedicated single team offering a 'one stop shop' for Local Members, including local support for case work and Community Boards
- Member training & development (building on the existing Charter Mark status achieved by Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council)
- Digital & ICT support to enable Members to work remotely and communicate with their electorate utilising technology
- Dedicated policy support for the council's statutory scrutiny function

To make it as easy as possible for those with full-time day-time commitments to serve as an elected councillor, a new Buckinghamshire Council could hold all full council and committee meetings in evenings.
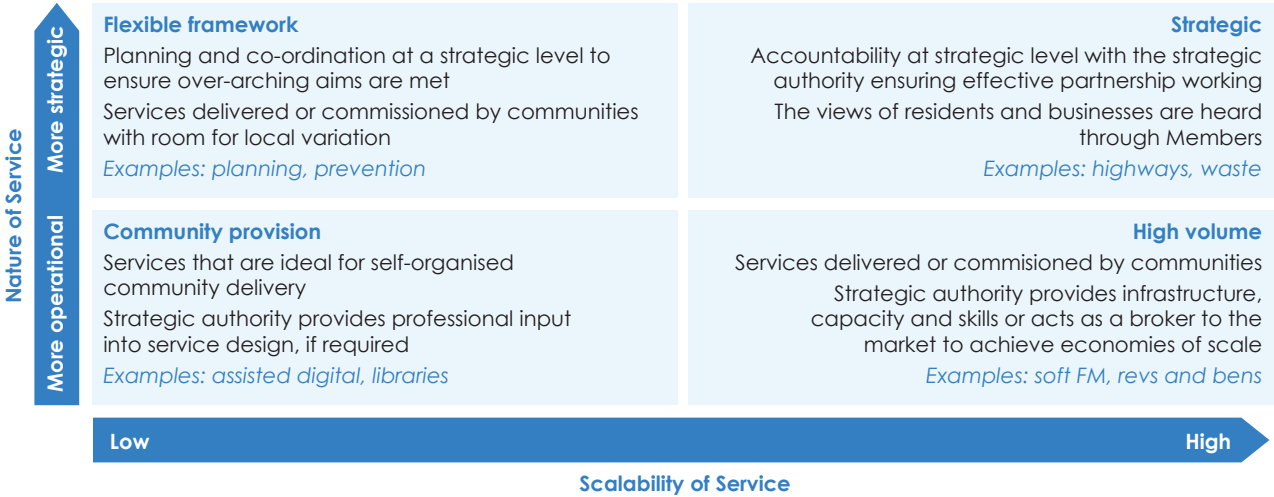
Electoral Wards

In order to effect a smooth and speedy transition from county and district Member representation, it is proposed that a new Buckinghamshire Council would have 98 councillors. This is higher than the range of 65 - 80 elected members recommended in the Buckinghamshire Business First /EY report, which was based on a review of average councillor per elector rates across unitary authorities. However, it would provide a straight forward approach in terms of a boundary review, and would also ensure sufficient capacity to lead the council during a period of transformation.

Implementation of this proposal would involve a Boundary Commission Review, with each of the 49 existing county council divisions broadly divided into two in order to create 98 single member wards. This is based on the approach taken with the creation of the new Wiltshire Council. It would represent a reduction of some 138 councilors across Buckinghamshire, and a saving of £1.2m compared with the current county and district councils. In the longer term, a more significant boundary review may be appropriate in order to reflect the changing nature of communities during a period of significant growth.

Operating Model

The creation of a new, county-wide single unitary council would provide a unique opportunity to introduce a modern business model, at the heart of a broader integrated system of public service delivery in Buckinghamshire. This would replace the management arrangements of the five existing councils, overcoming silos and promoting collaboration and integration.

Striking the right balance between joined up, strategic planning for the county, empowered communities, saving public money and offering choice will be vital. This balance could be achieved considering the **strategic or operational nature of services** alongside their **potential for economies of scale** (see model).

Flexible framework Planning and co-ordination at a strategic level to ensure over-arching aims are met Services delivered or commissioned by communities with room for local variation *Examples: planning, prevention*	**Strategic** Accountability at strategic level with the strategic authority ensuring effective partnership working The views of residents and businesses are heard through Members *Examples: highways, waste*	
Community provision Services that are ideal for self-organised community delivery Strategic authority provides professional input into service design, if required *Examples: assisted digital, libraries*	**High volume** Services delivered or commisioned by communities Strategic authority provides infrastructure, capacity and skills or acts as a broker to the market to achieve economies of scale *Examples: soft FM, revs and bens*	

Nature of Service — More strategic / More operational

Low → **High**

Scalability of Service

The role of a new Buckinghamshire Council would be to commission, co-ordinate, support and enable, as well as some direct delivery of services. Strategic commissioning would be underpinned by evidence of what works and an understanding of the priorities in each community, informed by active engagement. The authority could deliver and commission some services, particularly where there is a statutory responsibility. However, the new model would make it easier for many services to be designed and delivered at local level by more empowered town and parish councils.

A diverse range of service delivery models could be used, according to the needs of different services:

• Town/Parish Councils

• Direct delivery by the new Buckinghamshire Council - where services are strategic in nature or achieve best value for money through economies of scale

• With partners – through integration, pooled budgets, joint delivery vehicles

• Shared with other similar councils – through individual partnerships as well as regional alliances

• Creation of new trusts, social enterprises or joint ventures

• Contracting with voluntary and private sector providers

• Personal budgets

An immediate challenge for a new organisation would be to establish an agreed framework for the values and behaviours which it wishes to establish, in order to promote collaboration, innovation and accountability. Cultural values could for example include:

• Caring

• Trusting

• Working together

• Valuing diversity

Key operational traits of a new organisation might include:

• **Digital by design –** co-designing processes and services with customers to ensure that they meet needs and deploying new technologies where relevant

How might services be commissioned and delivered?

Local Government

Commissioning
Commissioning with, and delivery through, partners

Setting outcomes — Providing infrastructure
Allocating resources — Facilitating local choice

Delivery

Working with Housing Associations to achieve shared outcomes — Delivering through a supply chain where there is value for money

Delivering services directly where it makes sense to do so — Doing more for and with Local Councils

Service Use

Businesses have one council to deal with — Delivering through schools and academies and providing them with the support they need

Vulnerable people are better looked after locally

Giving everyday people the resources they need to choose and act locally

• **Entrepreneurial and prepared to take a risk –** with a strong external focus to seize opportunities for innovation and commercialisation

• **Strong financial planning –** to keep track of more diverse and complex funding

• **Devolving local decision making to lowest possible level –** enabling and supporting town and parish councils to choose and act locally

• **Pragmatic Commissioning –** with a strong commissioning and contract management framework to manage external provision and robust performance management for internally provided services

• **Strong and flexible infrastructure –** that facilitates partnership working and provides the resources for partners to work with the unitary council and with others, e.g. technology infrastructure that keeps data secure but allows it to be shared across many partners.

Best Practice Case Study – Excellence in Cross Regional Commissioning

Buckinghamshire County Council has played a leading role in building a commissioning consortium across six authorities to provide therapeutic residential care and education for 11-to 18-year-olds with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. The project resulted in a seven-year contract between residential child care provider Keys Group and the six authorities – Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, Bracknell Forest, Reading and Milton Keynes – and has already delivered savings as well as improved outcomes for the young people through specialist provision which allows them to stay near to home. The consortium has been widely recognised as best practice, including by Sir Martin Narey in his independent report on Children's Residential Care for the Secretary of State for Education (June 2016)

The six authorities are now in discussion with neighbouring authorities over a commissioning strategy for the next ten years. This case study illustrates a model for the future development of commissioning complex specialist services, together with a strong track record in partnership working with neighbouring authorities, which Buckinghamshire Council will be able to build upon in exploring opportunities for scaling up services in the future.

Commercial Model

A commercial outlook will be important for a new council, and it would be able to draw on considerable expertise from its constituent councils. The benefits of a commercial outlook are:

- the identification and exploitation of opportunities which can reduce the need for taxpayer or grant money
- a cultural shift that embraces balanced risk-taking within appropriate governance mechanisms
- a stronger empathy with the realities of life for businesses, and therefore a better understanding of how to help local businesses succeed.

Service delivery solutions could be considered on a case by case basis, taking account of:

- Value for money
- Impact on the market
- Quality
- Benefits to residents
- Statutory requirements

The table below illustrates a way of categorising commercial opportunities and offers some examples which Buckinghamshire Council could choose to build upon.

Activity Type	Considerations	Illustration
Taking existing service capabilities and finding new customers for them	The services need to have demonstrable competitive advantage in order to win business, and the council must be able to invest in marketing and continuing product improvement.	Taking excellent corporate or other services and selling them, or developing joint activities, with other councils – for example Buckinghamshire County Council's model of delivering HR and Organisational Development services to the London Borough of Harrow
Developing new capabilities for existing customers	The council needs the skills to identify and develop new product opportunities and must be willing to invest in this.	For example AVDC recently launched two new brands for its trading company: *LimeCart*, which provides garden services to residents, and *IncGen*, which provides services to business customers such as office space and a virtual reception service
Enhancing return from existing products for existing customers	Where councils have monopoly positions e.g. in fees and charges, there are regulatory limits to how much profit can be made. However, fees and charges can be used to drive beneficial behaviours.	Premium car parking charges in the most popular car parks to fund subsidised or free parking in high streets where parking charges impact badly on local business profits.
Maximising the return on assets	Councils may need to access specialist capabilities either though recruitment or external support	For example, Wycombe District Council's Handy Cross Hub redevelopment scheme which has led to new jobs as well as investment in new state of the art leisure facilities

Functional Model

It is envisaged that a new Buckinghamshire Council could be developed around five building blocks of services. In the longer term, a unitary council could potentially operate with four departments but it is envisaged that a new Buckinghamshire Council would wish to have additional capacity at the outset, particularly in the context of the transformation programme. The financial analysis has been carried out on this basis.

A new, county-wide single unitary council would deliver greater resilience to services, both through its own resources and through strong relationships with partners, thereby ensuring greater sustainability in public sector services for the future.

Organisational Resilience

Across the five councils there is a significant level of duplication in role and responsibility at a senior and executive level. In addition, the councils all struggle to recruit key staff to undertaken critical roles within crucial services such as planning and social care. A new,

county-wide single unitary council would be in a position to select the very best staff from across all five councils and beyond. The new council's members and executive would be able to build a new organisation which is fit for the 21st century and develop a customer and business focused culture that supports innovation across the county.

Redesigning the functions of five separate councils into a new fit-for-purpose structure would deliver not only savings but also the opportunity to design in resilience and strategic capacity to manage the service expectations of Buckinghamshire. The scale of a new, county-wide single unitary council would enable it to adopt approaches that have been proven within the current councils in the county and beyond. This would include the creation of specialist technical teams and the opportunity to professionalise support functions. These approaches would not only provide better services, but also create new career pathways to attract and retain key talent, something that has not previously been the case.

Aim 1:
Single Voice

This blueprint is not just about a new modern system of local government but of broader public service reform within Buckinghamshire, enabled and facilitated by a new Buckinghamshire Council, designed to meet the challenges and opportunities of 2020 and beyond.

Strategic leadership for Buckinghamshire is about strong and stable governance, the strategic capacity to understand and tackle complex problems, and the powers, local discretion and willingness to take bold and farsighted decisions on behalf of residents, communities and businesses of Buckinghamshire.

Benefits of a Single Strategic Voice for Buckinghamshire

This section highlights some of the opportunities that a new single county-wide unitary council would bring for Buckinghamshire:

- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire, with a single strategic voice, would be able to be a powerful advocate for ensuring the opportunities and needs of Buckinghamshire shape the emerging sub-national agenda and the commitment (through the National Infrastructure Commission) to address barriers to growth. It would be able to build upon the initiative that has created England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance – an emerging Sub-national Transport Board – using the ability of its civic leaders to develop momentum and deliver a change agenda. It would have the professional skills required to deliver an ambition for Buckinghamshire in a way that has not previously been possible.

- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would provide the scale and governance arrangements fit for a future which will be connected to growth in the region and the UK as a whole, with the potential for developing a devolution deal with government in the future. It would be able to gain economies of scale and integrate services across a larger geography where that makes sense

- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire, aligned with key partnership structures already in place such as the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Federation, would have the strategic accountability to deliver a place shaping agenda, seizing the

opportunities of growth as the catalyst for change.

- A single executive could provide the agile leadership to make faster strategic decisions. Stronger representation by fewer, more empowered councillors would provide clearer accountability over decision-making to residents and businesses. The council would provide robust assurance and regulation of the use of public funding and assets held on behalf of Buckinghamshire, and effective scrutiny of services delivered on behalf of the council and other public service providers.

- A new county-wide unitary council would be in a position to provide a single vision for Buckinghamshire, supported by investment plans for transport infrastructure, regeneration and housing delivery, skills and jobs.

- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be better for businesses, working in partnership to set the long-term direction and create the conditions that allows businesses to thrive, with a focus on investing in skills, transport infrastructure, encouraging business growth and playing to the strengths of the county's economy, particularly those sectors that will shape the lives of our residents in the future.

- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to maintain the excellent quality of education across Buckinghamshire, sustain the momentum in transforming health and social care, and improving children's services, and lead whole system integration to meet the growing demands of a changing population.

Strategic Partnership Working

Strong collaboration across public, private and voluntary sectors – at both strategic and local levels – will continue to be essential for meeting the future needs of Buckinghamshire.

A new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to use its democratic mandate to work with the public, private and voluntary sectors in Buckinghamshire at a strategic level, in shaping the future for the county, and at a local level in delivering improved and, where appropriate, integrated local services.

The key public service providers in the county all operate across a Buckinghamshire geography and strong strategic partnership arrangements are firmly embedded on a Buckinghamshire platform. A new Buckinghamshire Council would play a key role in these arrangements, providing a coherent, single voice for local government services.

The development of a new county-wide unitary council would provide an opportunity to review the way in which key stakeholder groups are able to engage with and influence local government. Consideration could be given to establishing forums for key groups

such as the businesses and voluntary sector organisations to encourage regular liaison with executive members of the new council at a county-wide level. There would also be opportunities to rationalise partnerships – for example, replacing two tiers of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships with a single partnership – as well as to reduce the duplication arising from separate county and district representation that currently exists. At a local level, partners would be critical to realising the ambition for Community Hubs and Community Boards set out in this business case and these models would be developed as a joint endeavour.

A new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to build on successes to date to work with local public sector partners in order to combine relevant back office services and create even greater efficiencies, in order alleviate some of the financial pressures being experienced by other public service providers. For example, Buckinghamshire County Council now provides the communication and engagement function for the Buckinghamshire CCG Federation.

The Role Of A New County-wide Single Unitary Council

The role of a new county-wide unitary council would be to:

- Listen to the people and businesses of Buckinghamshire and set a clear vision

- Use its evidence, data and information sources to develop key strategic plans

- Make sure resources are lined up together to deliver the vision and policies

- Forge alliances locally, regionally and nationally to coordinate strategy, investment and delivery of services in a way that delivers better outcomes for Buckinghamshire

- Be visibly accountable for all decisions of the council and be open to independent and rigorous public challenge and scrutiny, both strategically and locally

- Establish county-wide policy and service standards and devolve/share decision making with local communities

- Act on behalf of the local community in holding all public service providers to account

- Maximise opportunities for devolution and investment from Central Government that will give greater local control and influence to achieve the best for Buckinghamshire

Aim 2:
More Local Voice

Strong mechanisms for listening to local communities and responding to the differences in need across the county geography would be critical for the success of a new, county-wide single unitary council. Residents want to know **that a new council will give them a real say about services and act on their concerns, and deliver greater transparency and accountability.**

The development of a brand new county-wide unitary council provides an exciting opportunity to design a new localism model which builds on the experience of the five councils to date but goes much further in responding to the appetite amongst county and district councillors, town and parish councils and residents for a real say on local issues.

It is proposed that a new Buckinghamshire Council would deliver these ambitions through the following approach:

- **A new devolution offer to Parish/Town Councils – ** offering flexible opportunities to enable them to run services and assets currently run by the county and district councils where it is cost effective to do so, with packages tailored to local ambition and priorities

- **Five Local Area Planning Committees –** ensuring that local councillors take decisions on local planning issues

- **Nineteen new local 'Community Boards' –** giving local councillors the authority and resources to take local decisions, enabling local people to hold a new Buckinghamshire Council to account and ensure that its services reflect local differences

Each of these three key elements are critical to successfully delivering a localism approach. Each has a different role to play. Taken together, these three elements will offer far greater opportunities for local service delivery and local accountability than those currently offered by the county council and district councils under the two tier system.

