



WYCOMBE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe
Bucks HP11 1BB

Special Council

Date: 16 January 2017
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber
District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, Bucks

You are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting of the Council to be held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe on 16 January 2017 at 6.30 pm to consider the business set out in the Agenda below.

Ms K Satterford
Chief Executive

Fire Alarm - In the event of the fire alarm sounding, please leave the building quickly and calmly by the nearest exit. Do not stop to collect personal belongings and do not use the lifts. Please congregate at the Assembly Point at the corner of Queen Victoria Road and the River Wye, and do not re-enter the building until told to do so by a member of staff.

Agenda

Item		Page
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any disclosure of disclosable pecuniary interests by Members relating to items on the agenda. If any member is uncertain as to whether an interest should be disclosed, he or she is asked if possible to contact the District Solicitor prior to the meeting. Members are reminded that if they are declaring an interest they should state the nature of that interest whether or not they are required to withdraw from the meeting.	
3	MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT	1 - 173

Agenda Item 3

MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ms K Wood, Leader of the Council

Wards Affected: All

Officer contact: Catherine Whitehead Ext:3980

Email:Catherine.whitehead@wycombe.gov.uk

PROPOSED DECISION

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 Decision

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.

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.

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 available here: <https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/pages/About-the-council/Modernising-local-government/Modernising-local-government.aspx> 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 Is available here: http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1314/mlg-in-bucks_final_low-res.pdf and the latest submission has been prepared by the District Councils **Appendix 3** (To follow). 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

Appendices 1 to 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposal for Modernising Local
Government in Buckinghamshire

January 2017



CHILTERN
District Council



SOUTH BUCKS
District Council



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.





***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 hard-stretched 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.



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



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.

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 two unitary solution for the whole of Buckinghamshire, the four districts believe that this should be to create two 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.

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The options under consideration are as follows:



OPTION 1

TWO UNITARY COUNCILS

Two unitary council 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

THREE UNITARY COUNCILS

A three unitary council 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).

Options criteria	Two-unitary model of local government	Three-unitary model of local government
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

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	Two-unitary model of local government £m	Three-unitary model of local government £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 three unitary solution could deliver savings of nearly £58m over five years to residents of Buckinghamshire. A two 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.



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

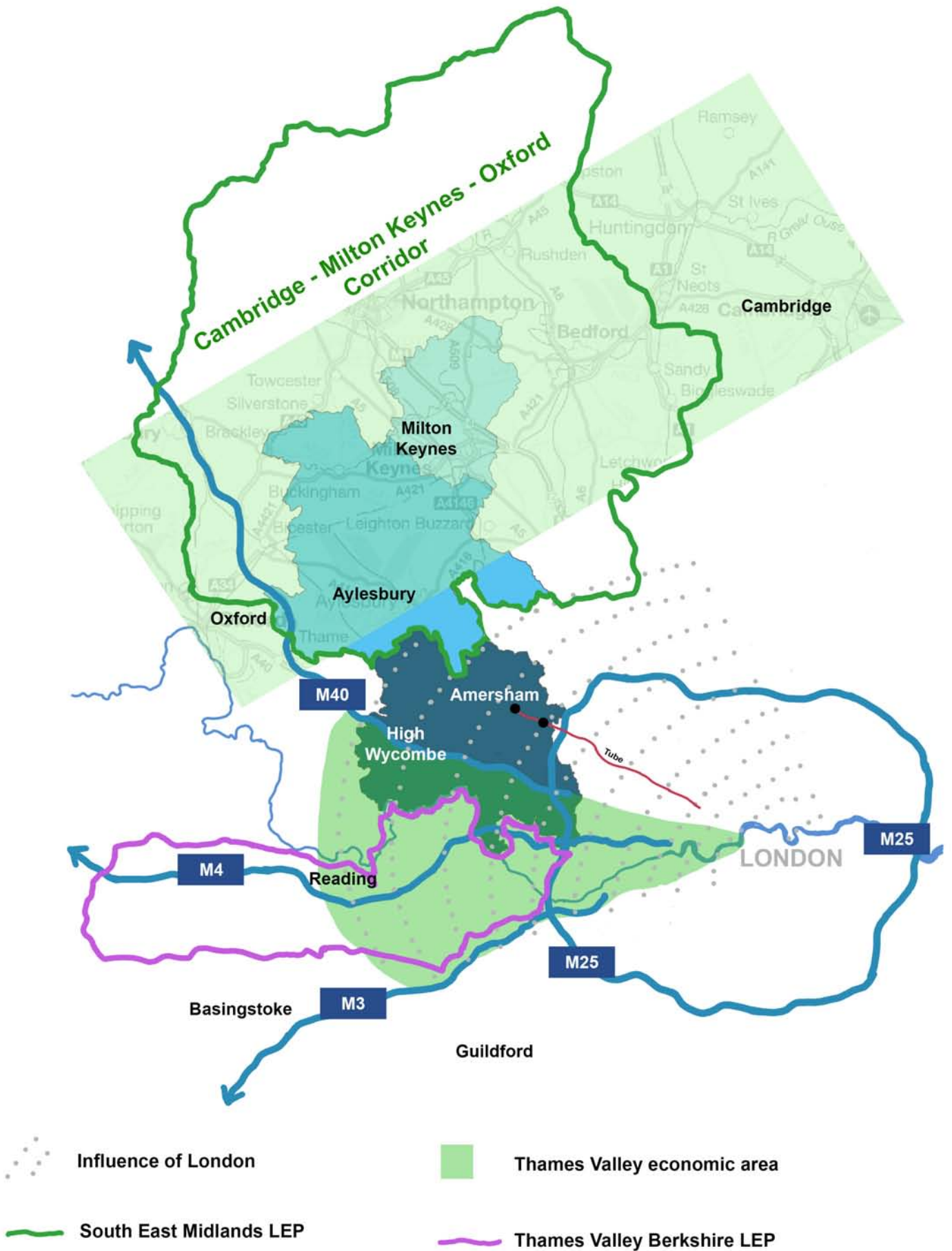
The north and south of Buckinghamshire are very different functional economic areas, with distinctive characteristics, challenges and opportunities. Two new unitaries in Buckinghamshire would allow each Council to pursue its own economic goals focused in just one direction.

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.



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.

MORE EFFICIENT

The financial analysis concludes that a three 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 three unitary model is capable of implementation on the same delivery timescale as the two 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 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



"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



[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



"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



"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





For more information visit:

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

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

South Bucks District Council
www.southbucks.gov.uk/mlgsb

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



Buckinghamshire District Councils

Strategic options case for modernising local government in Buckinghamshire

10 October 2016

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Responsibility statement

This Report and the work connected therewith are subject to the Terms and Conditions of the letter of appointment dated 20 July 2016 between Wycombe District Council, Aylesbury District Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council and Deloitte LLP. The Report is produced solely for the use of Wycombe District Council, Aylesbury District Council, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council for the purpose of preparing a strategic options case with independent analysis on the establishment of unitary local government in Buckinghamshire. Its contents should not be quoted or referred to in whole or in part without our prior written consent except as required by law. Deloitte LLP will accept no responsibility to any third party, as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose.

We take responsibility for this Report which is prepared on the basis of the limitations set out below. The matters raised in this Report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our work and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that may exist or all improvements that might be made. Any recommendations made for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact before they are implemented.

Other than as stated below, this document is confidential and prepared solely for your information and that of other beneficiaries of our advice listed in our engagement letter. Therefore you should not refer to or use our name or this document for any other purpose, disclose them or refer to them in any prospectus or other document, or make them available or communicate them to any other party. If this document contains details of an arrangement that could result in a tax or National Insurance saving, no such conditions of confidentiality apply to the details of that arrangement (for example, for the purpose of discussion with tax authorities). In any event, no other party is entitled to rely on our document for any purpose whatsoever and thus we accept no liability to any other party who is shown or gains access to this document.

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.

¹ Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015

² Identifying HMAs and FEMAs in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas, 2015

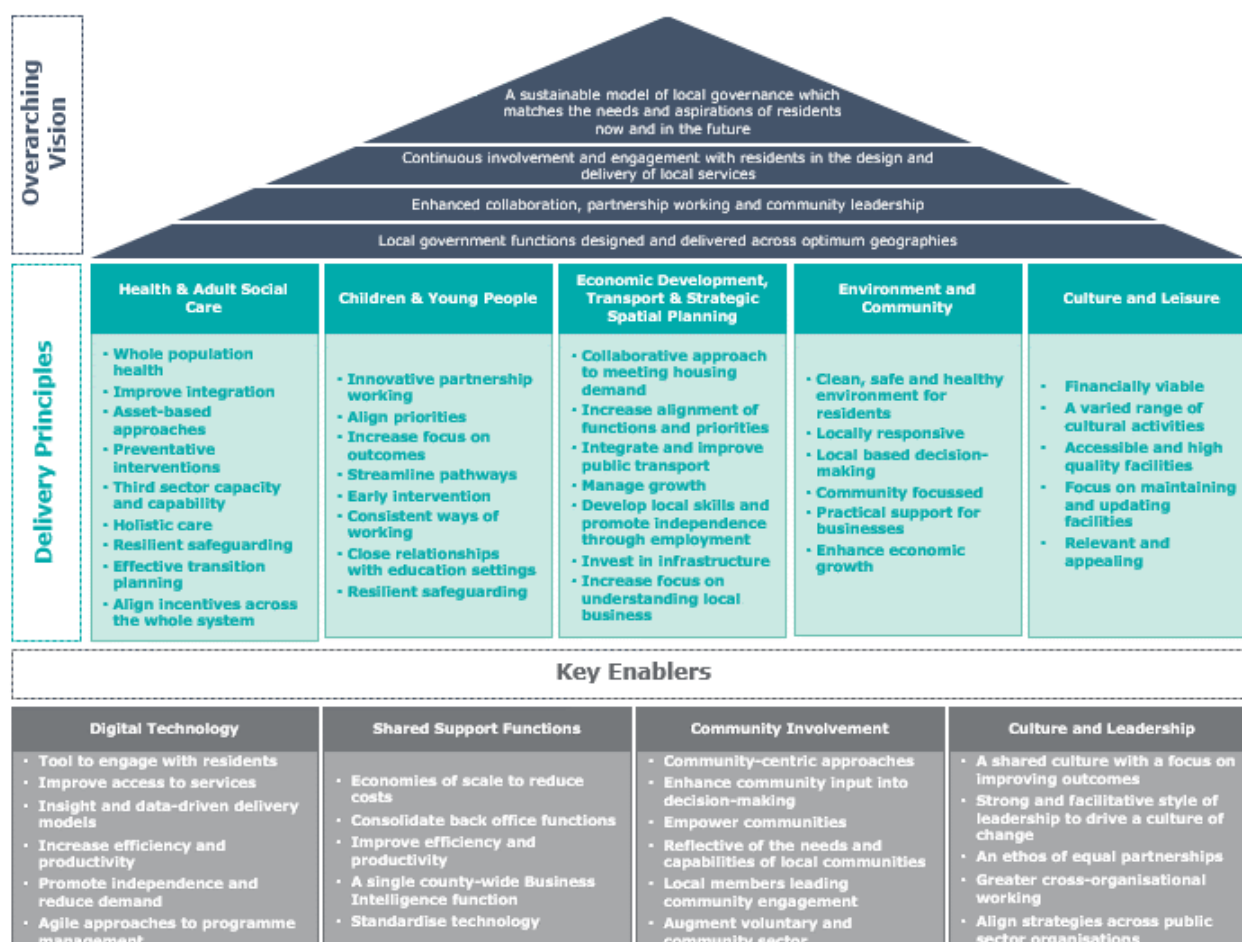
³ Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015

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.

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.

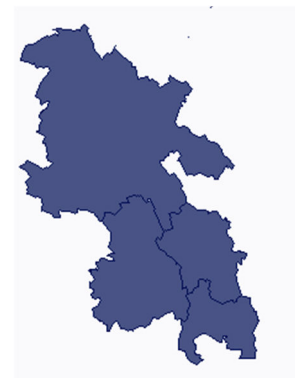
- **Business support**

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.



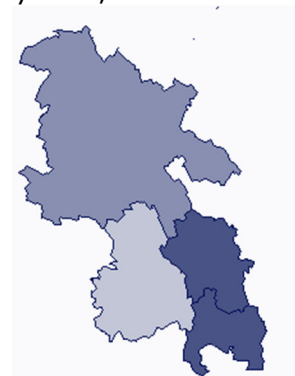
Option 2 – two unitary councils

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.

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.

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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

⁷ Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015

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.

