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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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Satterford'.

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.

Supplementary Agenda

Item		Page
3	MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT – APPENDIX 3	1 - 118

For further information, please contact Iram Malik on 01494 421204, or email: committeeservices@wycombe.gov.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

Modernising local government report

JANUARY 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part A

Executive Summary []

Introduction..... []

Why we need change []

Options Analysis..... []

Part B

A Road Map []

- One Direction
- Even More Local
- More Effective
- More Efficient
- Five tests for Local Government Re-organisation

Part C

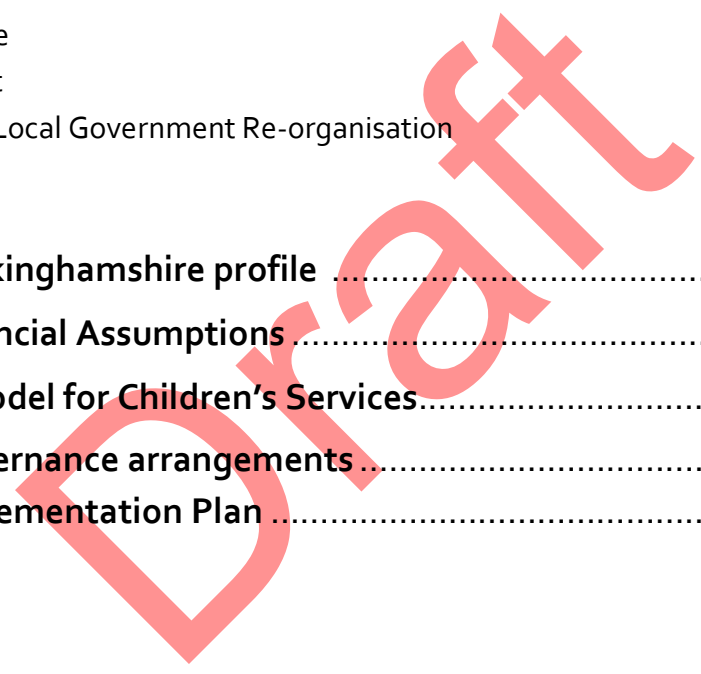
Appendix A: Buckinghamshire profile []

Appendix B: Financial Assumptions..... []

Appendix C: A Model for Children’s Services..... []

Appendix D: Governance arrangements..... []

Appendix E: Implementation Plan []



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.



SUMMARY OF OPTIONS



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

Winston Churchill



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Albert Einstein

— “ —

OUR SUBMISSION

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

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

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

— “ —

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The options under consideration are as follows:



OPTION 1

ONE NEW UNITARY

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



OPTION 2

TWO NEW UNITARIES

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

CRITERIA ANALYSIS

The following table provides a rating (1 or 2) for each option against the non-financial criteria (1 being the highest scoring rating for each criterion). For ease of comparison the same set of criteria have been used as the County Council business case. The criteria have been allocated with an equal

weighting and the overarching score has been calculated by adding the scores of the first three criteria with the average score for the last four sustainability criteria. Where both models have equal merit they have both been allocated the highest score (1).

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

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

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

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

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

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

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

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

OUR VISION

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

1. Local government will be rooted in communities and residents will be empowered to participate in the design and delivery of services for their local area;
2. Administrative boundaries and democratic accountability will reflect real economic and community geographies to allow aligned planning, consistent prioritisation and place based action to improve outcomes for residents and ensure that the deployment of public money is optimised;
3. Community resilience will be enhanced by providing 'just enough' of the right services at the right time, thereby promoting independence and the capabilities of individuals, rather than perpetuating a paternalistic model of local government which increases dependency;
4. There will be clear focus on achieving sustainable and inclusive economic growth that creates shared prosperity and promotes resilience and independence.
5. Collaboration and partnership working between public bodies will be enhanced by coterminous working, shared prioritisation and joint action;
6. Innovation in the use of data and technology and in the design and delivery of public services to best reflect and support the way people live their lives and improve effectiveness, productivity and efficiency.

— **W** —

"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

— **W** —



OUR AMBITION

One Direction - each council focussed on one economic geography

Even More Local - two councils provides greater local accountability

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

More Efficient - thriving economies and resilient communities provide sustainability

Why our ambition makes sense for Buckinghamshire:

ONE DIRECTION

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

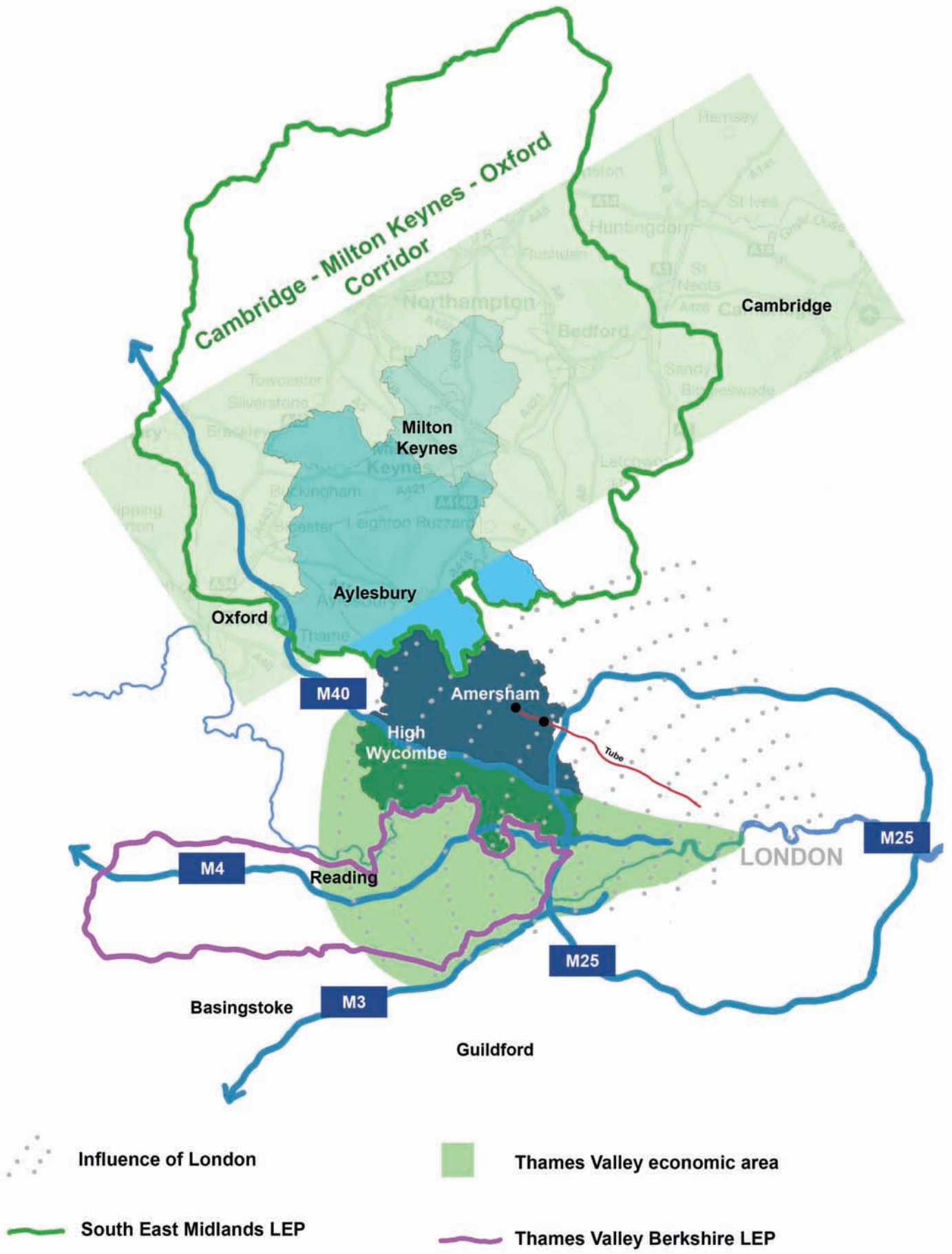
Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes are part of the Cambridge to Oxford Corridor identified by the NIC as a priority area for national growth. By contrast, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe are part of the Thames Valley and West of London economy. National infrastructure investments such as Crossrail and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

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

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

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

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY MAP



EVEN MORE LOCAL

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

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

There are crucial roles for councillors not only in being civic entrepreneurs but also in providing visible civic leadership to enable and support the work of others. Councillors work hard to foster

strong relationships and within local communities through partnerships, with Parish Councils, Town Councils and Community Associations; through their service on the boards of local voluntary organisations; their membership of local Business Improvement District Boards and through their wider engagement within their communities to identify individuals from all walks of life, and organisations from all sectors who want to play a role and to inspire others to do the same and more.

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



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

Clive Rodgers,
Vice-Chairman, Swanbourne Parish Council



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sharon Henson, Clerk/RFO,
West Wycombe Parish Council

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IMPLEMENTATION

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

It remains important to recognise that the financial benefits realised from restructure will not be sufficient to avoid the need for ongoing transformation to continue. Political leadership and

management must also continue to be focused on the urgent improvement work in Children's Services without being distracted by any decision towards transition to unitary status.

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



"The district councils are in a good position to support businesses and they need greater powers, such as control of highways, to make things happen more quickly."

"The county council's proposals for one council – probably based in Aylesbury – with various hubs, committees, and town and parish councils doing different things in different areas is not a 'one stop shop' – it would be worse than the current situation."

Peter Keen,
Chairman of bed manufacturer Hypnos





For more information visit:

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

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

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

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

PART A

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF OUR REPORT

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

This section of the report provides:

- Context for local government reorganisation in Buckinghamshire;
- What does Unitary mean;
- An overview of Buckinghamshire public sector landscape;
- The geography for key public agencies.

Draft

CONTEXT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

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

WHAT DOES UNITARY MEAN?

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

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

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LANDSCAPE

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE GEOGRAPHY OF DELIVERY FOR KEY PUBLIC AGENCIES

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

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

County Council Proposal



District Council Proposal



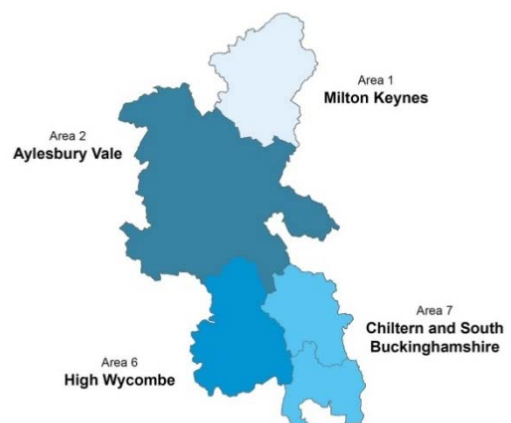
BLUE LIGHT SERVICES

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

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

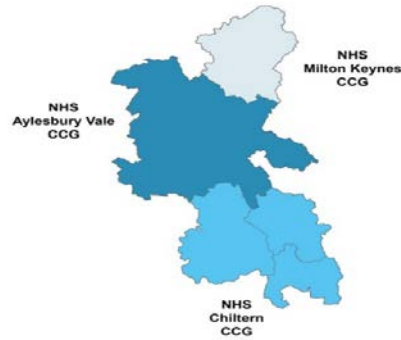
Fire: Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service cover the whole of the ceremonial county area.

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



HEALTH SERVICES

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



CCG Areas in Buckinghamshire

Strategic Planning for Health and Social Care (STP)

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



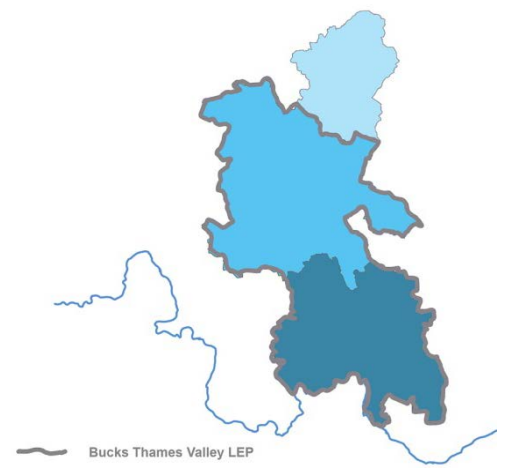
STP area for Bucks, Oxon and Berks

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

Bucks Thames Valley LEP

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

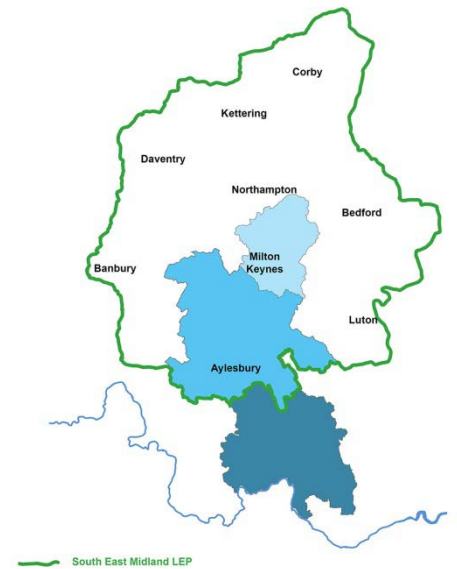
The **Bucks Thames Valley LEP** created in 2012 includes all four District Councils and therefore overlaps with SEMLEP which was already established.



South East Midlands LEP

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

SEMLEP Area (green outline)



England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

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



¹ <http://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/Pages/strategic-leadership.aspx>

WHY WE NEED CHANGE

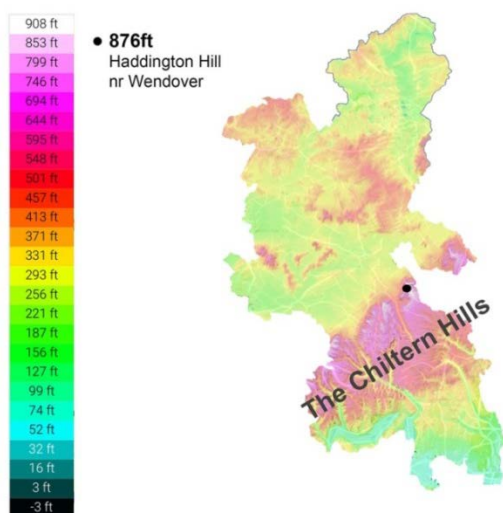
The profile of Buckinghamshire is set to change over the next 20 years. If we are to be ready to embrace future economic growth opportunities – and an increasing and diverse population that will place demands on our services, public service transformation and change is required now. There is no dispute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

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

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

Our Place

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



Map data © Google 2016 en-gb.topographic-map.com

Map x1 The topography of Buckinghamshire

Our people

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

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

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

From 2014 to 2015, the population increased by 2,331 people in the proposed **Southern Unitary area** to 339,693. The migration contribution to this change is smaller (739 UK and 530 from outside of UK), but the mid-lifers that are joining our communities have more very young children (700 under 45). The resident population in this area has an increasing number of over 65 and over 80 year olds too. [Map 1]

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

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

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

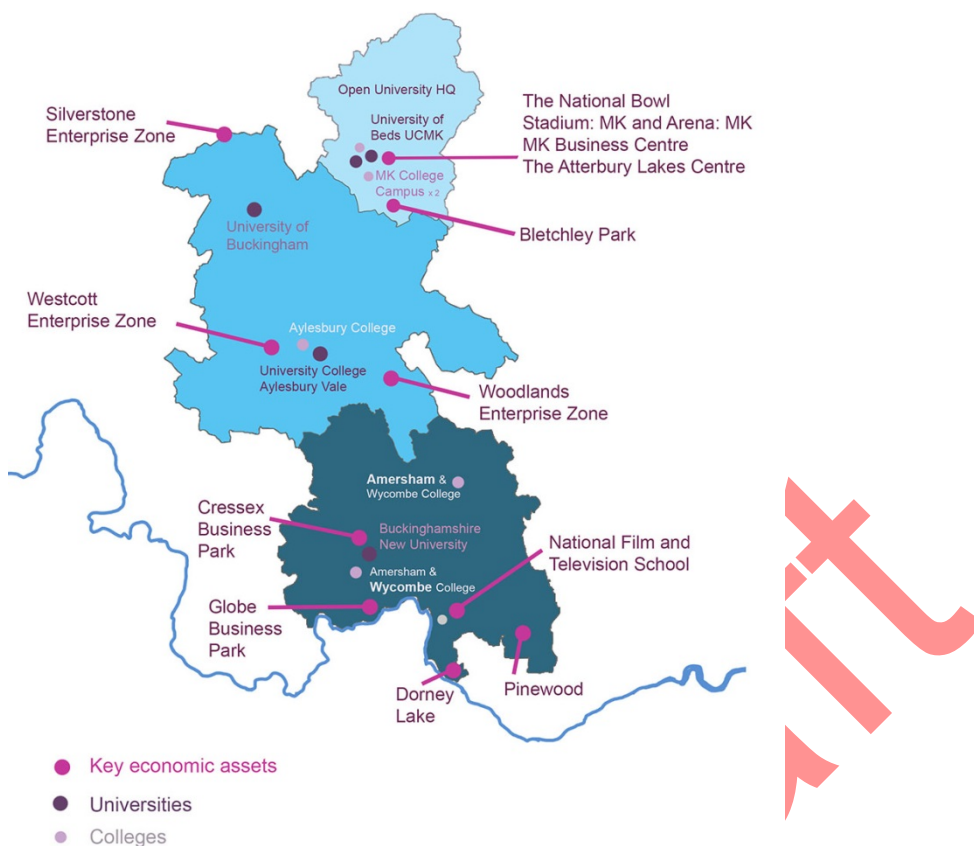
Our economy and economic potential

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

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

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

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



Map x Key economic and educational assets in Buckinghamshire

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

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

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

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

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

We can add more value to UK PLC

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

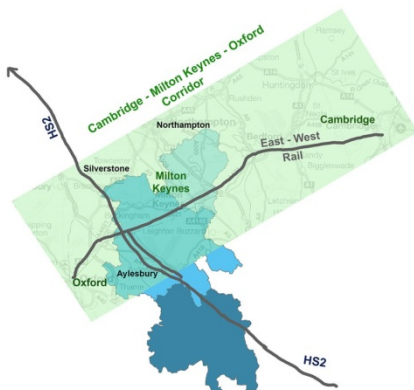
The strategies for planning infrastructure and economic growth and development are at opposite ends of the spectrum in north and south of Buckinghamshire. They need different focus - and different partnership arrangements to enact and sustain. The Southern area is a more natural match to the Thames Valley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



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

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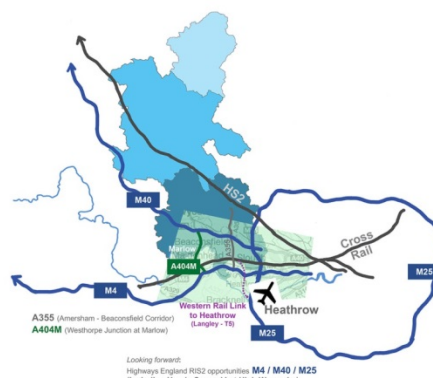
Looking North: future plans



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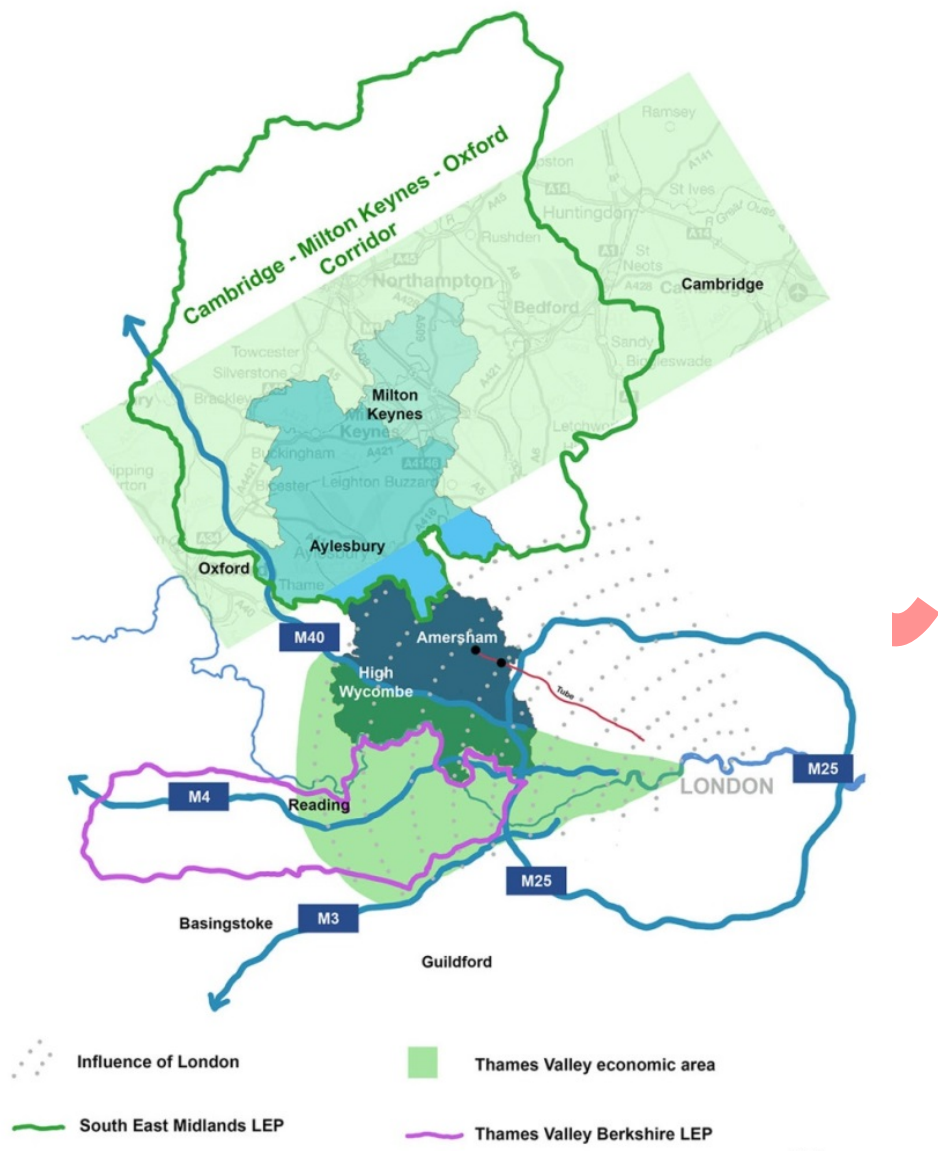
Looking South: future plans



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Why we need two new unitary Councils in Buckinghamshire.