Empowering Communities
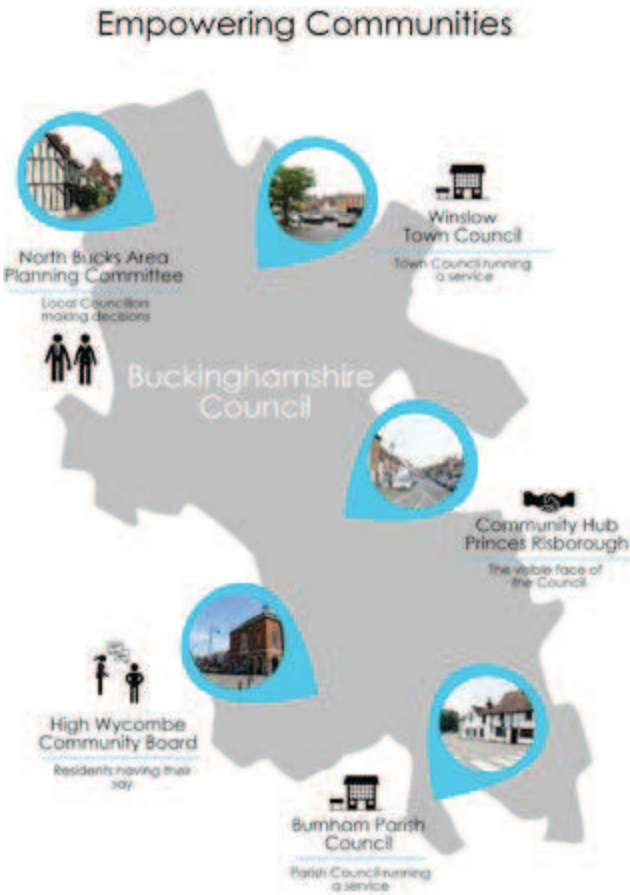
Best Practice Case Study – Local Area Forum

In 2008, Buckinghamshire County Council introduced 19 local area forums (LAFs) as a place for County, District and Parish Councillors, together with local representatives from key public sector organisations to come together to discuss and take action on local issues. The County Council allocates a budget to each LAF which is available to fund projects that tackle local priorities.

These have ranged between parking projects, match funded by town and parish councils, mobile speed awareness devices, intergenerational youth volunteering schemes, community cafes, and supporting youth enterprises. Some LAFs have held participatory budgeting schemes over recent years, each scheme engaging up to 3000 residents in voting on local projects.

Community Boards would provide the mechanism by which a new Buckinghamshire Council would listen to the views of local people on those services that remain the council's responsibility. They would not deliver local services themselves but could encourage **town and parish councils** and community organisations to take on responsibility for running services and assets, and facilitate agreements. Planning decisions need to be taken by a formal committee in accordance with the law, comprising of the elected councillors for Buckinghamshire Council. **Area Planning Committees** would therefore enable local councillors to take planning decisions.

The table illustrates the key differences between the current 'local area forum' arrangements and the locality arrangements underpinning a single unitary model.

| | Current | Future | |
Feature	Local Area Forums	Community Boards	Town/Parish Councils
Delegated Decision-making powers on behalf of Unitary Council	✘	✓	✘
Devolved council budget for local projects	✓ Informal arrangement	✓ Formal accountability	✘
Delivery of local services	✘	✘	✓
Scrutiny of local service delivery	✘	✓	✘
Consultee on all significant council service changes impacting on area	✘ Sometimes	✓ Always	✘
Statutory consultee on planning	✘	✘	✓
Raise taxation to invest in local issues	✘	✘	✓
Dedicated Officer Support	✘	✓	n/a

Parish & Town Council Devolution Offer

Parish and town councils have a critical role to play in supporting local communities to thrive and these will be key partners to a new Buckinghamshire Council on all aspects of its work, particularly in working together on Community Boards to tackle and solve local problems.

It is envisaged that a new Buckinghamshire Council would develop a new devolution offer for individual town and parish councils. This agreement would offer both choice and resources.

The success of this model will depend on communities taking on the role they want in the services that matter to them, not being given accountabilities they don't want and assets they don't need. This will require a confident Strategic Authority that is as comfortable delegating decision making and resources as it is accountability.

Benefits will include:

For Communities

- Improved quality of service: parish and town councils take pride in delivering services locally and will likely 'go the extra mile' to deliver a high quality of service

- A more responsive agile service: parish and town councils are able to respond quickly to need for changes in service delivery

- Opportunities to generate local employment

- Greater local choice and decision making – for example whether to prioritise grass cutting in the centre of a village over the edges, or by raising precept locally to add value to services

For Parish and Town Councils

- Enhanced role and ability to respond to local issues

- Greater control over local service delivery if they wish

- The opportunity to take ownership for the local environment

- More substantial roles to attract candidates to join Town & Parish council

For Buckinghamshire Council

- Ability to secure the economies of scale from large contracts on universal service delivery models, balanced with a localised approach which is flexible to meet different needs of communities

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**Best Practice Case Study –
Town and Parish Council Devolution**

To date, 86 of the 168 town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire have taken on services from Buckinghamshire County Council through devolved arrangements. Many now have an appetite to build on this with even further devolution.

In 2013, the Stewkley Enterprise Agency was set up as a not-for-profit social enterprise, which enabled the parish council to provide both local employment and an enhanced quality of service for the villages. The social enterprise now provides services such as grass cutting, minor hedge cutting, weed spraying and road sign cleaning for Stewkley together with six other parish councils. A similar agreement has been made with Amersham Town Council, which carries out grass cutting, vegetation clearance, tree maintenance and graffiti removal services on behalf of five parish councils.

The Devolution Offer

**Best Practice Case Study –
Town and Parish Council Devolution**

Stone with Bishopstone and Hartwell Parish Council is an example of a parish council taking on service devolution without clustering. The 2016 annual report of the Parish Council noted:

"Overall, the Parish Council are very happy that the decision was taken to undertake the devolved services without clustering. Positive feedback from residents has meant that we have been able to provide a far better service and a much improved environment. We had inherited a rather neglected area of general maintenance work and our residents have praised the significant improvements. The Parish Council are confident that the decision to raise the precept to cover the additional funding of £5,000 (£4.50 approx. per household) was the correct way to proceed in order to achieve the improved environment and better standard of work."

A menu of assets and services could be provided, enabling each parish and town council to express an interest in individual assets and services. This menu would be supported by a transparent formula for the transfer of resources from a new Buckinghamshire Council to the local councils, a tailored package of capacity building and support and clear county-wide policies and standards.

By including a spectrum of options, flexible to meet the needs and ambitions of different localities, this model may lead to different solutions in different places. This could involve a parish council being commissioned to take on a service provider role on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council, on a case by case basis. At the other end of the spectrum, this could involve statutory based devolution with full legal responsibility for service provision transferred to eligible councils, together with associated resources. It could also involve the full transfer of local assets to the ownership of the local council.

Buckinghamshire Council would have a dialogue with each interested council on the respective business case for a deal. Key considerations could include:

- Evidence of the benefits to the local community

- Cost neutral overall for Buckinghamshire Council

- Enable more local decision making and budget setting

Examples of Services to be Included in the Devolution Offer

Assets which could be transferred to parish and town councils could include:
- Play areas
- Sports grounds
- Local Parks and open spaces
- Public toilets
- Allotments
- Community Centres
- Cemeteries and churchyards

The service devolution menu could include
- Minor road and footpath repairs
- Grasscutting and open space maintenance

- Flytipping
- Street cleaning
- Abandoned vehicles
- Environmental health
- Recycling management
- Home care and meals on wheels
- Health and wellbeing services
- Off street car parks
- Community library premises
- Community transport
- Community safety/ neighbourhood watch
- Footpath lighting

**Best Practice Case Study –
NALC Buckingham**

NALC's new Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils, and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential. Buckingham Town Council is one of a small number of councils nationally that have achieved the Quality Gold award which recognises those councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector.

Buckinghamshire Council would want to encourage and help resource local councils to use these sorts of tools and frameworks to share best practice, to make use of the all the training and funding available, and support each other so that local towns and parish councils reach their full potential.

Capacity Building Offer

This devolution offer could represent an ambitious programme for a local council, or group of local councils. A devolution offer could therefore be accompanied by investment in a capacity building programme tailored to the individual circumstances - including training and development, officer capacity and governance advice. In agreeing a deal, a new Buckinghamshire Council could support parishes by:

• **A single contact point and an online account** for the parish and town council with the unitary council to ensure that tailored support and advice is readily available, according to the circumstances of the individual council

• **Access to back office support services** which would allow local councils to access services such as customer service system, payroll, ICT, HR, legal advice, training and development, drawing on the purchasing power of a new Buckinghamshire Council

• **A project team to agree details of the offers,** set standards, and liaise closely with those parishes and town councils who are interested in taking up the offer

• **A capacity building scheme** for town and parish councils based on the County Council's New Futures programme for voluntary and community sector groups. The Town and Parish Futures scheme could offer business planning advice and specialist support to help councils address identified needs, improve what they already do, or to take on new assets and services

• **Transparency** with parish/town councils in the information on the respective service performance and contracts and budgets, being clear which services will require some specific standards/qualifications (e.g. pot hole filling)

• **Support to town and parish councils to cluster** where there are opportunities for service delivery improvements, whilst respecting the wishes of individual parish/town councils

Parish and town councils would be free to:

• Decide their delivery model (e.g. via contractors, volunteers, employed staff or a mixture of these)

• Decide how to allocate the total overall budget against specific activities

• Use the precept to enhance services if desired (although noting that any devolution of services will provide the resources to provide the minimum service standards specified by Buckinghamshire Council).

It is envisaged that the offer and transfer process would take between 2–3 years (depending on the size and scale of the service/asset).

There are of course a wide range of Town and Parish councils and some will not want to extend their role and responsibilities at this time. Where local councils did not choose to take up the partnership offer, Buckinghamshire Council would retain responsibility for service delivery in the area. Over time, however, it is anticipated that parishes will increasingly cluster together to take advantage of this deal.

Area Planning Committees

The majority of planning application decisions would be made by Area Planning Committees, with members of Buckinghamshire Council from within the area. It is envisaged that five Area Planning Committees would be appropriate.

The Area Planning Committees would carry out many of the functions currently carried out by district council planning committees, as well as determining planning decisions which the county council currently takes on issues such as the approval of school building extensions.

The types of issues that the Area Planning Committees would determine include:

• Planning Development Control

• Designation and amendment of conservation areas

• Village Design Statements

• Parish Plans in the planning context

• Registration of town and village greens,

• Powers relating to the protection of important hedgerows

• Powers relating to the preservation of trees

• Powers relating to complaints about high hedges

A limited number of decisions would be reserved to a strategic planning committee. These would be decisions with wider strategic implications or a significant impact beyond a specific local area – such as planning applications for a large-scale major development (defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government as those of 200 houses or more). The thresholds for decision-making on planning would be set out in the council's constitution.

For the purposes of this business case an illustrative map is included below with proposed boundaries for five Area Planning Committees. This has been based on best fit with natural communities and best size for the effective functioning of the committees. The current district council boundaries have been used to ensure continuity with current development committees, although Aylesbury Vale has been divided into two to reflect the differences within the area. These boundaries would be subject to local consultation.

Legend:
□ Buckinghamshire
■ Area Planning Committees

Appendix 4
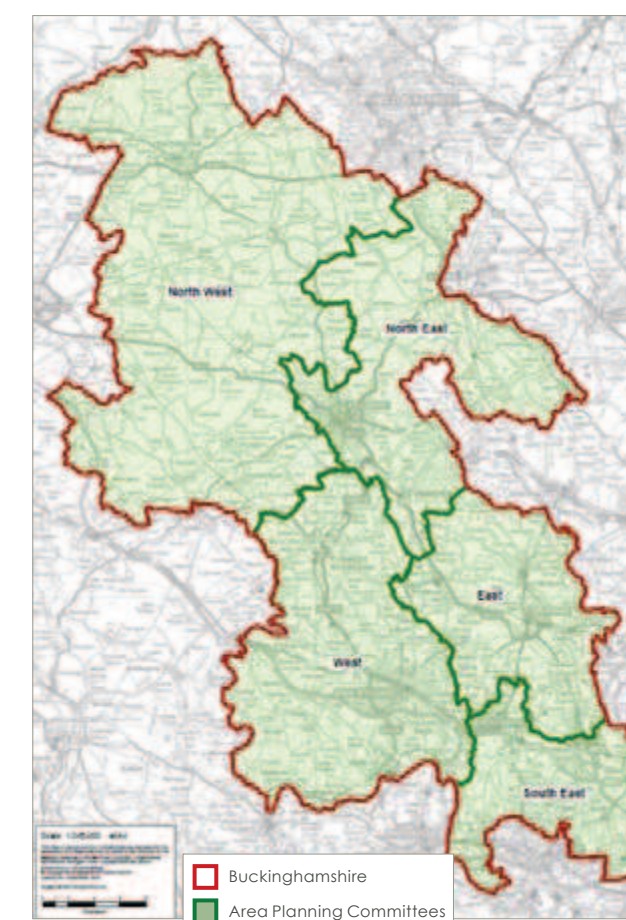
Community Boards

A network of Community Boards could enable local councillors and the community to have a say about issues that affect them and take action to resolve issues.

The Community Boards could be set up as formal committees of a new Buckinghamshire Council so that councillors in that area could take decisions on issues such as the funding for local community groups. The Community Board could be a formal consultee for all major changes of Buckinghamshire Council services in the area so that local people have a stronger voice on service planning.

The role of the Community Board is proposed to build on the experience of the Local Area Forums, which are resourced by the county council and work in partnership with the district councils, but would be different in some key respects (see p49).

The proposed role of the community board would be:

- **To enable local Members and residents to influence Buckinghamshire Council & partner service planning** e.g. budget consultation or Cabinet Member decisions with local impact, such as service change/transport/transfer or disposal of assets

- **To lead and encourage community action** to resolve local issues – road repairs, traffic problems and speeding, litter, facilities for young people, affordable housing, reducing loneliness and social isolation. To help communities to help themselves.

- **To have particular regard to the health, social care needs and well-being of residents in the area** using their local knowledge and networks to both identify local needs/issues as well as solutions; and their influence to help resolve these needs

- **To have an oversight and scrutiny role in relation to local public sector performance and delivery in the area** identifying & communicating any issues to the relevant bodies e.g. Buckinghamshire Council and partners; including oversight of the devolution service offers to parishes/town councils in area

- **To take decisions on delegated Council**

budgets. It is envisaged that £2m could be allocated between the 19 Community Boards, providing enhanced opportunities for participatory budgeting and generating match funding.

- **To provide a local point of access to Members and council services** e.g. by providing regular well publicised formal meetings and forums

To reinforce the role of the Community Board, the communities could provide a building block for use by a new Buckinghamshire Council in its commissioning of services. For example, a local health and wellbeing needs assessment will be carried out for each community area, enabling the Community Board to tailor public health initiatives according to the differing health priorities of each area. A new Buckinghamshire Council could also encourage and support its partners to use the Boards as a mechanism for local consultation and engagement.

Membership and Public Participation

The formal voting membership of the Community Board would be all Members of Buckinghamshire Council in the geographical area covered. Standing invitations would be made to key partners - health, police, the business community, voluntary and community sector and parish/town councils - to attend the meetings. Whilst the voting rights would rest with the unitary councillors it is expected that the Boards would work by consensus wherever possible.

For the Boards to work effectively they would need to facilitate high levels of public participation in their work. Our ambition is that Community Boards would be innovative in finding a wide variety ways of talking to the public about the issues that they care about. This would include reaching out to different types of people as well as within all localities e.g. older people, faith groups, disabled and young people. As an example, Community Boards could encourage youth participation by holding forum events with young people working with existing town and parish youth councils.

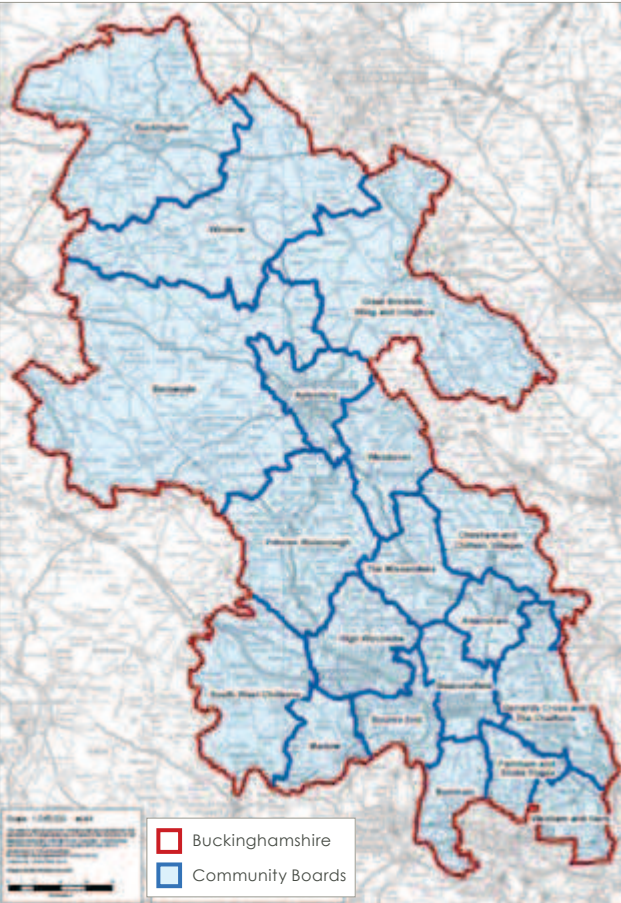## Location of Community Boards

The number of Community Boards, and the geographical boundaries, would need

to be subject to full consultation with local communities and key stakeholders, such as the Buckinghamshire CCG Federation, to ensure that they reflect local identity and are fit for purpose.