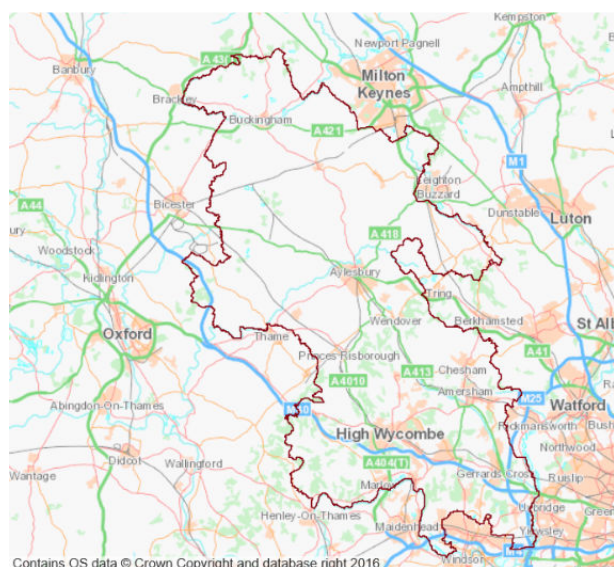
The following table provides information about the authorities within Buckinghamshire. The table outlines staff full-time equivalents (FTEs) at each Council. The revenue outturn total service expenditure figures have been taken from the 2015/16 Revenue Outturn (RO) statistics for the authorities. The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

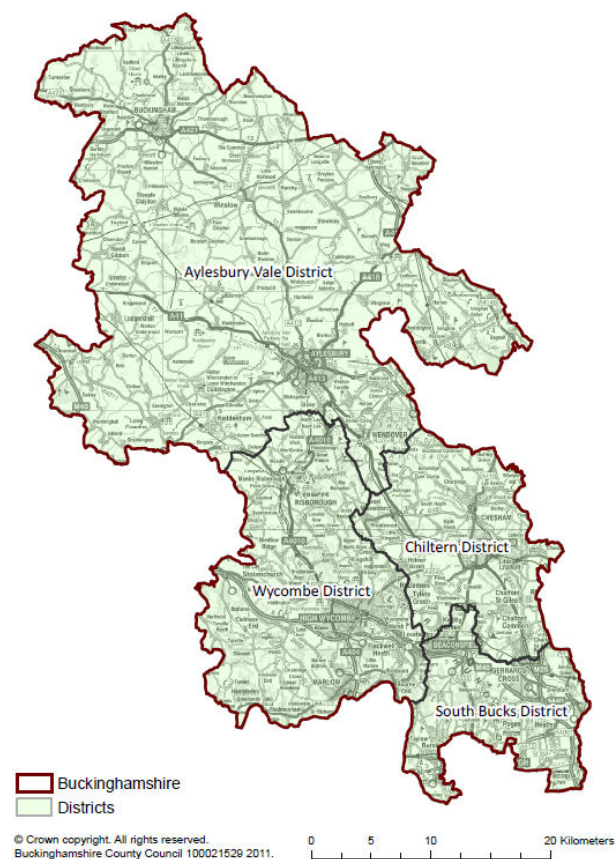
The following maps demonstrate the area covered by the County Council and the four district councils:

Buckinghamshire County Council



⁸ Office for National Statistics as at mid-2015

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:

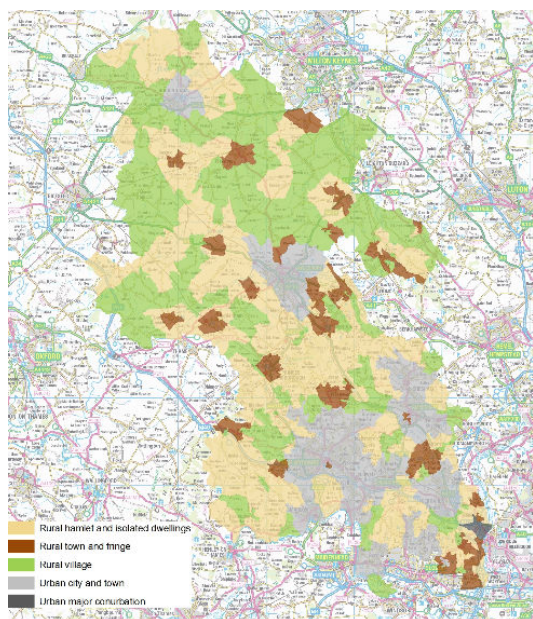
Thames Valley Police area



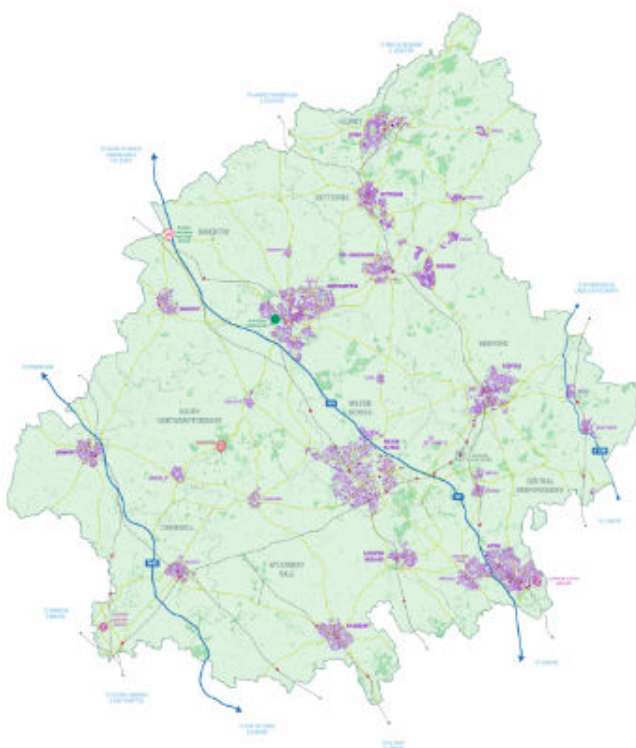
There are two Local Enterprise Partnerships in Buckinghamshire which provide direction and co-ordination for economic development programmes across the region. The BTVLEP

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

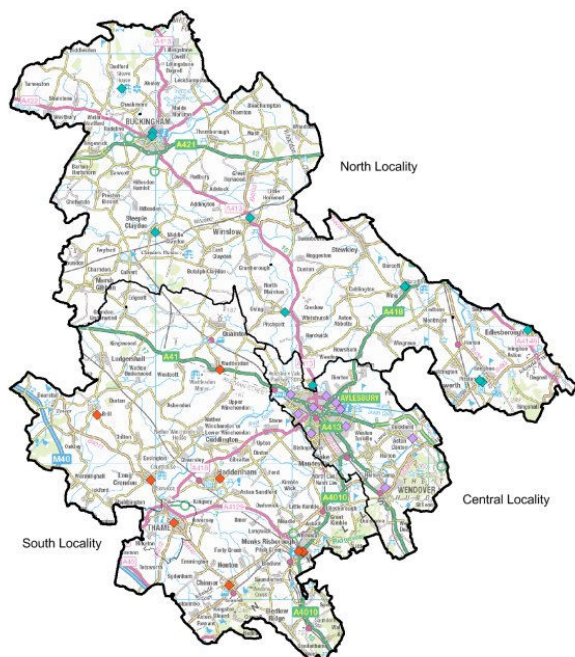


South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership



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 CCGG: 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.

⁹ Identifying HMAs and FEMAs in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas, 2015

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.

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

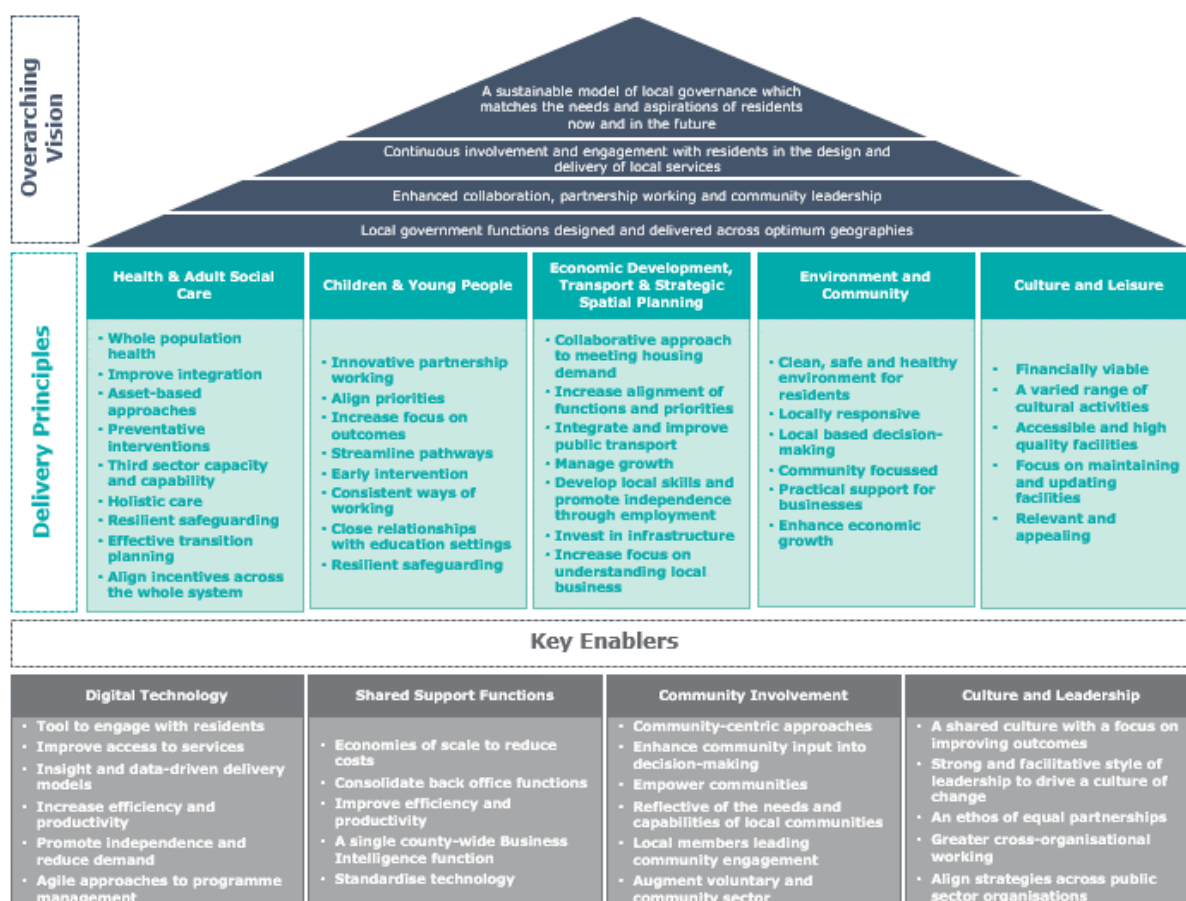
The relative performance of the authorities in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding area is illustrated in Appendix A. The data shows that there is significant variation across the authorities in relation to adult social care and children's services and there is room for improvement in a number of areas,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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

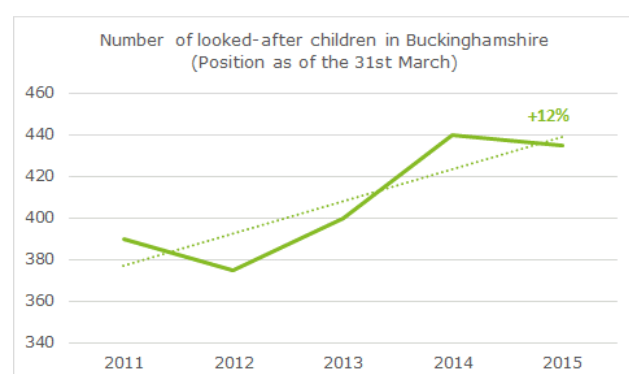
Therefore, demand for adult social care services is expected to rise in future years and transformational change is required in order to manage this demand within the existing financial envelope of local government. Further, the relative performance of local authorities in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding 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.

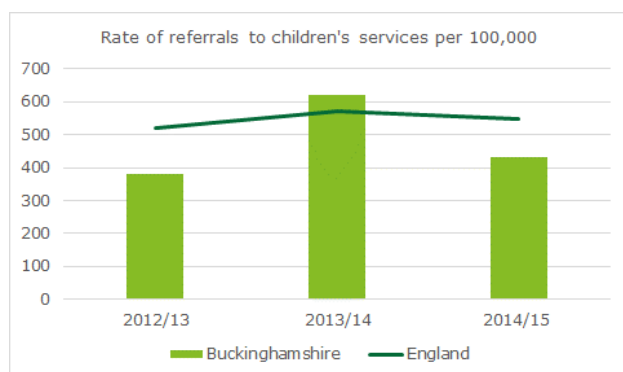


Further, the graph below indicates there was a 14 per cent increase in the rate of referrals to children's services between 2012/13 and 2014/15, compared to a five per cent increase nationally.³⁰

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



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:

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

- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

³⁴ Buckinghamshire's Local Transport Plan 4, March 2016 - 2036

³⁵ Buckinghamshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2012/13

³⁶ 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

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

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 payments⁴⁷
- 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

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 2014/15⁴⁹ and 2015/16⁵⁰ 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

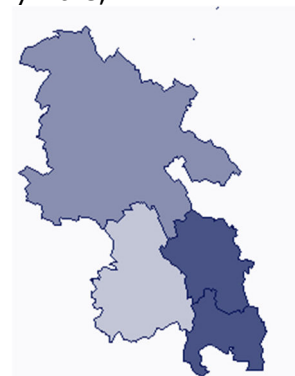


⁵² The new model of local government may wish to consider delivering the developing control function in line with UA boundaries to protect local interest

⁵³ The new model of local government may wish to consider delivering the developing control function in line with UA boundaries to protect local interest

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

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:

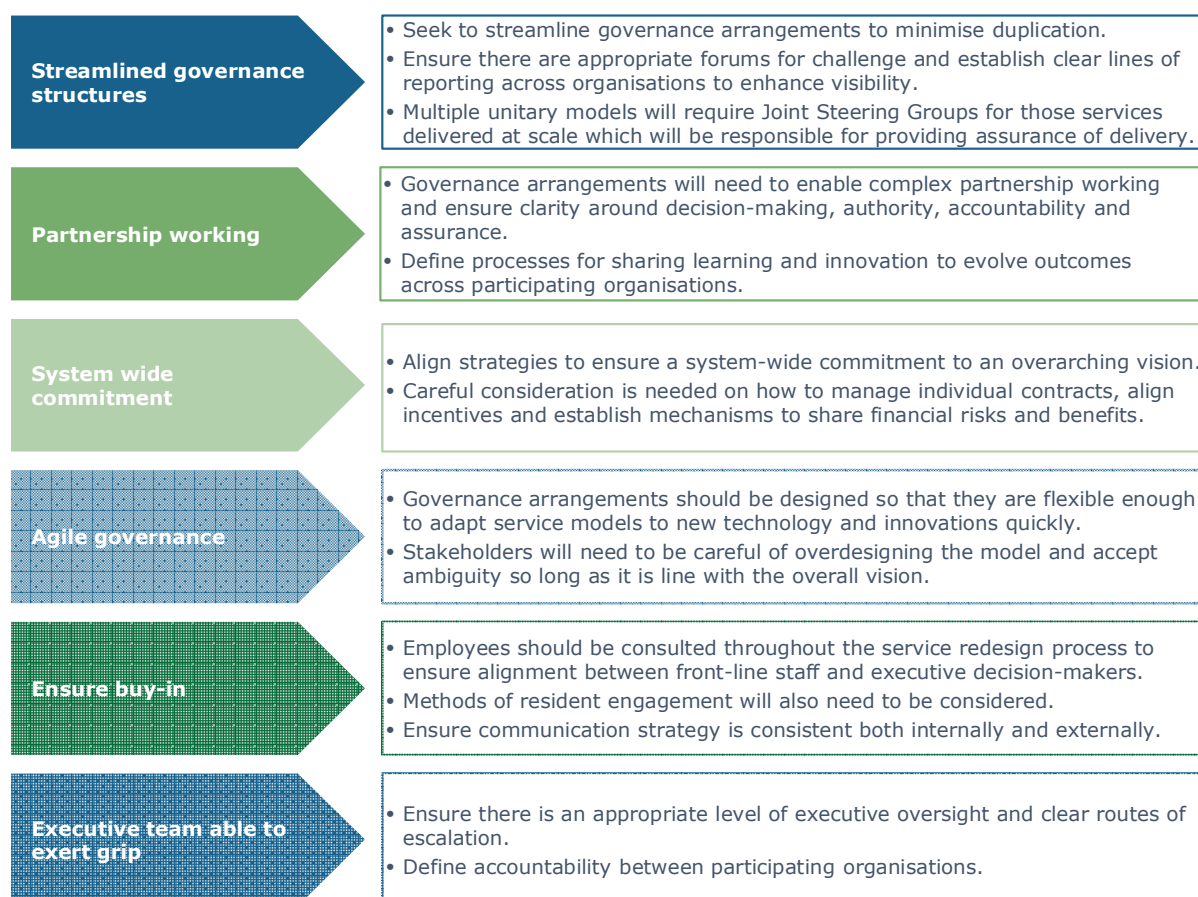
The government enforced a trust model on Slough in 2015 following an Ofsted report which found 'widespread and serious weaknesses'. The trust will focus solely on improving children's services and it is thought this model will lead to significant delivery improvements.

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.

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/>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This criterion considers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revenue position(s); ○ Transition costs; ○ Ability to meet the requirement of setting balanced budgets in the future; and ○ The use of available reserves on an equitable basis.
4. Capable of providing accountable and locally responsive leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (£1,448⁵⁹) 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

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 2016⁶¹.

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.

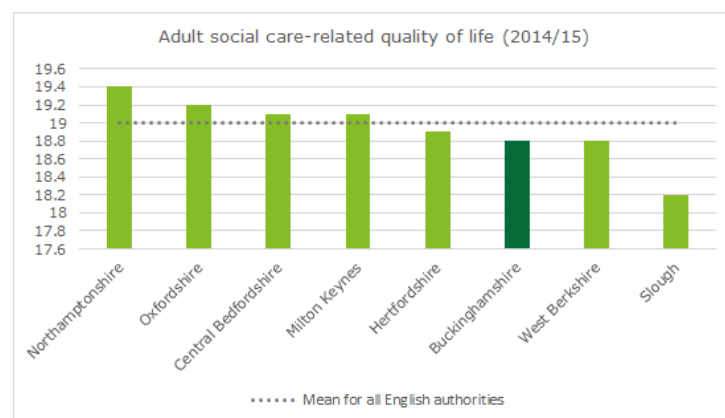
If a decision is made to implement a unitary model of local government, there will be a process of councillor rationalisation and alternative ward options will be explored as part of a boundary review. This will require extensive stakeholder engagement with existing parish and town councils. As part 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

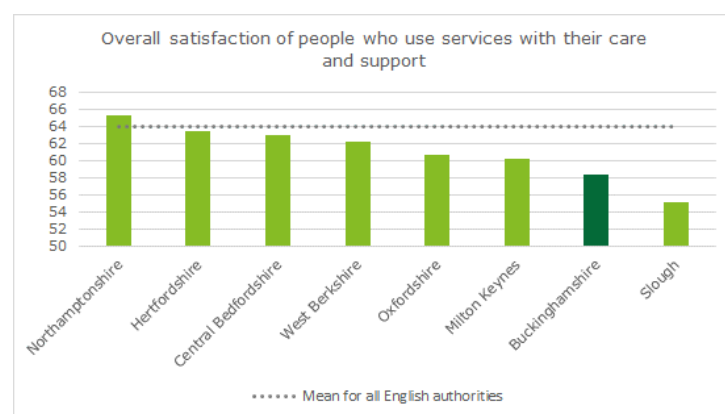
Social care related quality of life, 2014/15



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.

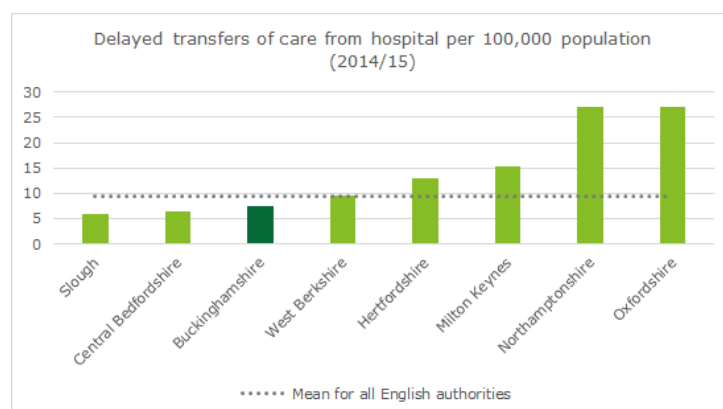
Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support, 2014/15



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.

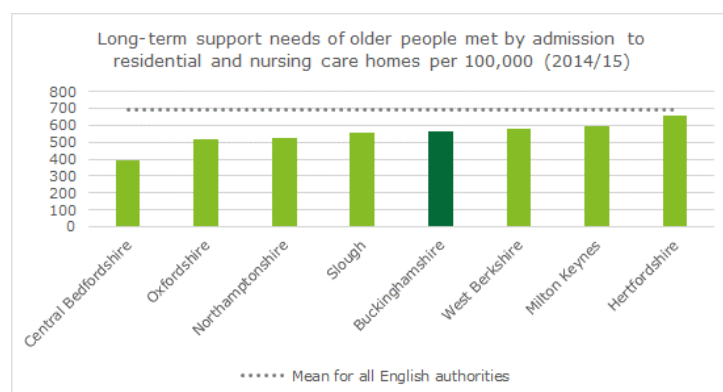
Delayed transfers of care from hospital, 2014/15



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.

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

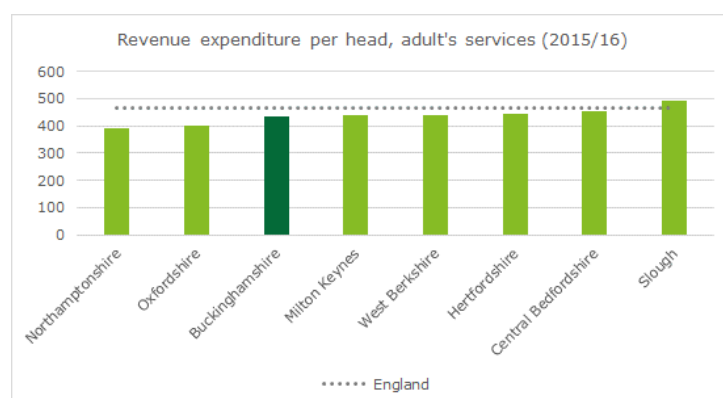
Long term support needs of older people met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, 2014/15



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.

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



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.

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.

Children's services

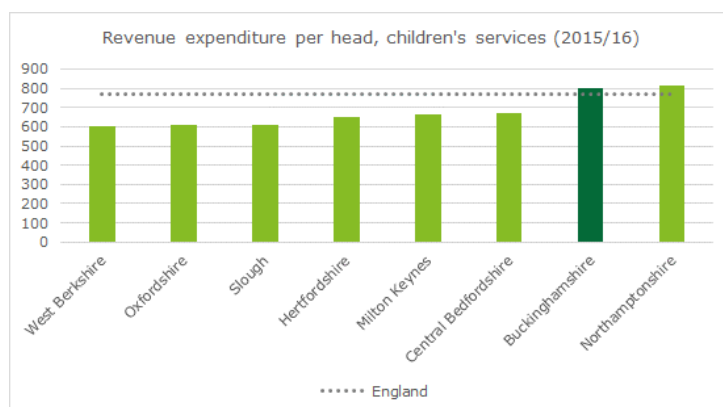
Ofsted inspections of children's social care, 2014 & 2015

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.

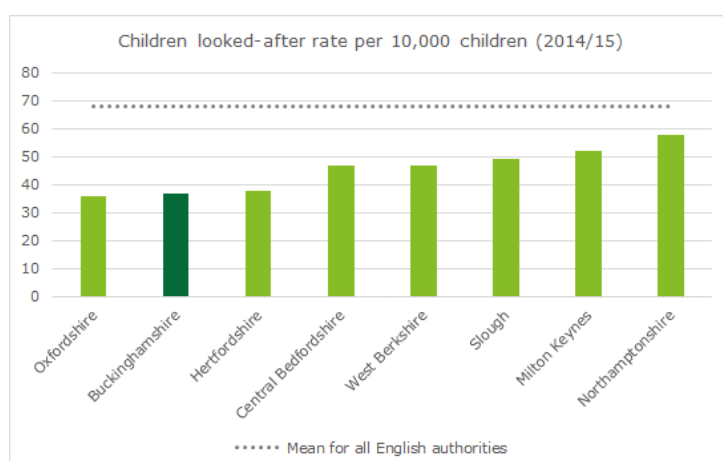
Revenue expenditure per head children's services, 2015/16



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.

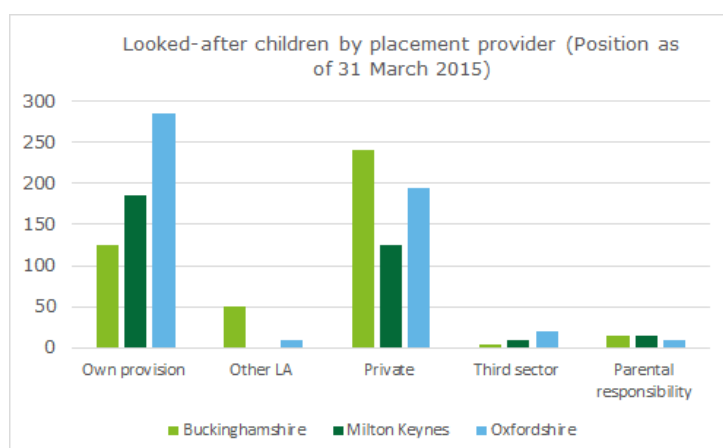
Children looked-after rate per 10,000 children aged under 18, 2014/15



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.

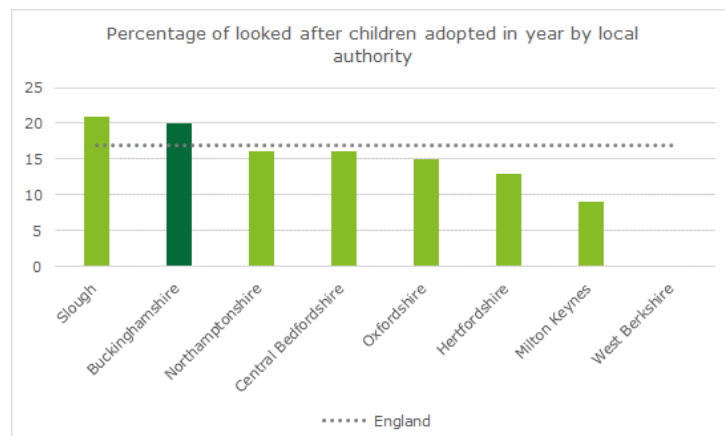
Looked-after children by placement provider, 2015



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.

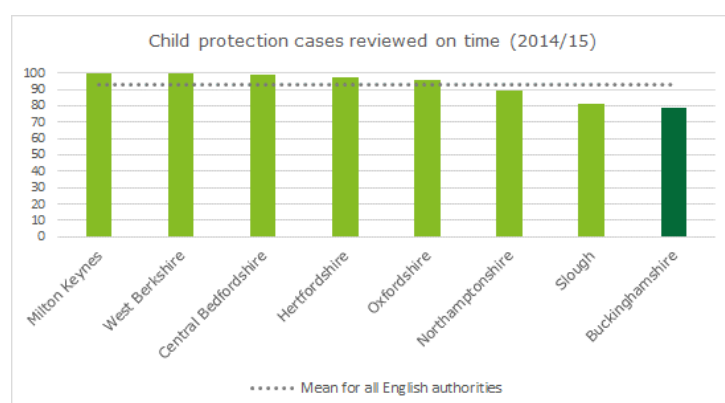
Percentage of looked-after children adopted in year, 2015



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.