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FINANCIAL PRESSURE ON AUTHORITIES

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

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

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

The main sources of funding for local government are:

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

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX

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

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

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

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

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

AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£1.6m	£0.6m	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£3.7m	£3.7m	£3.8m	£3.9m
New homes bonus	£8.3m	£7.9m	£6.1m	£5.8m
Council tax*	£9.7m	£9.9m	£10.2m	£10.6m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£20k	£700k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£0.4m	£0	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.5m
New homes bonus	£1.0m	£1.1m	£0.9m	£0.8m
Council tax*	£7.3m	£7.5m	£7.7m	£7.9m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£414k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year.

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£0.4m	£0.1m	£0	£0
Estimated business rate income	£1.0m	£1.0m	£1.1m	£1.1m
New homes bonus	£1.5m	£1.1	£0.8m	£0.8m
Council tax*	£4.7m	£4.9m	£5.1m	£5.2m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£170k	£410k

*Council tax increase by 1.99% each year.

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£1.5m	£0.6	£0.1	£0
Estimated business rate income	£3.1m	£3.1m	£3.2m	£3.3m
New homes bonus	£3.7m	£2.3m	£1.8m	£1.7m
Council tax*	£8.8m	£9.0m	£9.0m	£9.0m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£460k

*Council tax freeze from 2017/18 onwards

MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
RSG	£26.5m	£17.4m	£11.5m	£5.5m
Estimated business rate income	£48.3m	£46.8m	£47.8m	£47.8m
New homes bonus	£12.4m	£9.5m	£7.2m	£6.9m
Council tax*	£102.7m	£108.3m	£113.8m	£119.6m
Estimated business rate tariff adjustment	£0	£0	£0	£0

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

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 payments²
- Rural Services Delivery Grant
- Transitional grant to ease the pace of RSG reductions in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The following table shows the estimated spending power of the six councils for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20:³

	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m
Buckinghamshire County Council	351.4	352.2	355.5	366.6
Aylesbury Vale District Council	24.4	24.4	21.6	21.7
Chiltern District Council	10.4	10.4	10.3	9.9
South Bucks District Council	7.8	7.6	7.2	7.0
Wycombe District Council	17.5	17.2	15.8	15.7
Milton Keynes Council	191.5	189.3	188.0	192.7
Total	603.0	601.1	598.4	613.6

SALES, FEES AND CHARGES

The six councils each have separate policies to charge for some of the services they provide in order to recover the cost of providing them. With the funding landscape shifting considerably there is more pressure on the councils to consider charging for services that are currently not being charged for or increasing charges subject to the constraints of legislation where they exist to improve outcomes and support budgets to deliver the outcomes. The income earned from sales fees and charges over the past two years by the six councils as reported in the Revenue Outturn (RO) Statistics for 2014/15⁴ and 2015/16⁵ is as follows:

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-spending-power-provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2016-to-2017>

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2014-to-2015-individual-local-authority-data-outturn

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2015-to-2016-individual-local-authority-data-outturn

	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m
Buckinghamshire County Council	57.1	49.0
Aylesbury Vale District Council	17.2	23.6
Chiltern District Council	7.7	8.0
South Bucks District Council	5.5	6.6
Wycombe District Council	9.3 ⁶	9.6
Milton Keynes Council	34.9	46.3

INVESTMENT INCOME

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

Draft

⁶ Wycombe District Council has identified an error in their RO submission for 2014/15 where the sales fees and charges amount should be £9.3m rather than the 14.9 included in the RO.

OPTIONS ANALYSIS

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

APPROACH

To support the case for change and for ease of comparison with the County Council proposals the same criteria as the County Council have been used. The following table provides a definition of the non-financial and criteria used in order to carry out the analysis of the options.

Options criteria	Sub-criteria	Sub-criteria definitions
Service performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieving and delivering the best possible services to residents, service users and customers. - Service standards and value for money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of organisations that need to work together to deliver services. - The level of aggregation, disaggregation, and integration required, including the proportion of population affected. - The potential for change in volume, frequency and characteristics of services delivered.
Democratic leadership and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democratic participation and accountability. - Ability to influence the decision making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear understanding by residents, businesses and elected members of the democratic pathway. - Whether individuals, families and communities have clarity about who is representing them and where to go for support.
Local engagement and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of services that are responsive to local needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibility to move resources to where they are needed the most. - Maintaining and/or creating natural communities.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coterminosity with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The degree of coterminosity with other parts of the public sector. - The number of organisations that need to work together to deliver services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ability to facilitate strategic (planning and delivering services across organisations) - Improving Gross Value Added. - Ability to improve economic planning with partners. - Ability to influence key policy areas such as housing, transport, planning and rate reliefs etc.

	- Skills and capacity	- The impact on public sector skills and capacity. The ability to influence skills to support business growth.
	- Engagement of supply chain (business supply chain)	- Local and national; business and supply chain engaged in innovation and creative service delivery.

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS APPRAISAL

OPTIONS ANALYSED

The options under consideration are as follows:

OPTION 1 – ONE NEW UNITARY COUNCIL

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



OPTION 2 – TWO NEW UNITARY COUNCILS

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



NON-FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

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

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

* scores are calculated from the average of the sustainability criteria 4, 5, 6 and 7 plus the sum of criteria 1,2 and 3

1. Service performance

Both options would benefit from closer working and greater collaboration between related functions such as housing and children's services. There are greater long-term benefits with regard to service delivery under the two new unitary model. This option has been allocated the highest score (1) as this model would allow for authorities in the north and south to develop their own specific priorities which are reflective of local interests and develop local-based commissioning. This would enable the authorities to focus on their respective strengths and concentrate the delivery of services around the different demographic and socio-economic characteristics in the north and south.

The single new unitary option has been awarded the lowest score (2) because the existing County geography crosses the natural border of the Chiltern Hills creating challenges for delivery across all services. Whilst in the short term this option is likely to be less disruptive to service provision, the proposal cuts across the key economic connections of the northern economy which will have a significant impact on delivery of housing. The proposal as set out in the business case does not articulate how it is intended that the model will bring about the required improvements which are necessary in the delivery of the key services to improve performance and outcomes.

2. Democratic leadership & accountability

Both options would benefit from a single political and executive function overseeing all local authority services. However, the leadership under one new unitary authority would be less local. The elected members would be operating remote from the communities they serve. There is a risk of the leadership becoming disconnected from local issues under this model.

The two new unitary model has been allocated the highest score (1) in relation to this criterion because decision making for all services will be located in the areas affected. There will be greater opportunity for residents to take part in decision making. The number of political leaders and executives under this option will provide the greatest opportunity for locally responsive and accountable leadership. This option has the

greatest potential to fundamentally change the relationship between local government and residents from a paternalistic model focused on service provision to one focused on co-production and promoting independence.

3. Local engagement and decision making

Under both models there will be a reduction in the number of councillors due to the reduced number of local authorities. The two new unitary model provides closer accountability between the Councils, their elected members, residents and communities, both geographically in terms of accessing members, meetings and services as well as actual democratic representation at a local level. The role of local councillors will be central to achieving the modern and sustainable local government vision set out in this document as their role will be key to shaping new relationships with residents in order to reduce demand. The two new unitary model has been allocated the highest score (1) against this criterion. This is because under this option there will be more councillors to engage with and represent local residents than the new single unitary model and there is a clear model set out as to how engagement will be effective.

4. Economic growth

Different parts of the county are part of separate functioning economic geographies. The two new unitary (option 2) allows each authority to set coherent plans and priorities based on the growth opportunities, assets and needs of each economic area and align investment plans over the long term with less potential for conflicting priorities shifting focus on a regular basis and like Milton Keynes this will lead to a step change in growth and productivity. Under the two new unitary (option 2) there would be a greater opportunity for senior leaders and executives to develop relationships with local SMEs which would enable the authorities to tailor their business support programmes to local circumstances in order to support growth. Therefore, the two new unitary (option 2) has been allocated the highest score (1).

5. Skills and capacity

The main driver of growth is the SME sector and it is crucial that the council's build credible relationships at a senior level to maximise influence and contribution through investment, aligning skills programmes and business support. A two new unitary model would be in a better position to do this and be more responsive to the needs of local SMEs. Therefore, the two new unitary option would be in a better position to deliver the skills pipeline required for growth which has led to it being allocated the highest score (1) in relation to this criterion.

6. Engagement of supply chain

Both options have merit when considering this criterion and have therefore been allocated the highest score (1). Greater economies of scale could be achieved through the consolidation of the County Council and four district councils into one organisation under the new single unitary option. Efficiencies could also be achieved under the two new unitary model through the sharing of back office and corporate services. Under the single new unitary option a single procurement process would provide more strategic control both financially and operationally. Under the two new unitary model the authorities would have closer engagement with local providers and a greater opportunity to support local businesses and economic growth.

7. Co-terminosity with partners

The two new unitary model would enable closer engagement between the councils and CCGs, the police and local voluntary and community sector organisations in comparison to the single new unitary model. The two new unitary model has been allocated the highest score (1) because it aligns service, partnerships and natural economic boundaries with a logical geography based on how people live their lives in the respective communities and this creates the best arrangements for transformation in both service delivery across the public sector and positively influencing demand by building capacity in communities.

NON-FINANCIAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The total scores allocated in relation to the non-financial analysis indicate that a two new unitary model (option 2) meets the criteria set out better than the one new unitary model (option 1).

- The non-financial analysis recognises that one new unitary would achieve benefits of scale in delivering short-term savings; but the model proposed under Option 2 is more likely to bring about the necessary improvements in service delivery through the provision of local agile leadership, delivering the right services at the right time and working with partners and communities in co-production of effective solutions.
- There is a strong case that Option 2 will provide greater accountability and transparency as well as carrying out decision making at a local level.
- Engagement will be carried out more effectively within the Option 2 model in a way that will reflect good practice in engagement, will be inclusive to allow as many people as possible to play a role and will allow communities to be involved at all stages of the process.
- The Option 2 model clearly demonstrates that the two functioning economic geographies in Buckinghamshire are better served by Leadership that has a single focus and one that allows strong partnerships to be formed without fear of conflicts.
- The model in Option 2 has also demonstrated that there is genuine co-terminosity with partners which will enable the building of stronger relationships and allow services to benefit from joint working.

The analysis demonstrated that the two new-unitary model will better serve the communities of Buckinghamshire.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

FINANCIAL CONTEXT

The new funding model for local government together with shifting patterns of demand require significant transformation in the role of local government and relationships it has with communities and other key partners.

A two new unitary model is founded on putting in place a shared infrastructure for service delivery which will reflect new modern thinking in terms of customer engagement and digitalisation of services. This will improve customer access and convenience, reduce costs and exploit the strengths that we have locally.

CASE STUDY ON SHARED WASTE COLLECTION

Chiltern DC and Wycombe DC successfully procured a joint waste collection service contract from March 2013 delivering savings of £1.5m per annum across a population of 271,000. This contract has provided significant customer benefits and helped increased recycling rates to **55%**. Further savings were realized through a single contract management team and customer services offer. This is currently being enlarged with the South Bucks DC team being combined with the shared contract management team, with the intention to have a single contract covering all three districts due to be procured from 2020, supported by a joint customer service approach across the three authorities for the waste service.

With a two new unitary option we will build on the existing successful relationships and structures in place with parish and town councils. The structures will be clear, reflect local need and avoid the creation of additional levels / hubs which experience has shown do not empower communities or change the relationship between providers and users of public services. We are clear that we want to put residents at the centre of decision making with strong capable

local political leadership. Our case has shown that there are clear differences between the north and south of the County which two new unitaries can address in a cost effective, modern and inclusive way.

CASE STUDY ON PARISH COUNCIL JOINT WORKING

In Aylesbury Vale, the Council has been innovative in ring-fencing 20% of its New Homes Bonus for Parish use. Initially unique in local government, it chose to let a panel of parish council and district representatives allocate this funding to parish led schemes. From village halls, cycle ways and traffic calming it has improved the lives of thousands of parishes' residents affected by housing growth. Significantly, by letting them determine local priorities and supporting them with tangible resources they are actively engaged in this process.

One size does not fit all and by building on existing strengths and collaborating where it makes sense, whilst recognising differences and the need to meet these with locally driven solutions the two new unitary model provides the balance our communities need and deserve.

Whilst any organisation created through re-structuring will be an entirely new organisation, size will be a critical factor in terms of tackling issues differently. Organisations which are too large will be unable to adapt, will be too remote from the issues they seek to solve and will spend too long restructuring. Consequently, they are more likely to end up replicating existing, broken, models of delivery. The case for a two new unitary model is compelling in Buckinghamshire given the Social, Economic and place making challenges. Under a two new unitary model the created organisations will be smaller and more agile. The shared experiences of managing change and joint working gained by the districts will be inherited by the new organisations.

ANALYSIS

This section presents a high level analysis of the potential costs and savings which might be achieved by creating one or two new unitary solution. If the arguments and financial analysis presented in either this or the County Council's submission were to move to implementation, then both cases would need to be worked up in more detail to refine the assumptions, costs and savings. Reflecting that the analysis is high level, a degree of caution has been built in to the analysis, thereby providing a contingency in the event that the actual experience varies negatively from the assumptions used here.

Many of the assumptions used in this analysis share the same shared delivery structures proposed within the County Council's report and so are also supported by their analysis and their external testing.

The assumptions used have also been benchmarked and tested against other, externally available, experience on forming new unitaries in order to confirm their validity. In some areas this has identified that the assumptions used in the County Council's proposals appear to be overly cautious and where this strongly felt to be the case higher assumptions have been used.

The significant deviations from the County Council's model are around the additional Governance structures and costs of Democracy. For People services like Adult Social Care and Children's Services, there are also additional roles over the one new unitary approach. Whilst this adds cost, it provides greater resource and focus on the transformation of these vitally important services.

Additionally, reflecting the compelling economic and growth based differences in the two areas, the proposals for two new unitaries include provision for additional resource for Place services.

In the majority of other areas the model is predicated on shared delivery structures, but varied to provide additional intelligent client resources in some areas to reflect the unique differences underpinning the North and South of the County.

Influence of Milton Keynes Unitary Council in Buckinghamshire

The analysis recognises that the Buckinghamshire proposals presented here does not cover the entirety of the County of Buckinghamshire. Milton Keynes Council was created as a unitary council in 1997 with a population of circa 220,000 and occupies the northern most quarter of the County. Despite its size upon creation, Milton Keynes has performed well as a unitary in this time, delivering significant GVA to the economy and is meeting the needs of its residents and businesses.

Adopting the County Council's proposals will deliver two mismatched unitaries by size and by geography. Aylesbury Vale's economic and housing growth characteristics show strong similarities with those of Milton Keynes and this is borne out in the live to work journeys made by their two respective groups of residents. The south of the County on the other hand looks towards the Thames Valley and North / West London.

A north / south unitary solution which encompassed the whole of the County of Buckinghamshire could:

- Address the disparity in relation to size,
- Improve the sustainability of the created organisations,
- Build on the experience gained by Milton Keynes,
- Speed the process of transformation and reduce the cost
- Align the geographies with the National Infrastructure Commission work
- Improve the focus of housing delivery and economic growth

There are clear potential opportunities and gains from considering a wider geography that need to be considered and explored in a wider, holistic, sustainable unitary solution for the region. Given the timeframe, this has not been possible in detail at this stage. However, ignoring this factor in any decision made weakens both the long term strength and contribution to the wider economic growth agenda.

VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

A detailed analysis was commissioned in 2015 by LG Futures on whether an Aylesbury Vale and rest of Bucks unitary solution would produce viable councils.

The principal questions posed within this report and its conclusions were as follows:

<p>Starting point</p> <p>Can resources and expenditure be disaggregated in a reasonable and equitable way?</p> <p>Do any of the proposed authorities begin with an unfair or unmanageable deficit in year 1?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disaggregation of resources and expenditure indicates expenditure and resources would be balanced between the two unitaries. Neither would have a significant surplus or deficit. • There is some scope to refine the datasets to improve robustness but this is unlikely to materially change the overall conclusion.
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<p>Council tax convergence</p> <p>Can council taxes for all residents be converged into a single rate within 5 years without placing an unreasonable financial burden on residents?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council taxes can be converged within 5 years with relatively small overall changes in council tax. • Council taxpayers in Aylesbury Vale would see no change in council tax. The largest increase in council tax would be for residents of Wycombe who would experience a 1.9% increase in council tax over 5 years.
<p>Repay transitional costs within 5 years</p> <p>Can the costs of setting up the new unitary councils be repaid within 5 years?</p> <p>Can this be demonstrated with reasonable certainty and with a reasonable margin for error?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimates for transitional costs and savings have been estimated based on benchmarks from other LGR business cases. • Payback can be achieved within 2 years on this basis. • More work needs to go into the specifics of the business case estimates.
<p>Optimum size and/ or structure for delivering savings and efficiency</p> <p>What is the optimum size for a unitary council, and can a reasonable case be made that the proposed structure has more economies than diseconomies of scale?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both of the two unitaries would be reasonable compared to other single-tier councils in England. Aylesbury Vale would be at the lower quartile and Bucks UA would be at the upper quartile. • There is no evidence that larger local authorities are more efficient or what the optimum "size" is for an authority.

ANALYSIS OF COSTS

The analysis includes estimated reorganisation costs which cover:

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

The approach to the analysis of each is as follows:

- **Income foregone from harmonising council tax**
Where UAs are formed by combining existing authorities there will need to be a process to harmonise council tax levels. By 2019/20 when the unitary councils are assumed to be formed it is estimated that there will be a difference of £41 per annum between the lowest average band D council tax (including the County Council tax of £1,305) in Wycombe District Council (£1,448⁷) and highest in Chiltern District Council (£1,489). Bringing together the three districts in the South creates council tax differentials which will need to be harmonised.⁸

⁷ Wycombe District Council includes a special expenses precept

⁸ Council Tax rates for 2016/17 are based on CTR and CTB forms

Three options were considered in the Strategic Options Analysis report to harmonise council tax. Firstly, it is possible to freeze council tax for some payers at the high end and increase the council tax of others until everyone is on the same level then a universal council tax increase can be applied. Secondly, council tax can be harmonised to the lowest current level on day one of the new council and then all council tax payers have the same percentage increase thereafter. Thirdly, council tax can be harmonised to the weighted average level. Whichever way this is modelled there is less council tax collected than if there was no change to the current structures. The difference between status quo and the new structure has been described as “income foregone”.

Income foregone has been calculated by multiplying the tax base by the estimated band D council tax rate under the status quo to arrive at an estimated total council tax revenue collected figure. The figure was then compared to the same calculation for each council tax harmonisation option. In all of the options modelled the income foregone is least over five years when harmonisation occurs to the lowest level of council tax. Under the two new unitary model there is an increase in council tax revenue over the five years as a result of harmonisation on the assumption that both unitary councils will increase council tax by 3.99% from 2019/20 onwards.

There is a high degree of certainty around the Council Tax calculation effects, as these are based on firm plans which have been published by each of the authorities. The proposed approach is clearer for residents to understand and is politically the most palatable and would help minimise the new unitaries starting from a position of negative public reaction.

The income foregone of £1.1m under the one new unitary model compares favourably to the calculated £8.7m foregone in a new one unitary proposition over five years. After three years under two new unitaries there is no income foregone and council tax harmonisation increases Council Tax revenue to the new councils from that point onwards. Whereas, under the one new unitary model all five years result in income foregone.

- **Reductions in senior staff headcount**
Senior staff restructuring costs relate to redundancy payments and pension costs for those posts in tiers one (Chief Executive), two (Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Directors) and three (Senior Management/Heads of Service) no longer needed to run a reduced number of authorities.
- **Change management for reorganising the Councils**
The change costs are one-off costs to support the reorganisation change process, including setting up the new unitary councils, a single shared service back-office function and the integration of IT systems across multiple organisations.

ANALYSIS OF SAVINGS

The estimated savings from reorganisation cover:

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

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

- **Reduction in senior officer posts**
The savings in respect of the senior staff structure are the salaries and on-costs saved for the reduced numbers of senior staff posts required to run the new authorities.
- **Reduction in the number of members**
Member savings come from having fewer authorities and hence a requirement for fewer members.
- **Savings in corporate services**
Corporate/back office services savings are achieved through the consolidation of these functions and the economies of scale typically achieved. Across the Councils there is experience of delivering savings in this area. Under the one new unitary model the assumption would be for essentially shared back office functions delivered by an appropriate mix of joint in-house and outsourced arrangements. Therefore, the costs of transition to this arrangement and its recurring costs would not be materially different from what would be the case for a one new unitary.
- **Service optimisation savings**
The service optimisation savings are achieved through service consolidation and procurement savings, e.g. a single waste collection contract. To date the districts have already achieved a material degree of service consolidation, and a significant degree of in-house knowledge and experience exists around how to deliver successfully these changes. A programme of consolidation and transformation would have three key improvement aims:
 - Quality of service and meeting customer needs within the context of a Customer Service Strategy
 - Creating resilient sustainable services
 - Delivering efficiency gains and financial savings
- **Property rationalisation savings**
The savings from property rationalisation, consolidated purchasing of utilities and Facilities Management contracts. The focus of this work stream would be on how property assets should be utilised for the administration of services and customer delivery. This part of an overall property strategy would link closely with the Customer Services strategy. It is anticipated from work already undertaken by the Districts that with the changes around shift and appropriate mobile working the requirement for property space will significantly reduce. The approach to the delivery of back office services will have a material impact on property. The property strategy around service operational assets (Leisure facilities, Depots, etc) will be driven by factors that essentially would not be influenced by the model of local government, and therefore in this business case has a neutral effect. There will also be supplementary benefits from the property rationalisation activity in terms of ability to accelerate other important priorities such as housing delivery, which have not been costed into the table below.

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

Income foregone, costs and savings	One new unitary model of local government £m	Two new unitary model of local government £m
Income foregone		
Council tax harmonisation (lowest level)	8.7	1.1
Total income foregone	8.7	1.1
Costs		
Senior staff restructuring	5.0	3.9
Change management	9.3	10.4
Total costs	14.3	14.3
Savings		
Senior staff restructuring	30.1	23.0
Member costs	4.3	0.6
Corporate services	31.7	25.3
Service optimisation	24.5	19.6
Property rationalisation	5.3	4.3
Total savings	95.9	72.8
Net savings	72.9	57.4

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

FUNDING THE TRANSITION

In the early years following the creation of any new council structure there would be a requirement for the authorities to fund income foregone as a result of council tax harmonisation and the cost of implementing the new structures, e.g. one-off change costs and staff exit costs (prior to year one of the new council structures being in place). The source of funding the foregone revenue/costs in the early years could be borrowing or council reserves. The table below shows the combined earmarked and unallocated reserves for each option according to each authority's Revenue Account Budget as at 31 March 2016⁹.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>

Revenue Account Budget 31 March 2016	Earmarked reserves £m	Unallocated reserves £m	Total £m
Buckinghamshire County Council – Actual Balances	128.7	19.6	148.3
Aylesbury Vale – Actual Balances	24.1	3.3	27.4
Chiltern – Actual Balances	5.0	4.2	9.2
South Bucks – Actual Balances	2.2	3.5	5.7
Wycombe	38.9	8.6	47.5
Less Minimum Working Balance and Contractual Commitments	(35.9)		
Total	198.9	39.2	238.1

Not all of these Reserves can be called upon as some represent minimum assessed levels of working balance and some will represent sums set aside for earmarked liabilities which, it is expected, will be called upon within the years prior to, or shortly after reorganisation.