To illustrate the concept, a map has been drawn up for the purposes of this business case (as below). This is purely for illustrative purposes and will change through consultation. The key principles underpinning this model are:

- **Best fit with natural communities:** school planning areas have been used as a starting point for developing these proposals as they are designed to reflect the natural flows of children to local primary schools which are often at the heart of local communities

- **Co-terminous with town and parish council boundaries:** so that any town or parish council would only have to work with one Community Board

- **Best size for the effective functioning of the committees:** small enough areas where the public feel a strong connection with, as well as of a sufficient size for partners to engage with.

Ensuring that the Community Boards are coterminous with the unitary electoral wards is desirable but has not been used as a design principle at this stage

Buckinghamshire
Community Boards

Decision on:
- The allocation of devolved Revenue and Capital Funding
- Disposal of non-strategic assets
- Speeding reviews, dropped kerbs, traffic calming measures
- Oversight of detailed works negotiated through S106

Consultation on:
- Proposals to change hospital services (CCG)
- Priorities for Allocations of Community Infrastructure Levy Funding (CIL)
- Developing a multi-use community hub (partners involved)
- Allocation of new school places

Scrutiny on:
- How agencies are planning to prevent flooding
- Effectiveness of local community transport
- Performance of highways provider on pothole filling

Work planning:
- Setting up a group to plan community workshops for people to have their say on forthcoming changes in children's centres.

as these would be subject to a Boundary Review.

Whilst this model has identified 19 areas, these do not fully reflect the boundaries of the existing 19 local area forums.

Learning from Best Practice

The design work in relation to the role and number of Community Boards is drawn upon best practice elsewhere - in particular successes of Wiltshire Council who set up their equivalent of the proposed Community Boards as a key element of their new unitary council.

In determining the appropriate number of Community Boards practice elsewhere indicated that it was important to have a sufficient number so that local communities could have their say. For example, Wiltshire Council has 18; Durham 14; Shropshire 33 and Cornwall 19.

Aim 3:
Better Public Services

At a time of austerity, a new, county-wide single unitary council must achieve significant service improvement opportunities as well as sustainable savings. Our ambition is a high-quality customer experience that recognises and adapts to the changing lives and expectations of residents, working with them to personalise and join up services around their current and future needs.

Residents have told us that a new model of local government must be designed to ensure that the quality of services is retained and enhanced, and that services should be easier to access. (Ipsos Mori research – Appendix 5)

Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils have already demonstrated some of the opportunities through their joint services model. A new Buckinghamshire Council would be able to build on this and exploit further opportunities

for the benefit of all residents and businesses county-wide. Experience from other county-wide unitary reorganisations demonstrates opportunities for service improvement across all areas of the council without incurring additional ongoing costs.

This section highlights some of the opportunities that evolving into a new single unitary council could bring to the following service areas:

• Customer experience

• Health and Care

• Children and young people

• Communities, culture and leisure

• Housing, Transport, Planning, Economy and Environment

• Corporate and support services

Customer Experience

The changing population profile in Buckinghamshire means changing demands for customer service. Buckinghamshire sees one of the highest usages of online services in the UK with 91.9% of residents having access to the internet. Demand for online services will continue to grow with increasing developments in technology and generational shifts.

The current two tier model is no longer the most effective for delivering public services that meet the needs of our diverse customers. The county council receives between 35-40,000 web-hits annually for district related services and an average of 680 calls per month, at a cost of £34k pa, creating a dis-jointed and confusing customer journey. Residents tell us

that they are 'passed from pillar to post'. Not only does this create a fragmented customer experience, it runs the risk of vulnerable individuals "falling between the cracks' that currently exists between Buckinghamshire's councils. It also has a significant impact on the operating costs of multiple authorities. Services are not joined up for residents and councils do not have reliable data to plan and commission services effectively.

A new, county-wide single unitary council could improve outcomes for residents through the development of a fully integrated customer service approach. This could involve a single point of access for all residents underpinned by one common source of data.
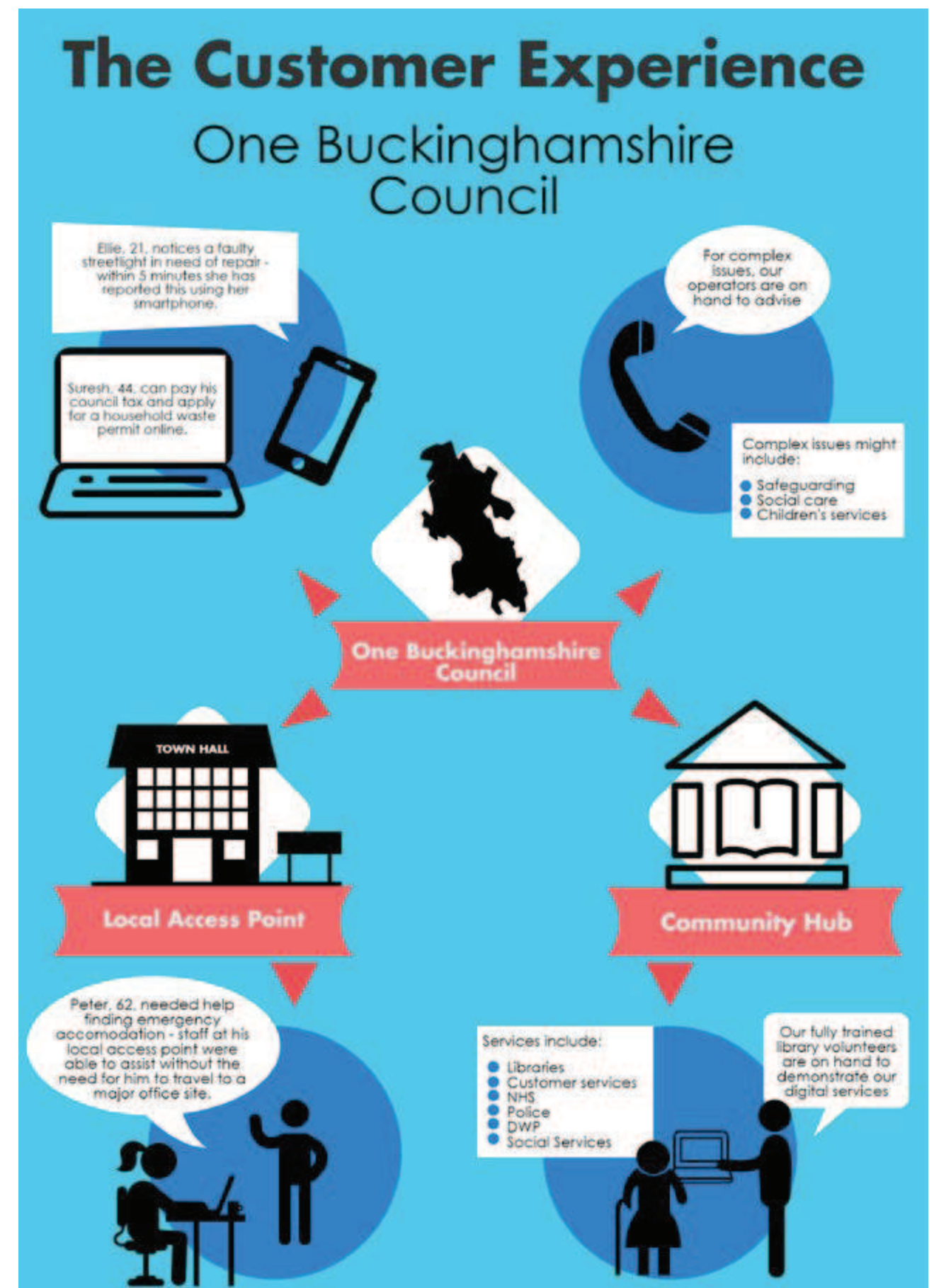
A SIngle Point of Access

A new Buckinghamshire Council would be able to replace existing multiple websites and customer service with one point of access through a channel of their choice, one website where they can source all relevant information with opportunity to self-serve and track progress if desired.

A Single Secure Customer Account

Residents would be able to securely log in and access their full council service account, with details of all the services that they use and those that may be relevant to them with the ability to track progress of service requests. All their information and personal data would be held in one place within a secure environment, meaning they would only have to provide and verify their personal circumstances once and, with their consent, this would then be used to ensure accurate access to all their entitlements. Within a two-tier system this would be cost prohibitive and, would require agreement from five councils who operate different IT platforms with the inherent data security risk this brings.

A Single Business Account

Businesses would be able to securely log in and manage their day-to-day interactions with the council. The electronic system would provide bespoke information, advice and support based on the specific nature of the business and desired transaction. This would then allow a new Buckinghamshire Council to deploy appropriate professional support in the form of online chat, telephone or face-to-face support and appropriately deploy the wide range of services that may be needed such as planning, environmental health, building control, grants.

A Single Parish And Town Council Account

This would recognise the role of local councils as a major partner in a new modern public service model and provide tailored support and advice according to the circumstances of the individual council.

Predictive Service Delivery

Information collated by the council and its partners could be used to proactively identify patterns of behaviour that can be used to predict a likely service need before it arises. For example, ensuring that a request for an assisted bin collection service due to mobility issues will trigger an assessment of the health and social care needs of the individual to support them in remaining independent for longer. Predictive service delivery will be a critical element of a future operating model for social care.

Local Service Variation

By adopting a single account based approach to access and information collation, a new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to ensure its local area structures have the information they need to support decisions and target spending. This move to an evidence based approach to policy and decision making would enhance local democracy and focus scarce resources where they are needed the most.

Supporting Integration Across Health and Social Care

Research consistently shows individuals most at risk are most likely to have interactions with multiple agencies increasing cost, complexity and risk. The delivery of an account based customer access approach would enable full data integration across the new council and local health providers. Recent statutory changes to the NHS and Social Care mean that Buckinghamshire Council can best exploit data to prevent ill health and promote independence. The single authenticated customer account will be controlled by the customer, allowing them to grant various 'layers' of permitted access to the loved ones and professionals who support them.

Digital Delivery

Through service integration and transformation there is an opportunity to design digital processes to achieve 24/7 access. Rapid increases in technology and the changing expectations of residents provide the opportunity to change the way services are delivered. A new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to design digital services in the way Government Digital Service has delivered at a scale in central government

Digital Inclusion

No individual, group or community can be disadvantaged through a lack of digital access to council services. A new Buckinghamshire Council would design services around the needs of users, providing other access channels to support customer outcomes, including a telephony system for complex queries and support in community hubs.

Community Hubs

There will always be times when residents need to talk to someone face to face, and a new, county-wide single unitary council would need to ensure that this can happen close to home. A network of multi-agency community hubs could enable communities to access services from a place local to them, ensuring vulnerable residents are safeguarded.

By working across organisational silos within a community, partners would be able to reach

at-risk and vulnerable individuals and connect them to services that enhances customer and community outcomes.

It is envisaged that a community hub could be provided in each of the local community areas (currently proposed as 19 areas) with the service offer tailored to the needs of each area. A new Buckinghamshire Council would need to work closely with public sector providers, including the parish and town councils, to understand local need, identify and provide community hubs that meet this need. Initial discussions with partners indicate support for this model which builds on existing examples of co-location of services and helps release surplus property in the public sector estate.

Best Practice Case Study – Digital Development

Best practice across the authorities is already impressive with increasing effort and success being put towards maximising digital processes and aligning customer expectations.

Aylesbury Vale District Council has with its digital development partner Arcus Global built an online account that customers can access. It includes a range of features such as managing council tax, benefits, bins and discounts at their convenience. It's available 24/7, on any device, with no need for a phone call.

In April 2016 the "My Account" already had 16000 users with an average 100 users signing up every day. The account has won a European IT and Software Excellence Award for the launch and ongoing development of the online account. Arcus and AVDC picked up the award for Customer Experience/Management Solution of the Year. Particular praise was given to how My Account matches user expectations and allows AVDC to monitor usage to continually develop and improve the service.

Best Practice Case Study – Community Hub in Practice

The Families Plus project at Chess Medical Centre, Chesham, is a unique colocation of services built around the needs of Lone Parents dependent on welfare benefits. The project aims to increase the number of socially stable, financially robust households by better assisting specific communities of high need through effective partnership working.

In addition to the existing pharmacy, NHS dentist and 2 GP practices, further services provided by DWP, the NHS, county council social care and voluntary and community sector are now located in the same centre and deliver local services where there is the demand.

This fundamentally changes the delivery method and level of support to Lone Parents in receipt of welfare benefits and their children. This approach aims to move these residents into education, training or employment; improving financial and social outcomes for parent and child.

An excellent colocation of services has been achieved that provides a strong case for developing similar community hub models across the County, as seen with the more recent roll-out to Wycombe.

Health and Care

Demographic change, increasing demand and reducing budgets are placing adult social care services under significant pressure. The integration of health and social care services has been a major focus for the county council and the Health Trusts, in order to tackle health challenges, support people to live independently for longer and reduce cost pressures. Greater alignment of health and social care services with community services such as housing, recreation and leisure would fundamentally change the way services are designed, commissioned and delivered:

- Public services could be commissioned with family and health outcomes in mind utilising the full range of public and community services available to assist prevention, keeping more adults more independent for longer

- Health outcomes could be supported by a clear vision for leisure, outdoor and recreational spaces and quality housing in the county, with clearer accountabilities for delivering on county-wide strategy such as the Sustainability Transformation Plan

- Single strategic leadership across planning, housing and social care could allow fit-for-the-future accommodation to be provided that supports the changing needs of an ageing population and young people transitioning to adult services as well as vulnerable care leavers. This would enhance accessibility and the capacity for assistive technology and telecare included by design. Full consideration could be given to the impact of the built and natural environment on the health and wellbeing of local communities and residents

- A single local authority working with a single federated CCG to a shared agenda would simplify partnership working particularly with Health and the County Sports partnership 'LEAP'

- Consolidation of resources across the existing councils, particularly in property assets and ICT, would allow a new Buckinghamshire Council to provide the infrastructure and capacity to communities and local councils to deliver more services at a local level, encouraging community capacity and resilience

- Consolidated revenue collection and benefits functions would deliver consistent performance, aligned with specialist services
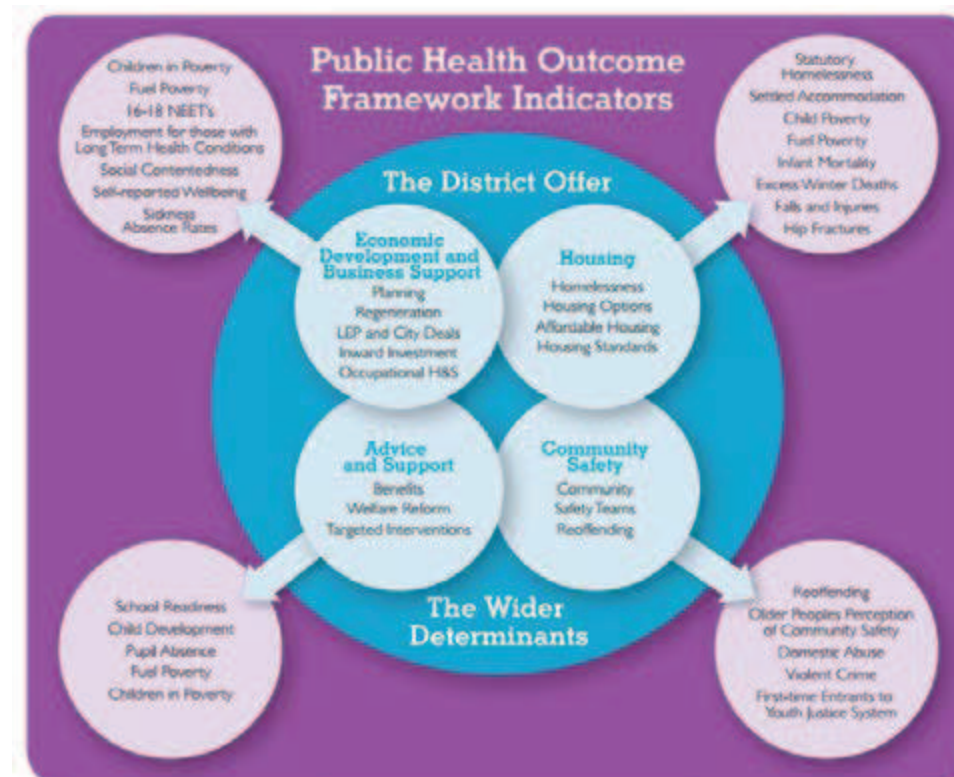
Public Health Outcome

This model illustrates the synergies between county council and district council responsibilities

Source: District Councils' Network 2013

like debt collection and advice, social care financial assessments and income collection.