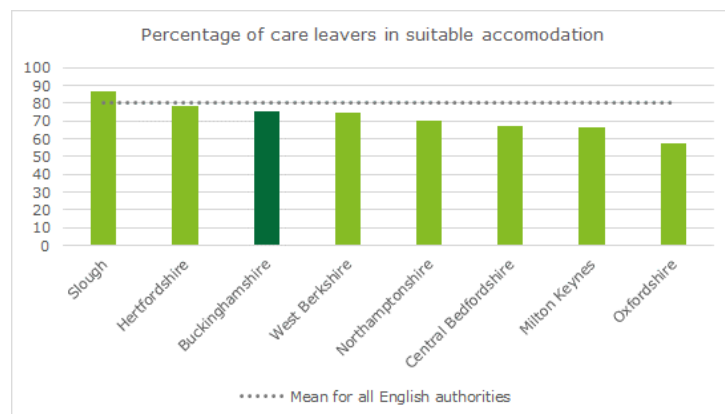
Child protection cases reviewed on time, 2014/15



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.

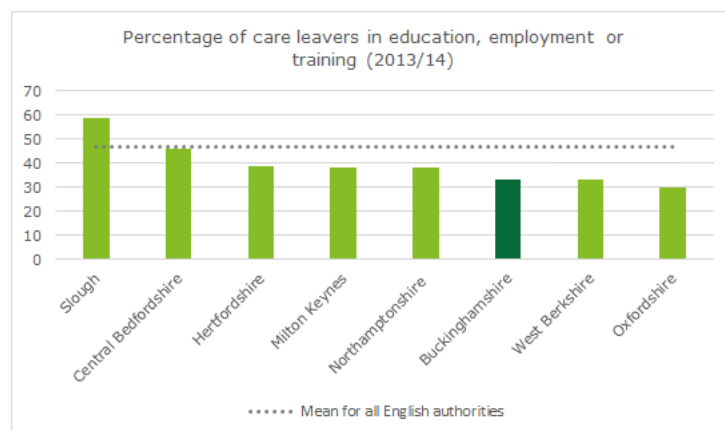
Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation, 2013/14



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



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 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.

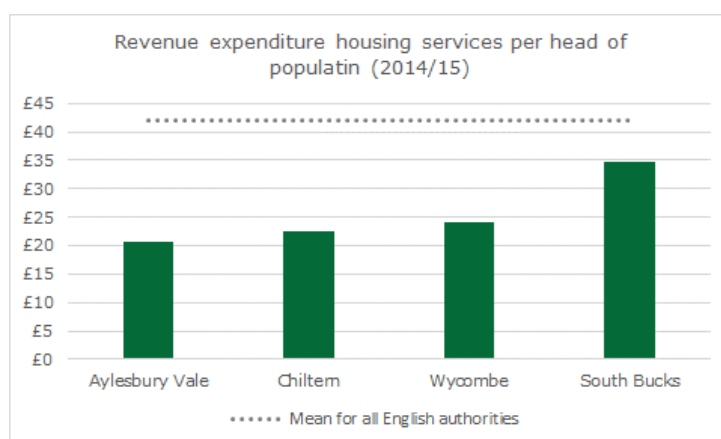
Outcomes for looked-after children

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

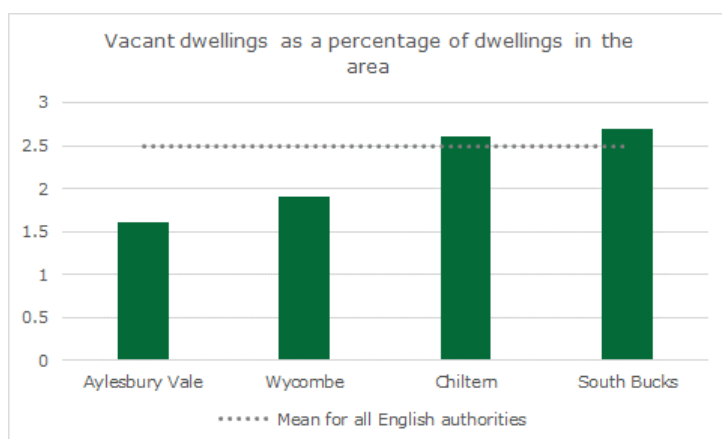
Total revenue expenditure on housing services (GRFA only) per head of population, 2014/15



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.

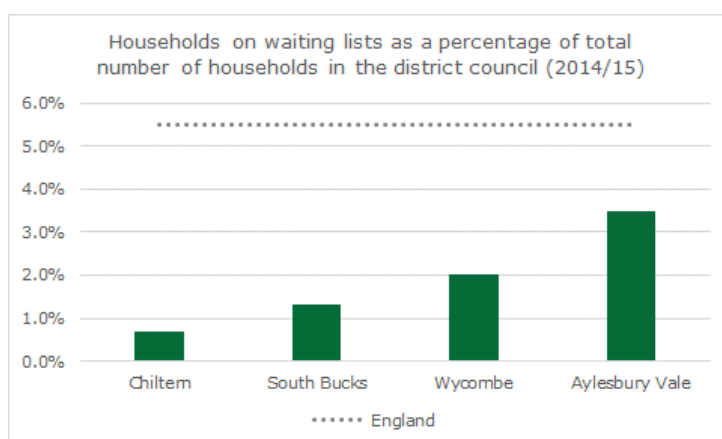
Vacant dwellings as a percentage of all dwellings in the area, 2014/15



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.

Appendix B: Good practice examples

Good practice examples – health and adult social care

Kaiser Permanente⁶²

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, Alaska⁶³

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

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, Suffolk⁶⁵

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

⁶⁴ Integrated Digital Care Records – Enabling information sharing 2015

⁶⁵ <http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11779/LGA+Adult+Social+Care+Efficiency+Programme+-+the+final+report/8e042c7f-7de4-4e42-8824-f7dc88ade15d>

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, Calderdale⁶⁶

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 programme⁶⁷

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

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 Keynes⁶⁸

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 Hillingdon⁶⁹

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 Council⁷⁰

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, Australia⁷¹

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 Croydon⁷²

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

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, Solihull⁷³

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 Council⁷⁴

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;

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 DC⁷⁵

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, Helsinki⁷⁶

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 colectivo 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 Grid⁷⁷

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 than 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 Somerset⁷⁸

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 Council⁷⁹

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;

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, Estonia⁸⁰

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 City⁸¹

Overview

New 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 Google⁸²

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

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 Council⁸³

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 & Wrekin⁸⁴

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 Council⁸⁵

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.

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, Utah⁸⁶

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, Barcelona⁸⁷

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 Mexico⁸⁸

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.

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)

⁸⁸ D.Eggers, *Delivering on Digital: The innovators and technologies that are transforming government* (2016)

MK:Smart, Milton Keynes⁸⁹

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 Council⁹⁰

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:

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 Harrow⁹¹

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 Barnet⁹²

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.

⁹¹ Online Electoral Registration through MyHarrow account

⁹² Good practice in Local Government Savings, Department for Local Government and Communities, 2014

'One Council' approach, Kirklees⁹³

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.

⁹³ Good practice in Local Government Savings, Department for Local Government and Communities, 2014

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	<p>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 referendum 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.</p> <p>The 2016/17 average band D council tax rates⁹⁴ used in the calculations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>The 2016/17 council tax base⁹⁵ used in the calculations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aylesbury District Council - 69,410 • Chiltern District Council - 43,560 • South Bucks District Council - 31,988 • Wycome District Council - 66,373 <p>*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.</p>

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

<p>Change programme costs</p>	<p>The financial analysis assumes the following for each option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-unitary model – creating three unitary councils will require (over a two-year change programme): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ £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): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. ○ £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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 • 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.
<p>Senior staff restructuring (estimated cost of reducing the number of senior posts)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Based on this, the assumption used in the financial analysis assumes the following for each option:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-unitary model – creating three unitary councils <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-unitary model – creating two unitary councils <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-unitary model – creating one unitary council <p>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.</p>
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Savings

Assumption category	Assumption description Source
<p>Senior staff restructuring (estimated savings from comparing current cost to new structure cost)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The estimated current senior staff cost for the County and the five districts is £5.8m + 25% on costs per annum</p> <p>Based on this, the assumption used in the financial analysis assumes the following for each option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-unitary model – creating three unitary councils <p>The combined cost of the three new organisations is assumed to be based on the following:</p> <p>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</p> <p>The current senior staff costs for the three</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-unitary model – creating two unitary councils <p>The combined cost of the two new organisation is assumed to be based on the following:</p> <p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-unitary model – creating one unitary council <p>The senior staff cost for the new organisation is assumed to be based on the following:</p> <p>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</p>
<p>Democratic</p>	<p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Under the current democratic structures for the five councils there are currently 236 members. Under the reorganised structures the financial analysis assumes the following for each option:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>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.</p>
Corporate services	<p>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%.</p> <p>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 achieved, 66% in year two and 100% in year three. In each year thereafter, 100% of the estimated savings is assumed to be achieved.</p> <p>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 following adjustments have been made to reflect this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.15. • Two-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10.
Service optimisation	<p>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%.</p> <p>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 achieved.</p> <p>It has been assumed that the single unitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two</p>

	<p>and three unitary options. Therefore, the following adjustments have been made to reflect this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.15. • Two-unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10.
Property rationalisation	<p>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%.</p> <p>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 achieved, 66% in year two and 100% in year three. In each year thereafter, 100% of the estimated savings is assumed to be achieved.</p> <p>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 following adjustments have been made to reflect this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)		BCC 2019/2020 Net Budget Requirement £m	
County	521,922	Total net budget requirement	335.1
Aylesbury Vale	184,560	Functions delivered across Buckinghamshire under DC vision	300.7
Chiltern	93,972	Total net budget to be disaggregated	34.4
South Bucks	68,512		
Wycombe	174,878		

		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 522,000⁹⁶, 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.

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 Council 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.



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Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

Business Case
September 2016

Buckinghamshire
Council

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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.

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.

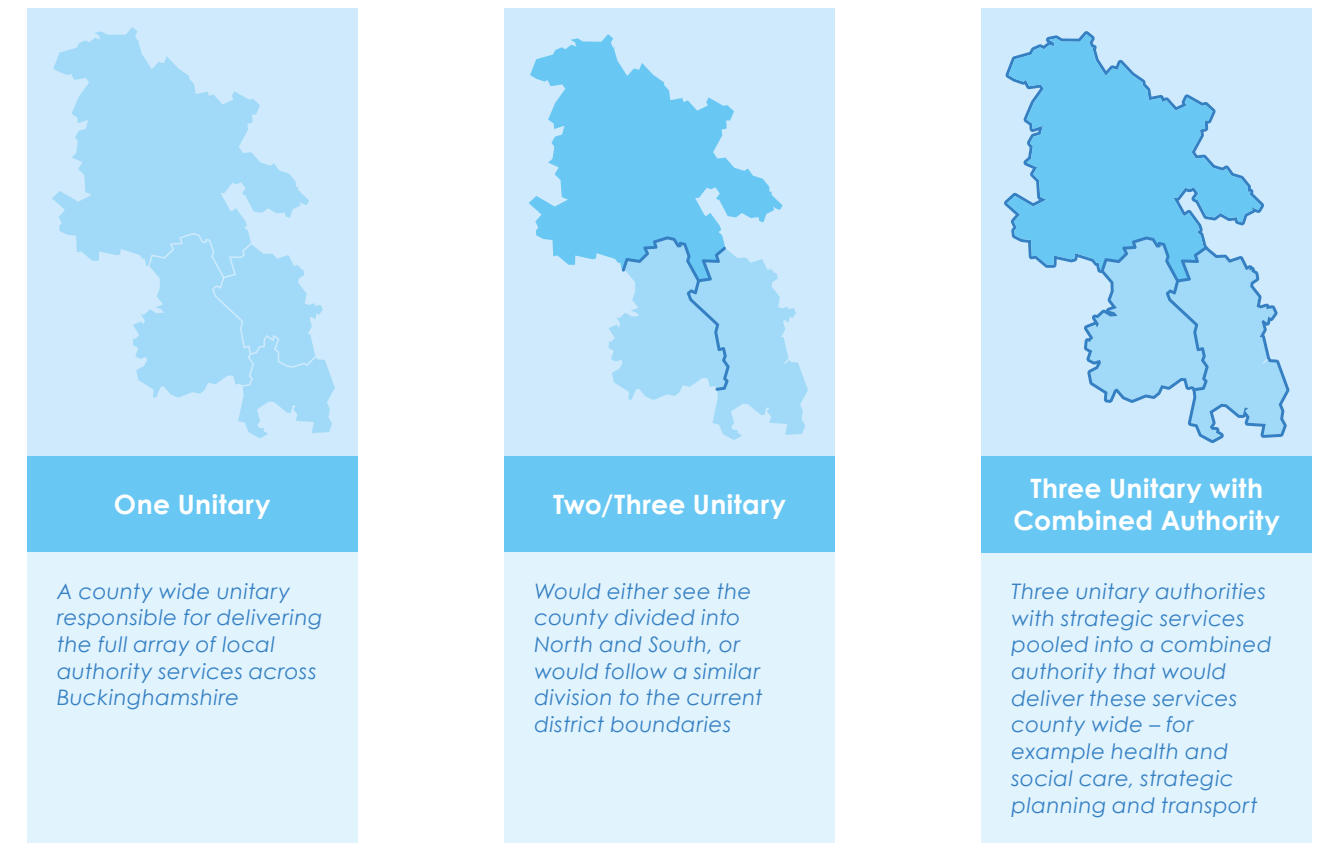
“No change” is the highest risk strategy.