PAYBACK PERIOD

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

PART B

Draft

A ROADMAP FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE:

A NEW MODEL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This section sets out the road map for a different future for local government in Buckinghamshire. It outlines our vision which is at the heart of our new delivery model and describes where we want to get to. It articulates our ambition for the place and the people who live or spend time here and it explains, using the five statutory tests as a guide, how we will get there.

VISION

Local government reorganisation should enable and accelerate reform across the public sector, providing leadership of place and democratic accountability. Most importantly of all local government needs to reshape its relationships with residents focussing much more on building resilience and independence. Sustainable local government will work alongside people and communities to assist them in securing their own wellbeing, with much more emphasis on early intervention and prevention to avoid demand for hard-stretched public services. It should also provide a better focus for encouraging and enabling growth.

AMBITION

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

1. Local government will be rooted in communities and residents will be empowered to participate in the design and delivery of services for their local area;
2. Administrative boundaries and democratic accountability will reflect real economic and community geographies to allow aligned planning, consistent prioritisation and place based action to improve outcomes for residents and ensure that the deployment of public money is optimised;
3. Community resilience will be enhanced by reframing the relationship between local government and residents so that it is focussed on promoting independence and harnessing the capabilities of individuals, rather than a paternalistic model which increases dependency;
4. Collaboration and partnership working between public bodies will be enhanced by coterminous working, shared prioritisation and joint action;
5. Innovation in the use of data and technology and in the design and delivery of public services to best reflect and support the way people live their lives today and improve effectiveness, productivity and efficiency.

SUMMARY

One Direction : each council focussed on one economic geography

- There are two distinctive economic geographies in the north and south respectively. Each is part of wider, nationally significant economic areas.
- Two tier local government has held back growth and productivity. This reorganisation must not repeat the mistakes of the past. It must unleash the full economic potential of the two economic geographies.
- The confusion of the LEP geographies and focus is hindering rather than supporting growth. Economic performance is significantly below par and this reorganisation must take the opportunity to address this.

Even More Local: two councils provides greater local accountability

- Two councils will provide genuine local accountability and build stronger partnerships in local communities.
- Elected members mandated as community leaders in governance structures that provide clarity around accountability to communities and places that make sense to local people.
- Effective engagement with communities focussed on empowering them and unleashing the full capacity and capability of local people.

More Effective: the right service at the right time improves outcomes and builds resilience

- Delivery focussed on providing 'just enough' of the 'right services at the right time' to improve outcomes and build resilience.
- This is all about promoting independence and self-sufficiency.
- Design and delivery of local services will be more sensitive to the particular needs of different communities.

More Efficient: thriving economies and resilient communities provide sustainability

- -Thriving economies will provide greater public resources and more capacity and capability to address local issues.
- -Empowered communities and self-sufficient individuals in control of their own lives need less and consume less public services.
- -Structural change coupled with this new approach to building thriving economies and resilient communities will create genuinely sustainable local government.

ONE DIRECTION

Our aim and ambition is to create two of the most successful and productive locations in the UK for business and housing growth, in attractive environments where people and businesses want to be – truly great places to grow.

We will plan for and help deliver over 45,000 new homes by 2036 across the two economic areas and support fast employment growth with 33,000 new jobs in the same period.

As two of the most strategically well placed areas in the country, we will optimise the areas latent potential and fully harness its assets and the contribution it can return to the local area, wider region and UK PLC and start to close the underperformance gap that exists.

Our role in local government is about enabling the area to thrive into the future, providing the long term strategic direction and effective solutions to existing issues and ensuring we achieve our full potential. In the context of creating successful places to live and work, the goal is to create communities and environments that are dynamic, responsive and sustainable.

Under two new unitaries Aylesbury Vale will achieve one of the highest rates of housing growth in the UK, more than most metropolitan cities and matching if not exceeding levels in adjoining growth areas of Bicester and Milton Keynes in the last 5 years. It will lead the actual delivery of new housing, with the recent garden town designation for Aylesbury, whilst the Southern area will grow within its constraining geography building on its clear relationship with London and the Thames Valley.

We will have a clear focus on achieving positive outcomes for our economic areas and work closely with those neighbouring economies that we have a symbiotic relationship with.

Wycombe DC's approach to commercialism in the property regeneration (as recognised in the "2016 MJ Awards") will be continued and rolled out within the new Southern unitary. We will have successful partnerships and collaborations with key agencies and government partners to achieve results on the ground and effectively engage with local communities and businesses.

We will have a clear compelling vision and delivery plan for the long term future of the area and innovative approaches to getting things done. We will create the right conditions for sustained economic and housing growth in our areas.

Aylesbury Vale's approach to the Commercial Council can continue to drive forward the concept on behalf of the local government sector and create the delivery model that is scale-able across all aspects of local government. Aylesbury Vale was iESE's Council of the Year 2015.

Working together, we will have efficient and effective services and systems, that are accountable, connected with the customer, whether that be business, resident or government and be agile in responding to and making the most of opportunities such as the East West rail scheme, the Cambridge – Milton Keynes- Oxford corridor in the north and Heathrow/Thames Valley Hub and Cross Rail corridor to the south.

PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES...WHAT'S STOPPING US FROM ACHIEVING OUR AMBITIONS?

The north and south of Buckinghamshire are very different functional economic areas, with distinctive characteristics, challenges and opportunities. Most of Aylesbury Vale is part of the Milton Keynes Travel To Work Area (TTWA), and links very closely to part of the region, whilst the area to the south, looks to the Thames Valley and west of London and is part of the High Wycombe, Slough and Heathrow TTWAs.

The current two tier arrangements, that attempt to join the two areas artificially together, are actually hampering the performance of both areas in achieving the key ambitions set out in chapter 1. This is true in relation to growth, strategic planning, skills development, infrastructure planning, investment strategies and on the ground delivery.

Because of the very distinct differences and challenges/opportunities between the north and the south, at present there is no coherent economic strategy that exists for the geography that Bucks CC currently operates across. The County Council no longer provides an economic development function as an authority and has instead provided funding to a variety of different organisations to deliver some economic activity across the area and this has meant a dilution of impact and overall strategic focus.

As a consequence, the whole of the administrative area currently covered by Bucks County (and in particular the key urban areas of Aylesbury and High Wycombe), have been significantly **underperforming in terms of productivity and growth indices**. The table below sets out the extent of the opportunities lost to the area and wider economy.

Geography	GVA	GVA	GVA	Productivit	Business	Bus LEU (Scale	
	1997	2014	growth	y (Jobs)	LEU (2010-	up)	
	(£m)		1997-2014	2004-14	16)	Sm10	Med50 -
						-49	249
England	665,544	1,377,851	107%	+8.0%	+18.3%	+9.7%	+6.3%
Berks, Bucks & Oxon (NUTS2)	37,404	80,076	114%	+6.0%	+14.8%	+8.4%	+6.3%
Buckinghamshire	7,578	14,774	95%	+0.1%	+14.1%	+8.6%	+0.8%
Milton Keynes	4,030	10,294	155%	+17.9%	+29.0%	+12.8%	+8.2%
Potential dividends if Bucks grows at NUTS2 level		£1,443m	+19%	+15120jobs	+230 LEU	N/A	+35 LEUs
Potential dividends if Bucks grows at MK levels		£4,550m	+60%	+35020jobs	+4,925LEUs	+142 LEUs	+47 LEUs

Sources: All latest ONS & NOMIS data

Over the recent past, Buckinghamshire is estimated (by ONS data) to have underperformed the Thames Valley (TV) NUTS2 sub-region, of which it is a part (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire). By 2014, GVA is £1.4bn per annum lower than that if Bucks had matched average Thames Valley growth since 1997. 15,120 new jobs (since 2004) and 230 new businesses (since 2010) would have been created at average NUTS2 levels of performance. The comparisons with MK are even more striking. Divergence of £4.6bn pa GVA by 2014, 35,000 jobs and almost 5,000 businesses.

Looking at the information presented in the highly respected Benchmarking Local Innovation report (produced by Enterprise Research Centre in 2015), there is also clear evidence that the level of innovation is far from where it should be for those businesses in the Bucks Thames Valley (TV) area.

As the table below indicates the Bucks TV area is not in the top half for any of the innovation measures and is far and away the worst performer in the London mega-city region. A single new unitary construct would only serve to continue to reinforce this poor performance. Two new unitary Councils on the other hand would enable the two economic areas to be properly integrated into their respective LEP geography, so the Southern area would become

part of the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and immediately be part of an eco-system and agglomeration including Reading University and the Business Enterprise Research and Development (BERD) giants of Thames Valley. Aylesbury Vale is unequivocally part of SEMLEP and would have access to the most innovative city in the UK and universities like Cranfield, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and the Open University, all arguably larger than the two Higher Education Institutions in Buckinghamshire.

We have estimated that if the two economically coherent and growth-oriented unitaries of Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern Hills can achieve just a 2% additional growth rate over the one new unitary construct, then the additional benefit to the Treasury is in the order of £100m per annum.

Figure 13: Ranking of local economic areas by innovation benchmarks

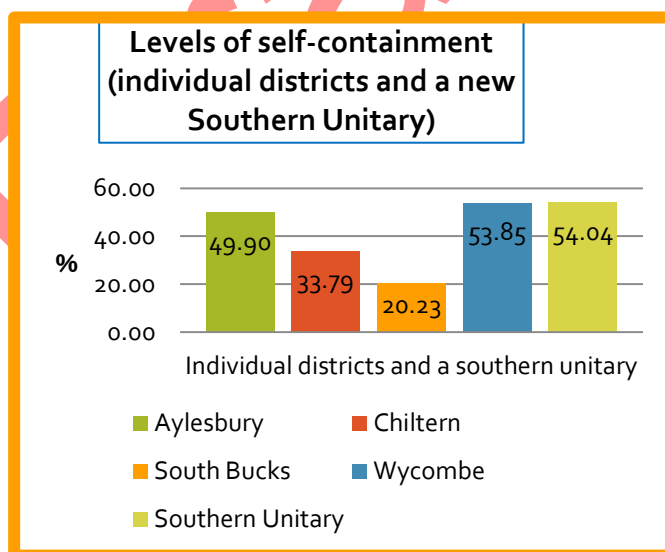
ENGLISH LEAS	Product/Service	New to market	Process	Strategy/Marketing	R&D	Collaboration	Overall
Oxfordshire LEP	1	5	1	2	1	1	1
Greater Cambridge & Peterborough	5	10	5	1	2	2	2
South East Midlands	3	6	7	3	9	6	3
Gloucestershire	2	17	12	7	6	3	4
Enterprise M3	4	1	21	12	7	4	5
Dorset	10	2	3	11	13	21	6
Tees Valley	8	15	2	10	12	14	7
Coast to Capital	18	3	11	4	18	8	8
Swindon and Wiltshire	7	9	4	5	5	38	9
Liverpool City Region	16	25	14	8	10	13	10
Northamptonshire	9	16	6	33	3	20	11
Cheshire and Warrington	15	22	13	16	14	22	12
Comwall and the Isles of Scilly	19	26	8	6	37	7	13
Coventry and Warwickshire	24	23	23	17	11	9	14
Lancashire	6	33	16	22	16	15	15
Black Country	14	30	19	34	8	5	16
Leicester and Leicestershire	11	35	10	21	4	29	17
Thames Valley Berkshire	17	11	30	35	17	10	18
Hertfordshire	37	7	28	14	22	24	19
Greater Manchester	26	19	18	38	25	11	20
Heart of the South West	21	18	31	18	15	34	21
Derby, Derbyshr., Nottingham, Notts.	20	31	37	9	19	23	22
North Eastern	23	8	29	31	24	26	23
Leeds City Region	22	28	24	32	21	16	24
London	32	20	22	23	23	25	25
Worcestershire	39		26	13	31	12	26
Sheffield City Region	27	29	15	26	20	30	27
Greater Birmingham and Solihull	25	4	27	29	33	32	28
East Wales	12	36	34	20	32	28	29
South East	28	24	33	19	27	31	30
Solent	33	14	32	41	26	17	31
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	29	13	17	27	40	40	32
West of England	34	34	9	15	44	33	33
West Wales & The Valleys	35	37	20	28	28	27	34
SW Scotland	40	12	35	30	34	45	35
The Marches	38		39	37	35	18	36
Buckinghamshire Thames Valley	30	27		39	36	36	37
Humber	44		42	25	38	19	38
NE & Highlands & Islands	13	40	40	45	30	35	39
York and North Yorkshire	45	21	36	36	39	39	40
Greater Lincolnshire	31		41	24	45	41	41
New Anglia	43	38	25	40	41	37	42
Eastern Scotland	36	32	43	42	29	44	43
Northern Ireland	41	39	38	43	42	42	44
Cumbria	42			44	43	43	45

The evolution of the LEPs in this part of the country also further evidences the real economic geography of the area. In 2010, AVDC joined the South East Midlands LEP, as Aylesbury Vale is part of the natural 'functional economic area' of SEMLEP. SEMLEP itself, was a natural evolution and extension of a government designated growth area (Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM) and had also co-operated in working on the original 'Oxford to Cambridge' arc proposals. After the first wave of LEPs had been approved, it was clear that certain parts of the country were not represented by a LEP, including the "white space" of southern Buckinghamshire and BTVLEP was the last LEP to be established in 2012. In 2013, SQW were commissioned to help facilitate a review of the LEPs position in Aylesbury Vale. One of the conclusions by SQW in December 2013 was:

"In case AVDC is forced to choose between LEPs, the strongest strategic alignment and rationale regarding functional economic geographies is for AVDC to be part of SEMLEP."

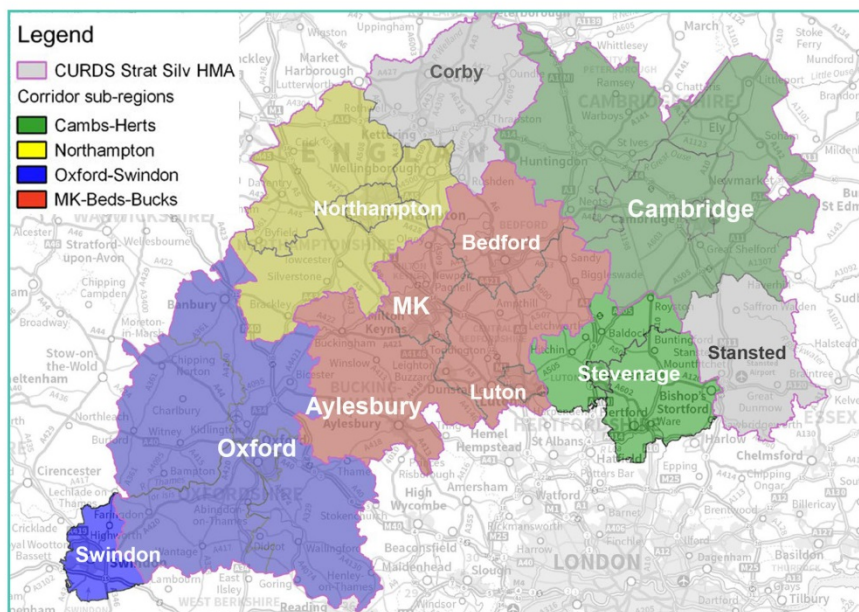
SQW LEPs report 2013

BTVLEP is, by some distance, the smallest LEP economic geography in London and the Greater South East (GSE). The resident population is 37th out of 38 LEPs and almost 30% smaller than Oxfordshire's - the next smallest London and GSE LEP. BTV GVA (of £14.8bn) is sixth smallest of all LEPs and almost 40% smaller than Oxfordshire - the next smallest in London and GSE. Most critically, Buckinghamshire has lowest level of self-containment of any of the 38 LEPs - 58% - and this has fallen steadily over the years (e.g. from 66% in the 2001 census).



What is striking about the self-containment illustration is that the +/-50% self-containment levels achieved are almost entirely accounted for by the urban centres of Aylesbury and High Wycombe in their respective districts. There is almost no net 'county dividend' from commuting between the north and south of the county.

The recently issued Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor Interim Report by the National Infrastructure Commission also confirms that Aylesbury Vale is clearly part of an economic and housing area that relates to this corridor, rather than a Bucks wide area.



NIC Interim Report (Dec 2016) Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor; p33 Source: Savills.

The lack of a clear and outcomes-focused economic development strategy for the county area is all too apparent and can be evidenced by the poor performance of BTVLEP in terms of growth related outcomes. BTVLEP have difficulty in being able to identify and get collective “buy in” to the mission critical issues that need intervention across the boundary of administrative convenience that BTVLEP operates across. The scale of BTVLEP is also an issue as almost the smallest LEP in the country; its effectiveness is also impaired by the attempts to work across two economic areas with very different needs.

There are also two clear transport corridors reflecting this economic geography. The south of the county is closely integrated into the transport infrastructure of London and the Thames Valley. The north by contrast looks to transport infrastructure connections more on an east-west axis towards MK. The existing county-wide transport strategy fails to sufficiently recognise and reflect the needs of both geographies and for many years the area has suffered from a lack of investment in pro-active strategic transport planning because of the inability to prioritise across the two functional economic areas because of political balancing acts, which dilute the overall impact.

One of the very real challenges that the district councils in Buckinghamshire face is the disconnected input into the planning process by Bucks County Council. This is in relation to the strategic contributions preparation of the new local plans and also development management. This is having a serious impact on the delivery of major housing and employment schemes across the area and the ability to secure planning decisions in a timely fashion. Their input into strategic planning also has the potential to undermine the preparation of robust and soundly evidenced local plans.

The most recent example of this relates to the county councils perspective on green belt release as reported in the Planning Weekly news in December 2016. The strategic planning approach that seems to be promoted by BCC in relation to the green belt is clearly in conflict with central government guidance to local authorities needing to meet their own housing need, including releasing appropriate sites from the green belt where unmet need is an issue. This has the potential to undermine the preparation of local plans for the area and create uncertainty about future housing delivery.

In summary, there are three principle reasons why in the past we have not been able to optimise the areas full economic potential on a local and more regional scale:

Buckinghamshire underperforms in terms of local growth because it is entirely the wrong level of geography to provide leadership and governance of relevant Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA's)

The County Council level leadership and governance of its functional economic areas is hampered by being pulled in two different directions, which has led to a lack of strategic coherence and prioritisation

These systemic problems mean that the county council have been unable to optimise the potential of the two functional areas and has struggled to create a coherent long term economic strategy

LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE PAST

The deconstruction of Buckinghamshire in the late 1990's is probably the most positive, beneficial example of local government reform not just locally, but nationally, in recent decades.

The liberation of Milton Keynes (MK) from the 12th century construct of 'Bucca's home' (Buckinghamshire) has delivered the UK's most successful and fastest growing city, led by a dynamic, creative unitary council. In 1997, MK became a unitary council, assuming responsibilities for services previously provided by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC). The city is consistently one of the fastest growing, highest performing, smartest and most environmentally responsible in Europe.

Buckinghamshire is not similar to areas like Cornwall and Wiltshire which have most recently moved to unitary status. These areas are both sparsely populated rural counties (around 150 persons per square kilometre). Their largest settlements are Truro (around 20,000) and Chippenham (around 45,000) respectively. They are very distant from major metropolitan centres (apart from the M4 corridor area of north Wiltshire). They have productivity levels at 76% and 89% of UK average (compared to Buckinghamshire at 117%). The critical mass savings issue is clearly more pertinent in very sparsely populated rural counties with no major anchor urban centres.

RISKS OF THE ONE NEW UNITARY PROPOSAL

The county council's "Business case for modernising local government in Buckinghamshire" is virtually silent on the substance of local growth strategy and economic geography. The omission of any recognition throughout the county council submissions of the major urban centres (Aylesbury, High Wycombe) and other prominent towns as specialist, distinctive drivers of growth is a reflection of the failure to appreciate or to acknowledge the success that Milton Keynes has achieved in relation to growth.

One new unitary will continue to have divided economic objectives, conflicting priorities and as a result will not be able to maximise these thriving economic areas. The proposal submitted by BCC provides very little evidence of how it will focus on the unique challenges and opportunities of the two economic areas, how the transport and housing needs will be met, particularly in relation to the major growth opportunities in Aylesbury Vale and how it is possible to accelerate the delivery of housing and employment to meet local and wider needs but also contribute to the wider opportunity offered by the East-West Growth Corridor. Joining these economic areas together artificially for the convenience of the administrative boundary of the county simply won't work and is not in the local or national interest.

In short, Buckinghamshire is one of the most porous economic geographies in the UK, and a member of two quite distinctive functional economic areas - South East Midlands and Thames Valley. On a best fit basis, unitary local authorities would recognise this, rather than augment the already divisive leadership and governance of economic geographies.

MOVING TO THE FUTURE

We are now at a stage where the further deconstruction of Buckinghamshire County into two new unitary councils to operate alongside and, where appropriate, in partnership with Milton Keynes is appropriate.

Buckinghamshire has not only been holding back the crucial Thames Valley sub-region of London and the Greater South East, but MKs 'liberation' has been followed by sustained growth performance that far outstrips that of the residual administrative county. The additional benefits that could have accrued locally had the key urban centres of Aylesbury and High Wycombe been permitted to shape and control their own destinies, in the same way as Milton Keynes, is of national significance.

Liberating Aylesbury and High Wycombe as urban anchors of two new unitaries can create the next version of 'Milton Keynes' in terms of local growth, innovation and fiscal contributions to the UK. Major intervention priorities in growth sectors like film and media, advanced automotive engineering, space etc., all are parts of much wider initiatives and clusters (like London and Hertfordshire's film sector, the Stevenage to Portsmouth space corridor, or South East Midland's 'Motorsport Valley').

There is nothing 'wrong' with BTVLEP's approach in the face of these challenges, and pan-boundary collaboration is to be welcomed. But, the two new unitary option provides a much better fit of local authorities to Functional Economic Areas (FEA). This would therefore strengthen public-business leadership and governance (probably SEMLEP and Thames Valley Berkshire LEPs) of these crucial economic geographies.