- Whole system approaches to tackling the wider determinants of health could be developed through the integration of preventive services - for example services currently provided by the county council such as substance misuse services, physical activity programmes and health protection, together with services currently provided by the district council such as alcohol licensing, housing, leisure and environmental health

- More effective and consistent large scale campaigns could be delivered to promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthier lifestyles

- Better insight could be available to support and improve preventative services through trend analysis, creating a single customer record and a basis for designing and delivering services based on individual need and community capacity

- Seamless support could be provided for clients with multiple needs (such as early
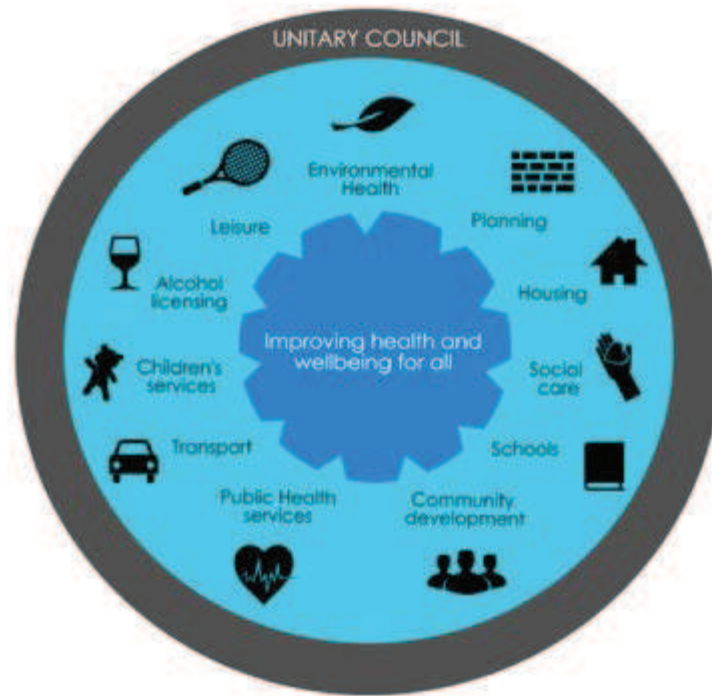
intervention, housing, community support), or at times of crisis

- Customer journeys could be improved by joining up assessments, grants, benefits, housing and planning applications, whilst efficiencies could be delivered in commissioning and back office processes.

Best Practice Case Study – Multi-Agency Groups

Buckinghamshire has invested in the development of MAGs (Multi-Agency Groups) that currently operate at 44 GP practices in the county. The model involves key members of relevant teams coming together to identify and discuss the most vulnerable people on their caseloads that they believe would benefit from a more holistic approach to enable them to maintain their independence.

Since launching in 2013, 2354 patients have been referred and the model continues to be rolled out through strong partnership working, despite the initial funding ceasing.

Each MAG has a core team of health and social care but also benefits from engaging other teams from the county and district councils – including the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), Trading Standards and Environmental Health.

Benefits from this approach include reduced hospital admissions, a decline in A&E attendances, emergency and elective

inpatient spells with a secondary care cost saving of over £256,003.

Investment in MAGs has resulted in an established best practice model of service delivery and effective partnership working. A new Buckinghamshire Council could build upon this approach through the development of a Community Hub model which co-locates partners in a locality and promotes models of information exchange and joined up service delivery.

Children and Young People

Children's Services in Buckinghamshire have been on a significant improvement journey and OFSTED inspectors are starting to recognise progress in key areas. Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility of local government and all its partners. Faced with rising demand and declining budgets, it is critical that partners work together to improve the outcomes for children in need, whilst also promoting resilient families across Buckinghamshire.

The integration of local government services county-wide would provide clear responsibility, greater commissioning power, opportunities to achieve closer working between partners and deliver significant benefits for children and young people:

- Single strategic leadership across all aspects of local government service delivery which impacts on the wellbeing of children and young people. Housing, leisure and play are critically important to improving outcomes for children and young people. Lack of appropriate accommodation is often a significant issue in supporting families and young people to achieve stable lives. A single county-wide unitary council would bring these functions together with statutory responsibilities for the wellbeing of children and young people to deliver stronger organisational links and encourage improved outcomes

- Consistent approach to safeguarding across all local government functions, for example transport, leisure, community safety, by providing common standards, training and communications to all employees and delivery partners

- Consistent model for involving children and young people and encouraging the voice of the child in all appropriate aspects of service delivery

- Simplification of partnerships and elimination of current duplication of meetings both for local government and its partners, including Thames Valley Police and health partners

- Development of 'whole system support' for youth offenders covering housing, financial planning and benefits, education and training designed to reduce reoffending

Best Practice Case Study – Whole System Working

"Families First" is Buckinghamshire's response to the national Troubled Families Agenda, which seeks to "turn around" the lives of families facing multiple problems, including mental health difficulties, domestic violence and debt.

Phase 1 of the programme (2012–2015) successfully "turned around" 545 families (100% of target) and Buckinghamshire was awarded "early starter" status for Phase 2 in recognition of its strong performance and ambition.

Partnership working has been a major factor in the success of Families First. The programme has led to significant changes in how all agencies work together in Buckinghamshire to improve outcomes for children and their families and reduce the burden on the public purse. Rather than employ new teams, the Buckinghamshire delivery model was based on the commitment by all relevant agencies to play their part from the outset, moving outside their traditional remits to provide lead family workers to coordinate all the work with the family. The approach has been underpinned by strong multi agency governance and oversight, coordination of work, shared training, tools and processes.

A new Council and its partners will be able to draw on this whole system approach as a model for working together to transform services to deliver longer-term goals into the future.

- Reduction in the 'touch points' for vulnerable children, young people and families through joined up, consistent services in relation to assessments, grants, benefits, housing and planning applications, particularly for children with disabilities.

- Effective sharing and availability of data across services which could lead to improvements in early intervention and prevention, for example sharing data about families experiencing difficulties with issues such as housing and debt, delivering coordinated assessments and service responses, increase the speed of verification for school applications, fraud deterrent and detection.

Communities, Culture and Leisure

Improving the cultural offer is vital to building community cohesion, strengthening sense of place and community empowerment. Community, Culture and Leisure services could be more joined up in the county than ever before, with closer alignment both to each other and to the desired outcomes for residents, businesses and communities. Opportunities could include:

- The creation of a coherent culture, leisure and tourism strategy for the county - one that broadens and improves service provision to build community cohesion, strengthens sense of place and builds community empowerment

- Services designed with strategic outcomes in mind, maximising use of assets such as quality housing and leisure facilities to improve health and cultural outcomes, reduce crime, foster more confident and resilient communities and support prevention

- A more strategic approach to delivering the Government's strategy for sport – *A New Strategy for an Active Nation* – promoting health, social and economic outcomes through existing assets, for example country parks and managed green spaces, and working with the County Sports Partnership 'LEAP' to improve active lifestyles and participation in sport

- Coordinated and user-focused service delivery that builds on the Paralympic heritage to establish Buckinghamshire as the most accessible County

- A one stop shop for individuals and businesses to access consumer protection services such as trading standards, environmental health, licencing, building control and private sector housing regulation. A uniform and consistent approach would contribute to improving public reassurance and also enable specialist expertise to be developed to support effective enforcement

- A single county-wide team for emergency planning, resilience and business continuity with better links to the Fire and Rescue Service through one stronger partnership

- A single strategic local authority for Thames Valley Police to liaise with for community safety issues

- A simplified route through which communities and the voluntary and community sector can interact with the local authority, become more self-reliant and bid for contracts where services are being tendered

- Expansion of the range of services delivered through libraries so that libraries continue to develop their important contributions to health and wellbeing, digital inclusion and welfare reform

- The development of a broader but more consistent leisure offer, based on stronger needs assessments. Local residents would have more say in the type of programmes (including outreach) available in their local area and health professionals would be able to refer patients to physical activity programmes that deliver evidence-based interventions.

Housing, Transport, Economy, Planning and Environment

A new, county-wide single unitary council could manage these services in a way that achieves a fundamental shift from disparate processes and disconnected customer journeys to an integrated set of services that support the economic and physical growth strategy for the county, whilst appreciating individual community needs. Some of the most visible benefits for the new authority and for customers would be realised through bringing together this portfolio of services that supports the three pillars of sustainability –economy, society and environment.:

- Joining up strategic and local planning to create a single vision for Buckinghamshire which integrates economic growth and demographic change with the planning, roads, transport, housing, green infrastructure and other services to support it – with improved leverage to enable, influence and benefit investors and developers. A new single county-wide unitary council could make rapid progress in this area

- A single housing and homelessness strategy, building on the collaboration that has already developed across the four district councils, that would address differences across the county and ensure that sufficient housing stock is made available to cater for needs of the most vulnerable, including those facing homelessness and domestic violence or needing supported housing

- Improved strategic relationships with the key housing associations (Paradigm, RedKite Housing Trust and Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust) to secure the development of purpose built accommodation for service users with higher needs which could reduce social care costs, together with the effective delivery of appropriate affordable homes

- Elimination of complex existing arrangements for Section 106 funding and Community Infrastructure Levies, with one organisation negotiating with developers and making use of that funding in a way consistent with a single, strategic vision for Buckinghamshire

- A single strategic approach to the use of publicly owned land and surplus assets

- Integrated planning function with strong and effective links to housing, transport and regeneration services, providing a speedy and effective one stop shop for developers and the community

- A model of 5 area planning committees would ensure local development decisions are taken in in the local area, whilst a strategic planning committee would determine major applications with strategic implications

- A consistent and integrated waste collection and disposal service, creating an end to end waste service with a single, consistent strategy supported by joined up delivery, enhancing performance and customer satisfaction, would be a major benefit from a single unitary council

- Joining up similar services such as winter maintenance and street cleaning services to ensure that they are aligned and not negatively impacting each other

- Consolidation into single teams to drive efficiencies – for example, housing advice and homelessness teams , leisure, green spaces and country parks teams

- Delivery of locally-focused services by town and parish councils, such as local highway maintenance and management, parks, green spaces and town centre management. savings from collective energy purchasing for the local government asset base in Buckinghamshire – estimated cost reductions of around £180,000 per year

- A new single energy contract to achieve a lower unit price. Energy efficiency improvements could be implemented across the local government estate in a cost efficient manner

- A single strategic organisation would be better able to draw in and take advantage of investment and external funding opportunities, resulting in real service delivery improvements

- Opportunities to eliminate confusion, clarify accountability and improve the journey for customers. For example one central location for planning applications would allow more consistent comments from the public as there is regular confusion over which council completes which service currently

- Customer insight would be significantly improved by a single account for residents which could provide the opportunity to draw together knowledge of vulnerable service users which is currently spread across suppliers, the districts councils, county council, service providers, Bucks Home Choice (the choice based lettings system) etc.

Local Plans

The three local plans will be newly adopted at the launch of a new council and will therefore continue to provide the policy framework for Buckinghamshire for the immediate future (Appendix 4).Once the plans come up for review in 2022/2023, Buckinghamshire Council could consider the benefits of moving towards a single local development and infrastructure plan for Buckinghamshire.

Benefits of a Single Plan

- **Stronger focus** on place shaping, mapping out a vision for what we want our places to be

- **Integrated approach** to growth, linking together the planning and delivery of jobs, housing and infrastructure to build sustainable communities

- Improved integration with sub national policy, with a single voice

- **Single** evidence base and plan making process – both offer efficiency savings

- **Simplified**, streamlined consultation processes, enabling more meaningful consultation which will improve the quality of the policy and control processes

- **Enhanced** spatial planning, with coordination of social, environmental and economic interests for the county as a whole and improved integration with regional level policy

- A **strategic** view of the connectivity across the County between the two urban centres of Aylesbury and High Wycombe

Corporate and Support Services

Consolidation of corporate resources and support services would maximise savings for the new authority through economies of scale, process efficiencies and rationalisation of management and systems. Consolidating resources would also allow savings to be made in the back office that in turn protects frontline services. Opportunities could include;

- Reduced expenditure on support services such as ICT, Human Resources, Finance, Legal, Procurement and Property functions estimated at around £7m a year, through a combination of staffing efficiencies and greater purchasing power. Pooling of resources and expertise would reduce dependency on agency staff, high cost interim staff and consultancy expenditure

- Investment in specialisms that no single council can afford alone. This could also lead to centres of expertise that could support frontline services more effectively and also offer opportunities to other local public sector providers - for example building on the model whereby the county council now delivers a communications and engagement function for the Buckinghamshire CCG Federation

- Consistent delivery of low cost, high quality processes, building on best practice processes from the existing councils. This would place the new authority in a strong position to lead in shared services partnerships, such as the county council's shared HR and Organisational Development service with London Borough of Harrow

- A single corporate and support services team which would eliminate competition between the existing councils for traded services, such as payroll and meeting space hire

- A single online portal to access details about the council's formal governance, with a single webcasting provider providing online access to committee meetings

- A more strategic approach to procurement and a single relationship with the market which could deliver significant savings through greater economies of scale. The new authority would have a combined annual third party spend of more than £350m

- More effective customer relationship management through data sharing, with opportunities to identify local demands for service and tailor services appropriately - for example through joining up council tax register with disabled blue badge and concessionary fares data

- Greater clarity to local service users: one place to go, consistent advice, wider combined promotion channels and increased capacity to respond to local requests

- Increased resilience and ability to respond to peaks and troughs in workload to deliver a better service for residents. It would offer improved business continuity and the ability to respond flexibly and responsively to change

- More career opportunities that would make the new authority a larger, more attractive and more dynamic employer, attracting quality candidates in a tough professional services market, eliminating competition for top candidates between the existing councils and providing opportunities for career progression which help retention.

Appendix 4

Aim 4:
Better Value for Money

The system of local government funding will change over the next 4 years. Arrangements for the retention of business rates are currently under review and are uncertain beyond 2020. New responsibilities will be devolved to local authorities but as yet there is no agreement around what they will be. The relative needs formula is also likely to be reset. The New Homes Bonus system is also under review nationally.

Whilst the impact of some of these changes is not known at this stage, it is probable that the Buckinghamshire authorities will see reductions in both New Homes Bonus and the level of income from business rates. These changes will occur during a period when districts' financial resources are already assumed to decline in the core spending power. Under a single county-wide unitary authority the fall in core spending power would only be approximately 2.0%, which would significantly mitigate the potential risk to frontline services.

A new Buckinghamshire Council would be well placed to manage both known and unknown financial risks:

- Ability to direct resources to areas of highest need
- Funding changes including business rates (e.g. larger employer leaving)
- Volatility in levels of income generation
- Demand pressures on social care budgets
- Pressure on services through housing growth

Financial Model:
Overview

LG Futures was commissioned to provide some independent support in producing a financial model for Buckinghamshire Council. The model confirms that a new, county-wide single unitary council would be financially viable, based on current spending and funding patterns. The four-year forecasts indicate that the financial position of a new Buckinghamshire Council would deteriorate between now and 2019-20 as a consequence of the known funding changes for local government. However, the change for a single county-wide unitary council would be less severe than for the district councils under the current arrangements.

Savings

Based on the assumptions made, CIPFA statistics and benchmark comparison with other local authorities, the model estimates that a new Buckinghamshire Council could achieve annual cost savings of £18.2m a year, compared with the current two-tier arrangements.

These savings would primarily be achieved through:

- Operation of existing services within Buckinghamshire at the most efficient level
- Streamlined senior management structure
- Reviewing functions/reducing management overheads
- Changes to democratic structures
- Reductions in corporate overheads

Overall savings are estimated as £18.2m per annum (from year 3 following transition). This equates to a saving of £35.27 per head of population and £84.03 per household.

These savings make very prudent assumptions about the cost savings which could be achieved through streamlining services and functions once they are brought together under a single county-wide unitary council. It is anticipated that they in fact will be significantly higher than those identified above. Moreover, they do not include the wider cost savings to the public purse which unified local government could achieve for key partners.