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:



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	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1.25	6.25	●
Option Two: Multiple Unitary	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2.75	9.75	●
Option Three: Combined Authority Option	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1.75	7.75	●

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
- **enhancement** of existing county-wide social care and safeguarding services through closer connection with related services such as housing, leisure and benefits
- **simplified** arrangements from the perspectives of the public, partners and businesses
- **protection** of a robust platform for further health and social care integration
- **opportunities** to improve the conditions for economic growth by bringing together related services such as spatial planning, housing, transport and infrastructure
- **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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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:

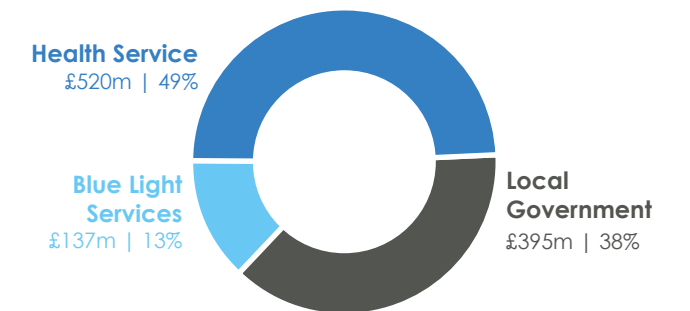
Buckinghamshire County Council	49	elected county councillors
Aylesbury Vale District Council Chiltern District Council South Bucks District Council Wycombe District Council	187	elected district councillors

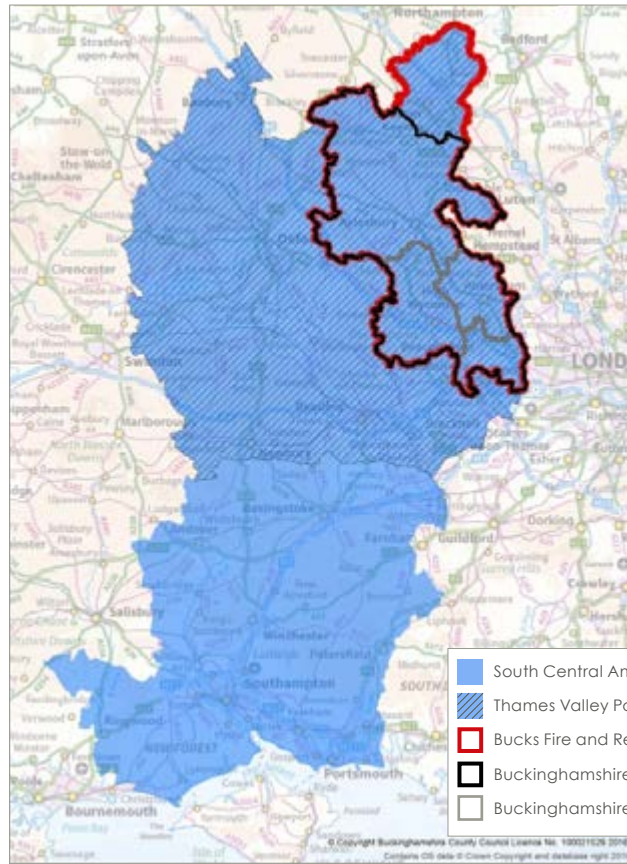
168 parish and town Councils cover all areas of Buckinghamshire, with the exception of the unparished area of High Wycombe.

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)





Blue light services

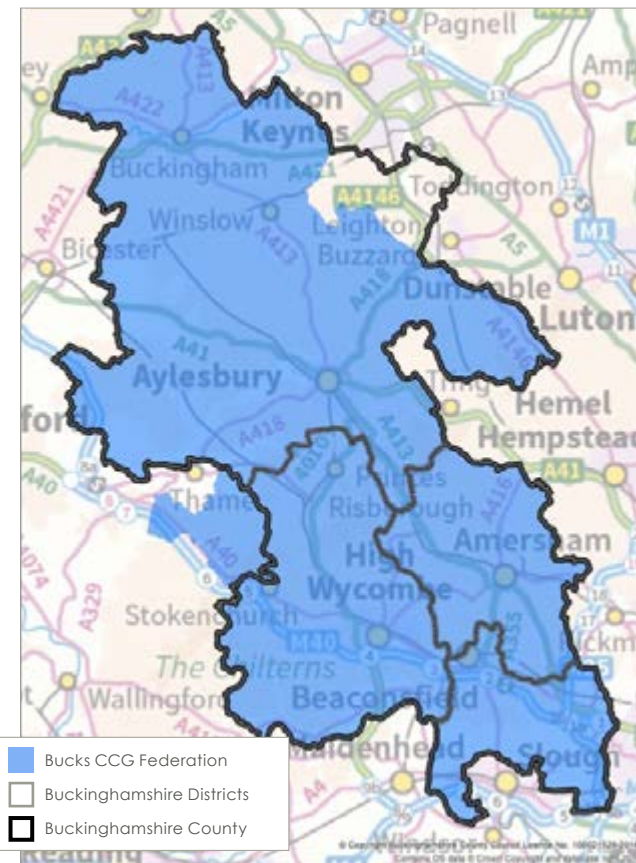
Buckinghamshire is served by:

- **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)

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.



"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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 opportunities 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.

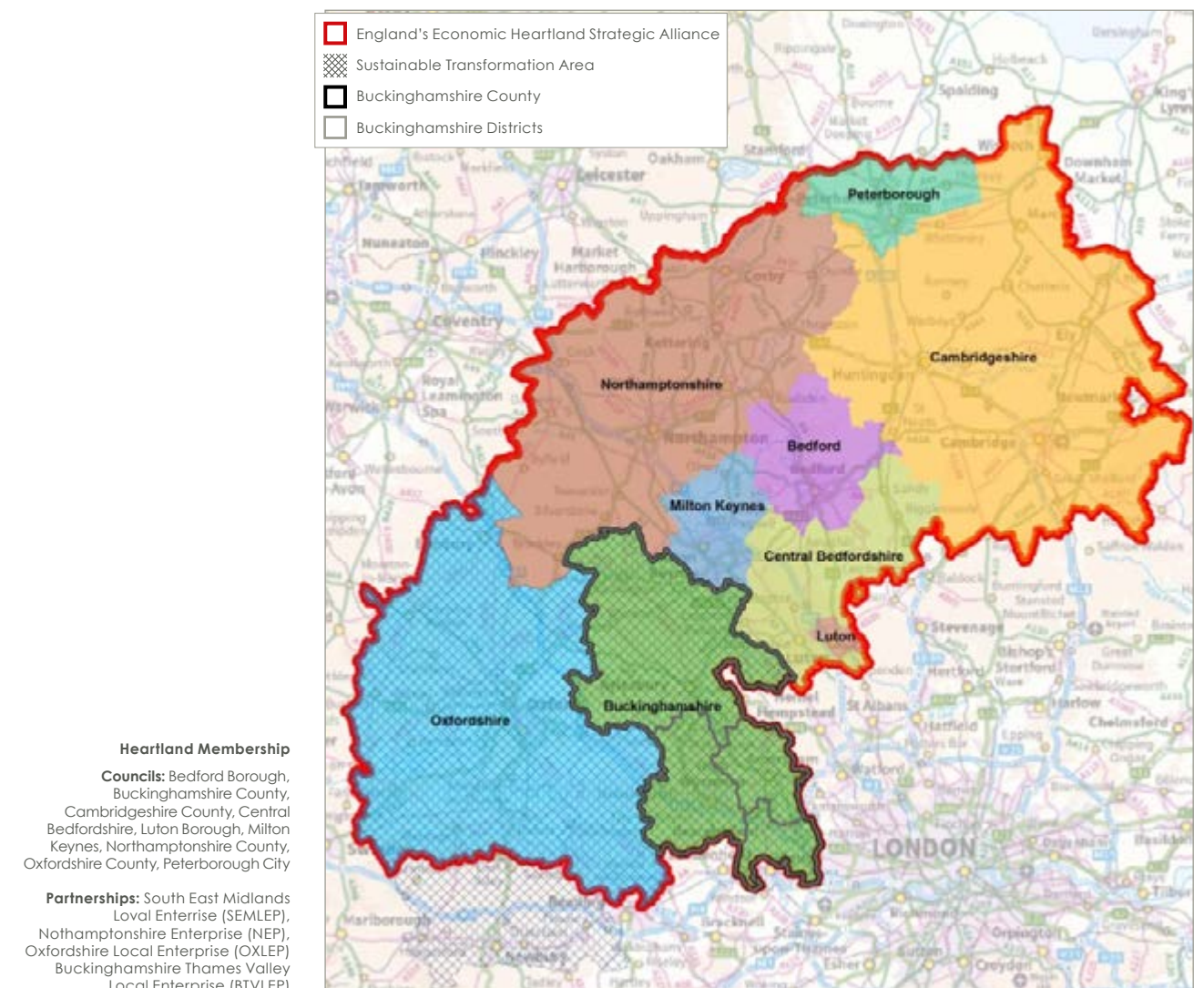


The number of council managers has reduced significantly over the past five years, but those who remain have to spend time trying to broker agreements across separate policy frameworks and independent decision making bodies, to try and manage the risk that vulnerable people could fall through the gaps 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



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."

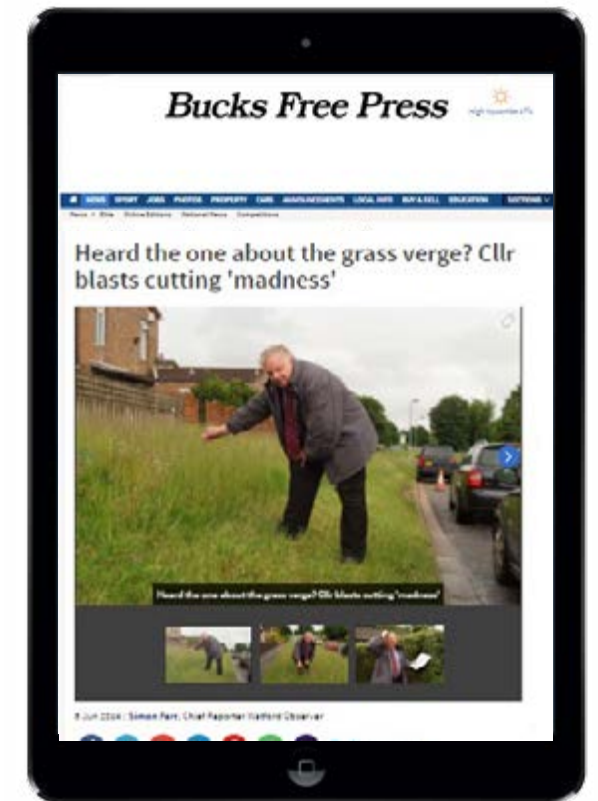
Female resident Buckingham

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 Deloitte 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.



66k | expected population growth between now and 2031

50k | new homes will be built over the next 15-20 years

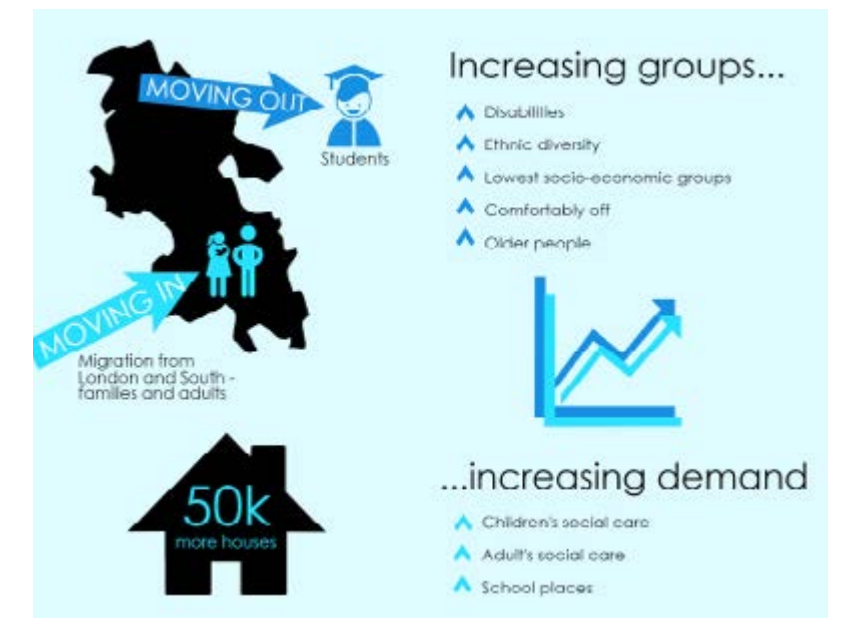
In 2016 the 65+ age group in Buckinghamshire accounted for 18% of the population – by 2031 we expect this to have increased to 23%. This accounts for 62% of total population growth over this period. By far the biggest increase will be observed in our 'oldest old' – the 80+ age group. The gap between 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.

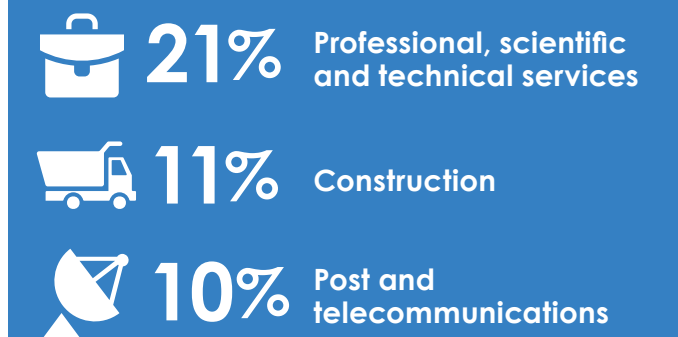
Economic Growth

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



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.