The approach proposed by the district authorities would however enable the area to fully unlock the potential of the area thereby making the maximum contribution to the local areas, region and national economy. It would mean there would be clear prioritisation and accountability to be wholly responsible for the place making and shaping proposals for the functioning economic areas and to move this forward in a timely joined up fashion.

The focus of the economic development activity by the councils would continue to be clearly focused on delivering outcomes on the ground, with business intensification and regeneration in the south and place-making and accelerating major growth and housing opportunities in the north. Two new unitaries would strengthen the relationships with BBF, through the much better fit with business and commercial markets.

Bucks LEP is the smallest (and most porous) of all the LEPs and there are serious doubts about its effectiveness and long term sustainability. The option to have two new unitary councils for the current two tier area would enable a review of the overlapping arrangement and to consider whether Bucks LEP should be absorbed within the existing LEP arrangements in terms of SEMLEP for the north and the Greater Thames Valley LEP for the south.

This arrangement would provide more sustainable and agile building blocks for future devolution deals based around real issues, such as the NIC Cambridge to Oxford corridor and Thames Valley/Heathrow hub.

There are also wider benefits of the two new-unitary proposal in particular to London and the Greater South East. (GSE). If London is to remain Europe's premier world city, the 'mega-city region' needs to enable, support and contribute to London and GSE's development.

The leadership and governance of the 'mega-city region' (MCR) outside London itself comprises eleven LEPs, and well over 100 LAs. Of the LAs, 20 are unitaries, and eleven are administrative counties. This level of complexity makes the planning and management of MCR growth challenging. Rationalisation and coherence is important. The recent merger of SEMLEP and NEP has been helpful. A major concern with a Buckinghamshire Unitary will be that, far from simplifying the MCR growth landscape (as the SEMLEP-NEP merger did), it complicates it further. A Buckinghamshire Unitary looks 'both ways' - to West Anglia AND Thames Valley radial growth corridors - causing tensions both locally and sub-regionally.

A far superior configuration would be a unitary Aylesbury Vale in SEMLEP contributing unambiguously to the NW/West Anglia and the O2C corridors, and a unitary Southern Buckinghamshire in TV Berkshire, contributing unequivocally to Thames Valley and M40 corridors.

Post the two unitary option, the number of LAs with which London MCR has to contend has reduced from five two-tier to two single purpose; and the number of LEPs has reduced from eleven to ten - both now amongst the ten largest LEP economies in England. Rather than adding to complexity and tension, this solution promotes rationalisation and coherence.

One other major set of issues concerns joint arrangements. It is quite right that Buckinghamshire should seek and foster joint arrangements to improve the well-being of local communities. Existing joint arrangements referenced include:-

The [BOB \(Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire west\) Sustainable Transformation Plan \(STP\)](#) for health provision in the county

The [England Economic Heartlands Alliance](#) - transport authorities and LEPs from Oxfordshire to Cambridgeshire that effectively focuses on east-west connectivity along the O2C corridor

The Greater Thames Valley 6-LEP consortium (GTV6LEP) of BTV, Coast2Capital, Enterprise M3, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and TVB LEPs

The LEP High Technology Group (of BTV, SEMLEP, Oxfordshire, Coventry & Warwickshire, Leicester & Leicestershire LEPs) working collaboratively on Silverstone and advanced automotive engineering.

There are many other sets of arrangements of this character which could be referenced. The point is that NONE of these groups would be diminished by a two new unitary reform in Buckinghamshire, and most of them would be strengthened by a sharper focus on the differential offers and opportunities of the north and south of the county.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This consideration of the appropriate arrangements for local government is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reorganise local government into better building blocks to respond to the wider economic challenges facing Aylesbury Vale and the Chiltern Hills areas in the future. The economic performance of this part of the region is at a crucial stage of development and any proposed reorganisation of local government needs to ensure that the prospects of optimising the contribution that the two very distinct economic areas can make to the local and national economy are pro-actively managed and delivered.

The proposals for a third runway at Heathrow and London's growth will clearly need to be a focus for the new southern unitary and ensuring that local communities can harness the opportunities that this can bring for the local economy whilst also preserving the key elements that have made the area a successful place to live and work.

Similarly the two key national infrastructure projects of East West Rail and the new Cambridge to Oxford Corridor will be "game and place changing" projects that will require the new Aylesbury Vale Council to be able to be an active and key player in the new NIC Governance arrangement. As an all-purpose Council for the functional economic area, it would be able to provide sufficient support and activity to maximise the potential of these projects from a growth and housing delivery perspective.

This section presents the high level economic and local growth rationales for the establishment of two new unitary councils in the administrative county of Buckinghamshire. The case draws on government and ONS data, and expert

analysis, to reflect on the work done by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and the four district councils (DCs) to propose structural local government reform (LGR) options.

The argument for a two new unitary option anchored by the major urban centres of High Wycombe and Aylesbury is compelling.

Firstly, the example of the last major LGR in Buckinghamshire - the 1997 establishment of Milton Keynes (MK) as an unitary council - is a striking endorsement of this model. Had Buckinghamshire achieved levels of economic performance akin to MK since LGR, the local and national economy would be at least £4.5bn GVA, 35,000 jobs and up to 5,000 businesses better off. Second, Buckinghamshire is even holding back the crucial Thames Valley sub-region. Performance compared to Berkshire and Oxfordshire shows deficits of over £1.4bn GVA and 15,000 jobs.

A significant reason for this underperformance is the pull of two distinctive and different functional economic corridors on the north and south of the county. Aylesbury Vale is unambiguously part of the North West Radial vector out of London and the Oxford to Cambridge corridor. Wycombe and Southern Buckinghamshire is part of Thames Valley and the Berkshire FEAs.

This two-facing economy has been exacerbated by sometimes weak and complacent County Council strategic leadership, and has left the BTVLEP struggling to produce a coherent economic narrative.

The appropriate precedents for unitary councils in Buckinghamshire are NOT Cornwall and Wiltshire - as referenced by BCC, nor is the proposal comparable to the small unitaries proposed in Bedfordshire as those Councils are very different from Buckinghamshire. Nor is Buckinghamshire like Cheshire. It is an area next to the County's capital with two large towns and potential for significant growth. These unitaries would have a strong economic future. The Southern Buckinghamshire unitary would be the sixth largest in England by 2020, and Aylesbury Vale would be a top-30 unitary in population terms.

Perhaps most importantly, though, the clear economic focus and purposes of the two unitaries - on two distinctive, nationally-significant and rapidly growing economic geographies west and north-west of London - will assist in rationalising and strengthening leadership and governance of the London mega-city region (MCR). It will replace five two tier councils with two unitaries with clear economic direction. It will enable further rationalisation of LEAs into SEMLEP and TV Berkshire - ensuring both are nationally top-ten LEP geographies in size and scale.

Economic rationale is not the only consideration for LGR - but it would be perverse to progress a BCC proposition that actually makes local growth coherence more complex and divisive.

The proposal to have two new all-purpose unitary councils would create a new, innovative form of local government that has the customer at the heart of its business model and is truly accountable to its local communities – a true social enterprise.

A two new unitary proposal would mean a clear line of sight from the Government to the two economic areas in terms of focus and activity on priorities, for example better growth delivery in Aylesbury Vale and work on east-west corridor, particularly in partnership with the other SEMLEP unitary councils. It would mean a dedicated focus on resolving issues and priorities for the two economic areas, with the ability to direct sufficient resource and energy into the priority projects to deliver increased productivity and growth.

The creation of unitary authorities provides an exciting opportunity to match administrative geography with economic geography, as far as it is practicable. These administrative boundaries need to be enduring. They need to be rooted in the empirical evidence of the current economy, but they need also to reflect future growth opportunities, particularly in the case of Aylesbury Vale.

Buckinghamshire got its name in the 12th century from 'Bucca's home'. The 1997 LG reform is probably the best thing that happened for local growth to MK in the last generation.

The BCC case for a single administrative county unitary is fatally flawed on economic grounds. It runs high local risks of continuing complacent growth performance falling between two of the most dynamic growth corridors in the UK. These local risks will have a negative impact on London MCR, GSE and therefore national economic performance in a period of unprecedented challenge. There must also be concerns of public and business trust in delivery of the BCC approach, the relative modesty of its ambition, and the potential for services distraction and disruption during a fraught transition period.

If Government wishes to encourage and support LGR in the administrative county, the overwhelming economic rationale will be to develop the one new unitary option focused on the NW and TV radial growth corridors within the London MCR.

The four district councils have already put together a significant proposal, with strong supporting material. This is underpinned by the real world MK example of genuinely transformational growth.

It is time for the rest of 'Bucca's home' to move into the 21st century.

Draft

EVEN MORE LOCAL

Introduction

Two Councils across any given area as oppose to one will mean that the governance and decision making will be more local. Two new unitary Councils based in the locality of the people they serve and providing a one-stop shop for local government services presents an exciting new opportunity for local involvement in decision making and true local accountability.

The proposed model:

- Provide genuine local governance not just on Planning matters but on all matters which are the responsibilities of the **new Councils**.
- Maintain a level of **elected Members** which will facilitate a new role for Members as the accepted and mandated leaders of their Communities
- Build on the strong relationships that currently exist with **Town and Parish Councils**
- Develop a **Community Together** approach which works to empower communities and engages them not just in decision making, but right through from identifying the issues to delivering the solutions.

The governance arrangements will support the vision and objectives of the unitary councils. In particular they will be designed to ensure that:-

- Decision-making is streamlined, accountable, transparent and efficient
- Democratic representation lies at the heart of local communities providing strong leadership and responding to local needs
- There is effective and innovative partnership working at all levels to deliver joined up services and empowered communities

New arrangements will seek to minimise local bureaucracy, achieve more efficient use of resources, ensure that decisions can be scrutinised and support community involvement in democratic processes.

Two New Councils

It is important that local accountability and community engagement are at the heart of any proposed model for the future of Modernised Local Government in Buckinghamshire but the majority of decisions will continue to be taken by Members centrally based in civic offices. Whilst webcasting can be used as yet there is no proposal for distributed democracy using digital technology. This means that wherever those offices are located those Members engaged in the day to day decision making will continue to travel as County members do currently, to and from their homes and the communities they serve. Whilst they do so their ability to carry out significant roles within their local communities is impaired. The democratic deficit which will occur when the number of Councillors is significantly reduced will be felt in communities. Two Councils will provide the necessary counter to this by making decision making more local.

The issues of a place like Dorney located as it is on the borders of Slough will be of little consequence to a Councillor who represents Buckingham on the borders of Milton Keynes. To approach an issue in debate that is likely to ensure the needs of both areas are met will continue to require compromise or an inevitable sense of bias and schisms even within the same political group.

Reorganisation should enable and accelerate reform across the public sector providing leadership of place and democratic accountability. Wherever it exists the two tier system presents challenges for both upper and lower tier Councils but in Buckinghamshire this has been compounded by a strategic administration with a geographic boundary which builds inherent conflicts, makes the creation of a single strategic direction and purpose an impossibility and therefore continually sub optimises economic and community outcomes.

Dorset County Council has recently published its own case for the division of the County of Dorset which has broad consensus. The proposal sets out the reasons why the one new unitary proposal would not work. These arguments are equally applicable to Buckinghamshire and are set out below.

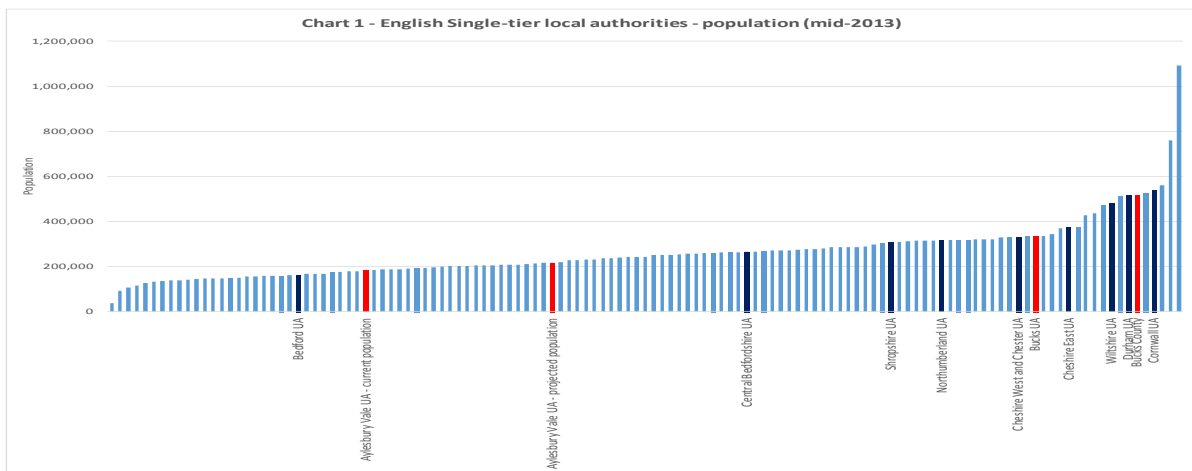
- A single council for the area the size of the Dorset area would have less of a sense of identity than the two-unitary options, and could be less accountable to local residents. It is likely that the two-unitary options, by covering smaller geographical areas, would be able to serve their communities better.
- Such a wide variation of rural and urban areas would not be best served by a single large unitary council covering the whole of Dorset.
- If we change council structures, we would make sure that all households served by a new unitary council eventually pay the same — a process called council tax harmonisation. The issue of council tax harmonisation becomes more difficult across one large unitary council because of the significant difference between the current lowest and highest council tax levels.
- There is a one-off complexity and costs involved in combining services from all nine councils into one unitary council.
- Discussions with central Government (Department of Communities and Local Government) indicate that we would need to make an exceptional case for a unitary council with a population of more than 600,000.

All of these statements are true of Buckinghamshire except the last. The current population falls within the 600,000 and that will also be the case in 2019. There is consensus across Buckinghamshire that housing growth should increase under a unitary governance model. It is our case that this will be significantly greater if there are two new unitary Councils across the area driving individual economic agenda. However either way it is likely that the percentage population rise for Buckinghamshire is likely to go up with estimates including migration and market signal uplift now suggesting population to be 540,000 – 550,000 by 2019 and therefore the current two tier area will reach 600,000 much sooner than is currently anticipated and by 2033 will be significantly larger. Even by estimates based on previous growth it would be the first of the unitary County areas to reach that population.

Unitary	Population 2011 Census	Population 2015 (Est)	% Change	Order in which Councils will reach 600,000
<i>Buckinghamshire</i>	505,283	528,400	4.58	1
Cornwall	535,300	549,404	2.63	2
Durham	513,200	519,695	1.27	4
Northumberland	316,000	316,028	0.01	6
Shropshire	306,129	311,380	1.72	5
Wiltshire	470,981	486,100	3.21	3

Whilst there are differing views about the optimum size for a unitary the Secretary of State has recently indicated an optimum range which would have a lower limit of 300,000 population. We understand that a new unitary Council based on the size of Aylesbury would fall below this level. Whilst we recognise that there is likely to be guidance on optimum size it is also necessary to take into account the particular circumstances of the place. Aylesbury is a

growing unitary which both the single new unitary and two new unitary options say is likely to increase with the advent of unitary status. Whilst Aylesbury Vale continues to grow, although it would be below the suggested minimum in the optimum range, Aylesbury Vale is already larger than a significant number of existing unitaries. Many of these smaller unitaries perform well in relation to social care delivery, particularly in the area of children's services.



It is our case that growth would be significantly greater than current forecasts (and the 2013 charts above) and in addition to the population rise, this will bring financial benefits to the Council which will put it in a very different financial situation from small unitaries which have already been created. As a top 30 unitary, it would by no means be at the lower end of existing unitaries in any event but the combination of the proposed partnership with Milton Keynes, the track record of the Council both in relation to commercial approaches and digital delivery but above all the likelihood of significant growth in population and income would provide Aylesbury with resilience not available to other unitaries.

It follows that whilst Aylesbury continues to grow although it is currently below the minimum size for a unitary, significant growth and partnership with its neighbour will provide the necessary resilience for this thriving place. There are smaller unitaries many of who perform well in relation to social care delivery, particularly in the area of children's services.

Elected Members

The proposed unitary for the County administrative area would have the highest number of electors per Councillors of any unitary County as shown in the chart below. This is not just an issue of numbers but creates a democratic deficit which will distance Councils from communities. There is a recognition that localism envisaged a new role for local Councillors ¹⁰.

Unitary	Population 2015 (Est)	Number of Councillors	Ratio
<i>Buckinghamshire</i>	528,400	98	5392
Wiltshire	486100	98	4960
Northumberland	316,028	67	4717
Cornwall	549,404	123	4667
Shropshire	311,380	74	4208
Durham	519,695	126	4125

Local government faces unprecedented financial cuts - deeper than any other sectors. There are in addition significant rises in population and a demographic shift which places more demand on our services; there are more reductions in

income and difficulties in recovery; there has been a period of low economic growth; social polarisation between local communities; significant re-organisation in areas like education and health; and the ever rising demand for services. All these factors combine to place significant strain on the capacity of local councils to deliver.

Local councillors can champion the views of people and communities and provide local democratic leadership. They can also stimulate good local economic growth and engage with local communities, encouraging them to reduce the demand on services and to step into the breach left by the withdrawal of publicly provided services. Councils, and councillors, will need new approaches to do this successfully, such as utilising less formal social networks, participatory democracy, better engagement with young people and a broader influencing role, rather than the more formal traditional structures we associate with the public sector.¹⁰

Councillors can foster strong relationships through partnerships and within local communities, with Parishes, Town Councils, and Community Associations; through their service on the boards of local voluntary organisations; their membership of local Business Improvement District Boards and through their wider engagement within their communities to identify individuals from all walks of life, and organisations from all sectors who want to play a role and to inspire others to do the same and more. There is a need for Local ward councillors to reclaim their leadership role as the accepted and mandated voice of citizens. They need recognition and support, to help them enhance their role as key influencers and door-openers to other community leaders who can make things happen.

Businesses create wealth, not the state and local government can create the conditions for enterprise to thrive by engaging the private sector and universities to develop their distinctive economic assets. In a decade of low growth, where the old models of funding have gone, councils can become a vital part of micro-economic policy, especially to create and support good growth with socially responsible approaches to employment and economic wellbeing and support local philanthropy. Polls suggest that the public know that they need to do more, with many willing to do so, but equally they cannot do so without well-functioning public services. The challenge is to change the nature of the relationship between the citizen and the state, rebuild trust and ensure good local integration between health, social care and other services.

Under the Cities and Devolution Act 2016 powers can be given to councils or collections of councils that reflect the way local economies and markets work. In a decade of low growth and austerity, attempts to rebalance the economy geographically will only succeed if local areas can take more control over their own destiny. This requires new and vibrant public-private ventures that enable councils to become more enterprising and businesses to become more civic. These types of arrangements rely on the strength of the relationships between elected members, and other community leaders, across the region.

It is proposed that we would have a pattern of wards based on existing District wards which will provide elector member ratios from 3500 – 4500. This level of representation is a significant reduction on the existing level provided through the two tier model but which is consistent with other new unitaries and maintains a level which is capable of enabling members to carry out the new roles necessary to take forward our vision for working together with our Communities in the future. Job roles for Members will also be set out and expectations on the role of Members articulated. Members will be supported by the two new councils to carry out these roles, and this will include the use of ward budgets to support community initiatives.

¹⁰ This is articulated in the LGA brochure on Political Leadership, the report of the Commission on the Future of Local Government and the DCLG report Councillors on the Front Line.

Town and Parish Councils

There are currently 180 Town and Parish Councils across the whole of Buckinghamshire and a further 37 parish meetings together with the unparished area covered by High Wycombe Town Committee. This provides a bedrock of local representation, and whilst not all parish councillors are elected they are subject to the ballot box and accountable to their communities. This network provides genuine local community representation. It is our proposal that the two new Councils will build on existing relationships to ensure that the contribution that is made to the local area by Town and Parish Councils is valued and supported. With this relationship there is ample scope to continue to provide a tailored approach to devolved services which enables Councils that wish to do so to take on the delivery of key services where they have the capacity and desire to do. However it also recognizes that one size does not fit all and devolution may not be desired by all. There is scope for joint commissioning to support parishes to deliver services under Council wide frameworks for street lighting or grounds maintenance which have the financial benefits of scale but gives each community a choice about what it needs.

To support this approach key features of future community engagement are likely to be:-

- Parish and Town Council Conferences

All parish and town councils would be invited to submit suggested topics for discussion and debate, and the new Council can also add topics to the agenda.

- Charter for Town and Parish Councils

This would set out clearly how the unitary council would engage and consult with town and parish councils. It would also include a memorandum of understanding on how the devolution of powers and transfer of assets would be achieved.

Area Panels

- Existing community based forums and meetings would be brought together and combined into Area Panels. These area panels would not be a standing meeting but would meet as and when the meetings were required for example during a period where the relevant area was facing a specific change or redevelopment; where there was a community interest in carrying out a targeted piece of work to tackle an issue or where there was a specific project which an area wanted to take forward such as celebration or festival. These would be constituted as formal meetings to enable action to be agreed and taken and they would be supported by the Council, but would arise in response to local need. Town and Parish Councils would be invited to use these panels as a means by which they could drive forward initiatives they are keen to promote within their area.

Community Together approach

The Community Together model is an essential part of our vision for how the two new Council's will create the right conditions for people to take collective responsibility for their futures in a climate of declining public resources.

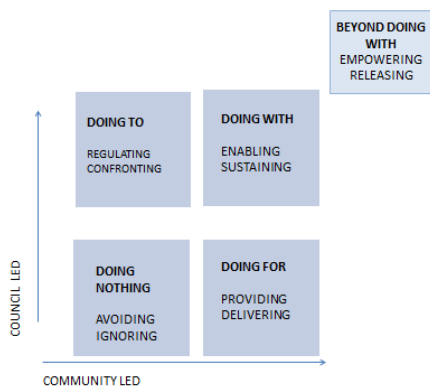
There are a number of reasons for the proposed approach:

- the high expectations of consumers used to a digitally-enabled 24 hour society;
- the inability of local authorities to sustain previous patterns of service delivery with fewer resources;
- the recognition that residents can be a key resource in ensuring that individuals remain independent;
- resilient communities are more likely to withstand external shocks (economic or otherwise).

Community Together is about a repositioning of the Council from delivering top- down services, to recognition that communities, with the Council and other partners working collaboratively, can develop services and solutions in response to local needs, which can also lead to additional capacity.

The new Councils will be responsible for promoting and guiding change but the model set out requires collaborative working across all sectors. Therefore our partners will also be an important player in realising this shift.

The figure below sets out the existing approach to community engagement, *Community Together*, adds a 5th way of working – *Beyond Doing With*.