	Value	Description
Democratic processes	£1,625,000	Reduced number of members, overall committees and support
Senior staffing	£2,990,000	Streamline senior management structure
Back office	£3,975,000	Support Service efficiencies for new council – 10% prudent reduction
Consolidated Systems	£1,700,000	Reduced costs of single system platforms in new Council
Contract Efficiencies	£2,760,000	Larger contracts, efficiencies and economies of scale
Service opportunities	£3,650,000	Consolidating existing services and operating to the most efficient level in Buckinghamshire, including refuse collection and recycling, revenues and benefits and the consolidation of other district services.
Property Rationalisation	£1,500,000	Revenue cost savings from the rationalisation of property holdings across the district and county council estates.
Total	**£18,200,000**	

Transition Costs

In order to establish a new Buckinghamshire Council and deliver the savings, one-off transitional costs of £16.2m would be incurred. These would cover the costs of the transition programme team, redundancy and/or retirement costs, and interim shadow arrangements. Taking into account the estimated level of savings, it is estimated that these transitional costs could be repaid within a period of three years.

A sensitivity analysis has been carried out on the assumptions around savings and transition costs. This is included in Appendix 2. It confirms that transitional costs do not impact significantly on the financial case and, even under extreme circumstances, payback would still be within five years.

	Value	Description
Transition Programme Team	£1,500,000	Assumes a team of five posts over three years
Recruitment and Interim capacity	£1,500,000	Assumption is that current staffing across the five organisations will be deployed to manage the transition as far as possible
Property	£500,000	Property rationalisation revenue costs
External communications	£500,000	Communications costs, signage and branding
Cultural Change Programme	£500,000	Including change management, skills development, enhanced communication
Corporate Systems Transition	£4,000,000	Transfer to a single ERP System (£1.5m) Consolidation of Revenues and Benefits and Planning Systems (£1.5m) Other Systems Integration Costs (£1m)
Harmonisation of Terms and Conditions	£500,000	Due to small differentials between the national pay and conditions at districts and local pay at the county.
Early Retirement/ Redundancy	£4,670,000	Assumes that the proposed cap of £95k on exit packages will come into effect
Closedown Costs	£500,000	Cost of closing down legacy councils
Legal and New Constitution Costs	£500,000	Includes Legal costs, contract novation, development of new constitution
Contingency	£1,500,000	
Total	**£16,170,000**	

Council Tax Equalisation

Variations in the district council element of council tax are relatively small in Buckinghamshire. The lowest is Wycombe (£131.99 at Band D) and the current cost of equalising council tax bands in all districts, within the existing referendum limits is £2.221m compared to existing council tax assumptions in the first 3 years. These proposals assume that council tax is equalised after the first year.

The budgets set by the county and the majority of the district councils have assumed the maximum increase in council tax over the next four years. Whilst a new Buckinghamshire Council may have an ambition to be able to freeze or even lower council tax in the longer term, it would be critical to get the new council onto a sustainable footing before being able to consider this. The financial model therefore assumes an increase of 2% for the social care precept up to 2021 and an increase of 1.99% within the council tax referendum limit in each of the current districts.

	Band D as at 1 April 2016 (excluding parishes, police, fire)	Assumed Band D as at 1 April 2018	Lowest Band D at 1 April 2019 (including Care precept)	Reduction in Band D (from 1 April 2018)	% change in Band D (from 1 April 2018)	Est. Council Tax Base at 1 April 2019	Reduction in district council tax Income (compared to budget for 2019/20)
Aylesbury Vale	£139.06	£144.65	£142.77	-£1.88	-1.3%	7,513	-340,147
Chiltern	£168.77	£175.55	£142.77	-£32.78	-18.7%	44,060	-1,598,340
South Bucks	£148.00	£153.95	£142.77	-£11.18	-7.3%	32,994	-469,382
Wycombe	£131.99	£137.30	£142.77	£5.48	3.99%	68,026	186,793
Total						**216,592**	**-2,221,076**

Investment of Savings

Taking into account the savings and the payback period for the transitional costs, a new Buckinghamshire Council would be able to afford investment of £45m (282% over the 5 year period) of cumulative net savings to enhance delivery against residents' priorities over the first 5 years or the investment of annual revenue of £18m after year 3.

Reserves

This table sets out the existing level of general fund reserves held across the county council and district councils plus any balances held in earmarked reserves for Transformation or contingency purposes. For general fund balances, the lowest level is at Chiltern District Council where balances are equivalent to 8.1% of net revenue expenditure. There are some plans to use balances across the district councils to support the budget but these appear to be limited. These are shown as the 'planned increases' line below and reflect the information presented within the 2016/17 Medium Term Financial plans.

The table below shows the impact on the general reserves balance for Buckinghamshire Council, if the reserves were used to meet the net transition cost as presented in the financial model below. A new Buckinghamshire Council could reinstate the reserves to the pre-unitary level by choosing to put less than one year's savings into reserves after 2021. In practice some of this investment could be met from capital reserves and usable capital receipts.

Impact on Reserves	Base Year 2016/17 £000	Lead in -Y1 2017/18 £000	Lead in Y0 2018/19 £000	Year 1 2019/20 £000	Year 2 2020/21 £000	Year 3 2021/22 £000	Year 4 2022/23 £000	Year 5 2023/24 £000
Aylesbury Vale	7,299	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chiltern	4,496	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Bucks	4,603	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wycombe	10,370	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bucks CC	17,400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total General Reserves	17,400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Planned Increases	456	111	455	-772	0	0	0	0
Net Transition Costs	0	-23,000	-5,350	-6,476	0	0	0	0
Reserve Balance	44,624	42,435	37,540	30,292	30,292	30,292	30,292	30,292
% of NBR	12%	11%	10%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%

In addition to the general fund reserves, collectively the county council and district councils held over £203m of earmarked reserves as at 1st April 2016. Although some of these will be used in the near future for the purposes for which they are held, in the context of a new unitary council, a new Buckinghamshire Council would want to review the purpose for which these funds are held to meet the priorities of the new council.

Capital Programme

Over 500 property assets are held across the county and four district councils (excluding schools, agricultural estates and country parks) with a net book value of just under £1bn. Physical space would have an important role to play in realising the benefits of a brand new unitary council. The strategic management of a combined property portfolio would provide enhanced opportunities for:

• transfers to parish and town councils

• development of community hubs and promote co-location and integration of public sector services

• rationalisation and disposals to remove duplication and realise the value for reinvestment

• commercial investments to create revenue streams or enhanced post-development capital receipts

• use of assets to stimulate growth.

The county council recently commissioned Carter Jonas to carry out a property review in order to identify opportunities for delivering both financial benefits and service improvements. The scope included potential

"A Unitary model may generate substantial savings whilst offering an improved service"

Carter Jonas, 2016,

property sharing opportunities with public sector partners, including co-location into multi-agency community hubs. The report identified potential net capital receipts of up to £48m, including co-location of county and district functions. The ability to deliver the top end of this estimate would be enhanced through the establishment of a single unitary council due to the reduced geographical constraints.

No assumptions have been made about additional capital expenditure as a result of the establishment of a new Buckinghamshire Council, beyond the transitional spend on ICT systems. Any change in property requirements would be managed through the existing portfolios or financed in the main through the disposal of existing assets.

Summary of Financial Model

The adjacent financial model shows that a new Buckinghamshire Council would be able to balance its budget, funding the cost of transition from reserves with payback within 2.5 years from set up. Even where all transition costs are funded from reserves, the model indicates that reserve balances overall would not fall below 5% of net budget requirement.

Impact of Proposals on Net Budget Requirement

Appendix 4
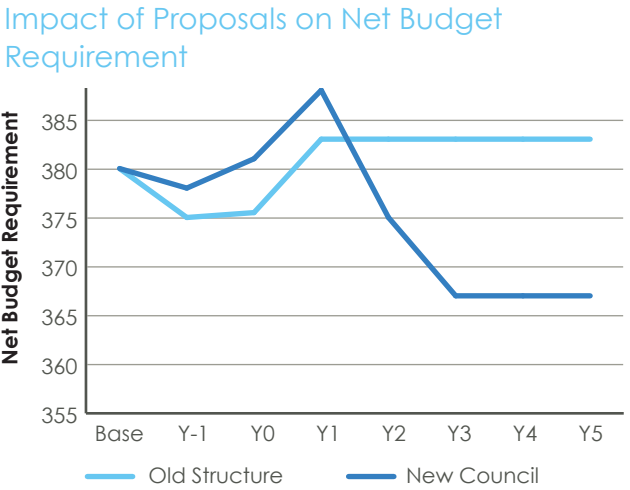
The table below summarises the impact of the changes described above on the total spend of the existing and then the new authorities. The payback period calculated by this model is 2.2 years from 1 April 2019.

2.2 years from 1 April 2019

	Base Year 2016/17 £000	Lead in -Y1 2017/18 £000	Lead in Y0 2018/19 £000	Year 1 2019/20 £000	Year 2 2020/21 £000	Year 3 2021/22 £000	Year 4 2022/23 £000	Year 5 2023/24 £000	Total 2016/24 £000
Old structure									
County	332,070	328,832	329,310	336,722	336,722	336,722	336,722	336,722	2,673,821
Districts	48,196	46,537	46,285	46,585	46,585	46,585	46,585	46,585	373,942
TOTAL under Existing Structure	380,266	375,369	375,595	383,307	383,307	383,307	383,307	383,307	3,047,763
New Structure									
County	332,070	328,832	329,310	0	0	0	0	0	990,212
Districts	48,196	46,537	46,285	0	0	0	0	0	141,018
Transition costs	0	2,300	5,150	7,670	1,000	0	0	0	16,120
CT equalisation	0	0	0	2,221	1,652	1,691	1,730	1,771	9,066
TOTAL under New Structure	380,266	377,669	380,745	388,225	374,927	366,797	366,837	366,877	3,002,343
DIfference	0	2,300	5,150	4,918	-8,379	-16,509	-16,470	-16,430	-45,420
Difference made up of									
Transition Costs	0	2,300	5,150	7,670	1,000	0	0	0	16,120
Effciency Savings	0	0	0	-4,793	-11,032	-18,200	-18,200	-18,200	-70,606
Re-investment	0	0	0	2,221	1,652	1,691	1,730	1,771	9,066
Net of costs and savings	0	2,300	5,150	4,918	-8,379	-16,609	-16,470	-16,430	-45,420

Assumptions

Business rates – for the purpose of this business case no change has been assumed to the relative needs allocation to a unitary authority from the total awarded to upper and lower tier at present.

New Homes Bonus – Although the current 80:20 split may also be reconsidered, for the purpose of this business case it is assumed that there will be no impact on the overall total resource available to a unitary authority.

Appendix 4

C

Chapter C
Achieving the Change

Managing the Risks of Change and Achieving the Benefits

An effective change management programme would be fundamental to ensuring that a new Buckinghamshire Council is launched successfully and is able to achieve the benefits articulated in this business case. Bringing five separate organisations together would present a significant challenge in terms of developing a brand new organisational culture. We do not underestimate the need to plan and properly resource this programme, and to sustain a focus on this for the first 2-3 years of the life of the new council whilst continuing to deliver good business as usual services.

The five legacy councils have a strong track record in delivering transformational change and possess the skills and experience to lead this change programme, drawing on external capacity as required.

Learning from the experience of other new unitary authorities, the approach to implementation would be characterised by the following principles:

Continuity of service delivery to residents, communities, businesses and service users is the top priority. Members and officers from all five existing authorities must be able to play a full role in the transition to a brand new council

Valuing Employees - key to the success of the new council would be its ability to retain skilled, specialist staff from the five organisations and actively engage them in shaping a new culture for a new organisation

Valuing the legacy of the five councils - the approach to implementation would need to be built on a fundamental respect for the history and legacy of each of the five existing councils

Valuing Partners - a wide range of stakeholders have contributed to the design criteria for a new unitary authority, and must continue to have a voice during the implementation phase.

From Transition to Transformation

The programme is envisaged in three phases over a five year period (assuming 2019 go live):

- Preparation: DCLG decision – April 2018

- Transition: May 2018 – May 2020 – with go live in April 2019

- Transformation: May 2020 – May 2022

From the approval of the Business Case through the first year of the new council, the emphasis would be firmly on service continuity rather than change. In this period, priority would be given to retaining existing staff, and to the ongoing effective operation of existing systems, processes and contracts, with a strong focus on performance management to ensure that performance of front line services and resident satisfaction remains sound. Whilst there may be some opportunities to integrate services from Vesting Day (or earlier), the realisation of benefits through harmonising teams, systems, policies and contracts, would be phased gradually over time as and when it makes sense. Whilst this defers the benefits until later in the plan period, it would ensure that a new Buckinghamshire Council can lay strong foundations for future success. The financial modelling in the business case reflects this cautious approach to the phasing of service redesign.

Key Milestones

Assuming that a decision is made in January 2017, key milestones are envisaged as follows:

Unitary Transition Milestones	
January 2017	Secretary of State Decision
	Shadow Implementation Executive & Transition Board established
March 2017	Appointment of Programme Director
May 2017	County Council elections
Summer 2017	Parliamentary Structural Change Order
Summer 2017	Appointment of Chief Executive
	Transition Reviews commissioned:
	Property
	Digital & IT
	HR Terms and conditions
	Supply Chain
	Business Continuity Plans
Summer 2017	Boundary Review Proposals submitted
Autumn 2017	Chief Executive of new Council in post
	Agree organisational structure
Spring 2018	Boundary Commission Report published
	Top team of new council appointed
Autumn 2018	Set budget
April 2019	Vesting Day for new Council
May 2019	Elections for new Unitary Council
May 2019	County and District Councils dissolved
May 2019	Integration of services on phased basis
	Monitoring the delivery of benefits

A detailed programme plan is at Appendix 6.

Governance

Once the Secretary of State makes a decision, an Implementation Executive and an officer Transition Programme Board would be established to lead the preparations for the new council, prior to Vesting Day. Post Vesting Day, these would be replaced with the Cabinet and Management Team of Buckinghamshire Council.

The Implementation Executive would lead the delivery of the Transition Plan and also oversee key 'business as usual' milestones for each of the five councils to ensure that any risks to service continuity are mitigated.

Strong collaboration with key stakeholders would be critical throughout the programme, and the detail of these arrangements would be developed with key partners.

Governance Arrangements

Implementation Executive (Members from each of the 5 councils)

Programme Board (Chief Officers from each of the 5 Councils)

Programme Management Office
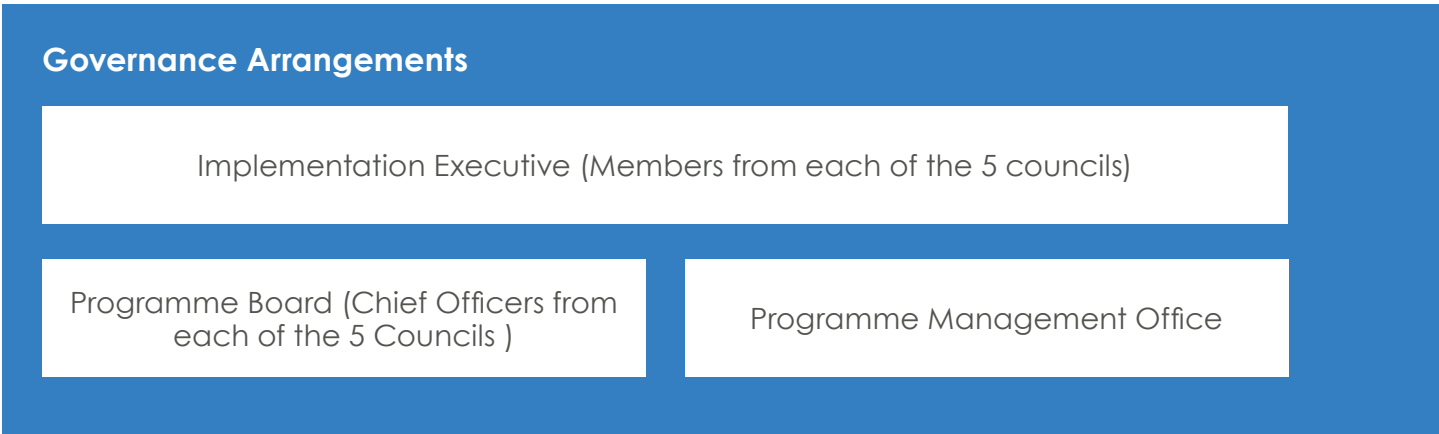
Transition Programme Management Office (PMO)

At the outset, a new programme management team would be established in order to manage the substantial transition programme, drawing on the talent across the five organisations blended with external advice and challenge. A Programme Director (external) would be appointed to lead the transition programme, with accountability to the Implementation Executive.