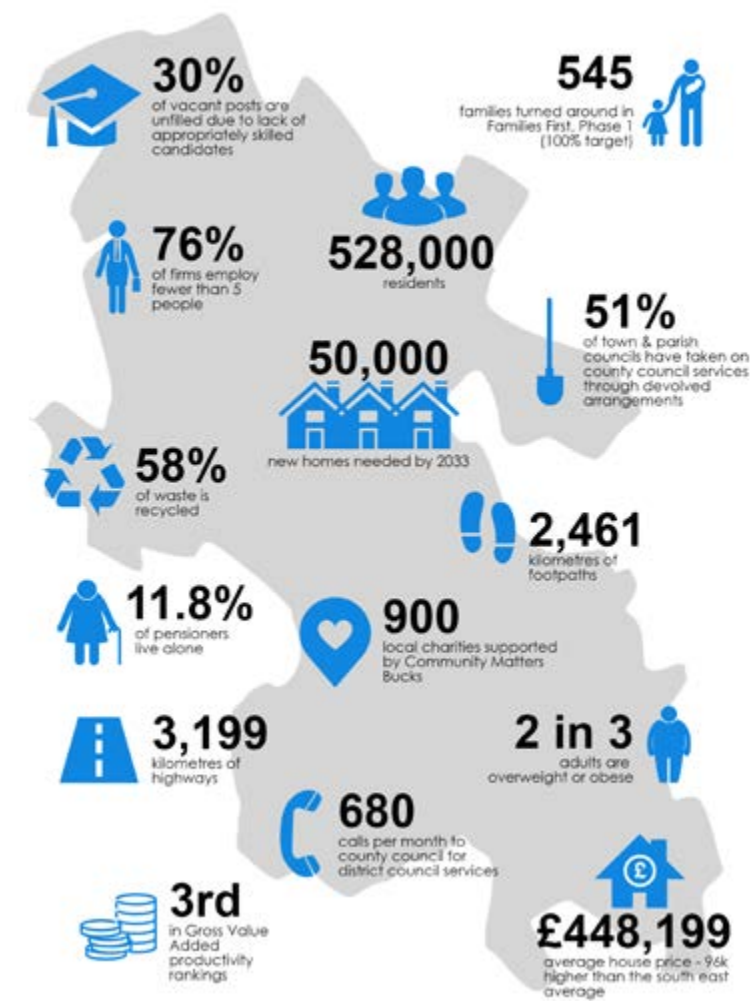
The National Infrastructure Commission has been tasked with bringing forward proposals and options for the long-term infrastructure priorities to unlock growth, jobs and housing within the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor over the next 30 years. The remit for this work includes a review of the 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



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 countryside 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

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	Two/Three Unitary	Three Unitary with Combined Authority
<i>A county wide unitary responsible for delivering the full array of local authority services across Buckinghamshire</i>	<i>Would either see the county divided into North and South, or would follow a similar division to the current district boundaries</i>	<i>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</i>

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’.” The table below sets out the population sizes by geography in Buckinghamshire, the options and whether they broadly align with recommended criteria.

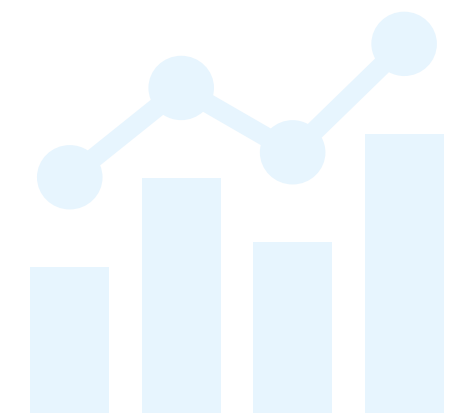
Option	Boundary	Population 2015	Population 2031	Within recommended limits?
1	County-wide Buckinghamshire Unitary	528,300	594,925	Yes
2.1	North Bucks unitary	188,700	222,888	No
	South Bucks unitary	339,600	372,03	Yes
2.2	North Bucks unitary	188,700	222,888	No
	Wycombe unitary	176,000	192,388	No
	Chiltern & 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).

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Option 2.1: Two Unitary Authorities	2	<p>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.</p>
Option 2.2: Three Unitary Authorities	3	<p>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.</p>
Option 3: Three Unitary Authorities + Combined Authority	4	<p>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.</p>

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 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

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.



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.

A New Vision

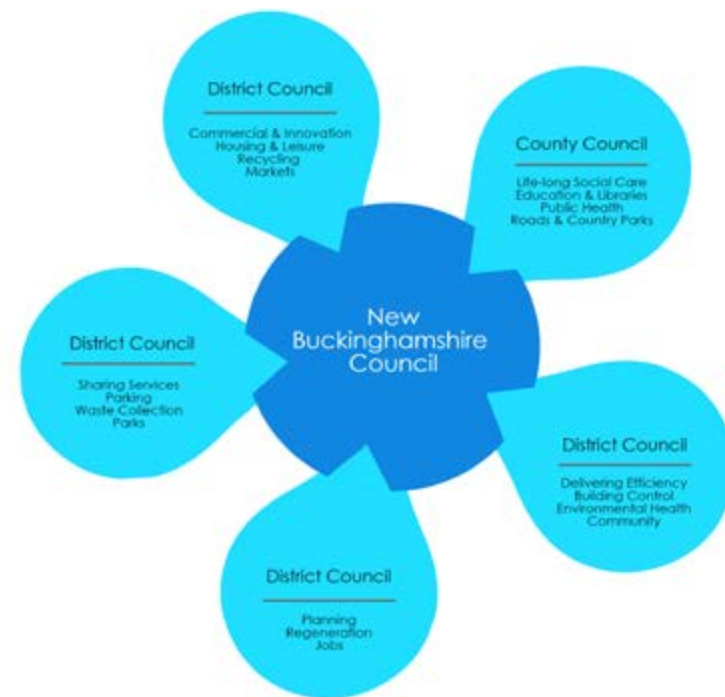
Our vision for the future of Buckinghamshire is to provide a new form of civic leadership fit for purpose in 2020 and beyond, one that gives local people a stronger say in the choices that affect them and enables each local community – from Buckingham to Burnham – to realise its own shared vision for 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



Ambition for Buckinghamshire

A new, county-wide single unitary council will be able to leverage 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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

Best Practice Case Study – Regeneration

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

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 policies, 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
- 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.

Further details of council structures and the roles of local members are included at Appendix 3.

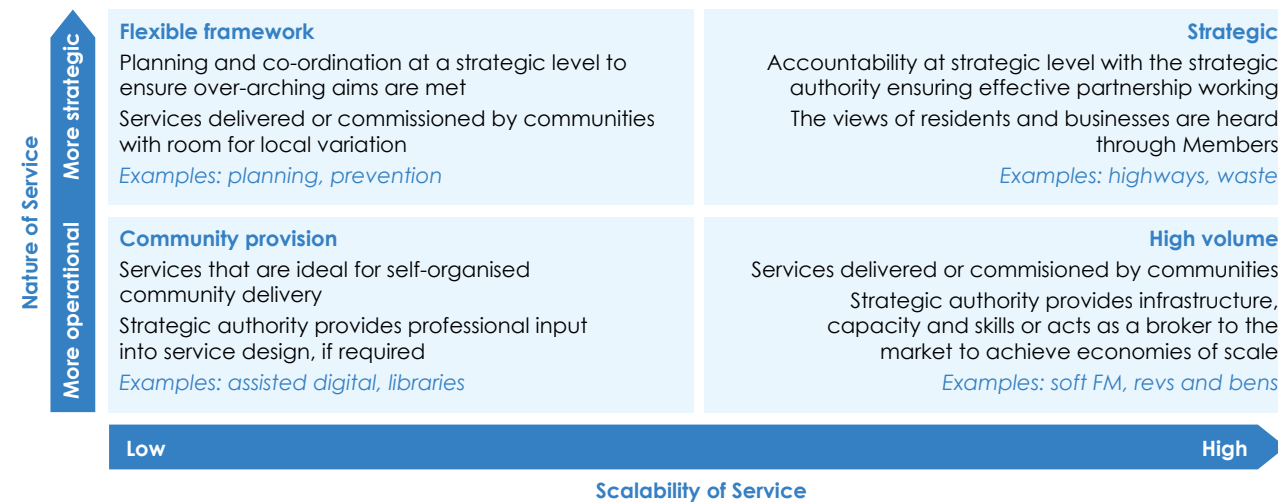
Supporting Local Members

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:

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).



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

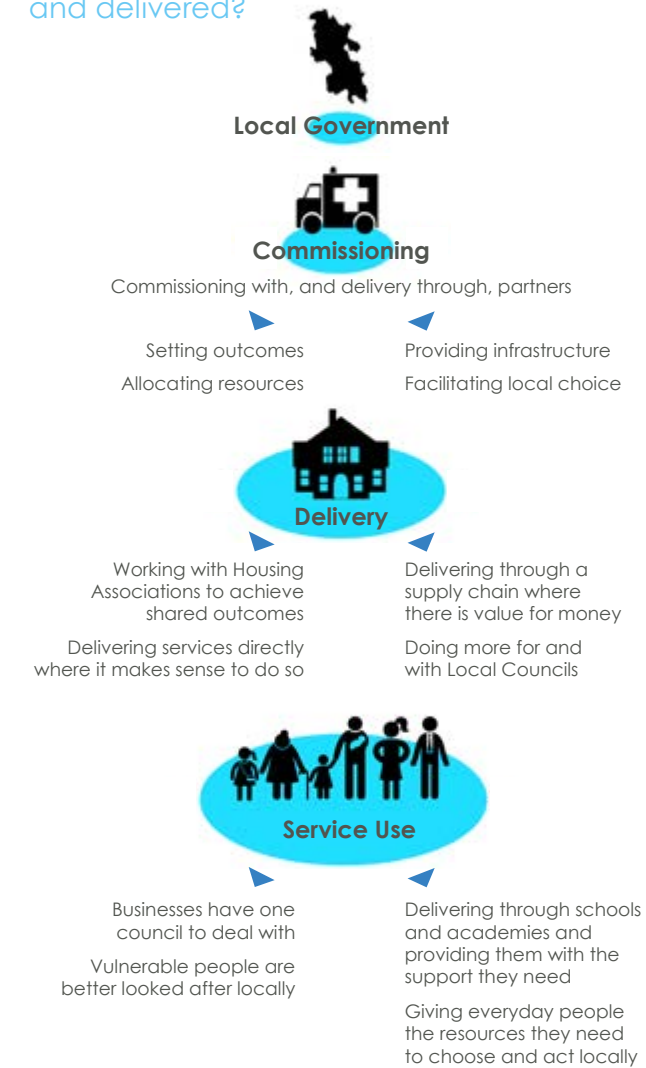
An immediate challenge for a new organisation would be to establish an agreed framework for the values and behaviours which it wishes to establish, in order to promote collaboration, innovation and accountability. Cultural values could for example include:

- 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?



- **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: <i>LimeCart</i> , which provides garden services to residents, and <i>IncGen</i> , 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 through 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 to 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.



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.

Feature	Current		Future
	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

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 – 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.”



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 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.

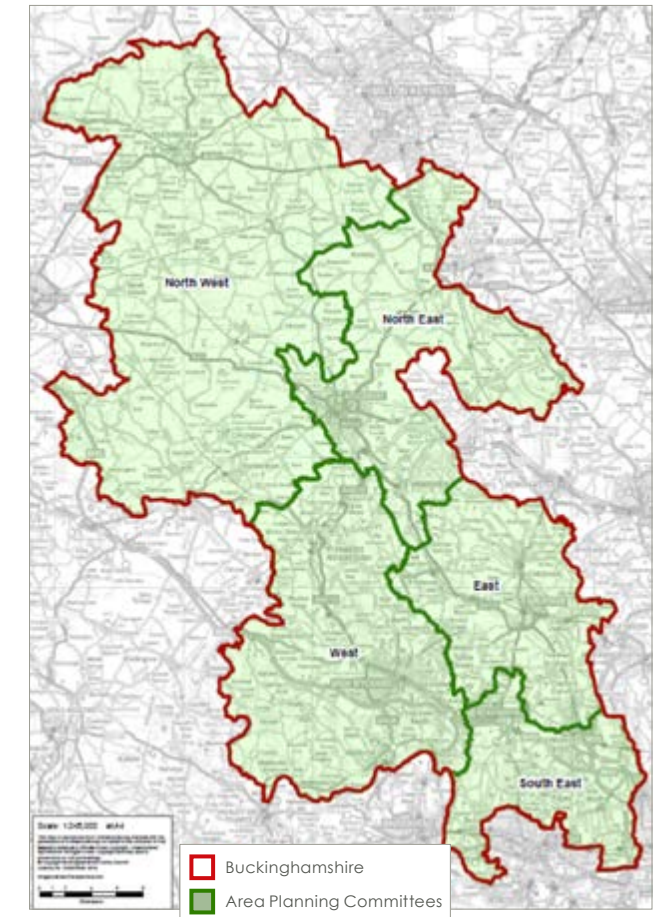
The Area Planning Committees would carry out many of the functions currently carried out by district council planning committees, as well as determining planning decisions which the county council currently takes on issues such as the approval of school building extensions.

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.