Much of the traditional delivery of public services falls into the 'doing for' domain where citizens are in a passive role and in a culture where citizens expect their local authority to play a significant role in meeting their needs. This way of working can be expensive, may be relatively unresponsive to changing needs and does not necessarily empower citizens. It is also no longer sustainable.

'Doing with' is more about collaboration and encourages citizens and communities to become more involved. It places people at the heart of service design and delivery and can bring the innovation, efficiency and sharing of responsibility and risk that comes with the most effective collaborations. It involves a culture change that will help to strengthen resilience. 'Beyond doing with' is about strong community leadership, engagement and empowerment.

This change requires stronger rather than looser leadership and decision making from the Council. *Community Together* will see the Councils acting as both strong leaders in decision making and as an enabler of community action to build resilience, increase self-sufficiency and, consequentially, reduce demands on services.

This model proposed is one where the new Councils will be involved with new community initiatives on a time- limited basis. 'Doing with' must generate the self-sufficiency that leads projects and services into an independent and sustainable state - 'beyond doing with'.

The role of Ward Members within their communities has always been vital to the work of the Council and is critical to the success of *Community Together*. Members already act as champions for their wards. The proposal in *Community Together* would be in embedding the second role and in providing resources and a model to help Members in their enhanced leadership role.

The Process of Engagement

The research and accepted practice, together with recommended engagement tools in community engagement recognises that engaging with communities requires thought and planning. There are however broad principles which will support successful engagement.

- Allow for all levels of engagement from commenting, to advising, to participation in decisions to influencing outcomes and in the delivery.
- It should take place in ways that are engaging and welcoming to all, with materials which are accessible to the majority, with additional support for those that need it.
- Provide an opportunity for differences to be resolved without confrontation
- Engagement should recognize that people are more likely to be effectively engaged if it is limited and focused on a task to maintain interest and motivation.

There are many different forms that engagement can take but empowering individuals requires a move away from traditional committees, boards, forums and hubs. The weakness of formal Meetings as a tool for engagement are widely recognised as

- They are unlikely to be representative of the community because not everyone has the time or inclination to attend
- Attendance is often low unless people feel personally or deeply concerned
- Some people are likely to feel inhibited in large groups
- Traditional formats can limit audience contribution and lead to conflict
- It can lead to unhelpful media publicity particularly where tensions arise

For empowerment to be effective there is a need to work within communities, to allow them to take the lead empowering key individuals within communities to act as pioneers so that others will follow.

CONCLUSION

Two new unitary councils will provide closer decision making. A higher number of Councillors will provide a strong democratic mandate to carry out the roles of Community Leaders. Our model for delivery will support the existing extensive network of community based organisations to act in the interests of their communities and where they wish to do so to take on additional responsibilities through devolved powers. Our model also sets out a clear role for Members as community leaders supporting and enabling more informal local arrangements through supporting local businesses, schools, GPs and voluntary organisations to come together for the wellbeing of their communities. Finally our model will empower communities themselves to have a full role in designing and delivering solutions to local issues.

Even More Local because ...

ACCOUNTABLE – Elected representatives can be held to account through the ballot box, Details of local councils, parish councils and elected members are publicly available and published for all to see

TRANSPARENCY – People know who is taking which decisions and who is responsible for decision making in their area. The delegation schemes are clear and decisions are taken in public meetings with information available to everyone.

EFFICIENCY – There are minimum tiers of decision making and decisions can be taken swiftly with minimum number of processes necessary to give effect to a decision. The costs are kept to a minimum.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP – The arrangements enable the brokering of informal relationships to support and enable delivery of services and to mobilise community activity into effective support to sit alongside publicly provided services

MORE EFFECTIVE

The two tier system has been an impediment to the improvement and modernisation of key services. It has created an unhelpful barrier between leisure and public health; between community safety and youth services and between housing and children's services which would not exist in a single tier structure. Unitary Councils can look differently at the delivery of services and enable a broader preventative approach designed to ensure a single access point for those who require support; a pathway that aims to support people in the community outside statutory systems for as long as possible and services which focus on outcomes. This analysis focuses on the delivery of one key service and how two new unitary Councils will be able to improve performance through a different approach based on the child, their family and their community.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE

Children's services in the two tier area are delivered by the County Council. They are delivered through area arrangements with teams based in Aylesbury, Wycombe and Amersham. The current delivery model recognises the need for localised approaches but has continued to have Corporate Leadership from a County wide structure. The leadership and management has made explicit its determination to improve the reputation of Children's Services but has struggled to bring about the improvements necessary.

In June 2014 the Service was inspected by Ofsted and found to be one of only four authorities nationally who were inadequate in each of the three key judgements. 'Officials at the Department for Education considered that the 'inadequate' judgement was at the more serious end of the spectrum of failure' (Red Quadrant Report February 2015) and took the decision that 'external intervention was required to ensure that children's services in Buckinghamshire were improved to the required standard' (Red Quadrant Report February 2015). The Department for Education appointed Red Quadrant to conduct an independent review of the County Council's improvement plan. The report noted that in the immediate aftermath the Council focused on defending itself against the criticism and the Council 'missed the opportunity both to accept responsibility publicly for the inadequacies outlined in the report and to spell out its commitment to the children and families in Buckinghamshire'.

By November 2014 the Council had recognised the imperative and set out an improvement plan to be reviewed quarterly by Cabinet. The Red Quadrant report expressed concern that the proposed Improvement Plan did not have sufficient focus on outcomes

'Each work stream has a set of success measures ... they comprise a set of key performance indicators that are collected by the council and are useful in indicating progress or are proxies for progress in many areas of the plan. Improving outcomes for children was not the major feature, with little indication of how the processes are affecting outcomes for children'

The report was completed in February 2015, at the same time that the first of the agreed quarterly monitoring reports was presented to Cabinet. It stated that the political 'response has been reactive rather than proactive and we have concerns that the scrutiny process is not rigorous enough to anticipate and address future issues in good time'. In June 2015 there was a further quarterly update, but this appears to be the last in 2015. In the June 2015 a Corporate Performance Report was presented to Cabinet. .

'The Chief Executive commented that the Council would only be able to maintain current performance and would be unable to strive for increased performance due to the difficult situation' (referring to the Council's financial situation).

Our inspections this year show that, regardless of context, providing outstanding services is possible and that good is a standard that any local authority can achieve and maintain

OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT 2016

A single 'quarterly' monitoring report was presented to Cabinet in January 2016 there have been no further reports. In August 2016 Ofsted published a monitoring report on the progress of the Improvement Plan which concluded that the local authority is making progress but this has mainly occurred in the last six months and in some areas this progress is still too slow. This has not been reported to Cabinet.

The one new unitary Business Case makes it clear that they believe the improvement plan for Children Services has been delivered and has been successful.

'Following an inadequate Ofsted rating for children's safeguarding services in 2014 the multi-agency Children's Improvement Board has overseen a focused improvement journey resulting in improvements to services for children and their families'. (County Council Business Case)

In (outstanding authorities) senior leaders and elected members are well informed and operate within a mature culture of respectful challenge. An absence of complacency leads to a strong culture of continuous learning, professional accountability and responsibility.

OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT 2016

In December 2016 the Council's performance on Children's Services was reported to the Council's Select (Scrutiny) Committee. Across all indicators performance showed that 59% were below target, with a further 18% slightly below target. For example in relation to repeat referrals whilst the national average is 24% the position in Bucks is 35% (against their target of 25%), 85% of re-referrals are for the same concern. Whatever the cause high levels of repeat referrals indicate waste and missed opportunities to improve outcomes for vulnerable children in the system which will contribute to the rising costs of the service.

Higher performing local authorities spend their money more effectively, investing wisely in the best services and bringing costs down. The evidence from inspection suggests that investment in early help is associated with stronger outcomes for children.

OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The Red Quadrant report identified from the outset that the County Council improvement plan was at risk of failure because the focus on process will run the risk of distracting those working directly with families away from the professional role they have in talking to children and working with and supporting families.

Social workers need time to spend with the children and families on their case list. They need a place of work that makes it possible for them to exercise their profession at the highest level. They need managers who trust and challenge them in equal measure.

OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT 2016

It is expected that with the appropriate focus, the external assessment of Children's services will continue to recognise improvements but this will be from a very low base and has been the result of an extended period of investment. There has been significant investment as well as overspends on the Children's Services budget to fund the necessary efforts to satisfy inspectors that progress is being made.

It is recognised that in order to shift from a reactionary to a preventative service investment is required until the benefits of prevention can be realised. The County invested £2.6 M to fund the Improvement Plan in 2014 with a further £0.5M in 2015 and £0.35m in 2016.

The Council has invested just under £1m of this in 'Front Door and Early Help'. However the One Year review of Early Help shows that only 16% of children in receipt of the service are new to children's services with 25% known to the service for 10 or more years. The County Council has announced that it is cutting spend on its Prevention Matters programme from £4,878,000 pa to £2,878,000 pa by 2018/19. Prevention programmes have long time horizons to deliver their full impact and cutting preventative services is likely to lead to cost rises in acute services at a later date.

There is no disagreement that in the long term the delivery of services will be aided by the demise of the two tier system. A new Council will have the opportunity to write a new chapter. But improvements in outcomes for Children should not be assumed from the process, and the transition will provide a distraction from the improvement plan. Continued focus will be needed to ensure that short term improvements are sustained into the future. Even an investment into the services, as has been shown, will not of itself bring about the necessary improvement. A reappraisal of why the investment in Children's Services has failed to achieve the level of improvement expected will be required and a model developed which will enable the new Councils to contain costs and to deliver the performance required both by inspectors and to meet their own targets.

A CASE FOR CHANGE

It is our case that as long as leadership and management continues to be remote from delivery and delivery itself is hampered by the diversity of challenges presented within this collection of disconnected communities the improvements brought about by the immediate focus and injection of resource will not be sustained. A different model of delivery which starts with the child will be necessary. This is much more likely to occur in and be capable of delivery under the local management of two smaller Councils. Two new unitaries will have a greater focus on the improvement of services. They can be more agile and innovative and cross working with co-terminus partners will be simpler. Two unitaries will have flatter management structures with more contact between leaders and the front line; this leads to a team approach across the organisation with teams understanding the broader objectives of services and supporting them to enable delivery.

Two innovative and commercially successful unitaries will be able to invest in prevention and early intervention and the advantages of much greater economic growth through appropriate focus will enable investment to be maintained.

Two unitaries will understand that the quality of externalised services is just as important to residents as directly delivered services. Best practice strategic commissioning and procurement approaches will be applied to stimulate the right provider services in local areas together with not for profit arrangements and voluntary intervention and where arrangements are in place ongoing work with providers will take place to support their growth and development to modernise in accordance with changing practice.

The proposed two unitaries are closely aligned with local policing areas, CCGs, and have the benefit of being local for schools, Doctor's surgeries and local hospitals that are at the front line of delivery. A new local Council could also build on existing strong partnerships with third tier councils, local VCSOs, faith groups, resident associations and sports clubs, all of whom have community services of their own and will help to ensure that support is provided within communities. Voluntary sector bodies that help and support the delivery of statutory services also recognise the need for delivering services on a north and south model for example there is a Women's Aid in both Aylesbury and Wycombe and a Citizen's Advice Bureau in each of those places as well as a third also located in the South of the area.

Two unitaries will continue to have strong networks outside of the area to support better service delivery. Homeless residents in the south have to be placed outside the area through necessity but our networks make sure that the receiving authority knows about them and their needs. We can use these networks to place children within 20 miles of their homes.

District housing authorities have also built strong relationships with other Councils like Brent to better understand the influx of residents into the County. Brent Council make increasing numbers of homeless placements in the County and have worked with the housing authorities to help the receiving Council area respond. In the future this relationship will need to have active involvement from Children's Services. Brent Council placed 28 homeless families that are known of in Wycombe alone during 2015/16. This has increased to 28 placements in the first six months from April 2016 and there are other London Boroughs who place in both Wycombe and the rest of the southern area to tackle the homelessness crisis in London.

Where local authorities place families needing accommodation into the area there will need to be strong relationships with those southern authorities to ensure that the transition for children does not place them at risk. Buckinghamshire because of its long thin geography has a high number of housing and social care neighbours with whom relationships have to be maintained. Brent Council is not a neighbour but the presence of London on its southern borders requires a particular focus on additional relationships with other Councils to respond positively to the proximity of a capital city with a homelessness crisis to ensure the safety of children is always the priority.

The IMD analysis shows that in Buckinghamshire, the highest levels of deprivation are in the north of the County in Aylesbury and Milton Keynes and so a different focus is required in that area to ensure that those children get the best start in life. Deprivation in the south is focused on wards with higher proportions of ethnically diverse residents. There are two Prevent priority areas in the Thames Valley Police area, these are Wycombe and Slough. Almost all referrals are for Islamist related extremism and the majority within the County area are from Wycombe. There have also been a number of trials of Wycombe residents for terrorist related incidents. In contrast the north has greater issues with Far Right Extremism. Youth gang culture is more prevalent in Wycombe and there are links with gangs in Slough. There are more missing children in Wycombe and Early help referrals show that Wycombe has a significantly higher proportion of referrals from Asian/Mixed families than Aylesbury even allowing for the higher percentage of the population. A detailed analysis of the differences between the North and South is set out within the Buckinghamshire Profile section.

The focus of two local Councils will mean that Children are appropriately tracked as they cross the border into the area and that both those children and the resident children are appropriately supported having regard to the needs of the individual children and families within their cultural communities. The analysis that has taken place of other two tier areas has not been of a place with the geography of Buckinghamshire, with populations focused in large towns and on the doorstep of the capital city. These differences argue for a different solution for Buckinghamshire.

DELIVERING COST EFFECTIVE CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Improving Children's Services is all about the right service available at the right time, a think family approach, building family and community resilience and developing the work force so that outcomes for families are improved. This must take place in a co-ordinated, integrated and where possible co-located way with partners. There must be highly effective leadership and management with a vision of continuous improvement and strong political and community support.

Major costs in Children's Services are:

- Looked After Children and their placement costs.
- Child Protection and other statutory work.
- Work force costs.

With increasing demand for services, it is more cost effective and better for children if there are effective Early Help and Prevention Services. This must be a whole system approach with partners to reduce the need for expensive statutory interventions.

Many authorities have developed effective ways to manage the demand for Looked After Children through senior managers chairing weekly placement panels. These have reduced rates of Looked After Children while managing risk. Placements with family and friends, adoption, special guardianship orders and planned returns home all need close scrutiny.

More effective joint commissioning placements for children are cost effective such that there is a proactive approach to the market. Commissioning across a range or group of Councils has also proved to be more cost effective. Investment in local fostering campaigns has reduced placement costs while providing more placements closer to home. Across the two tier area only 48% of children are placed within the Council's area compared to 75% in Milton Keynes.

Many Authorities have developed multi-agency teams to work intensively with children and young people on the "Edge of Care", these have reduced admissions. Some Authorities have integrated services with the National Troubled Families approach; this gives a whole family focus and has reduced the need for statutory intervention from a range of partners.

There are a number of indicators of children's behaviour that increase the likelihood of them requiring to be Looked After and this must be a real focus for the deployment of resources across the partnership so that children are protected before requiring a Child Protection Plan or care and that these factors are resolved at an earlier stage. Those children on Child Protection Plans need a strong focus with regular reviews held on time to avoid drift.

An effective Early Intervention Strategy must be agreed and embedded with partners including the Voluntary and Community Sector, schools, children's centres, youth services, housing, and the range of organisations. Family and community resilience can be developed through parenting programmes especially where parents can mentor others. With a strong focus on co-ordinated front line practice and processes, unnecessary referrals and assessments can be reduced. If all parts of the multi-agency system are clear on the services available and the threshold criteria for each service, then the right services will be available at the right time at the right level.

Work force costs can be managed by an effective recruitment and retention strategy, a reliance on agency Social Workers increases costs and the lack of a consistent work force has a detrimental impact on children's outcomes. Staff performance must be rigorously managed. Teams can be restructured, integrated and increasingly multi-agency which makes them more cost effective in delivering outcomes. There will be

opportunities for sharing, training and development. Above all good effective management and leadership create effective services. There will also be opportunities for reducing costs through new technology in a range of ways. The use of shared capital assets is both cost effective and improves partnership working as evidenced in many Children's Services.

All of the above must be supported through a highly agile performance management framework which includes budget management. This should include forward forecasting with the ability to take advantage of piloting new models of service through targeted funding opportunities etc. Performance must be subject to regular management and member scrutiny and challenge with a strong emphasis on outcomes for children rather than process. A detailed model for the delivery of efficient and effective Children's Services in Buckinghamshire is set out at Appendix D.

CONCLUSION

There are significant challenges in Children's Services, and despite the sharp wakeup call of the 2014 inspection the improvement has been slow, and performance continues to fail to meet targets. There are reasons why the re-referral rates are high, why the Early Help and prevention has failed to target families at the right stage, and why despite the focus on need for improvement, plans are already in place to cut preventative services. The prognosis for sustainable improvement coupled with the delivery of cost effective services under the current arrangements is not positive.

A different approach is needed; an approach focused on the particular communities, on individual children and families and one which puts strong social work practice at the heart of improvement. A plan which is focused on windfall savings from the move to unitary to prop up performance for a few more years will not be sustainable. The only way to bring about sustained improvement is to provide a clear vision and model for a different approach; agile leadership, focused on relationships with particular communities and to work effectively with neighbours. Above all the whole system needs to be much more sharply focussed on securing positive outcomes for children. Unless these changes are made the cost of delivering Children's services across the whole County will continue to rise, early intervention will not be effective, performance standards will not be met, the migration of families into the area will continue to come as an unwelcome surprise and as a result children will continue to be at risk of harm.

A two new unitary approach, with a better understanding of and more engaged with their communities, with much stronger partnership working at a local level, better engaged with surrounding authorities, with greater leadership focus and agility will provide a stable platform for this necessary transformation to take place and improved outcomes to be sustained long term.

MORE EFFICIENT

Efficient does not mean spending the least money, it is about optimising the outcomes for local people within the resources available by delivering effective services that residents both want and need at the lowest cost. Providing a homogenised, low cost, service across the widest possible area does not reflect the differences that exist within an area and is therefore not by definition the most efficient.

Whilst scale does allow the potential for costs to be reduced, (if not controlled), the consequence is that all residents effectively receive a service specified on the average needs of the wider area and, in doing so, the uniqueness of individual areas and their requirements are ignored.

Two new unitary councils, whilst costing marginally more, will have the enormous advantages of being in touch with the communities they serve coupled with the agility, flexibility and responsiveness that only smaller organisations can demonstrate. These factors combined, enable services to be commissioned, delivered and monitored effectively and, through a deep rooted understanding of the customers, for local revenue streams to be developed in line with the services that local residents want and value.

The inherent problem faced by large organisations is not the price that they can negotiate for services, but the waste that derives through not properly understanding needs and not being able to control the costs effectively. Remoteness from the point of delivery and long chains of management weaken accountability and the effective monitoring of the actual value delivered. Consequently, significant amounts of the limited resources controlled by large organisations are not spent effectively. So, whilst unit costs might be lower, this is often not matched by corresponding better value.

The Section of the report on One Direction highlights this issue. The section identifies that in attempting to address the Economic Needs of the whole Buckinghamshire area, there are lost opportunities in both the North and in the South, which could be achieved through the pursuit of economic objectives specific to the needs of each area. The consequence of this is lost opportunities and economic growth being achieved that is well below that which should reasonably be expected from this area.

This lost growth also has a value to the councils in terms of lost Business Rates and Council Tax Income. The value of this lost Business Rates growth to the councils, ignoring the impacts of Council Tax (which has an associated impact in terms of demand for services), is estimated at £24 million over the 5 years of the modelling within this report. If this deficit was rectified then the modelling of the financial savings / gain from two new unitary councils, which both focused on growing their respective economies, instead of averaging resources less effectively, might look like those in the table below.

Income foregone - costs and savings	County Council based one new unitary	Two new unitary councils based on place and FEAs
Total Income foregone (Council Tax)	8.7	1.1
Total costs (reorganisation etc.)	14.3	14.3
Total savings	95.9	72.8
NET SAVINGS	72.9	57.4
Business rates growth dividends @1% pa	0	24.0
NET local finance surpluses	72.9	81.4

If economic growth achieved its potential then, if calculated on a cumulative basis, the net savings from two new unitary councils would exceed that of those modelled for the one new unitary.

An organisation which costs less, does not necessarily, produce better value for its residents or for the economy. The proposal presented here is predicated on better value being achieved, not just in core service delivery, but also in better outcomes for the wider areas through a better, deeper, understanding of local needs and therefore a clear, sharp, focus.

This report sets out some key areas where performance and outcomes will be improved;

- Wider Economic and Housing Growth Output
- Better Outcomes
- Digital Transformation
- Commercialism
- Joint Working

Wider Economic and Housing Growth

Two new unitary Councils with a clear focus on creating two of the most successful and productive locations in the UK for business and housing growth and being able to achieve their full potential as Milton Keynes has been able to, is fundamental to the unitary proposal presented here. As detailed in the One Direction section, these new authorities have the potential to enable both Councils to significantly improve growth and productivity. This has **a direct financial benefit both in national revenue and for the Councils concerned**. For example, just 2% pa additional growth amounts to additional GVA of around £300mpa. If government receipts are conservatively estimated at 33% GVA, this amounts to £100mpa of benefit to the Government. Looking locally, the county collects around £162m of business rates. If business rates rose faster in line with the additional growth, then this would amount to an additional £1.6mpa for each additional percentage added. If, in addition, home building also delivered more rapidly, the councils were to receive the benefits of additional council tax and some NHB benefits, based on County Council tax base forecast at around £217m by 2019, each additional percent would raise £2.2m subject to changes to NHB. This is additional resource which could be directed to meet the impacts of housing growth and the rising cost of services.

Councils have a role to play in terms of providing facilities and infrastructure for growing areas, and district councils such as Wycombe and Aylesbury have been progressive in this respect, but properly equipped and

supported an exponentially greater volume of economic growth could be achieved by the private sector in these areas and thus far actual delivery has fallen well short of that which should realistically be expected.

The change to unitary status will not bring about this growth unless there is a redirection of strategic focus, allowing the different areas of Buckinghamshire to operate within their own functioning economic geographies.

Better Outcomes

Due to increasing demand for adults social care there is an urgent need to embrace much needed transformational change in Buckinghamshire. Two new unitary councils working with Milton Keynes to provide just enough of the right care at the right time will promote and maintain independence, improve outcomes and impact positively on present and future demand for adult social care services. Doing this over a smaller geography coterminous with partners such as CCGs will better support integrated working and achieve greater transformational benefits when compared to one unitary council replicating existing practice.