A robust approach to risk management would be taken by the PMO in order to identify specific risks associated with the transition, and to actively manage these.

The Programme Director would report monthly on the delivery of the transition programme to all five councils, through the implementation executive, and also to DCLG.

Transition Programme – Workstrands

The 'Transition Phase' of the Programme would cover the period from laying parliamentary orders through to the end of the first year of the new council (Summer 2017- April 2020). At this stage, it is envisaged that the Programme would move into a 'Transformation Phase'.

The Transition Programme workstreams could include:

- Governance – including constitution and policy and planning framework

- Democratic Leadership – including planning for the elections, inductions of new councillors, defining the roles of Members, and development of Community Boards

- HR – including staff retention, transfer and appointments

- Systems – including ICT transitions

- Supply chain – novation of contracts

- Financial management – including design of the budget structure

- Culture Change – internal comms & organisational development

- External Communications & Stakeholder engagement

Appendix 4

- Customer Experience & Service Delivery

- Property strategy – including due diligence on asset transfer, opportunities for co-location and development of community hubs

- Service Transformation programme – including planning the phasing of service redesign opportunities

Democracy Commission

A "Democracy Commission" could be established to maximise public participation in the design of the new council, including the geography of the local areas and the terms of reference of the community boards and the community hub models.

Building on the Kirklees model, this could be established with an independent chairman, with a remit to gather views and ideas from existing county and district councillors, residents, parish & town councils, businesses and other partners, as well as drawing on best practice elsewhere. It is envisaged that this could start in Summer 2017.

One of the issues raised during the research on the business case is the way in which residents of the unparished area of High Wycombe could potentially benefit from the local devolution offer. This will be an issue for the new Buckinghamshire council to consider, and potentially could be included within the scope of the proposed 'Democracy Commission'.

Boundary Commission

It is proposed that the Buckinghamshire Council would be established with 98 single member wards, broadly based on dividing the existing county council division boundaries into two. This would involve submitting proposals to the Boundary Commission in summer 2017 to consider. The Boundary Commission anticipate that they would be able to reach a decision on the proposals by January 2018.

Creating a New Culture

A new, county-wide single unitary council would need visionary leadership, organisational flexibility and people capacity, with the right people working in the right way. To achieve this, it would be critical to invest in the transition of the workforce in a way that wins hearts and minds, builds trust, and develops the new council into a coherent and cohesive organisation, with its own distinct culture.

Underpinning the transition programme would be a major workstrand focused on developing and embedding a new culture for a new Buckinghamshire Council. This could include:

- Vision, values and behaviours

- Organisational development & design

- HR systems and policies

- Skills development

- Working practices

- Performance management

- Pay and reward, relocation and retention

- Assessment and selection

- Employee relations

A key element of this culture could be a business-like and entrepreneurial approach which would be found not only in the council's own commercial activity but more generally in the attitude towards problem solving, and in an empathy with the needs of businesses in Buckinghamshire
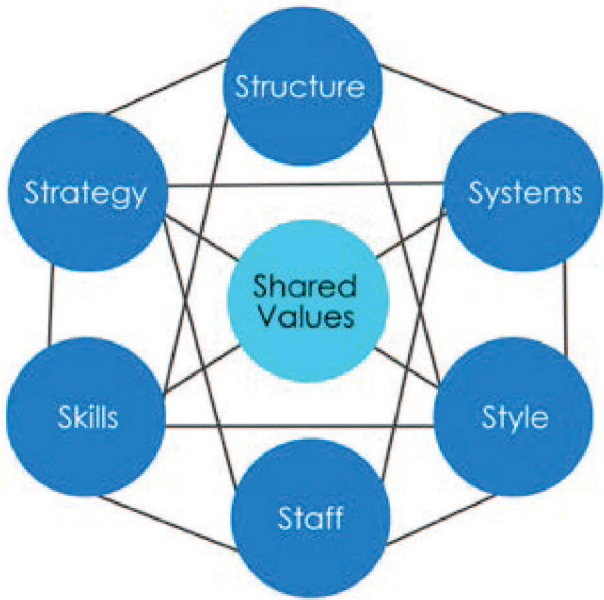
Credit: McKinsey

Appendix 1

Buckinghamshire Profile

Geography

Buckinghamshire is an attractive county with rich heritage and landscape; over a quarter of the county is included within the Chiltern area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a further third covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt. The county enjoys good transport links, particularly to London. Contrasting with the rural areas in the county, Buckinghamshire has an urban environment found within its key towns such as Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chesham.

History & Heritage

Buckinghamshire has been a strategic and administrative unit for over 1000 years. Its boundaries were laid down in 914 by King Edward the Elder who developed the new county of Buckinghamshire as a military unit and a judicial and taxation area, administered by a sheriff.

The Local Government Act of 1888 established the new Buckinghamshire County Council, with democratically elected members from both their urban and rural areas. 1894 saw the creation of elected Urban and Rural District Councils, based on the Poor Law Union boundaries, to look after sanitation and local roads and in due course play a major role in building regulation and the construction of council houses. In 1974, these were replaced by 5 larger district councils, with Slough moving out of Buckinghamshire and into Berkshire. In 1997, the new city of Milton Keynes gained unitary status and separated from the rest of Buckinghamshire.

Historic map of Buckinghamshire 1934

Demographic and socio-economic change

Buckinghamshire has a population of 528,000 residents, made up of approximately 212,000 households. The population profile is not static, and important changes are occurring. The gap is widening between the lowest and highest socio-economic groups; both of which are growing. The population over the age of 65 is increasing, as are levels of disability. Buckinghamshire is becoming even more multi-cultural and diverse. We experience a net loss of young educated adults, but net gains of families with children and mid-life adults. These changes, along with shifting behaviours are resulting in increasing demand for some services – including children's' and adults' social care, supported transport, school places, specialised and supported housing, and health services.

Migration

Migration into Buckinghamshire is a key driver of population change. Migrant characteristics are typically: aged 20-45, families with young children, BME, lower to mid-range socio-economic group, arriving from South Oxfordshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Milton Keynes, Slough, Hillingdon Ealing, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and India.

Since 2001 the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) population in Buckinghamshire has increased by 6%, and we expect to see a further 6% increase by 2031 (to 20% of the total population). The largest increase will be seen in the Asian/ Asian British group (from 9% to 12% total population). Greater Aylesbury and High Wycombe had the largest BME populations aged 60-79 in 2011 (766 and 1747 respectively), and this will still be the case in 2031, although they will have seen a 255% and 191% increase respectively (to 2725 and 5088 residents).

Future population change will be informed by future changes in housing supply, which is not currently reflected in the projections discussed above. Based on the emerging Local Plans, the housing supply is expected to increase significantly, potentially by an additional 50,000 houses over the next 15 years. Initial estimates suggest our total population could be 60,000 higher by 2031 than current projections.

Skills, employment and economy

We have a very highly qualified workforce in Buckinghamshire, with high levels of economic activity and low unemployment. 35% of working age people are educated to degree level or above (compared to 30% across the South East), 74% of the population are economically active (compared to 72% across the South East), and only 0.7% of working age population are claiming Jobseekers Allowance (0.9% across the South East).

Job opportunities are good. The latest figures show that there are 2.06 jobseekers for every job vacancy in the County – this compares to 2.47 across the South East, and 3.43 across England as a whole. Average earnings for jobs held by Buckinghamshire' residents are £35,579 – significantly higher than the average across the South East (£24,888) and England as a whole (£22,716). And less than 1% of people in Buckinghamshire live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country – compared to 8% across the South East as a whole.

But there are also challenges!

There are two prominent issues around skills – the substantial daily loss of skilled people who commute to higher paid jobs in London, and the 'brain drain' of educated young adults leaving Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire has a comparatively small proportion of people aged 24-30, being in the bottom 25% of all Local Authorities for this measure.

These issues may pose a challenge to the unfolding growth agenda in Buckinghamshire, which will be predicated upon the availability of an appropriately skilled workforce.

Skills shortages are more acute across the Thames Valley than the rest of the country, and within the Thames Valley Buckinghamshire faces the biggest challenge with 30% of vacant posts reported unfilled due to a lack of appropriately skilled applicants (compared to an average of 25%). Skills gaps are also an issue with 6% workforce employees deemed not proficient (compared to an average of 6.25% across the Thames Valley). There is evidence of some mis-match between the supply and demand of skills in Buckinghamshire, with particular shortages in the technician, higher level, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) skills required for local 'plan for growth' sectors (including engineering, digital/ IT, life sciences and medical technology, high performance technologies, creative industries, construction, and built environment). Competition from other employers (particularly London-based) is also noted as a driving factor.

A key opportunity for addressing these skills shortages, is to grow our Apprenticeship provision; with only 2% of key stage 5 pupils currently progressing into this type of training. The top five categories in our Apprenticeship profile are Business Management, Hospitality & Catering, Child Development & Welfare, Health and Social Care, and Administration. This demonstrates a comparative lack of provision in some of the more important sectors for the future of Buckinghamshire's economy (the 'plan for growth' sectors mentioned above).

Accessibility

Buckinghamshire is the least self-contained of all the Local Enterprise Partnerships with only 62.3% of working residents employed in the county, and roughly twice as many people commuting out of Buckinghamshire as commuting in. Out-flows are generally to the South, with in-flows generally being from East/ West. There is high car ownership and use in Buckinghamshire, particularly for journeys to work (the majority of people in employment travel less than 40k, and by car), 13% of residents commute (road or rail) to London, and 1 in 10 work mainly from home. North/ south travel (M40 and M41) is generally thought to be easier than East/ West. East West Rail is a key project expected to improve connectivity across Buckinghamshire with Oxford, Milton Keynes and Bedford (and Cambridge in the future on the 'Knowledge Arc'). It will place many communities on the national transport network and encourage inward investment (a survey of Buckinghamshire businesses in 2013 found that 1 in 5 expected East West Rail to have a positive impact on their business).

Housing Supply

The 'brain drain' and skill shortages issue discussed above are in part tied to the lack of affordable housing (both higher than average rents and house prices) for young professionals. The average price of a house in Buckinghamshire is £448,199 – compared to £352,120 across the South East. The difference is even more stark for detached houses – In Buckinghamshire the average price is £696,477, compared to £533,967 across the South East. Our affordability ratio (average house price to average earnings) is 13:1, considerably higher than the England average (8:1).

Despite the outstanding natural beauty of Buckinghamshire undoubtedly being an important factor in attracting and retaining skilled workers, the resulting constraints on developable land mean that housing growth cannot always match economic growth.

The demand for social housing significantly exceeds availability and although homeless acceptances in Buckinghamshire (1.75 per 1000 households) are lower than the national average (2.5 per 1000 households), there are increasing pressures on homelessness services – over the last three years homeless acceptances in Buckinghamshire have increased at almost three times the rate of those in England as a whole.

Business Profile

Buckinghamshire, from a labour market perspective, is advantageously located, within easy commuting distance from the London, the M4 Corridor, Oxford and Milton Keynes labour markets. Key features for which Buckinghamshire is world famous include Silverstone Race Circuit, Pinewood Film Studios and Stoke Mandeville 'The Birthplace of the Paralympics'.

Buckinghamshire is widely recognised as the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain, with more new businesses starting up and succeeding than anywhere else in the UK. Buckinghamshire is a small firm economy with the highest proportion of firms employing fewer than five people, at 75.8% of all firms. 40% of our small firms (with less than 5 employees) are located in rural parts of Buckinghamshire – and these businesses experience more barriers to growth than many, including a lack of affordable housing; poor business infrastructure (particularly a lack of suitable premises, slower broadband speeds and weaker training and development provision); a shortage of key services; a more restrictive labour market (characterised by a lower skilled, ageing workforce); a shortage of business networks; planning constraints; and a lack of access to business support and suitable finance.

The most prominent local business sector is 'professional, scientific and technical services' (21% of local businesses), followed by construction (11%), then 'post and telecommunications' (10%). As the construction sector has often been the first to demonstrate the impacts of a downturn in the economy, this could be an emerging issue for our business community as the impacts of Brexit become clearer over the next 2 years.

Film and TV is also a recognised dimension of Buckinghamshire's business profile - Pinewood Studios is a key hub for creative industries and the UK film and television industry, with around 112 full-time equivalent employees sitting alongside over 175 Pinewood tenant companies employing approximately 750 people. Recent research estimates suggest that Pinewood generates £101m GVA per annum. The National Film and Television School produces a host of award winning students and graduates, and many of the UK's most noted contemporary auteurs as well as commercial filmmakers. The county's strong natural landscape, great houses and National Trust properties have attracted many high profile film-makers in search of locations – from James Bond to Bridget Jones' Diary, and TV series such as the Midsummer Murders.

A survey of local businesses in 2013 found that overall around three quarters of businesses are satisfied with Buckinghamshire as a place to do business, leaving less than one in ten dissatisfied (these figures vary by district; businesses in Wycombe are more likely than average to be satisfied, whilst those in South Bucks are less likely). Advantages of being Buckinghamshire based are reported as:

Buckinghamshire is the 3rd most productive place in England

Some of the best performing schools in the country

48% of residents educated to degree level and above

6th highest proportion of employment in the knowledge economy

Next Generation Access (NGA) Superfast Broadband, which will deliver 24 Mbps- due to be completed 2018

Rail links to London Marylebone Station and access to London Underground network at Amersham Tube Station

Less than an hours drive to London and Oxford

Excellent access to national road network – via the M40 & M25

major international airports within 1 hour drive, inc. Heathrow & Luton

Key Stations for East-West Rail (Oxford to Cambridge) to be located within Buckinghamshire. Due for completion 2019

The main challenges to locating in Buckinghamshire were found to be utility and energy prices, transport connectivity (particularly for high-growth businesses), constraints around access to finance, broadband speed, and cost of premises.

The Buckinghamshire LEP evidence base identifies a number of challenges including a lack of high-growth business start-ups, lack of early-stage business accommodation, and weak specialist business networks. The impact of Brexit on inward investment and business start-ups is yet to become clear, but could also be an emerging issue for our local growth agenda.

Environment

A period of unprecedented growth will inevitably place pressure on the Buckinghamshire environment, and the benefits it provides. Whilst overall domestic energy consumption is reducing in line with national trends, residents in Chiltern and South Bucks consume more gas per household than any other District in England. Only 11% of electricity consumed in Buckinghamshire is from renewable sources, significantly below the Government's national target of 30% by 2020. CO2 emissions per capita in Buckinghamshire (6.8l) are also higher than the regional and English average.

Recycling rates in Buckinghamshire (58%) are better than the national average (45%).

However, Buckinghamshire has more municipal waste going to landfill than is the case nationally (currently 42% compared to the national average of 25%). This is set to improve as a result of the recent opening of a new Energy from Waste facility in the north of the County. This facility represents the single biggest investment ever made by the County Council, and stands to save the county's taxpayers £150 million over 30 years through avoiding landfill charges, as well as earning an income from the electricity generated from waste that cannot be recycled. As the county grows, avoiding and reducing waste and improving resource management will continue to be important to achieving a sustainable future.

Health & Wellbeing

Buckinghamshire scores well on the national measures of wellbeing with the highest GDP per capita outside Inner London, one of the highest life expectancies and some of the best educational results in the country. Compared to the national average a higher proportion of Buckinghamshire residents view their health as very good or good, and are less likely to report having a long term limiting illness.

Although Buckinghamshire is generally affluent and this is reflected in health outcomes that are better than the national average, there are still concerning levels of unhealthy lifestyles which are driving an increase in long term conditions. For example:

2 in **3** — adults are overweight or obese

1 in **7** — adults smoke, compared with 1 in 4 adults in manual groups smoke

1 in **5** — adults are physically inactive

1 in **5** — adults drink harmful levels of alcohol

1 in **3** — adults are at risk of developing diabetes

The prevalence of long term conditions, many of which are preventable, are expected to increase over the next five years, with the greatest increase expected in diabetes and cancer. The prevalence of cancer is predicted to increase by 31% from 2.5% to 3.2%, driven by unhealthy lifestyles, early detection and improved survival, while diabetes is predicted to increase by 17% from 5.9% to 6.9% driven by an ageing population and unhealthy lifestyles, particularly overweight and obesity. Although hypertension is expected to increase by 5% due to unhealthy lifestyles and better identification of hypertension. However, better management of hypertension and other causative factors such as diabetes, combined with improved identification means the prevalence of coronary heart disease is likely to remain fairly constant.

Mortality rates in Buckinghamshire are significantly lower than national rates for all deaths, for all circulatory diseases and for all cancers. However, the mortality rate due to hypertensive disease (conditions associated with high blood pressure) in Buckinghamshire is statistically significantly higher than the national rate.