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

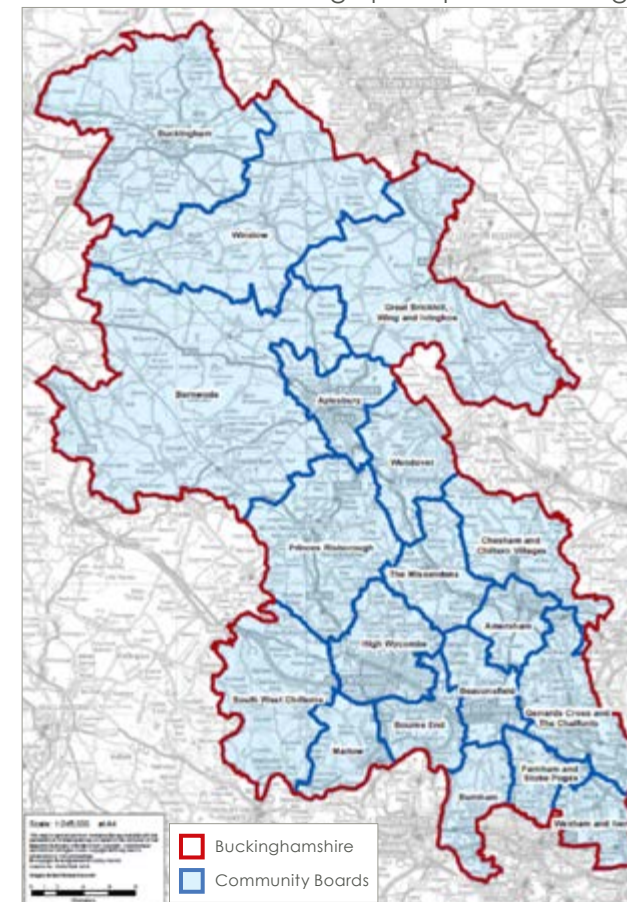
The number of Community Boards, and the geographical boundaries, would need

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



Example Agenda for a Community Board

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

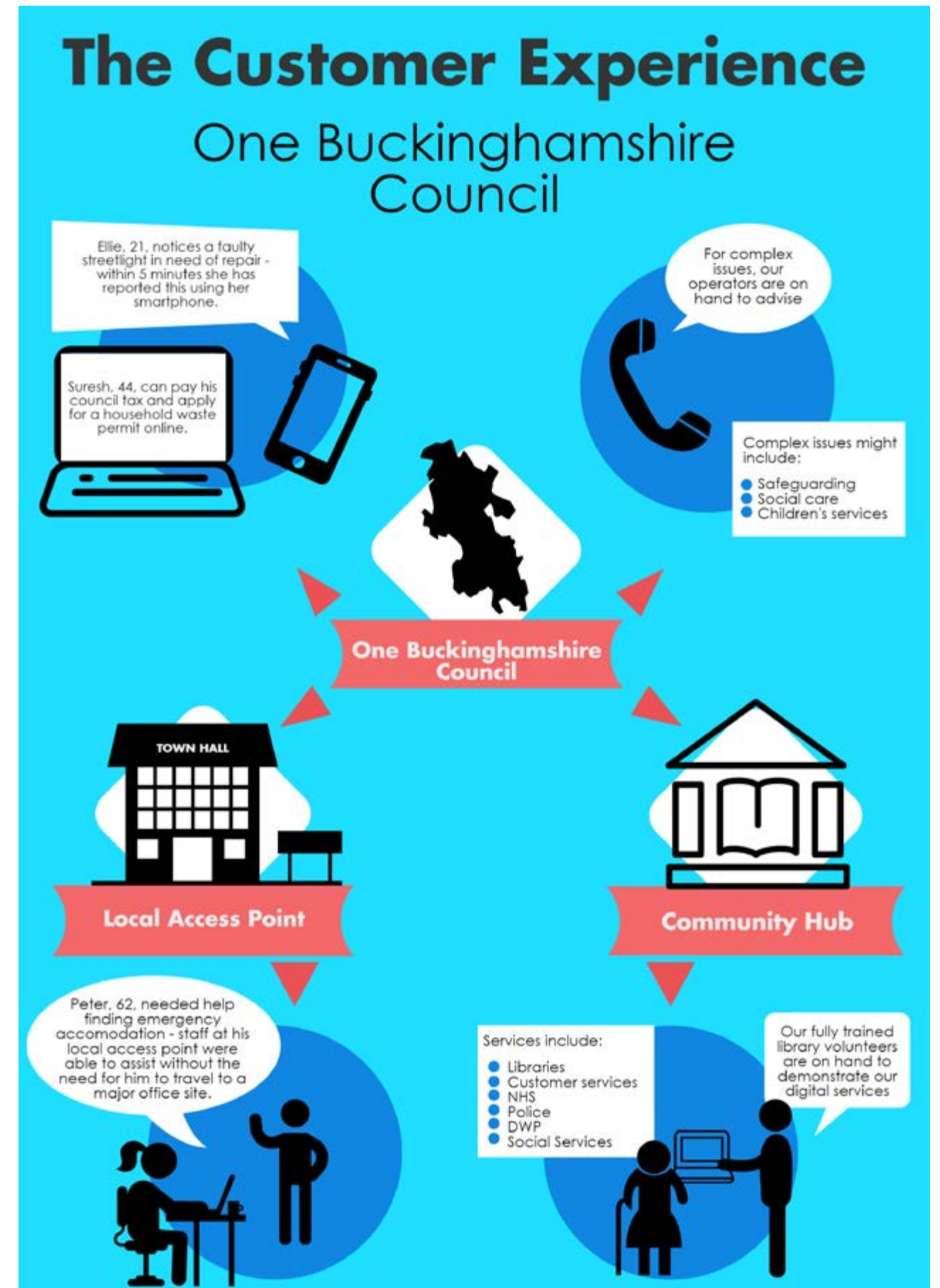
Customer Experience

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.

Best Practice Case Study – Revenues and Benefits Data

In Wiltshire, data from the benefits and council tax systems were collated to identify any single mothers with three or more children that will be adversely affected by the benefit cap in autumn 2016. This information was shared with the safeguarding team to identify families that may slip further into debt and crisis – thereby enabling targeted preventative services and changing outcomes for residents and improving lives.



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

Best Practice Case Study – Unlocking Data Potential

There are many examples of joining up data within unitary authorities enabling service improvement and income – from profiling debtors to increase debt recovery, to better evidencing eligibility, to identifying failure demand and profiling those customers to understand their needs better first time around.

Linking household level waste collection data (captured by Districts) with waste treatment data (captured at County level) would create an evidence based strategic response to increasing recycling and reducing waste to landfill. Southampton City Council saved £100k per year on waste disposal through a targeted intelligence-led campaign focused on households where recycling rates were low.



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



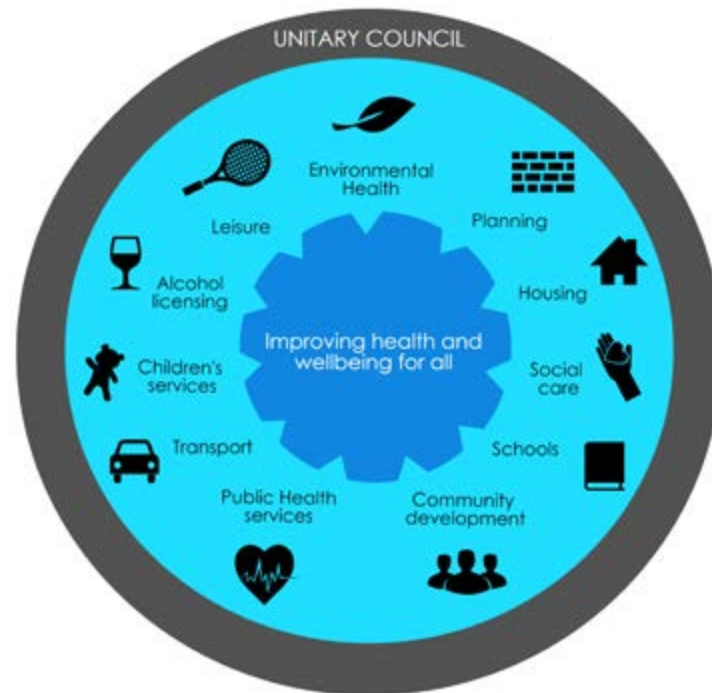
Public Health Outcome

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

Corporate and Support Services

- 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

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.



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,

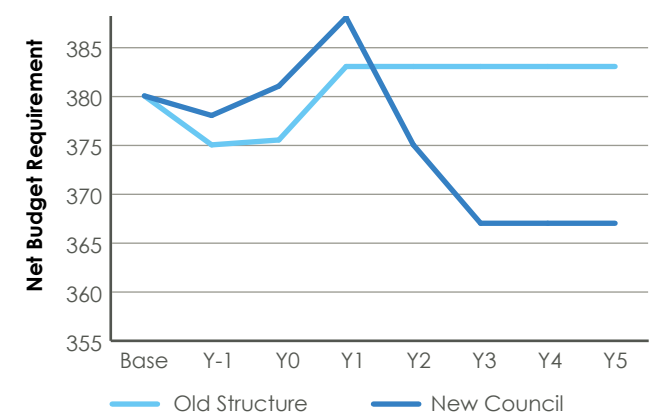
property sharing opportunities with public sector partners, including co-location into multi-agency community hubs. The report identified potential net capital receipts of up to £48m, including co-location of county and district functions. The ability to deliver the top end of this estimate would be 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



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
Efficiency 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.



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

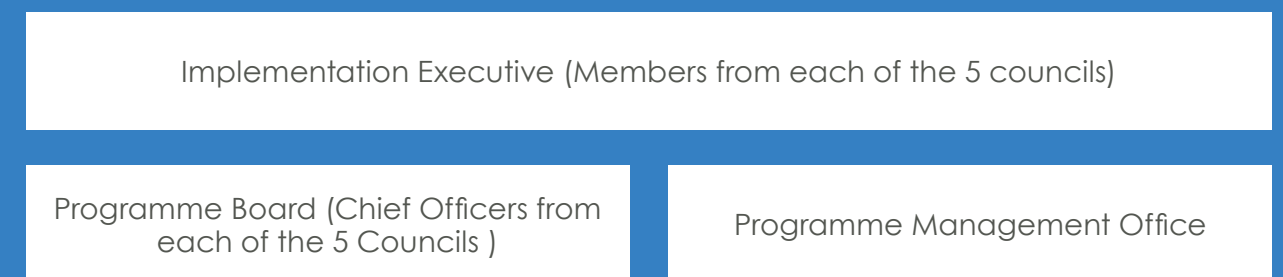
Once the Secretary of State makes a decision, an Implementation Executive and an officer Transition Programme Board would be established to lead the preparations for the new council, prior to Vesting Day. Post Vesting Day, these would be replaced with the Cabinet and Management Team of Buckinghamshire 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



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

- 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.



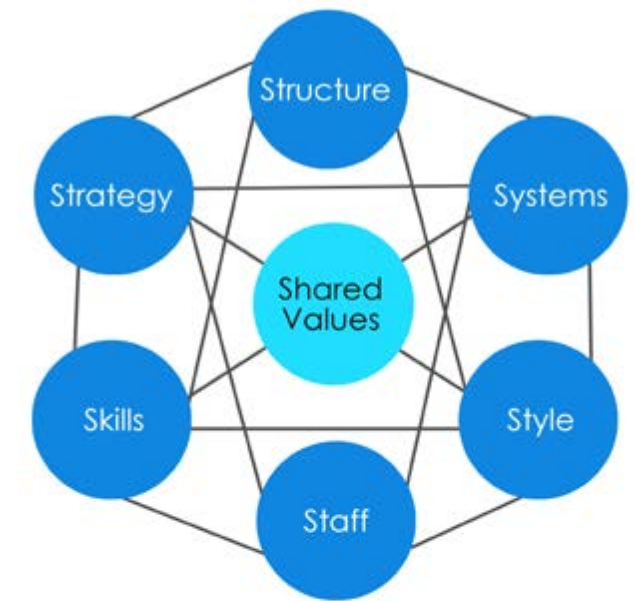
Creating a New Culture

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 mismatch 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, considerable 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:



Next Generation Access (NGA) Superfast Broadband, which will deliver 24 Mbps- due to be completed 2018



Excellent access to national road network – via the M40 & M25



Rail links to London Marylebone Station and access to London Underground network at Amersham Tube Station



major international airports within 1 hour drive, inc. Heathrow & Luton



Less than an hours drive to London and Oxford



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.



Buckinghamshire is the 3rd most productive place in England

48%

of residents educated to degree level and above



Some of the best performing schools in the country

6th

highest proportion of employment in the knowledge economy

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 (6.8t) 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.

2 in 3 adults are overweight or obese

1 in 5 adults are physically inactive

1 in 3 adults are at risk of developing diabetes

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:

1 in 7 adults smoke, compared with 1 in 4 adults in manual groups smoke

1 in 5 adults drink harmful levels of alcohol

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 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 equalisation 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.

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

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.

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:

- 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
- 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



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 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 participants' design principles for the future shape of local government and so no direct questions were asked about specific solutions. However, it was clear that participants were formulating their own strong views...

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).