The county budget for adult's social care in 2016-17 is £126.4m and this is expected to rise every year to £134.3m in 2020-21, accounting for approximately 40% of the total county budget. However, over the four years the cumulative impact of demand pressure is expected to be £27.0m and achieving a budget of £134.3m in 2020-21 is highly dependent on £12.2m of service efficiency savings, generating additional income of £5.1m and service reductions of £2.1m. The following table summarises the county budget plans for adult social care for the next four years by service area:

	2017/18 Budget £m	2020/21 Budget £m	+ (increase) / - (decrease) change	% change
Older People including Mental Health	48.5	55.8	7.2	14.9%
Learning Disabilities	41.2	43.2	2.0	4.9%
Physical & Sensory Disabilities	9.9	11.7	1.7	17.5%
Assessment & Care Management	11.5	11.6	0.2	1.7%
Social Isolation	-	0.1	0.1	0.0%
Adult Mental Health Needs	5.7	5.8	0.1	0.9%
Joint Commissioning	0.0	0.0	0.0	100%
Supporting People	1.8	0.1	- 1.7	-94.2%
Digital and Strategic Options Appraisals	- 0.4	- 1.0	- 0.5	130.3%
Centrally Managed Budgets	0.2	- 0.2	- 0.4	-174.4%
Business Intelligence	1.6	1.2	- 0.4	-23.0%
Commissioning & Service Improvement	1.5	1.3	- 0.1	-10.0%
Specialist Services	3.5	3.4	- 0.1	-3.8%
Strategic Commissioning ASC	1.4	1.3	- 0.0	-3.6%
Localities & Safer Communities	0.0	-	- 0.0	-94.2%
Total	126.4	134.3	7.9	6.3%

The biggest pressure on adults social care budgets over the four years in Buckinghamshire is expected to come from older people services with a planned budget increase of £7.2m, demand pressures alone of £13.1m but only £4.2m of service efficiency savings planned. Between April 2015 and August 2015, the cost of nursing placements for older people in Buckinghamshire increased by over 11% and the provision of short term Respite Care for Older People increased by 23%. These are people who are capable of living in the community

but for whom respite is provided to relieve their community carers. Developing closer community support to relieve the strain on carers is one significant way that rising costs can be contained, but these areas responsible for prevention and community engagement work appear to be the ones subject to proposed reductions.

Analysis of the county budget for 2015/16 shows that £74.7 million (58% of the total adults social care budget) was spent supporting service users no longer able to live in their own homes, a significant proportion of the overall spend and one which is subject to upward cost pressures now and in the future. Because of the high and rising cost of care, a small increase in the number of those able to remain in their homes with support would have an impact on budget spend. Two new unitary councils better connected with partners and to their communities will provide the best model for achieving this outcome

Digital Transformation

Key to the success of the future Unitary Councils will be the transition to effective Digital Services. Residents and businesses demand online access to services wherever possible. Good digital services are a key enabler of efficiencies and excellent customer service. The proposal presented here is supported from the experience gained by the existing districts in this area, with strong customer insight based on a local focus and connection with residents and businesses who have embraced digital service delivery.

In contrast to the pre-internet days few people now want to visit Council Offices to deal with the Council no matter how close it may be to their homes – they are just too busy getting on with their own lives. Many prefer the internet, using computer, tablet or smart phone as the medium to seek information about council services and to transact rather than having to make telephone contact.

They are used to dealing with online services, 24 hours a day 7 days a week, for all other needs in their life, shopping, insurance, utilities, entertainment etc., that the idea of having to attend an office (possibly taking time off work to do so) to conduct routine or even complex business with the Council face to face or on the telephone is alien to them.

As well as responding to Customer expectations, effective digital services enable transformation of council service delivery and for councils to organise themselves on the basis of how the customer interacts with them rather than the traditional “silo” service model favoured by many traditional councils right up to the present time

It is proposed that the Digital Services for the new Unitary Councils are delivered on the IT “Cloud” model whereby IT services are drawn down from Internet based service providers as required. This model has already been proven at Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC). AVDC were one of the first Authorities to move to the “Cloud” following adoption by the Council of a Cloud First strategy in 2011/12 with the objective of becoming IT Infrastructure free by 2017.

AVDC looked for innovation and a different approach and was the first authority to move its IT infrastructure to Amazon Web Services in 2013 / 2014. By autumn 2015, AVDC had a fully enabled customer “My Account” operational. In the 12 months following implementation 30,000 customers signed up online for accounts. In a District of 75,000 households this represents a 40% take-up in 12 months.

Not only has the Digital Platform enabled easier access to Council services but it has enabled a Transformation Programme to move the council to becoming more commercial in its approach and enabled the shaping of services to reflect the way in which the customer deals with the Council rather than the way in which the Council manages its services. All customer facing services have been brought together into one

group and organized to deal with differing *types* of transaction, e.g. fully digital, digital-assisted, specialist expert services. Savings achieved have enabled AVDC to bridge the funding reductions necessitated by changes in the local government funding model without cutting services and indeed, enabled services to be provided 24x7. A new resident can register for the Electoral Roll and Council Tax, apply for and be granted Single Person discount, order waste bins and special services online without any requirement for further contact with the Council. These transactions are fully automated and no human interaction, other than random validation, is required.

The transformation programme, which is nearing its conclusion, has run over a period of 15 months and has identified savings of £5m per annum (from an overall budget of £45 million gross spend) and given the Council invaluable experience in implementing transformational change.

This is the model we propose is adopted for the new Unitary Councils in Buckinghamshire.

THE DIGITALLY ENABLED RESIDENT

Customer Focus sessions run during the implementation of Aylesbury Vale District Council's Online Digital Services evidenced that the vast majority of residents do not want to journey to Council offices during office hours to deal with the Council.

The tables below shows the reductions in contacts using the traditional means of email and telephone since AVDC automated key transactional processes in October 2015.

Email Contact

Service Area	October 2015	October 2016	Increase/Decrease
Council Tax	1443	966	↓ 33.05%
Recycling & Waste	936	262	↓ 72.00%

Telephone Contact

Service Area	October 2015	October 2016	Increase/Decrease
Benefits	2813	2533	↓ 9.95%
Council Tax	3549	2557	↓ 27.95%
Environmental Health	827	720	↓ 12.94%
Recycling & Waste	1606	1325	↓ 17.50%

Some 92% of residents in Buckinghamshire have access to the web. Of those that do not (predominantly the elderly) most have contact with someone who can assist them. The savings made through digital enable the council to focus on face to face contact with those that really want and need it.

Aylesbury Vale's staff are actively incentivised to "nudge" customers to use Web services and assist customers to engage digitally. The impressive take-up of the online customer account (40% in 12 months) is evidence of the desire by the public for such services. Aylesbury Vale's oldest account holder is 92 years of age, disproving the claim that only the young utilize digital services. To assist the customer, AVDC run an out of hours online "web chat" service to facilitate web transactions

Business Customers and Parish Councils can interact via the web but can also be serviced by dedicated Account Managers – an example of where Aylesbury Vale has been able to redirect resource to those customers who need a bespoke service or where it might not be appropriate to rely exclusively on digital services. This is driven by customer insight and this would be something more effectively achieved in the one new unitary model. To facilitate the required growth in housing development Aylesbury Vale has also pioneered account managers for major developers to help developers submitting major planning applications navigate through the system avoiding unexpected delays.

FUTURE STRATEGY

It is expected that future strategy and future savings of the new Unitary councils are predicated on the delivery of a new Digital Strategy which will build on the work to date to create a single "Connected Knowledge" platform bringing all Council information in to one place. Amongst a range of further developments this strategy will release the councils from the model of running IT on a Microsoft Windows platform. All council systems will be available from any device which runs a web browser such as a tablet, smartphone, Chromebook, etc. thereby enabling increased flexibility at reduced cost.

A further recent move is in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) where Aylesbury Vale is developing services in both AI Engines and Voice Activated services such as Amazon Echo and it is believed that this area of technology will develop rapidly and enable better services and further significant savings to be achieved. AI Engines can automate the process of responding to (initially) simple queries and have the potential to make tangible savings in front line services. This technology exists and is in use in the private sector where customers generally do not realise that they are dealing with an AI robot rather than a human being. Voice Activated devices have the potential to both simplify transactions for the technologically familiar population ("Alexa which bin will be collected this week", "Alexa have any Planning Applications been submitted in my street?") but also to provide services to those who cannot use IT equipment ("Alexa, could you ask the council to send in someone to help me") and could, potentially, make voice requests for Council Services.

All of these developments will be available to the new unitary councils and will provide the platform for rapid development and implementation of an innovative Digital Services platform for the residents of the new unitary councils enabling both improved services but at a reduced cost freeing up funding for key services where human interaction is required such as social care and Children's services. The greater understanding of the respective communities will enable these digital services to be tailored to specific needs so as to ensure no section is ignored or disadvantaged.

HOW WOULD WE EXPECT SERVICE DELIVERY TO BE DIFFERENT

It will build on the already proven work carried out on Cloud Business Systems for all services. This will be a focused and driven programme, which would be implemented rapidly.

It is expected that the core elements of the IT strategy will be expanded to encompass all Unitary Council services through close working with existing innovative IT partners who, in the main, already have experience of working with Unitary Councils. We would propose to do this by;

1. Engaging with supplier partners to develop the strategy and develop Digital services in the period of the Shadow Authority
2. Work with those innovative suppliers to identify novel opportunities to deliver Social Care and Children's Services. We will develop and implement an aggressively timed programme to implement the changes and realise the benefits linking it to an organisation and staff development programme.
3. Recognise the trend for schools to adopt Academy status and offer Cloud based services as "IT in a box" both for educational support IT and internal School support services e.g. finance, HR, Payroll etc. (the districts are already commercialising the type of service to offer to third parties) and would seek to collaborate with organisations, such as Bucks Learning Trust to better understand and develop these products.
4. Recognise that the ageing legacy digital services in the County Council and some other areas will take longer than two years to migrate to the Cloud in their entirety and where migration is impractical will work in integrating the legacy services to the Cloud Platform.

The unitary councils would expand online services in all areas and bring innovations such as out-of-hours webchat, Artificial Intelligence and Voice Activated Services which tailor uniquely to the needs of their respective residents.

Whilst Digital Transformation is expected to be at the heart of the change and efficiency programmes which will transform services in the new organisation it is made clear that no individual, group or community will be left behind and the IT strategy will be designed to ensure that it does not marginalise or disadvantage those customers who for various reasons a digital only approach is not appropriate.

Commercialism

Commercialism would also be at the heart of the organisations, thereby recognising that the existing funding model for local government will not support, no matter how efficient, the service delivery demanded by a growing population.

One cornerstone of the business model for the new councils will be targeted charges for added value services. With local government struggling to meet its statutory obligations, it is likely to become the norm that services over and above the basic level of statutory provision should attract a fair charge. The surpluses generated from these will then be reinvested to support core statutory activities.

For example; Aylesbury Vale is a council with a publically stated ambition of becoming Council Tax free. It intends to do this through the generation of new income streams derived from its commercial activities and commercial ambition. To achieve this, it would need to generate an additional £10 million of new, net income. If the Council was only dependent upon maximising the income from the existing and traditional services delivered by councils then this would be an unrealistic target. However, the Council has committed itself to developing new commercial ventures based around commercial development and satisfying the needs of its residents which sit beyond the usual range of Council services. Whilst new services, these might still align to the values the council holds and would satisfy the needs of those individuals who are cash rich but time poor. Whether this is Gardening service aligned to Garden Waste collection or care services for those who can remain in their own

homes, but just need a little extra support, there are many opportunities to satisfy the residents' needs for a competitive fee. The surpluses from these activities can be used to preserve and re-invest into services for those who are less financially able to help themselves. If these ambitions were embraced and translated into a unitary organisation then the opportunities for income generation could grow exponentially

Commercial skills amongst staff will be a necessity in most areas of the Council's activities as even in statutory and non-charging areas many business concepts can be applied equally in driving down cost, increasing knowledge of customers and increasing productivity.

Beyond this, expanding into new markets, which align with and support the objectives of the Councils, providing added value and profits for re-investment will help to support and protect valued services.

The existing districts already have a considerable track record of doing this with successful property development and investment portfolios, a broadband company and a subscription based Service Company for households and businesses. These are both award winning and nationally recognised as great examples of imaginative and entrepreneurial ventures which represent the future for local government financial stability.

For example, AVDC has created two new companies, 'Limecart' and 'Incgen', whose function is to create innovative new services for our Residents and Businesses that they will value and be prepared to pay for. These two vehicles work in conjunction with local companies as their delivery partners to grow the local business sector, rather than competing directly with it. After a period of product development and customer engagement these commercial vehicles are now selling subscription based packages directly to residents.

The drive towards commercialism is partly driven by financial challenges but more importantly by a desire to keep pace with the increasing expectations and needs of our Communities. The new unitary organisations will need to realise that to succeed they will need to look for new commercially driven funding sources and redesign existing services in order to understand where the value element exists. It is only through diversification into new market areas will the council of the future survive and thrive.

Commercial and trading organisations perform best when they understand their customers' needs and can engage with them fully in order to satisfy them. In this respect smaller organisations perform more strongly as they are able to make this bond with their customers. One of the greatest strengths that councils' have as commercial organisation is their relationship with their residents and the strong sense of trust that their residents have in their councils. This is the unique differentiator versus the private sector and is the single most important factor which enables councils to compete effectively in new markets (especially service based services). The experience developed and gained will be invaluable in maximising commercial income generating opportunities in these new unitary organisations.

The other area where more agile councils have a unique advantage is the area of commercial property development. Their understanding of the growth in their communities and the facilities that these communities will require enables them to predict, target and often to facilitate the provision of commercial property assets in their areas. Not only does their role in enabling commercial

infrastructure support growing communities it also enables the councils to use their access to low cost borrowing to produce commercial returns, which in turn supports core council services.

Districts have been at the forefront of new commercial development in recent years, (a bi-product of their understanding of local needs and their affinity to these communities) and have undertaken massive programmes of development supporting wider regeneration programmes and promoting commercial growth in their areas.

Like most Councils Wycombe DC recognised that a continuous programme of cost reduction in itself would not address the budget constraints or aspirations for low tax levels for residents and has responded by developing an income growth strategy which delivers benefits far wider with investment across the district, which delivers on jobs, housing, key infrastructure which is essential for the future of the district which has been neglected by infrastructure providers.

For example, Wycombe District Council has recently completed the large scale redevelopment of Handy Cross, at the cost of £47 million providing both a new modern leisure centre, let commercial property investment (£750k pa rent) and a regional coachway to support the growth and connectivity of the district. The Council has been active in regenerating key strategic sites, supporting additional housing, providing infrastructure and through its shop buy backs ensuring that it continues to have a vibrant town centre. The Council has also invested in Commercial Property and funded further developments to improve its revenue base. This approach has also secured jobs in the local economy.

By working with the Business Community the Council has been active in supporting the creation of two new BIDCO's to support both High Wycombe Town Centre and the Marlow Industrial Estate (Globe Park) protecting and growing jobs. This has enabled the Council to re-direct resources to support the local economy whilst local businesses have worked together to fund key improvements.

Aylesbury Vale District Council has invested over £100 million in the Aylesbury Canal basin area to provide a modern 1,200 seat theatre, a University campus teaching facility and a Waitrose and Travelodge scheme. This has provided the catalyst for extensive growth and investment in the Town centre providing new facilities, restaurants and leisure activities for Aylesbury's rapidly expanding population.

Joint Working and Track Record in Delivery

The existing district councils have a significant track record of delivery and joint working which it is anticipated will transfer to and assist in the design and transformation of the services provided by the two new unitary councils. Joint working between the new unitary councils will be a key feature of the proposed delivery of efficient services and the existing districts have considerable experience of joint working.

For example Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils have been undertaking a programme of joint working for over four years, and have reached the stage of:

- A single senior management team
- All service delivery is by joint teams
- All staff are on a single set of terms and conditions

- Service delivery is supported by a single unified ICT infrastructure

The joint working has focused on meeting three objectives.

- Improved service resilience
- Improved customer service
- Improved efficiency and financial savings

Savings to date from joint working are over £1.7m per annum.

Its success has been achieved by engaging all staff in the work of joining teams together, supported by a small in-house project management team drawing on appropriate methodologies that have been successfully deployed in other organisations. Maximising the use of internal skills and knowledge has meant that the whole process of creating shared teams has been delivered with less than £150k of expenditure on external consultants.

The views of customers and users formed an important part of the process, and this avoided deploying a "one size fits all" solution. The closeness of the authorities to their local communities makes it easier for them to identify and respond to local needs. Over the period of the joint working, customer and user satisfaction with services has not declined.

The effective involvement of members in providing a clear strategic direction to the joint working, and inputting to the work of establishing joint teams, has been very important. This relies on having members who understand their communities and how different services impact on those communities.

The Councils also have been effective in managing major external contracts for some of their services that have delivered efficiency and improved services. These included:

- Waste services (Jointly with Wycombe District Council) – BIFFA/SERCO
- Revenues & Benefits – Northgate
- Leisure Services - GLL

The successful management of contracts has been achieved through being clear with contractors what outcomes are required, and allowing them to use their skill to deliver them. Having an open as possible working partnership arrangements, facilitates dealing with issues that will always arise in a collaborative way, and encourages improvement and innovation. The aim is to focus on the service not the contract. Success has also been achieved in part by ensuring the contractor understands the particular characteristics of the area and its communities, something that would be very difficult to achieve with County wide contracts.

The councils also have experience in alternative and community based delivery vehicles as a means of enabling service delivery within the communities directly concerned with that service area. Not only does this engage the residents, but with the necessary support and assistance this

also transfers elements of traditional council costs into the community, thereby reducing the burden on the wider taxpayers.

Examples of CIC's created by Wycombe DC to run local services include Woodlands Management (now a Mutual 'Chiltern Ranger'), Wycombe Museum (newly formed Trust), Sport Development (services transferred to an existing Trust) each protecting services whilst generating significant savings and creating a sustainable future for valued discretionary services.

Conclusions

Buckinghamshire is at a pivotal decision point which will affect the lives of its residents and its prosperity for decades to come.

Failure to recognise the unique needs of the area, split along its economic geography, will perpetuate the years of lost opportunity already recorded. This has manifested itself in lost Growth within Buckinghamshire as a result of resources being targeted in accordance political expediency, instead of those areas which will deliver the greatest economic impact. Only by recognising and not ignoring these differences will the true economic growth potential of these areas be unlocked.

Blurring areas will result in averaged, and therefore sub-optimal, service outcomes over areas of demonstrably different needs and with very different challenges. Spending more, or less, than is required to satisfy these distinct needs will result in waste. Efficiency isn't the measure of how much is spent, but what is achieved with what has been spent and how outcomes are improved as a result. Building a sustainable model will rely on value generation which will be more easily achieved with a focus at the right level, building on existing achievements. Two new smaller unitary councils will be able to clearly understand and articulate the needs of their areas and target resources to their priority areas more precisely.

Failure to think differently and failure to focus on outcomes in favour of a simplistic decision to only concentrate on the amount spent, will not resolve the underlying issues and problem. More money into the same broken model will only delay the same, inevitable, outcome where services are first rationed and then ultimately turned off.

The two new unitary councils proposed in this report will build on the track record of achievements by the existing districts of innovative solutions, digital transformation and true commercialism to fundamentally redesign the way services are delivered, needs are met and how local government is funded for the next generation.

FIVE TESTS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

It is understood that DCLG will consider proposals for local government reorganisation in Buckinghamshire against five key tests and the extent to which these tests would be met. Our analysis demonstrates that the two new unitary option is the highest scoring option according to the County Criteria. The model is also stronger than the new single unitary in each of the following key test areas.

- Deliver improved services and outcomes for local residents
- Demonstrate improved value for money and efficiency
- Deliver significant cost savings, and show that the cost of change can be recovered over a fixed period
- Support stronger and more accountable leadership
- Demonstrate the new model is sustainable in the medium to long term, both in service delivery and financial terms

CONCLUSION

Fundamental to successful, sustainable public services is a strong, growing and productive economy. We have set out in this report how we will realign local government in Buckinghamshire to reflect functioning economic areas, creating a 'one direction' approach to growth that enables coherent planning and unfettered prioritisation and investment to accelerate growth and productivity. Not only will this mean that our contribution to UK PLC improves markedly but inclusive economic growth will significantly reduce dependency and demand for hard pressed public services.

Government have set five tests for local government reorganisation. Namely that it should:

1. Deliver improved outcomes for local residents.

Our 'more local' approach will get local government much closer to our residents and the communities they live in, will build stronger partnerships to accelerate public sector reform and integration, will build even stronger relationships with our town and parish councils and better engage the voluntary sector. This will allow services, across all local government functions, to genuinely reflect the distinctive needs of our different communities leading to 'more effective' services delivering much better outcomes. Nowhere is this more important than in services to children and young people. More emphasis on professional social work and outcomes for children through a sharper focus on the child, the family and the community underpinned by much stronger partnership working with key agencies will deliver the step change which is so urgently needed in Buckinghamshire.

2. Demonstrate improved value for money and efficiency.

This comes from far more than simply being the cheapest. The challenge is to improve outcomes for less money. Our approach will focus hard on efficiency and productivity on an ongoing basis but will also promote wider public sector reform at a local level allowing alignment of priorities and resources so that public money

goes much further. Furthermore through our enhanced model of community leadership and by optimising economic growth we will promote the resilience and independence of our citizens, enable them to do far more for themselves and co-produce public value with them rather than simply delivering homogenous services. We will accelerate already impressive approaches to innovation, digitisation, shared services and commercialisation to both improve services and reduce costs. By putting all of these things at the heart of a new relationship with our residents we believe we can set new benchmarks in value for money and efficiency.

3. Deliver significant cost savings and show that the cost of change can be recovered over a fixed period.

Our proposal for two new unitary councils will deliver £57.4 million of net cost savings over the 5 year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24 and the cost of change, including the harmonisation of council tax, will pay back in year 2 of that period.

Although we recognise that demonstrating cost savings is essential, we believe that the financial benefits realised from our model will be far greater than the cost savings we have set out. There will be significant additional costs benefits from different ways of working and economic growth than has been evidenced within the costing model.

4. Support stronger more accountable local leadership.

Elected members in both their executive and representative roles are central to our model of locally accountable leadership. The optimum number of members, with appropriate governance arrangements that promote efficient, local decision making across all functions, building on already strong local relationships are key ingredients for success. Our model also recognises the role of our Town and Parish Councils in strengthening local accountability. Our 'community Together' approach will build on these foundations and will empower residents to influence not just decision making, but the design and delivery of services that meet the particular needs of our different communities.

5. Demonstrate that the new model is sustainable in the medium to long term, both in service delivery and financial terms.