There are also significant health inequalities in Buckinghamshire, with the most disadvantaged 20% of people experiencing poorer health outcomes, including infant mortality, premature mortality, hospital admissions rates for a range of conditions (including coronary heart disease, circulatory disease, heart failure, stroke and diabetes).

Community Safety

After a number of years of decreasing crime levels, crime increased by 12% across the county between 14/15 and 15/16 (reflecting a wider trend across the Thames Valley).

The hidden nature of some emerging areas of crime such as modern slavery, exploitation of vulnerable individuals and groups, and cyber (internet) crime means that the understanding of who is at risk is becoming more complex.

Repeat offending accounts for 67% of all detected crime, and a small proportion of offenders (5%) are responsible for more than 25% of all detected crime. Despite this the Ministry of Justice identifies Buckinghamshire as having the lowest repeat offending rate in the South East. The primary age of offending is between 16 and 26, with the higher rate of offending in this age group being linked to a higher rate of substance misuse.

Appendix 4

Appendix 2

Sensitivity Analysis

Council Tax Equalisation

The current model assumes 1.99% council tax equalisation for districts and county councils over the period; plus the 2% Social Care precept for the county and unitary council until 2021. Sensitivity analysis has been performed of a change in assumption around council tax increases by the lowest precepting authority.

The analysis shows that the impact of changes in council tax increases is not significant in terms of the overall business case.

		Cost of CT equal-isation in year 1	Impact on payback	Impact on GF reserve	Impact on GF as % of
		£000	Years	£000	%
Current assumption	**1.99%**	**2,221**	**2.46**	**30,292**	**7.8%**
Lowest DC increase by	1.00%	2,544	2.50	29,969	7.7%
Lowest DC increase by	0.00%	2,869	2.54	29,644	7.6%
Lowest DC increase by	-1.00%	3,194	2.59	29,319	7.5%

Savings Assumptions

The current model has a number of assumptions around potential savings. Sensitivity looks at the impact of an overall over-estimation or over-delivery of potential savings:

The analysis shows that savings would need to fall to around 50% of what has been assumed before it would become significant in terms of the overall business case.

		Total savings over 5 year period	Ongoing Annual saving	Net (surplus) / deficit over 5 years	Impact on payback period	Impact on GF reserve	Impact on GF as % of NBR
		£000	£000	£000	Years	£000	%
Current assumption		**70,606**	**18,200**	**(45,420)**	**2.24**	**27,440**	**7.5%**
Reduction of	5%	67,075	17,290	(41,890)	2.31	27,191	7.4%
Reduction of	10%	63,545	16,380	(38,359)	2.38	26,943	7.3%
Reduction of	25%	52,954	13,650	(27,769)	2.67	26,197	7.1%
Reduction of	50%	35,303	9,100	(10,117)	3.62	24,954	6.8%
Increase of	5%	74,136	19,110	(48,950)	2.18	27,689	7.5%
Increase of	10%	77,666	20,020	(52,480)	2.13	27,937	7.6%
Increase of	25%	88,257	22,751	(63,071)	2.00	28,683	7.8%

Cost Assumptions

The model has a number of assumptions around the cost of transition. Sensitivity looks at the impact of an overall under-estimation of potential costs. The model has assumed that the £95k cap on public sector exit packages comes into effect. The impact of this not taking place is also modelled.

The analysis shows that the £1.5m contingency assumed within the business case is not quite sufficient to cover a 10% increase in costs.

It would not cover the estimated cost of removing the £95k exit cap (*note this has been estimated at the top-end of potential packages assuming all senior officers are over 55 years and without taking account of potential vacancies).

In terms of the business case overall, however, a 50% increase in costs can be accommodated within general fund reserves without reducing reserves below 5% of net budget requirement.

		Total transition costs £000	Net (Surplus) / deficit over 5 years	Impact on payback period	Impact on GF reserve	Impact on GF as & of NBR
		£000	£000	Years	%	%
Current assumption		**16,120**	**(45,420)**	**2.24**	**27,440**	**7.5%**
No £95k exit cap		18,503	(43,037)	2.39	25,057	6.8%
Increase of	5%	16,926	(44,614)	2.29	26,684	7.3%
Increase of	10%	17,732	(43,808)	2.34	25,928	7.1%
Increase of	25%	20,150	(41,390)	2.49	23,660	6.4%
Increase of	50%	24,180	(37,360)	2.73	19,880	5.4%
Reduction of	5%	15,314	(46,226)	2.19	28,196	7.7%
Reduction of	10%	14,508	(47,032)	2.14	28,952	7.9%
Reduction of	25%	12,090	(49,450)	2.00	31,220	8.5%

Appendix 3

New Council Governance Arrangements

New Council Governance Arrangements

The political governance arrangements of a new Buckinghamshire Council could be designed to provide:

• representation of all Buckinghamshire's communities

• transparent and open decision-making

• responsiveness to the needs and ambitions of local communities

• accountability to local residents, communities and businesses

• robust assurance and regulation of the use of public funding and assets held on behalf of Buckinghamshire

• scrutiny of services delivered on behalf of the council and other public service providers

• strong partnership working with the public, private and voluntary sectors in the interests of local people

• civic leadership and pride in Buckinghamshire which respects the values of local communities and the heritage of the county.

Subject to proportionality rules, all councillors would be eligible for appointment to these positions, as well as serving on local Community Boards and external bodies on behalf of the council.

Strengthening Local Democracy – Council decision-making

A new council would need to ensure that there is robust public accountability for decision-making and that decisions are taken locally on issues that only affect one locality. Where decisions impact on more than one area or have a significant impact across Buckinghamshire, these decisions would be taken by the council as a whole through the councils' committees and Cabinet Members.

To ensure robust accountability and a localism approach, a new Buckinghamshire council could take the following measures:

• Ensure that all committee/cabinet/cabinet Member decisions which have a local impact demonstrate how the local councillors and the Community Board have been consulted

• Require public consultation on all major service changes through different ways – online; face-to-face engagement events; Community Board & Forum meeting.

• All planning decisions to ensure local consultation; the Strategic Planning Committee and the Area Planning Committees would ensure that the public and affected parish councils have the opportunity to make representations.

• Hold committee meetings in evenings to ensure that residents who work are able to attend

Council Committees

To fulfil the purpose of Buckinghamshire Council it is proposed that a Leader and Cabinet model be adopted for the new council, with four yearly elections. The other key committees of the council proposed are:

- Strategic Planning Committee
- Area Planning Committees (5)
- Licencing Committee
- Area Licensing Sub-Committees (5)
- Regulatory & Audit Committee
- Senior Awards & Appointments Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Board

- Pensions Fund Committee
- Rights of Way Committee
- Commercial Committee (to oversee the council's commercial activities)
- Community Boards (19)
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Schools Forum

The exact details of the roles of all committees would be set out in a new council constitution.

In order to make it as easy as possible for those of working age to serve as an elected councillor, all full council and committee meetings could take place in evenings.

Key Councillor Positions

In order to carry out the functions of the new council effectively the following roles would be needed:

- Chairman of the Council- ceremonial head of the council & chairman of full council meetings
- Leader & Portfolio Holders — political portfolios should be designed to deliver the benefits of integrating the former county and district council services to customers.
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee Chairmen (5) — The remit for scrutiny committees should be structured to reflect the political portfolios and strategic themes of Buckinghamshire Council. The committees will fulfill statutory responsibilities in relation to health, education, community safety.

- Strategic Planning Committee Chairman
- Area Planning Committee Chairmen (5)
- Rights of Way Committee Chairman
- Licencing Committee Chairman
- Regulatory & Audit Committee Chairman
- Pensions Fund Committee Chairman
- Senior Appointments and Standards Committee Chairman
- Community Board Chairmen (19)

Subject to proportionality rules, all councillors would be eligible for appointment to these positions, as well as serving on local Community Boards and external bodies on behalf of the council.

Cabinet

A Cabinet of ten members is envisaged for the first term of the new council. This is larger than would be required for 'steady state' but would provide the additional capacity required for the successful implementation of a major change programme. The new council could consider reducing this number in its second term.

Political portfolios should be designed to provide a focus on the key challenges and opportunities faced by the new council, and to deliver the benefits of integrated services. It will be for the new council to design these portfolios, but they will need to include combinations of the following areas of responsibility:

- Adults Services
- Health
- Housing Services
- Children & Young People's services
- Highways & Transportation
- Economic Development, Skills
- Growth Strategy — Planning, Housing and Transport
- Planning
- Property
- Waste
- Communities & Local Partnerships
- Leisure
- Culture
- Environment & Flooding
- Resources
- Customer Service
- Commercialisation
- Business Transformation

Scrutiny

A new Buckinghamshire Council's scrutiny system would be set up according to the four national overarching principles for good scrutiny:

- Provides critical friend challenge to executive policy and decision makers
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public
- Carried out by independent minded councillors
- Drives improvement

A new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to carry out more robust scrutiny on behalf of local residents of issues rather than the artificial current constraints of looking at council services of five separate bodies in isolation.

Scrutiny could be carried out at two levels - strategically and locally – by non-executive councillors on a cross-party basis. Strategically the following committees are envisaged:

- Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee – This Committee would have a key role in helping to join-up the work of each committee through an oversight role, including scrutinising the council's draft budget, its commercial activities, and considering call-ins.
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee
- Transport, Economy, Environment & Housing Committee
- Communities, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Committee

Locally scrutiny could take place through the proposed Community Boards.

Civic and Ceremonial Role

The civic and ceremonial heritage of Buckinghamshire dates back to 914 and the offices of the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff have long been valued county-wide. Whilst Milton Keynes is now a separate administrative area, Milton Keynes Council has continued to support the ceremonial structures of Buckinghamshire. The Clerk to the Lord Lieutenancy has traditionally been hosted by the county council and it is proposed that a new Buckinghamshire Council would provide that office in the future.

Role Profiles

Full details of Member roles for all committee positions will be set out in the council's new constitution. Role profiles are included here for:

- All Councillors
- Council Leader
- Cabinet Members (Executive)
- Scrutiny Members

All Councillors

All councillors will have the following roles to play:

Community Leadership

- Championing their division
- Dealing with casework
- Representing the community within the council and other agencies
- Campaigning on local issues
- Keep in touch with constituents
- Engaging with all groups within their respective electoral area

Decision maker and influencer

- Making well informed decisions at council meetings and other committees
- Working with partners and outside bodies as a representative of the council
- Act as a Corporate Parent for children and young people in the care of the local authority
- Liaising with town and parish councils
- Being an active member of the Community Board, including attending all meetings. This role may involve leading an action group to solve a local issue, leading community meetings with residents and facilitating engagement with the council and partners. The exact responsibilities of the role will be locally determined and agreed by each Community Board.

Leader

Leadership

- Provide an overall cohesive, corporate and strategic leadership and direction for the council
- Lead and chair the Cabinet and ensure its overall effectiveness
- Lead in developing the council's partnerships with other organisations
- Work with portfolio holders to ensure effective delivery of services within their portfolios against the agreed policies of the council, and to ensure the delivery of the Cabinet's responsibilities
- Ensure effective communication and explanation of all Cabinet's decisions and recommendations to council and the public
- Ensure that the Cabinet manages the business of the council within the financial limits set by the council
- Ensure Cabinet members abide by the council's code of conduct

Overall responsibility

- Ensure that cabinet exercises responsibility for the prudent management of the council's budget
- Have overall responsibility for the political management of the authority and the delivery of agreed council priorities, strategies and policies

Working with partners

- Be the main representative of the council, with others as appropriate, in dealing with the community, business, voluntary sector and other local and national organisations
- Ensure effective liaison with other political groups within the council

Cabinet Member (Executive)

The Cabinet is responsible for all local authority functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the council, provided the decisions made are within the council's agreed policy and budget framework.

- Participate effectively as a Cabinet Member taking joint responsibility for all actions and be collectively accountable.
- Build good relationships, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, with appropriate officers and work with them in developing policy
- Ensure that appropriate, viable, commercial opportunities within the portfolio area are identified and nurtured, in liaison with the Cabinet Member with overview responsibility for commercialisation
- To take a proactive approach to the early engagement of overview and scrutiny committees to help in policy development
- Ensure that a balanced approach is taken to risk - seek to ensure that risks are well balanced and are managed rather than always minimised, especially in relation to entrepreneurial activities of the council.
- Give political direction to officers working within the portfolio
- Ensure up to date knowledge of related developments and policies at national, regional and local level
- Enhance the council's reputation through taking the national stage where possible and participating in regional and national networks

- Have an overview of performance management, efficiency and effectiveness of the portfolio

- Represent Cabinet by attending scrutiny committees as requested in connection with any issues associated with the portfolio and consider scrutiny reports as required.

- Make executive decisions within the portfolio

- Act as a strong, competent and persuasive figure to represent the portfolio and a figurehead in meetings with stakeholders

- Be prepared to take part in learning and development opportunities to ensure that the role is undertaken as effectively as possible

- Represent the council as a spokesperson with the Media and feedback to Cabinet any issues of relevance and importance.

Scrutiny Member

The Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees carry out the statutory scrutiny role of the council in holding decision-makers to account (Cabinet and partners) and making recommendations to improve outcomes for residents through undertaking Scrutiny Inquiries.

All councillors on a Select Committee have the following roles:

- Reviewing and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken by the Cabinet. They may also be involved in policy development prior to decisions being taken by the Cabinet. The committees may make reports and recommendations to full Council and Cabinet and any relevant partner in connection with council functions.

- Assist with the development of an effective work programme

- Engage with all stages of the scrutiny process

- Develop a constructive relationship with Cabinet, officers, and partners in relation to the remit of the respective committee to assist the effective improvement process

- Be responsible for the outputs and outcomes of scrutiny, including monitoring the implementation of scrutiny recommendations

- Seek to engage with the public to enable the public voice to be heard of public concern

- Seek to gather, receive and analysis evidence from a wide-range of sources so that the committee can make evidence-based impartial recommendations.

- Analyse information presented to the committee

- Make recommendations based on the committee's deliberations

Appendix 4

Appendix 4

Planning Framework

Planning Framework

District councils are responsible for delivering Local Plans which set out the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change, including an annual trajectory of the number of new homes planned in the period. In 2015, the Government announced that councils must create and deliver local plans by 2017 to help reach the government's ambition of delivering 1 million homes by 2020 – or that Ministers would intervene to ensure that plans are produced for them. The expectation is that plans will be reviewed every five years. The timetable for adoption of local plans in Buckinghamshire is currently as follows:

	Adoption due	Plan period
AVDC	Summer 2017	2013-2033
Wycombe	End 2017	2013-2033
Chiltern & South Bucks	June 2018	2014-2036

It is anticipated that Buckinghamshire Council will, in due course, wish to consider the benefits of moving towards a single local development and infrastructure plan for Buckinghamshire, succeeding the three local plans. A single plan would need to contain sufficient detail to enable decisions at the local level be taken in a way that avoids challenge, with standard advice provided to deal with the detail of individual (smaller scale) planning applications.

The first review of the local plans (2022/2023) could be an appropriate point for the new council to begin those discussions. Until that point, the new council should continue to operate with the current local plans.

It is envisaged that a new council would continue to encourage the development of **Neighbourhood Plans**, in accordance with the local plans. Currently, 29 communities in Buckinghamshire are at various stages of developing neighbourhood plans and three are awaiting designation as a neighbourhood plan area. In addition to this, ten have been approved and adopted, with one further plan being held by a referendum awaiting final decision. These plans, totalling 43 across the county, provide a powerful way of enabling communities to shape a shared vision for their neighbourhood and direct the right types of development for their community, consistent with the strategic needs of the wider area.

Appendix 4

Appendix 4

Appendix 5

Engagement

The engagement of residents, communities and stakeholder groups has been critical to understanding how best to shape the future of local government in Buckinghamshire. An extensive programme of insight and engagement has therefore been carried out to inform the development of this business case.

Programme of Engagement

Throughout June, July and August 2016, Buckinghamshire County Council, in partnership with Buckinghamshire Business First, Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils, (MKBALC), Community Impact Bucks and Ipsos MORI held a series of engagement sessions, conducted 1,000 telephone interviews and ran an online survey.

The engagement sessions each followed a similar format, recruited by open invite and posed questions to understand priorities and needs, explore perceptions and represent the voice of different stakeholder group, in town and parish councillors and clerks, service users, businesses, suppliers, and voluntary and community sector organisations. The sessions were facilitated by external organisations, rather than the county council, in order to provide an independent voice:

Audience	Host	Date
Town/Parish Councillors	MKBALC	07/06/16 10/06/16
Town and Parish Clerks	MKBALC	08/06/16 09/06/16
Local Businesses	Buckinghamshire Business First	20/07/16
Voluntary Community Sector	Community Impact Bucks	25/07/16 27/07/16
Residents	Ipsos Mori	02/08/16 04/08/16 09/08/16

The telephone interviews undertaken by MORI, involved a randomized sample of 1,000 Buckinghamshire residents.