"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

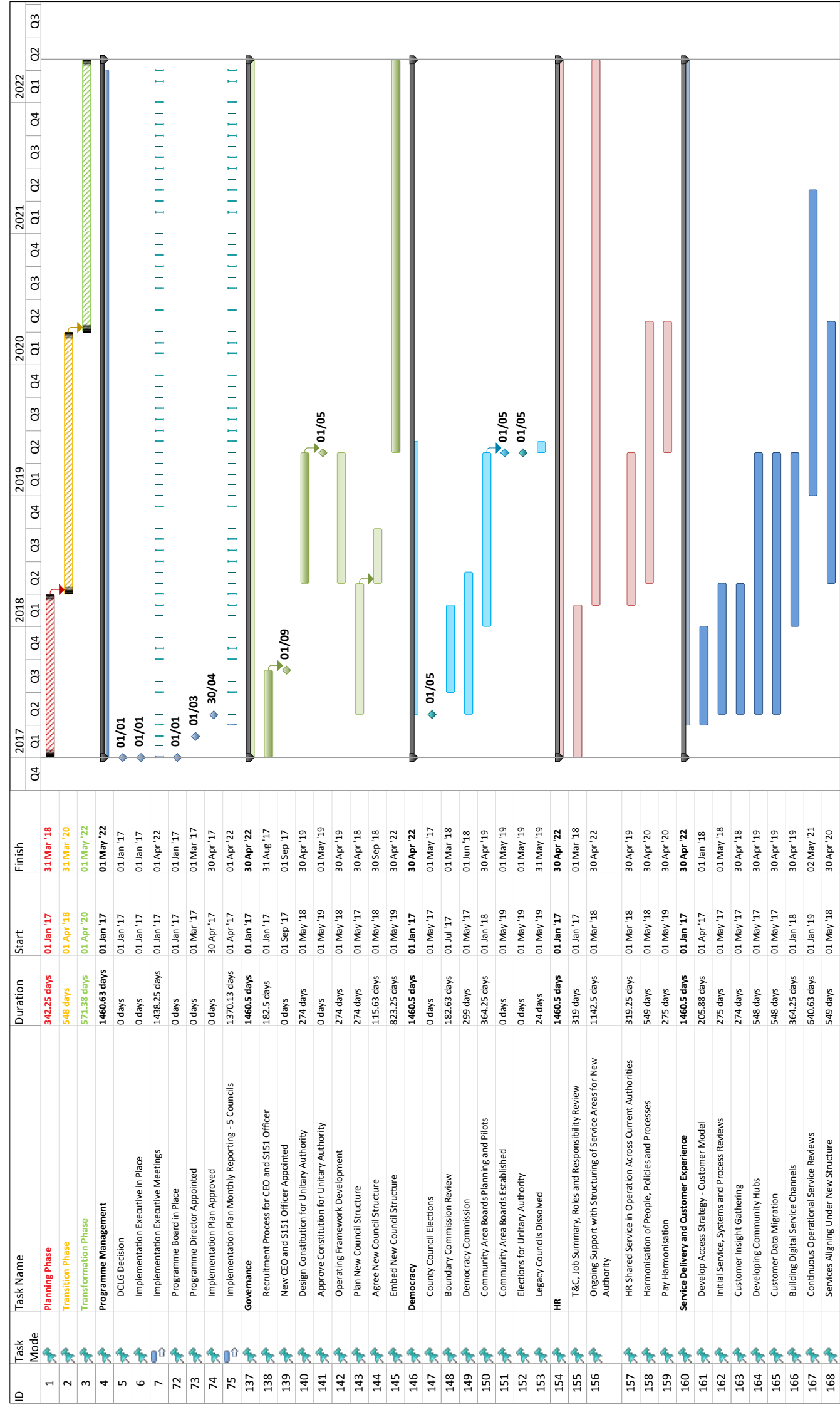
"There are mixed views about the unitary proposal...It is hard to make the archaeological voice heard at district level, it could be harder in a unitary authority. Whilst economies in delivery of civic services are important, this must not be at the expense of functions that play a small but supporting 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.

Appendix 6

Implementation Plan



Project: Unitary Implementation P
Date: 15 Sep '16

Task: [Solid Blue Bar] Project Summary [Dotted Blue Bar] External Tasks [Diamond] External Milestone [Arrow] Inactive Task [White Bar]

Split: [White Bar] Inactive Milestone [White Bar]

Milestone: [White Bar]

Summary: [White Bar]

Manual Summary Rollup: [White Bar] Manual Summary [White Bar] Start-only [White Bar] Finish-only [White Bar]

Deadline: [White Bar] Progress: [White Bar]

Page 1

ID	Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022			
						Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
169	Task	Services Operating Under Unitary Authority	823.25 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '22									
170	Task	Digital Services for New Unitary Deployed	0 days	01 May '19	01 May '19									
171	Task	New Telephone Number Available to Residents	0 days	01 May '19	01 May '19									
172	Task	Systems	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22									
173	Task	System Review	90.38 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '17									
174	Task	Data Capturing	116.5 days	01 May '17	30 Sep '17									
175	Task	Data Migration	432.5 days	01 Oct '17	30 Apr '19									
176	Task	System Alignment	432.5 days	01 Oct '17	30 Apr '19									
177	Task	Ongoing Data Maintenance	823.25 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '22									
178	Task	Property	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22									
179	Task	Commission Asset Review	296.13 days	01 Apr '17	01 May '18									
180	Task	Implement Short-Term Asset Strategy	548 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '19									
181	Task	Implement Long-Term Asset Strategy	823.25 days	01 May '19	30 Apr '22									
182	Task	Business and Supply Chain	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22									
183	Task	Develop Shared Business and Supply Chain Team	115.38 days	01 Apr '17	01 Sep '17									
184	Task	Due Diligence for Tender Activity and Current Spend	115.38 days	01 Apr '17	01 Sep '17									
185	Task	Opportunity Analysis (Long List) and Implementation Plan	69.25 days	01 Sep '17	01 Dec '17									
186	Task	Re-design Procurement	160.75 days	01 Mar '18	01 Oct '18									
187	Task	Contract Model on Deadline	0 days	30 Apr '19	30 Apr '19									
188	Task	Culture Change, OD and Internal Communications	1460.5 days	01 Jan '17	30 Apr '22									
189	Task	Business Case Approval Announcement	0 days	01 Jan '17	01 Jan '17									
190	Task	Develop Internal Comms Plan	5 days	01 Jan '17	06 Jan '17									
191	Task	Develop and Deliver a Staff Engagement Plan (Employee Reps, Trn, 1371.25 days)	1371.25 days	01 May '17	30 Apr '22									
192	Task	Organisational Design Principles Agreed and Implemented	455.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '19									
193	Task	Learning and Development Plan for Future Authority	455.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '19									
194	Task	Design and Agree Performance and Reward Frameworks	455.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '19									
195	Task	Agreeing New Organisational Values and Behaviours	455.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '19									
196	Task	Agreed Approach to Leadership and Management Throughout the	730.75 days	01 Sep '17	01 May '20									
197	Task	External Comms	1187.5 days	01 Jan '17	01 May '21									
198	Task	Business Case Approval Announcement	0 days	01 Jan '17	01 Jan '17									
199	Task	Develop and Deliver External Comms Plan	890.25 days	01 Jan '17	01 Apr '20									
200	Task	Develop Engagement Plan	890.25 days	01 Jan '17	01 Apr '20									
201	Task	Branding	632 days	09 Jan '17	30 Apr '19									
202	Task	Finance	1460.63 days	01 Jan '17	01 May '22									
203	Task	Monitoring Investments and Delivery of Savings	1460.63 days	01 Jan '17	01 May '22									
204	Task	Budget Planning	228.75 days	01 May '18	28 Feb '19									
205	Task	Budget set for New Authority	0 days	01 Mar '19	01 Mar '19									
206	Task	Coding Structuring	252.13 days	01 May '18	31 Mar '19									
207	Task	Statement of Accounts for Old Councils	158.75 days	01 Dec '18	30 Jun '19									

Project: Unitary Implementation p
Date: 15 Sep '16

Task Split Milestone Summary

Project Summary External Tasks External Milestone Inactive Task

Inactive Milestone Inactive Summary Manual Task Duration-only

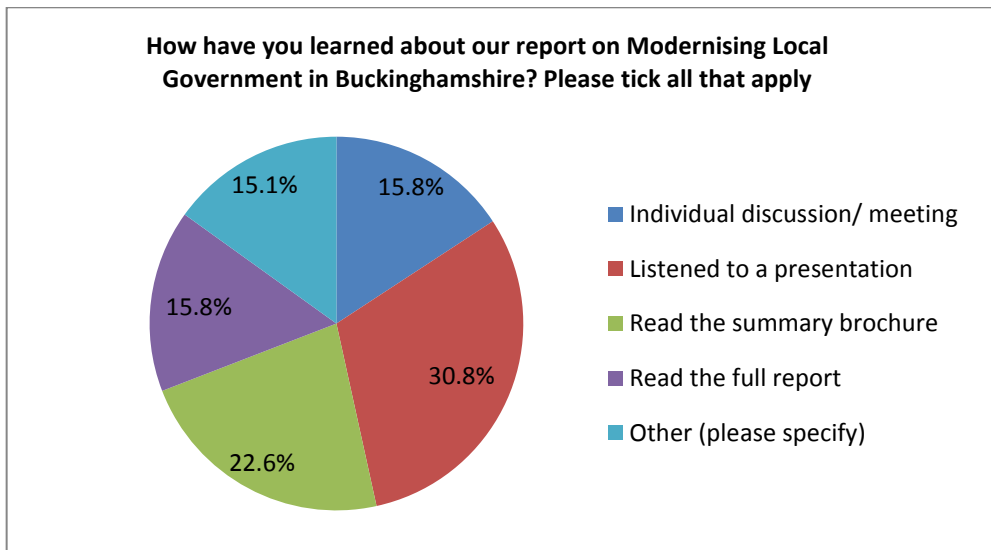
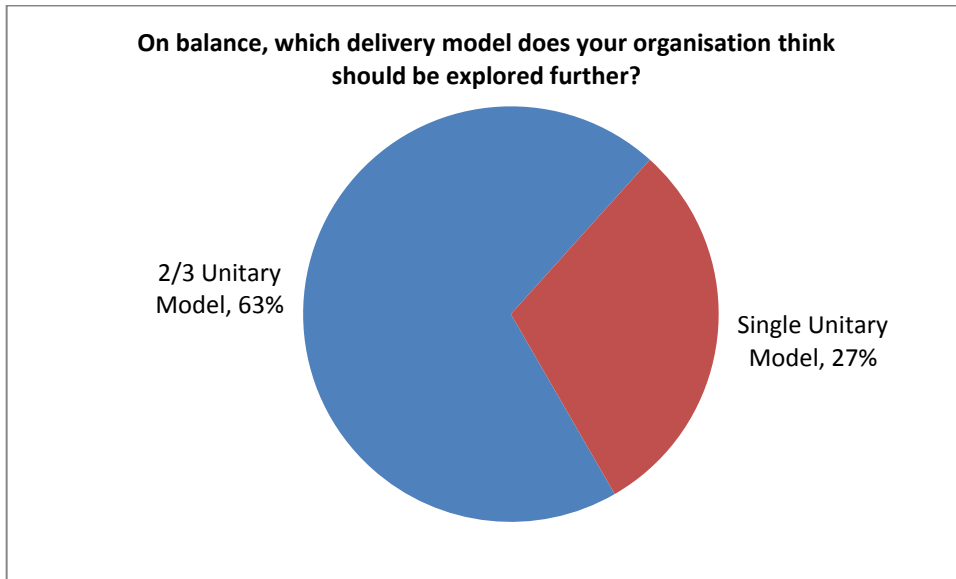
Manual Summary Rollup Manual Summary Start-only Finish-only

Deadline Progress

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.

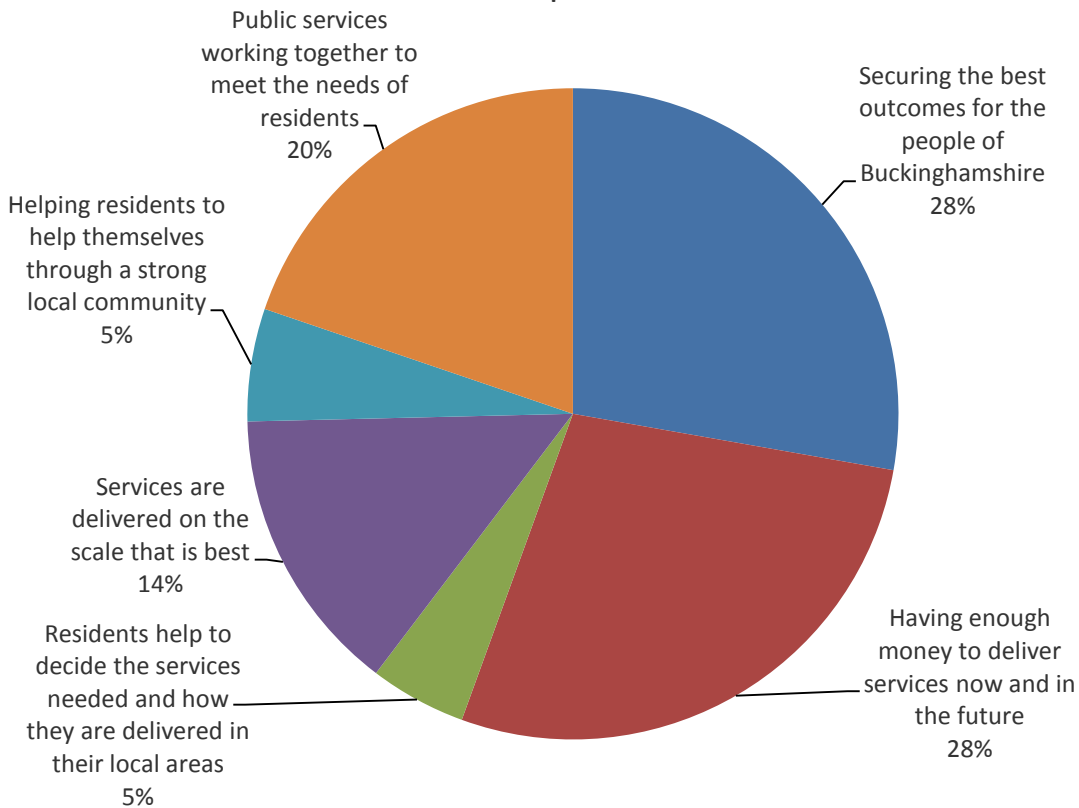
In total the districts received feedback from 146 key stakeholders including 79 town and parish councils, 25 local businesses and business groups, 37 voluntary groups and 5 other public sector organisations. Top amongst stakeholder concerns were securing the best outcome for the people of Bucks and having enough money to deliver services now and in the future.



Thinking about our proposed vision for Buckinghamshire, how important are the following principles for delivering sustainable public services in the county?



Which principle is the most important to your organisation? Please select only one option



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?