More effective local services (just enough of the right type at the right time), tailored to the needs of our different communities, stronger partnership working, engaging our communities and residents to promote resilience and independence and thereby reduce demand for public services are all vital elements of our approach to sustainable local government. Add to this a much more coherent approach to inclusive economic growth within real functional economic areas, producing additional resources and reduced demand and a locally accountable leadership model which builds innovation, efficiency and productivity into the DNA of our two new councils and we will deliver the most sustainable model of local government available to the people of Buckinghamshire.

APPENDIX A: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE PROFILE

Draft

APPENDX 1

Buckinghamshire Profile

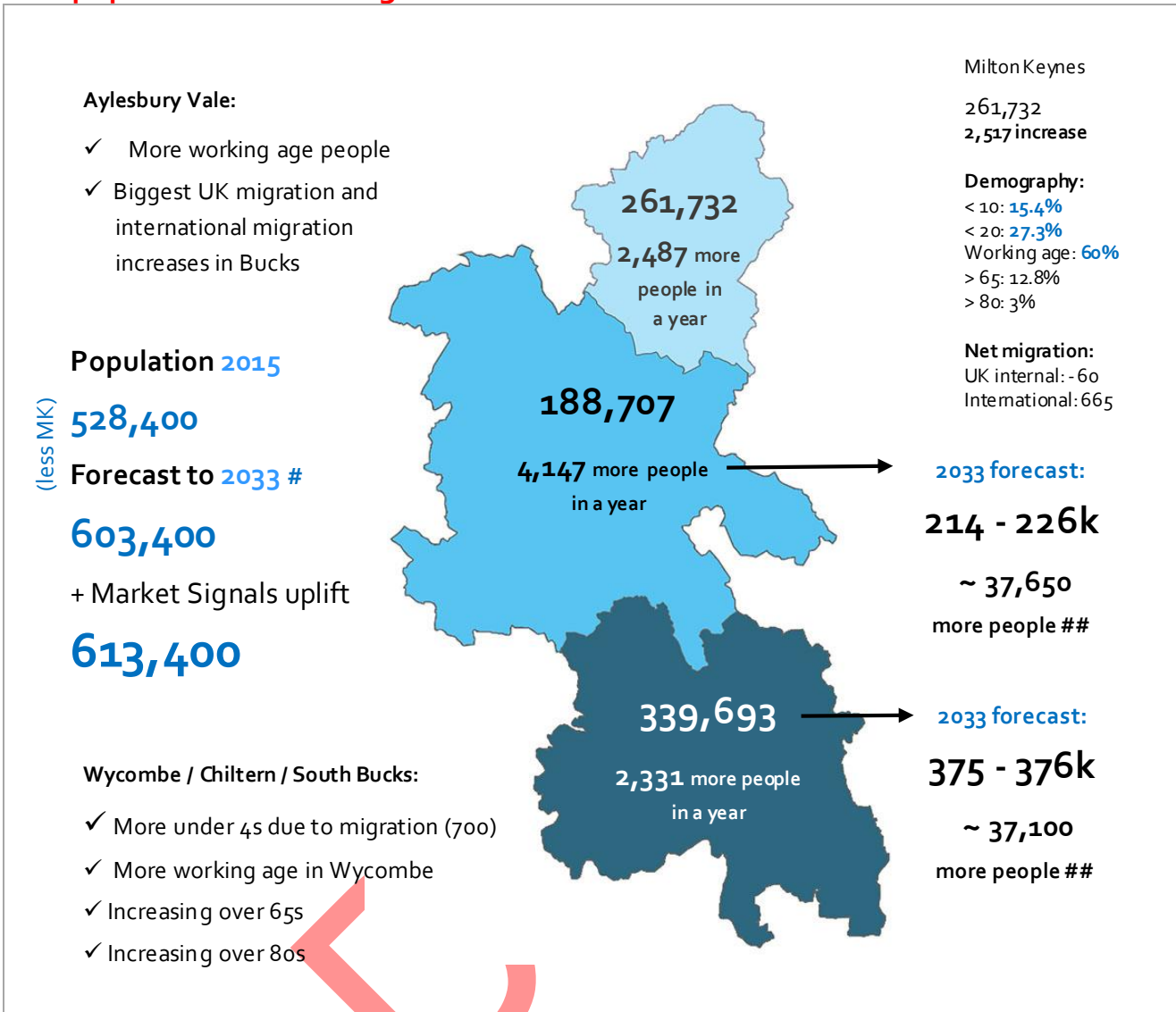
This section sets out the key characteristics of Buckinghamshire as a place – with a primary focus on the people that make up our communities and the businesses that drive our economy. When looked at as a whole, it may appear that Buckinghamshire is a broadly homogenous place to live and work, with characteristics that are in line with what you would expect in the South East of England. When you look at a more local level you can appreciate the diversity within our communities, in our geography and in our economies: this is shown in **blue text** on the pages that follow. The evidence supports two new unitary councils to enable us to be focused in **one direction** on our different economic geographies, be **even more local** and **more effective** and **more efficient**.

Map 1 Location of Buckinghamshire



Map 2 Our changing population: 2014 - 2015 and looking ahead to 2033

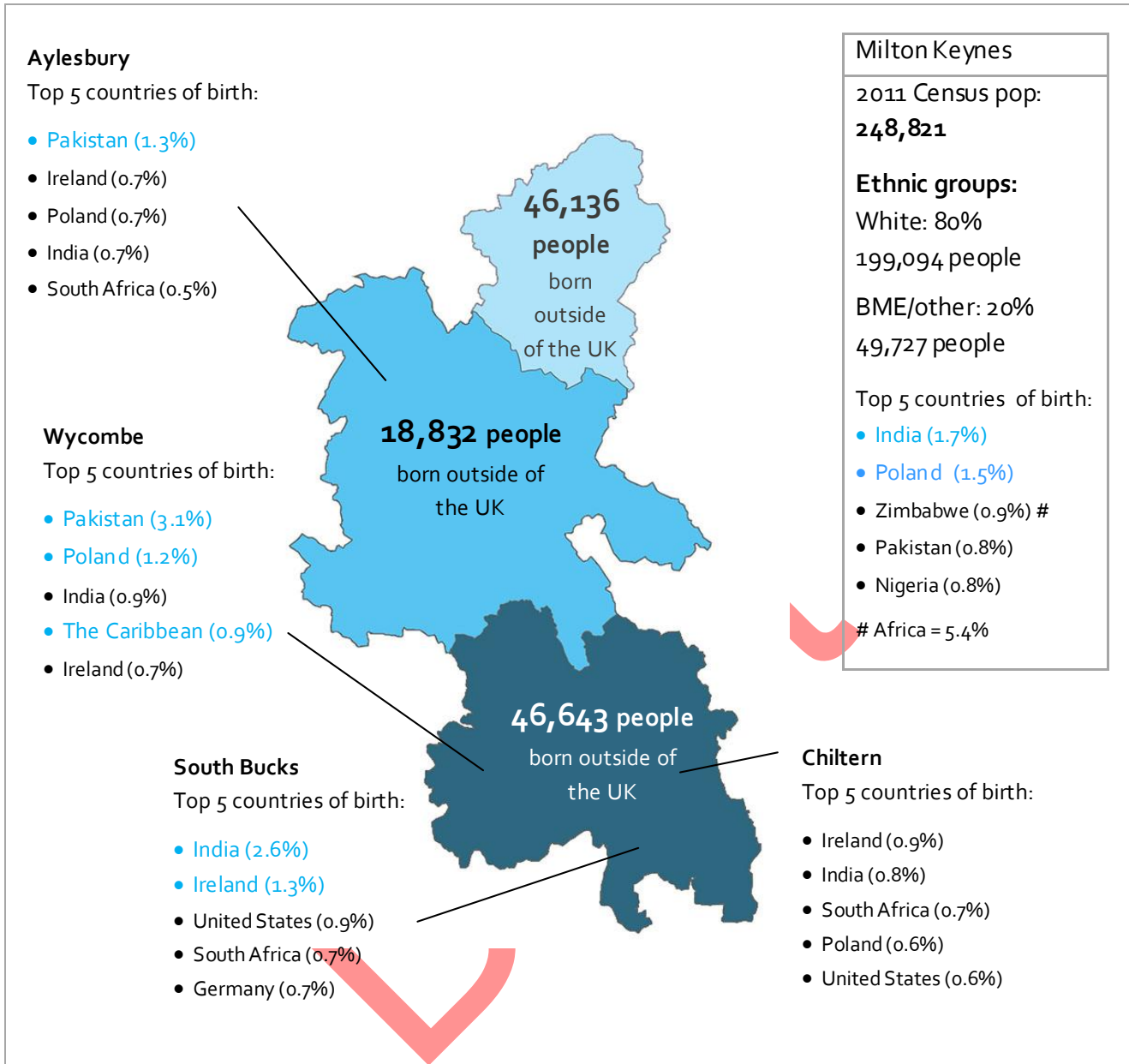
MK population forecast figures to be added



North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
188,707 4,147 increase	339,693 2,331 increase	176,028 1,150 increase	94,545 573 increase	69,120 608 increase
2033 Forecast: 213,948 – 226,357	2033 Forecast: 375,033 – 375,789	2033 Forecast: 192,924 – 194,134	2033 Forecast: 101,427 – 103,242	2033 Forecast: 78,867 – 80,228
Demography: Under 10: 13.2% Under 20: 25.2% Work age: 58.4% Over 65: 16.4% Over 80: 4.2%	Demography: Under 10: 12.7% Under 20: 24.9% Work age: 55.9% Over 65: 19.2% Over 80: 5.5%	Demography: Under 10: 13.0% Under 20: 25.2% Work age: 57.4% Over 65: 17.4% Over 80: 4.7%	Demography: Under 10: 12.6% Under 20: 25.2% Work age: 53.6% Over 65: 21.2% Over 80: 6.1%	Demography: Under 10: 12.3% Under 20: 23.6% Work age: 55.9% Over 65: 19.2% Over 80: 6.4%
Net migration: Internal: 2,186 International: 1,200	Net migration: Internal: 739 International: 530	Net migration: Internal: -147 International: 334	Net migration: Internal: 379 International: 101	Net migration: Internal: 507 International: 95

Source: 2015 mid-year estimates (MYE) from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and HEDNA Assessment Update (Dec 2016)
 # based on 2014-based SNPP and 10-year migration # trend forecasts # # less market signals uplift

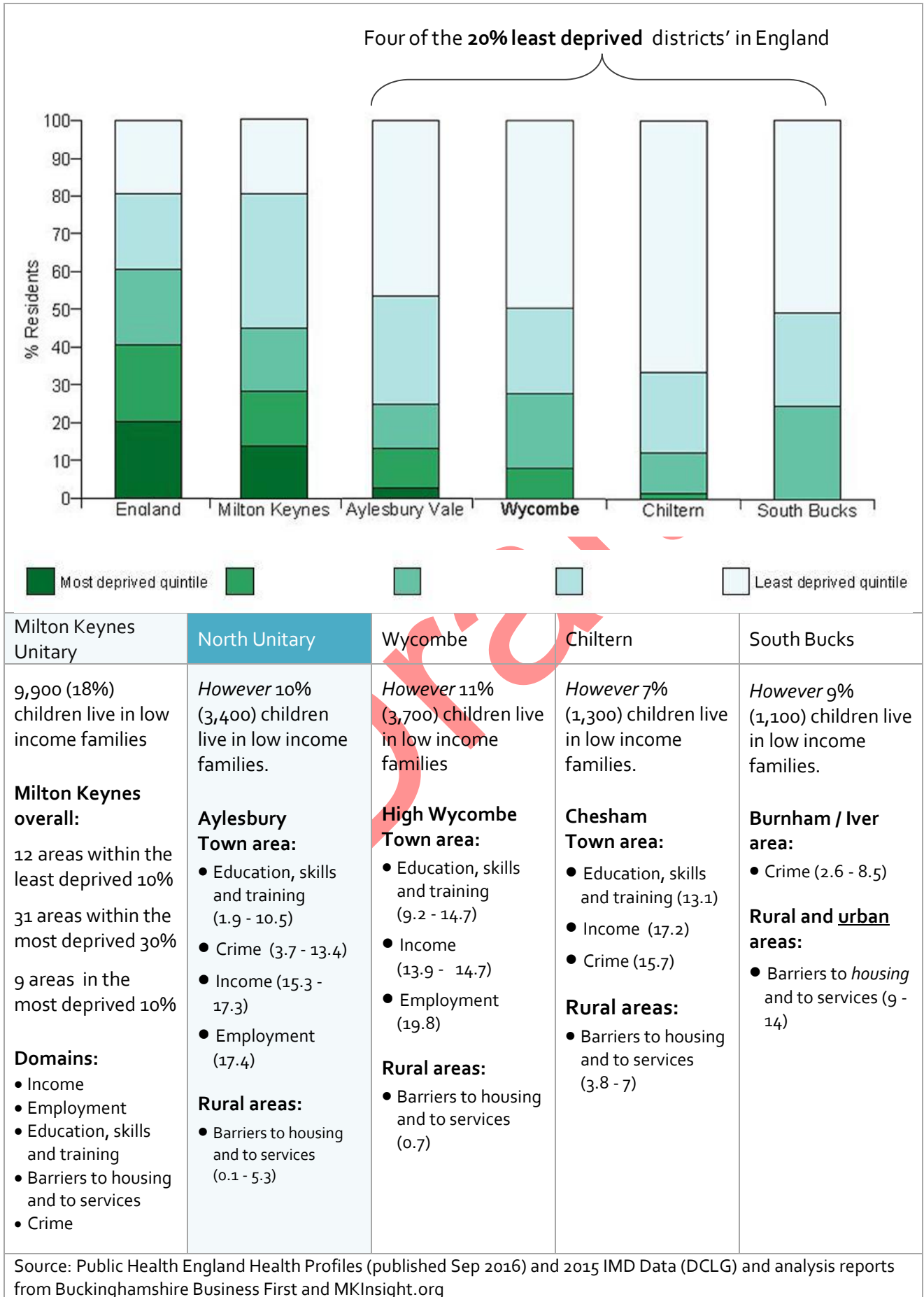
Map 3 Our Communities: Cultural heritage



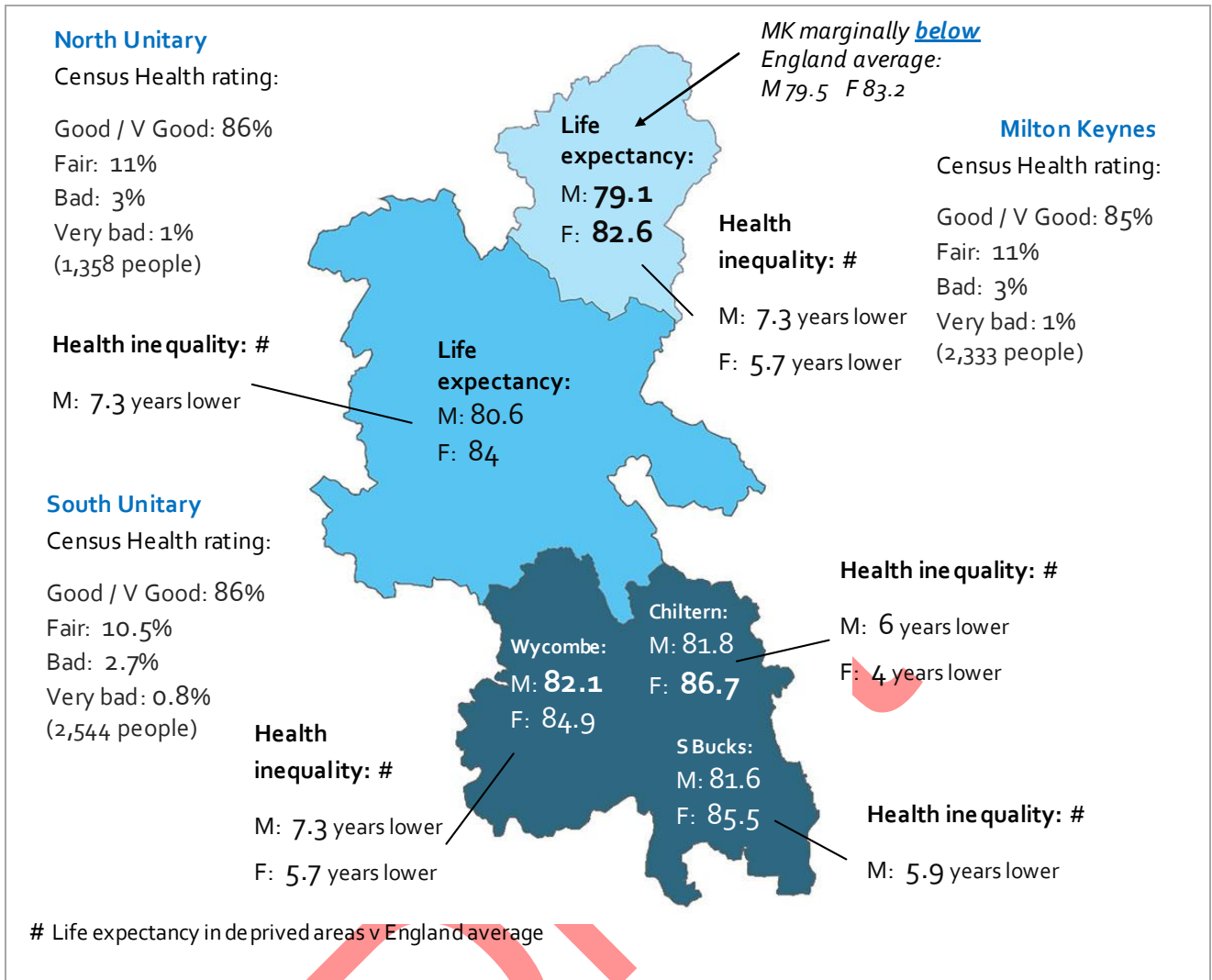
North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
2011 Census pop: 174,137	2011 Census pop: 331,166	2011 Census pop: 171,644	2011 Census pop: 92,635	2011 Census pop: 66,867
Ethnic groups: White: 90% 156,079 people BME/other: 10.4% 18,058 people (9,684 in 2001)	Ethnic groups: White: 84.6% (280,591 people) BME/other: 15.3% (55,055 people)	Ethnic groups: White: 81% 139,477 people BME/other: 19% 32,167 people (19,678 in 2001)	Ethnic groups: White: 91.5% 84,749 people BME/other: 8.5% 7,886 people (4,078 in 2001)	Ethnic groups: White: 84% 56,365 people BME/other: 16% 10,502 people (4,105 in 2001)
Religion: Christian: 62% Other: 6% (4% = Muslim)		Religion: Christian: 57% Other: 11% (8.8% = Muslim)	Religion Christian: 63% Other: 6% (2.5% = Muslim)	Religion Christian: 62% Other: 11% (4.7% = Sikh) (2.5% = Hindu) (2.5% = Muslim)

Source: Census data collected on 27 March 2011 from the Office of National Statistics (ONS)

Map 4 Our Communities: Areas of deprivation



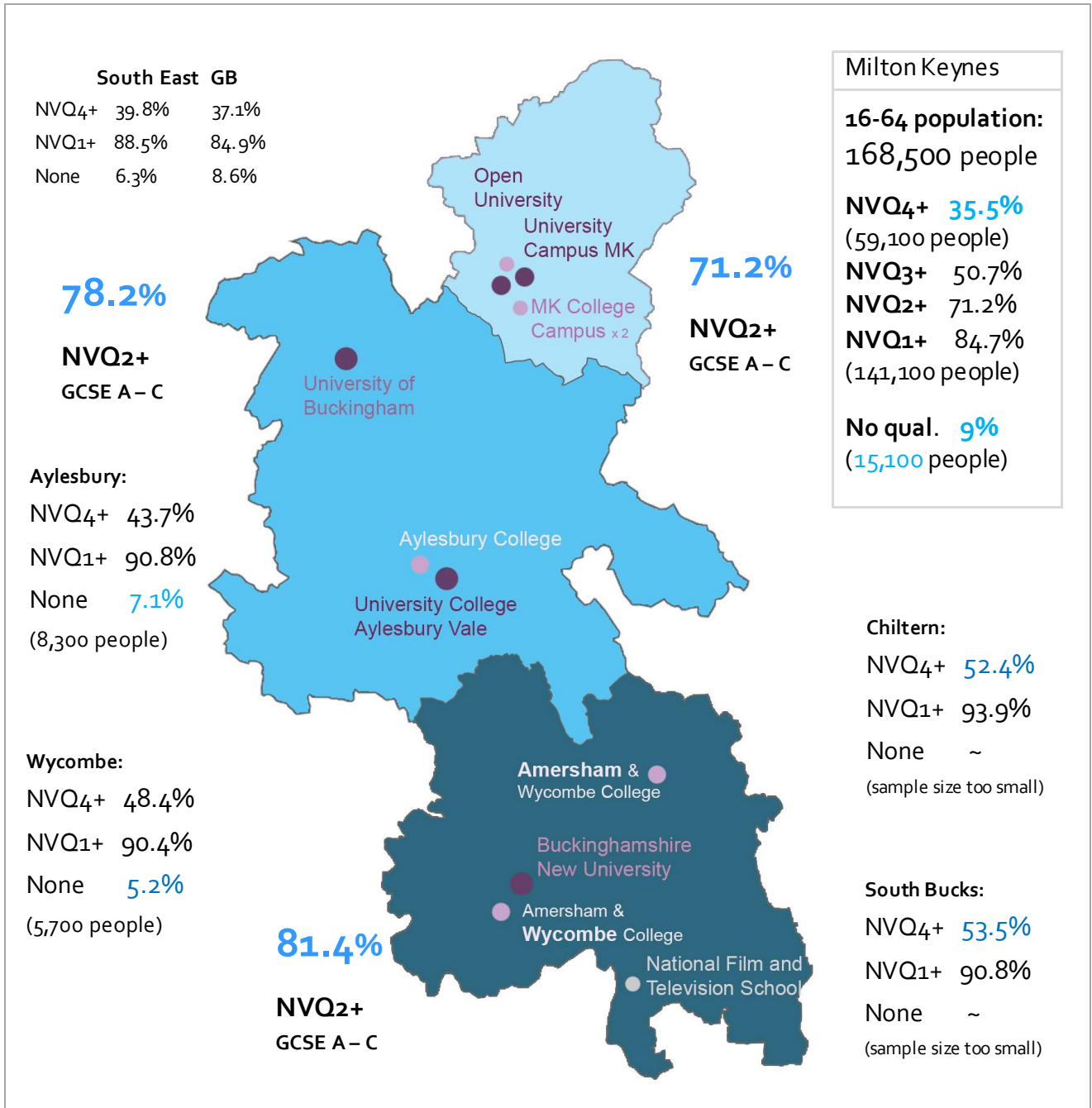
Map 5 Our Communities: Health



Milton Keynes Unitary	North Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 14% (34,538 people)	Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 14% (23,654 people)	Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 13% (22,526 people)	Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 13% (12,448 people)	Long-term health issue or disability that limits day-to-day activities: 14% (9,300 people)
Health Profile # Better: 9 / 26 No diff: 13 / 26 Worse: 4 / 26	Health Profile # Better: 21 / 27 No diff: 4 / 27 Worse: 1 / 27	Health Profile # Better: 22 / 27 No diff: 5 / 27 Worse: 0 / 27	Health Profile # Better: 25 / 27 No diff: 2 / 27 Worse: 0 / 27	Health Profile # Better: 21 / 27 No diff: 4 / 27 Worse: 1 / 27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCSEs achieved (4) Excess weight in adults (14) Life expectancy at birth (female) (23) Infant mortality (24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breast feeding (8) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KSI roads (25)

Source: Public Health England Health Profiles (published Sep 2016) and 2015 IMD Data (DCLG) and Census data collected on 27 March 2011 from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) #31 Health Profile indicators of which 27 (where data available) are comparable to the rest of England (rated against average score).