Findings

A summary of findings can be found below. A separate report is available with the detailed record of the research.

Sessions identified that participant's prior knowledge of the, so called, 'Unitary debate' was relatively low, but, by the end of each session, participant understanding was recorded to have increased, on average, by 20%.

Knowledge of where responsibilities lie for the delivery of each service provided, across the three tier council structure was varied. Overall, participants assigned 73% of responsibilities correctly. This was made up of 26% correct assignments to town and parishes, 61% to districts and 89% to county. This suggests that there could be better clarity of accountability at all levels.

To understand more about the perceptions held by participants about their identity to Buckinghamshire, as it currently stands, questions were posed around the effect that modernising local government might have on its history, geography and brand. This topic was met with an almost unanimous response from all stakeholder groups; that Buckinghamshire would remain Buckinghamshire regardless of the future shape that local government takes and that there is little significance placed on or owned towards identity and so little consequence of it changing.

Despite the general acknowledgment of the positive activity carried out by councils for the delivery of public services, there was an agreement that more could be done to improve them. For example, customer experience, efficiency of delivery, collaboration and shared learning between councils, streamlining of decision making and delivering value for money. There was also a strong focus from participants on the importance for the future model of local government to be responsive to local needs and where appropriate, deliver services locally.

The focus of the sessions was to understand particpants' design principles for the future shape of local government and so no direct questions were asked about specific solutions. However, it was clear that particpants were formulating their own strong views…

> "Let's go back to the work that BBF carried out some years ago. The case has in fact become much stronger for a whole of Bucks unitary authority...let's do it!" Local Business
>
> "There are mixed views about the unitary proposal…It is hard to make the archaeological voice heard at district level, it could be harder in a unitary authority. Whilst economies in delivery of civic services are important, this must not be at the expense of functions that play a small but supporting role in the cultural health of the community". Voluntary Community Sector
>
> "Aylesbury workshop participants wanted to come to a collective agreement of their suggested model for streamlining: All Aylesbury VCS participants opted for a single county-wide unitary authority with varying degrees of devolved budgets to a more local level." Community Impact Bucks

Regardless of its shape, the proposal to modernise local government was seen as an opportunity by all. Of course, each model would come with its challenges but it was globally seen as fundamental to ensuring the best for the local community, its economy and the future of local government.

Ipsos Mori Local government re-organisation: research report for Buckinghamshire County Council - September 2016

Resident Criteria

Retaining the quality of services. According to the survey, in thinking about future service delivery two in five residents stress the importance of 'providing high quality services' (40%) and 'improving the overall quality of service' (37%). In fact, group participants reflected further that potential re-organisation offers an opportunity to not just make savings and improve efficiency, but also improve service quality.

Making sure services are easy to access. The survey demonstrates how similar proportions (44%) also think 'ensuring that public services are easy to use and simple to access' is also key. This links to improving customer service as well as ensuring that any move to unitary status does not compromise residents' ability to be able to physically access services locally in person if they need to; a recurring theme coming out of the groups.

Giving residents a say about services and acting on their concerns. Over two in five residents (44%) to the survey think that 'giving people a say in the decisions that affect local services' is the most important thing for local councils to consider in thinking about a unitary model - the top priority of those asked about. 'Acting on the concern of local residents' was also mentioned by 43% as being important for future service delivery. These issues came through strongly from the group discussions too. Group participants were concerned about the potential risk to local responsiveness and the ability of any new council model to address local need as a result of future re-organisation at a larger-scale.

Ensuring transparency and accountability. Two in five residents (42%) to the survey also felt that 'being accountable to local people' was important. Group participants emphasised that residents should know how money is being spent and how decisions about future services and structures are made (including greater visibility of councillors here).

Appendix 6

Implementation Plan

ID	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
1	Planning Phase	342.25 days	01 Jan '17	31 Mar '18
2	Transition Phase	548 days	01 Apr '18	31 Mar '20
3	Transformation Phase	571.38 days	01 Apr '20	01 May '22
4	Programme Management	1460.63 days	01 Jan '17	01 May '22
5	DCLG Decision	0 days	01 Jan '17	01 Jan '17
6	Implementation Executive in Place	0 days	01 Jan '17	01 Jan '17
7	Implementation Executive Meetings	1438.25 days	01 Jan '17	01 Apr '22
72	Programme Board in Place	0 days	01 Jan '17	01 Jan '17
73	Programme Director Appointed	0 days	01 Mar '17	01 Mar '17
74	Implementation Plan Approved	0 days	30 Apr '17	30 Apr '17
75	Implementation Plan Monthly Reporting - 5 Councils	1370.13 days	01 Apr '17	01 Apr '22
137	Governance	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22
138	Recruitment Process for CEO and S151 Officer	182.5 days	01 Jan '17	31 Aug '17
139	New CEO and S151 Officer Appointed	0 days	01 Sep '17	01 Sep '17
140	Design Constitution for Unitary Authority	274 days	01 May '18	30 Apr '19
141	Approve Constitution for Unitary Authority	0 days	01 May '19	01 May '19
142	Operating Framework Development	274 days	01 May '18	30 Apr '19
143	Plan New Council Structure	274 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '18
144	Agree New Council Structure	115.63 days	01 May '18	30 Sep '18
145	Embed New Council Structure	823.25 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '22
146	Democracy	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22
147	County Council Elections	0 days	01 May '17	01 May '17
148	Boundary Commission Review	182.63 days	01 Jul '17	01 Mar '18
149	Democracy Commission	299 days	01 May '17	01 Jun '18
150	Community Area Boards Planning and Pilots	364.25 days	01 Jan '18	30 Apr '19
151	Community Area Boards Established	0 days	01 May '19	01 May '19
152	Elections for Unitary Authority	0 days	01 May '19	01 May '19
153	Legacy Councils Dissolved	24 days	01 May '19	31 May '19
154	HR	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22
155	T&C, Job Summary, Roles and Responsibility Review	319 days	01 Jan '17	01 Mar '18
156	Ongoing Support with Structuring of Service Areas for New Authority	1142.5 days	01 Mar '18	30 Apr '22
157	HR Shared Service in Operation Across Current Authorities	319.25 days	01 Mar '18	30 Apr '19
158	Harmonisation of People, Policies and Processes	549 days	01 May '18	30 Apr '20
159	Pay Harmonisation	275 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '20
160	Service Delivery and Customer Experience	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22
161	Develop Access Strategy - Customer Model	205.88 days	01 Apr '17	01 Jan '18
162	Initial Service, Systems and Process Reviews	275 days	01 May '17	01 May '18
163	Customer Insight Gathering	274 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '18
164	Developing Community Hubs	548 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '19
165	Customer Data Migration	548 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '19
166	Building Digital Service Channels	364.25 days	01 Jan '18	30 Apr '19
167	Continuous Operational Service Reviews	640.63 days	01 Jan '19	02 May '21
168	Services Aligning Under New Structure	549 days	01 May '18	30 Apr '20

Project: Unitary Implementation P
Date: 15 Sep '16

Legend: Task, Split, Milestone, Project Summary, External Tasks, External Milestone, Inactive Task, Inactive Milestone, Inactive Summary, Manual Task, Duration-only, Manual Summary Rollup, Manual Summary, Start-only, Finish-only, Deadline, Progress

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Appendix 4

ID	Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
169		Services Operating under Unitary Authority	823.25 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '22
170		Digital Services for New Unitary Deployed	0 days	01 May '19	01 May '19
171		New Telephone Number Available to Residents	0 days	01 May '19	01 May '19
172		Systems	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22
173		System Review	99.38 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '17
174		Data Capturing	116.5 days	01 May '17	30 Sep '17
175		Data Migration	432.5 days	01 Oct '17	30 Apr '19
176		System Alignment	432.5 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '22
177		Ongoing Data Maintenance	823.25 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '22
178		Property	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22
179		Commission Asset Review	296.13 days	01 Apr '17	01 May '18
180		Implement Short Term Asset Strategy	548 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '19
181		Implement Long Term Asset Strategy	823.25 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '22
182		Business and Supply Chain	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22
183		Develop Shared Business and Supply Chain Team	115.38 days	01 Apr '17	01 Sep '17
184		Due Diligence for Tender Activity and Current Spend	115.38 days	01 Apr '17	01 Sep '17
185		Opportunity Analysis (Long List) and Implementation Plan	69.25 days	01 Sep '17	01 Dec '17
186		Re-design Procurement	160.75 days	01 Mar '18	01 Oct '18
187		Contract Novation Deadline	0 days	30 Apr '19	30 Apr '19
188		Culture Change, OD and Internal Communications	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22
189		Business Case Approval Announcement	0 days	01 Jan '17	01 Jan '17
190		Develop Internal Comms Plan	5 days	01 Jan '17	06 Jan '17
191		Develop and Deliver a Staff Engagement Plan (Employee Reps, Tra	1371.25 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '22
192		Organisational Design Principles Agreed and Implemented	455.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '19
193		Learning and Development Plan for Future Authority	455.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '19
194		Design and Agree Performance and Reward Frameworks	451.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '19
195		Agreeing New Organisational Values and Behaviours	451.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '19
196		Agreed Approach to Leadership and Management Throughout the	730.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '20
197		External Comms	1187.5 days	01 Jan '17	01 May '21
198		Business Case Approval Announcement	0 days	01 Jan '17	01 Jan '17
199		Develop and Deliver External Comms Plan	690.25 days	01 Jan '17	01 Apr '20
200		Develop Engagement Plan	690.25 days	01 Jan '17	01 Apr '20
201		Branding	632 days	05 Jan '17	30 Apr '19
202		Finance	1460.63 days	01 Jan '17	01 May '22
203		Monitoring Improvements and Delivery of Savings	1460.63 days	01 Jan '17	01 May '22
204		Budget Planning	228.75 days	01 May '18	28 Feb '19
205		Budget Set for New Authority	0 days	01 Mar '19	01 Mar '19
206		Coding Structuring	252.13 days	01 May '18	31 Mar '19
207		Statement of Accounts for Old Councils	156.75 days	01 Dec '16	30 Jun '19

Legend:

Task | Project Summary | Inactive Milestone | Manual Summary Rollup
Split | External Tasks | Inactive Summary | Manual Summary
Milestone | External Milestone | Manual Task | Start-only
Summary | Inactive Task | Duration-only | Finish-only
| | | Deadline
| | | Progress

Project: Unitary Implementation P
Date: 15 Sep 16

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Stakeholder Engagement

The district councils' stakeholder engagement work for modernising local government in Bucks has revealed that 41% of stakeholders who responded favour a two-unitary model, whilst 32% favour a three-unitary model and only 27% would prefer a single unitary authority for the county.

In total the districts received feedback from 146 key stakeholders including 79 town and parish councils, 25 local businesses and business groups, 37 voluntary groups and 5 other public sector organisations. Top amongst stakeholder concerns were securing the best outcome for the people of Bucks and having enough money to deliver services now and in the future.

On balance, which delivery model does your organisation think should be explored further?

2/3 Unitary Model, 73%

Single Unitary Model, 27%
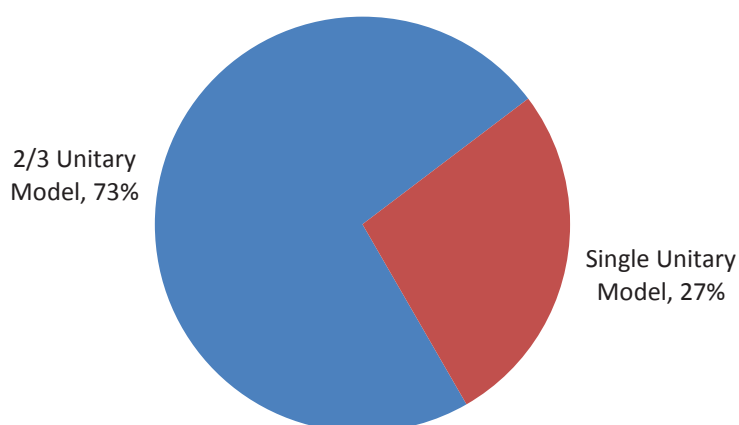
How have you learned about our report on Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire? Please tick all that apply

15.8%
30.8%
22.6%
15.8%
15.1%

- Individual discussion/ meeting
- Listened to a presentation
- Read the summary brochure
- Read the full report
- Other (please specify)
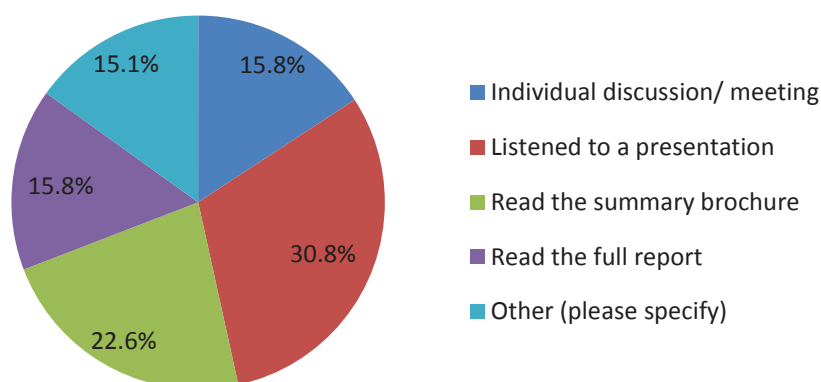
Thinking about our proposed vision for Buckinghamshire, how important are the following principles for delivering sustainable public services in the county?

Legend: ■ Not important ■ Slightly important ■ Important ■ Very important
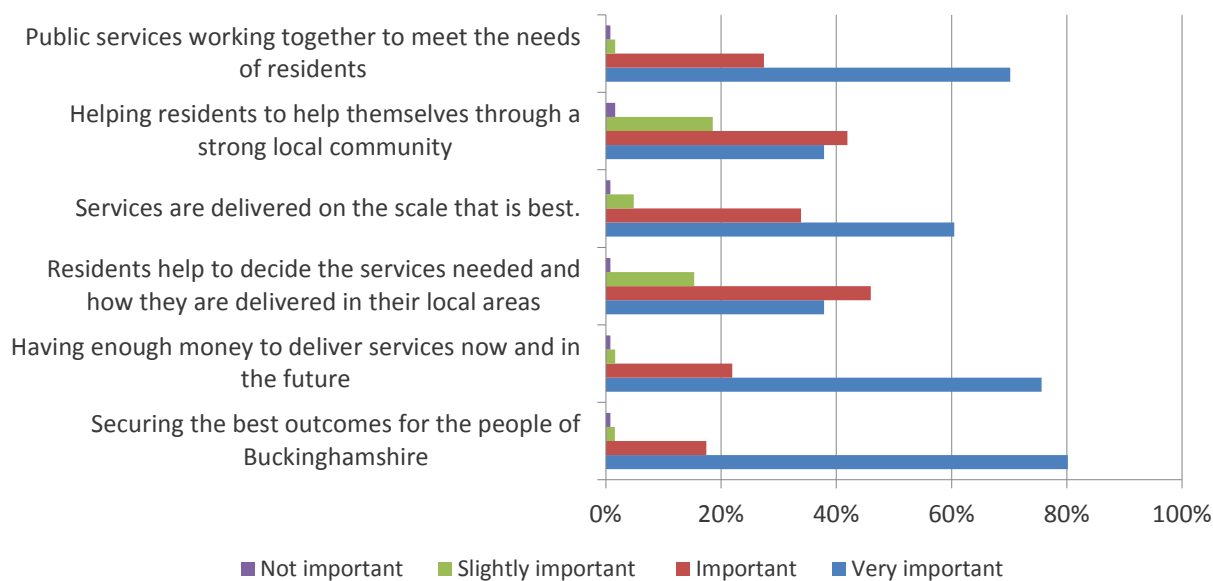
Which principle is the most important to your organisation? Please select only one option

- Public services working together to meet the needs of residents 20%
- Helping residents to help themselves through a strong local community 5%
- Services are delivered on the scale that is best 14%
- Residents help to decide the services needed and how they are delivered in their local areas 5%
- Securing the best outcomes for the people of Buckinghamshire 28%
- Having enough money to deliver services now and in the future 28%

Thinking about the context of the debate about reforming the current structure of local government in Buckinghamshire, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following observations made in our report?

Communities in Buckinghamshire are not all the same and local partners and organisations they work with will be different

Planning council services for the future needs to take into account population growth, housing need and reduced money from government

Structural change takes time and money which is better spent on improving services and challenging spend

The continued growth in high-cost services needs to be checked before a change of structure or else any savings made will be eaten up by growth

■ Strongly disagree/ disagree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Strongly Agree/ Agree