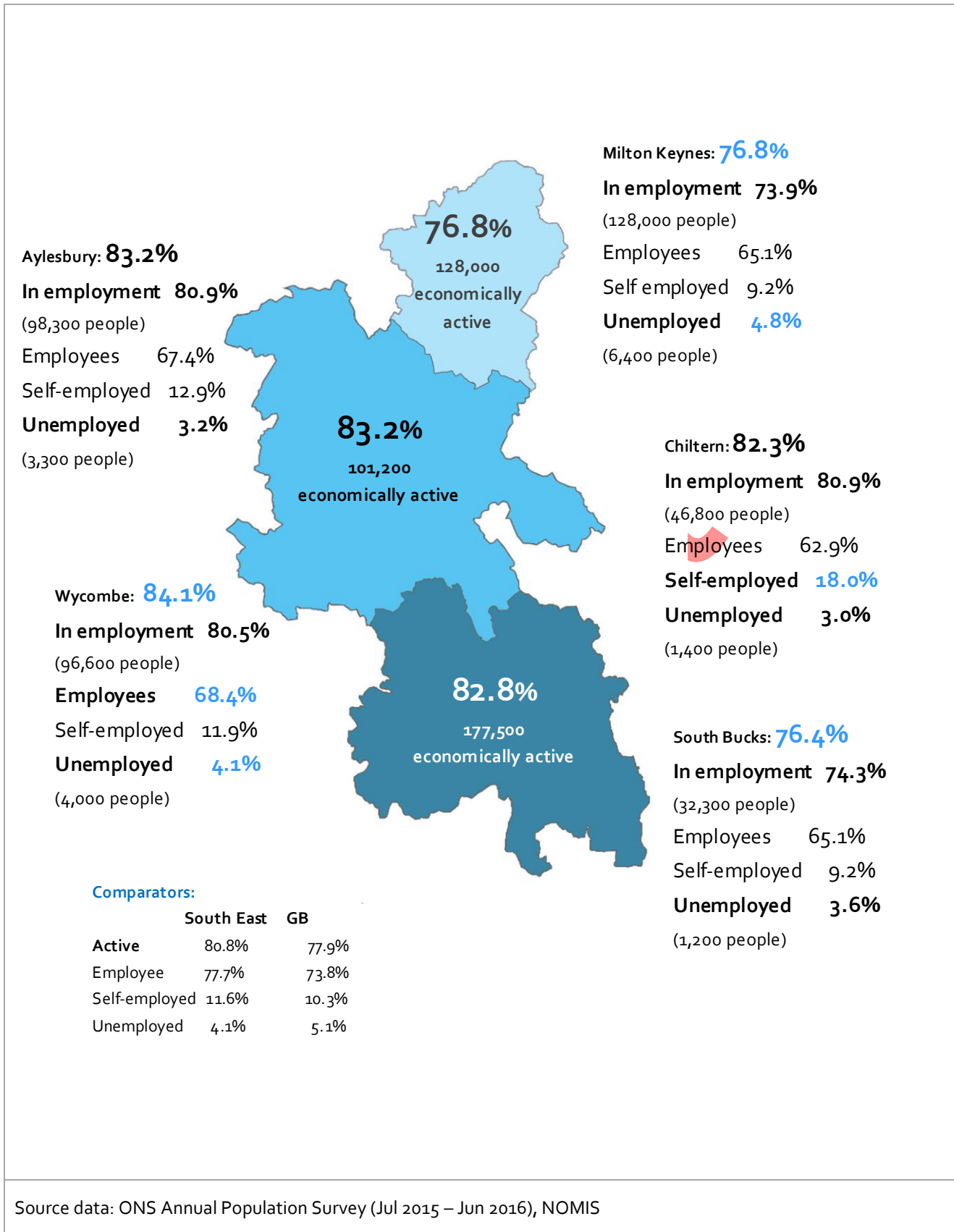
Map 6 Our Communities: Education



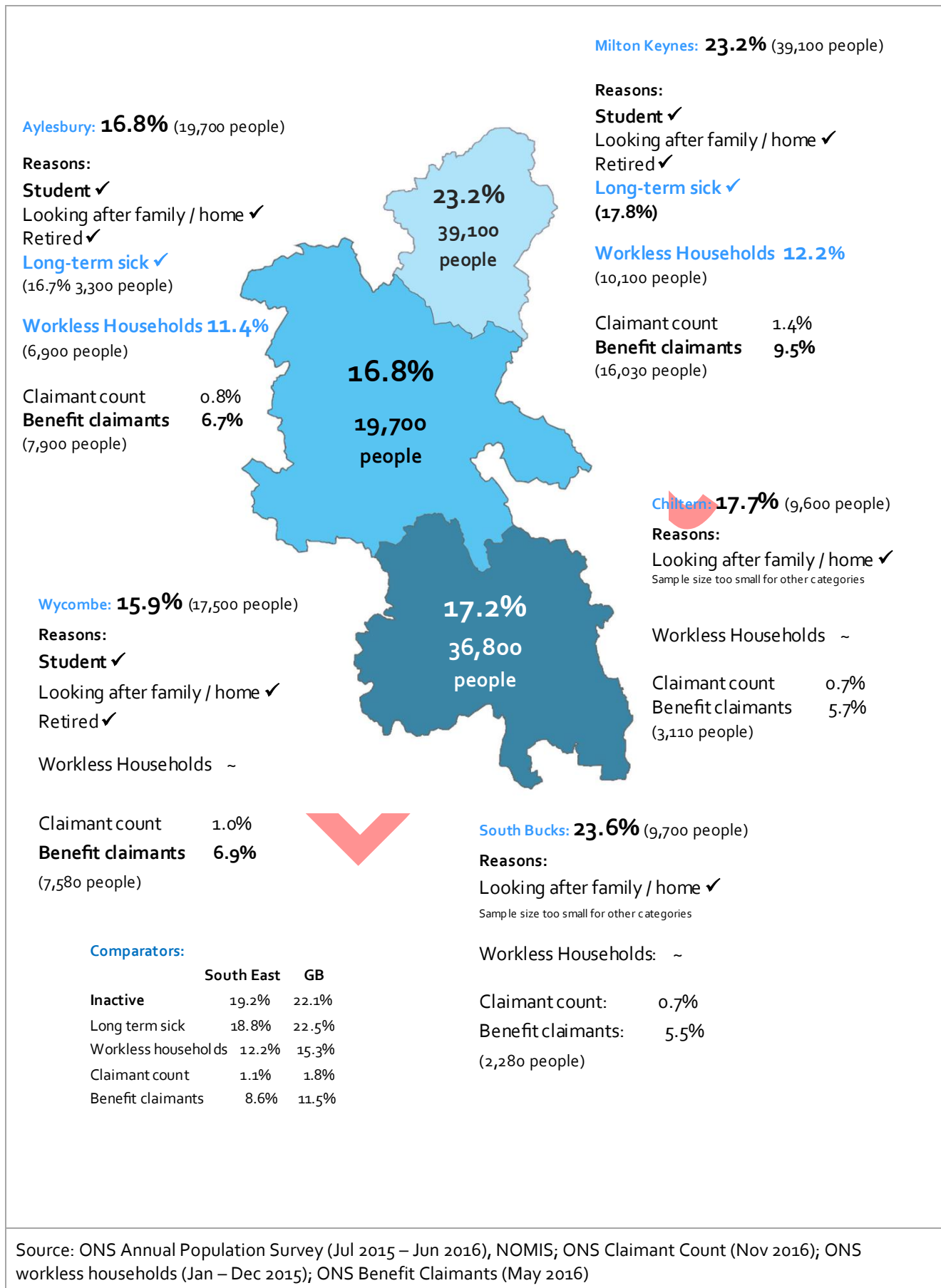
North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
16-64 population: 119,200 people	16-64 population: 205,700 people	16-64 population: 109,300 people	16-64 population: 55,000 people	16-64 population: 41,400 people
NVQ4+ 43.7% (50,900 people)	NVQ4+ 50.0% (102,900 people)	NVQ4+ 48.4% (53,000 people)	NVQ4+ 52.5% (28,400 people)	NVQ4+ 53.5% (21,500 people)
NVQ3+ 62.2%	NVQ3+ 67.8%	NVQ3+ 66.6%	NVQ3+ 58.8%	NVQ3+ 76.7%
NVQ2+ 78.2%	NVQ2+ 81.4%	NVQ2+ 80.7%	NVQ2+ 81.8%	NVQ2+ 86.9%
NVQ1+ 90.8% (105,600 people)	NVQ1+ 90.4% (186,000 people)	NVQ1+ 90.4% (98,900 people)	NVQ1+ 90.9% (49,300 people)	NVQ1+ 93.9% (37,800 people)
No qual. 7.1% (8,300 people)	No qual. 2.7% (5,700 people)	No qual. 5.2% (5,700 people)	No qual. ~ (sample size too small)	No qual. ~ (sample size too small)

Source data: ONS Annual Population Survey (July 2015 – June 2016), NOMIS

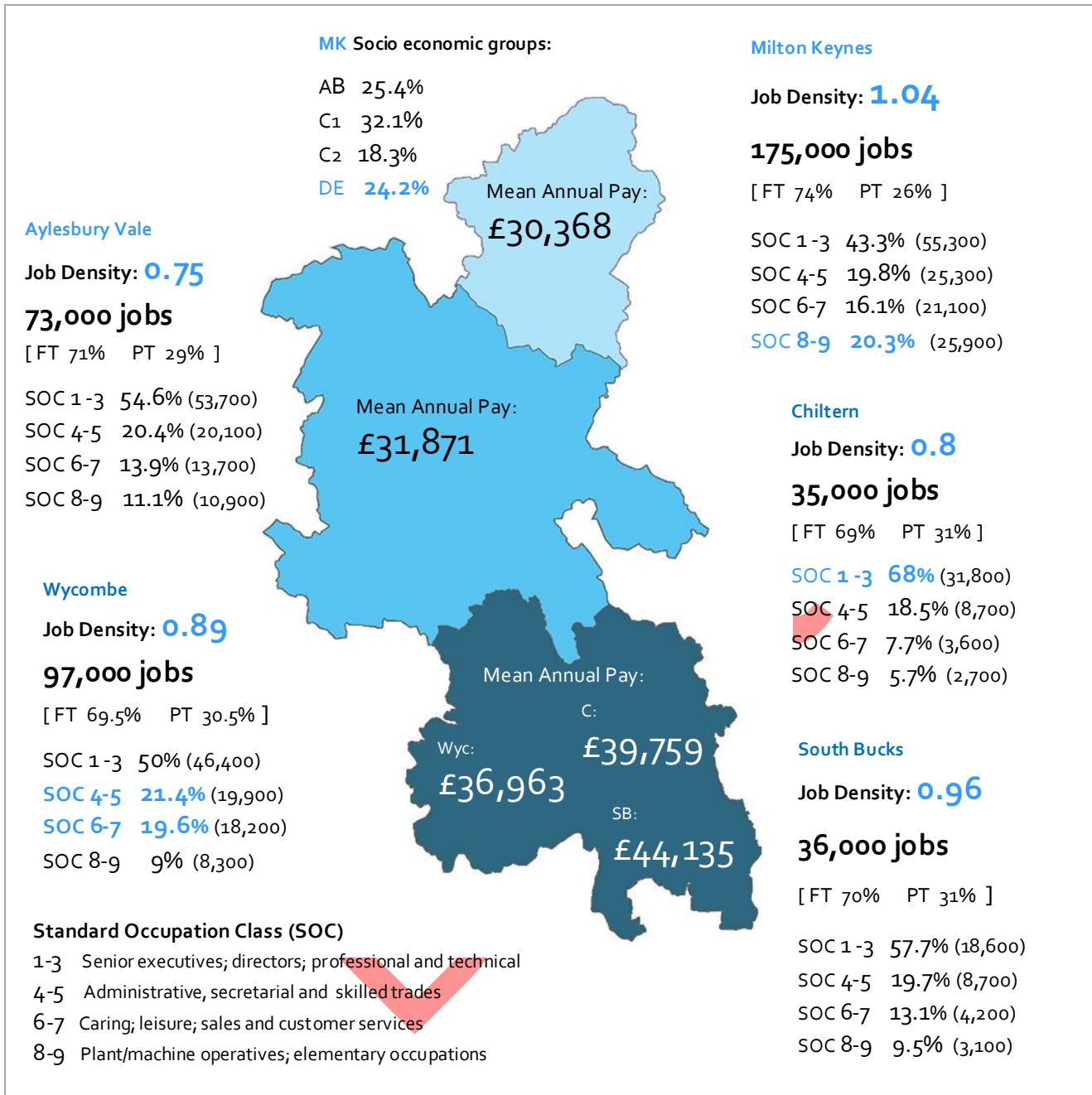
Map 7 Our Communities: Economic activity



Map 8 Our Communities: Economic inactivity



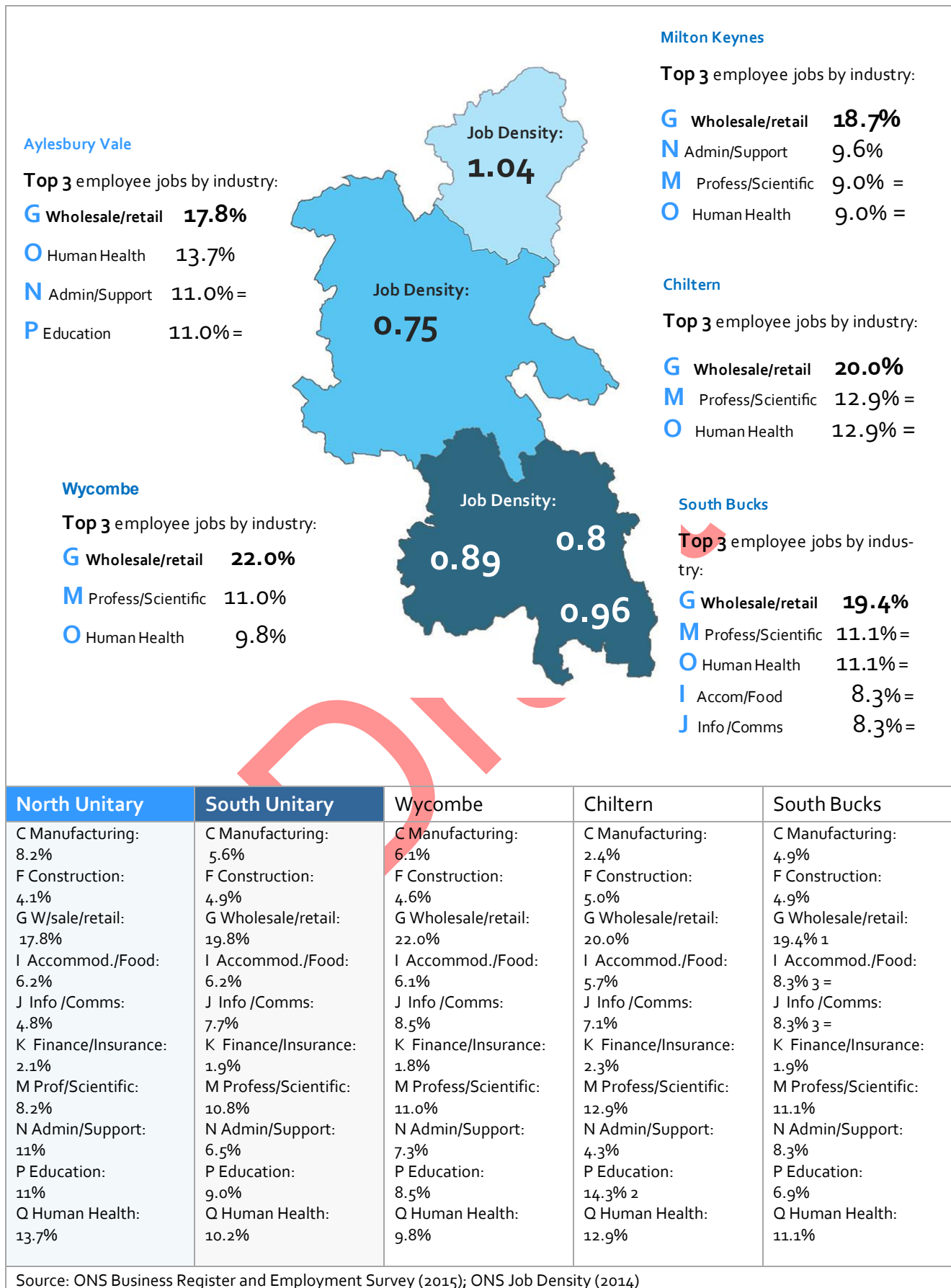
Map 9 Our Economy: Employment by occupation class and mean pay levels



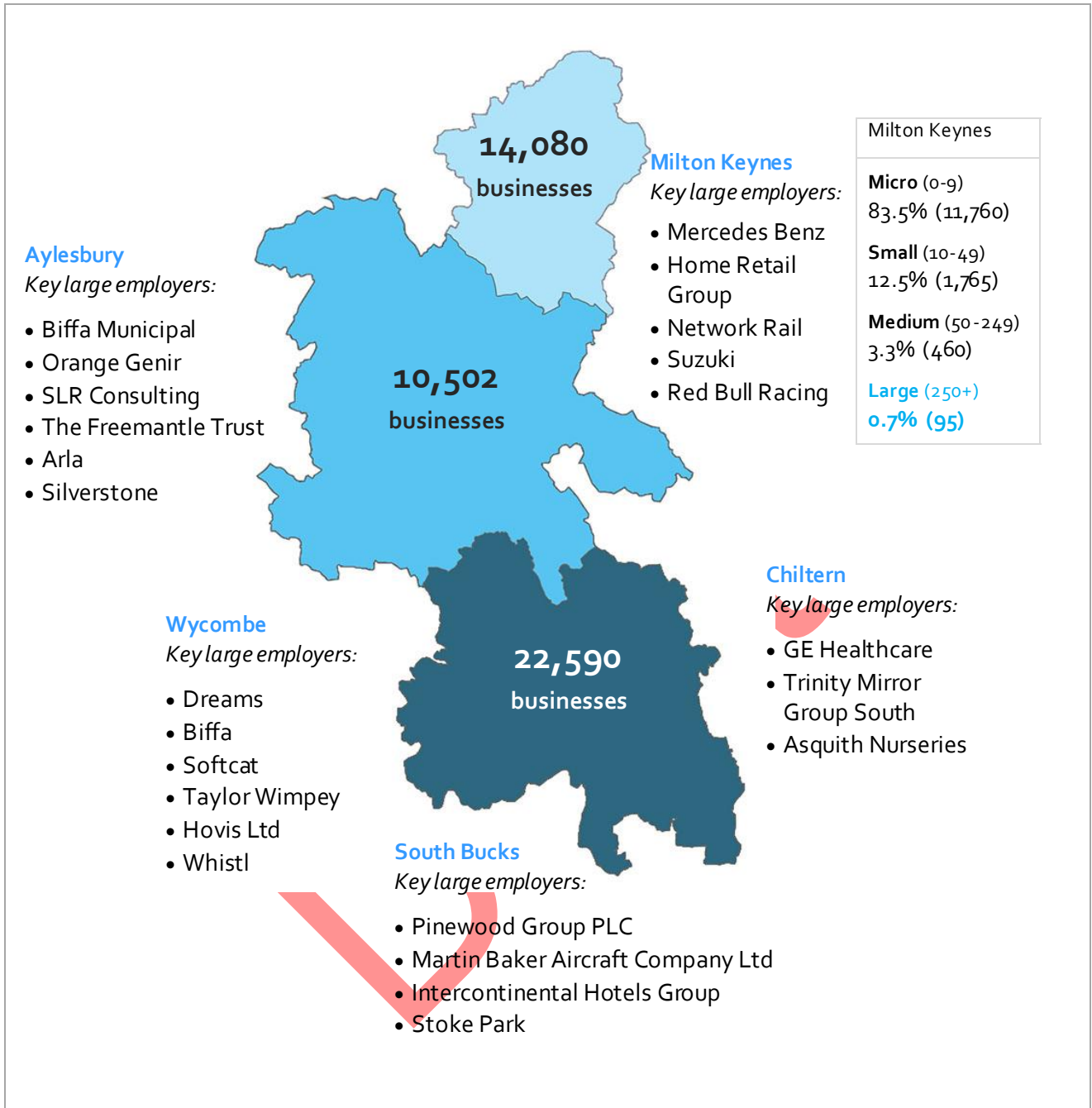
North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
Social Grade:	Social Grade:	Social Grade:	Social Grade:	Social Grade:
AB 29.7% Higher managerial /admin /professional	AB 35.9% Higher managerial /admin /professional	AB 32.7% Higher managerial /admin /professional	AB 41.0% Higher managerial /admin /professional	AB 38.0% Higher managerial /admin /professional
C1 33.2% Junior mgmt. / clerical	C1 31.8% Junior mgmt. / clerical	C1 31.7% Junior mgmt. / clerical	C1 31.0% Junior mgmt. / clerical	C1 33.4% Junior mgmt. / clerical
C2 20.3% Skilled manual	C2 18.3% Skilled manual	C2 18.8% Skilled manual	C2 15.6% Skilled manual	C2 17.0% Skilled manual
DE 16.8% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension	DE 14.6% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension	DE 16.8% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension	DE 12.4% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension	DE 11.7% Semi/unskilled/ casual /unemployed / state pension

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (Jul 2015 – Jun 2016), NOMIS; ONS Job Density (2014) and Social Grade from latest National Readership Survey

Map 10 Our Economy: What our residents do for work and job density



Map 11 Our Economy: Business in Buckinghamshire



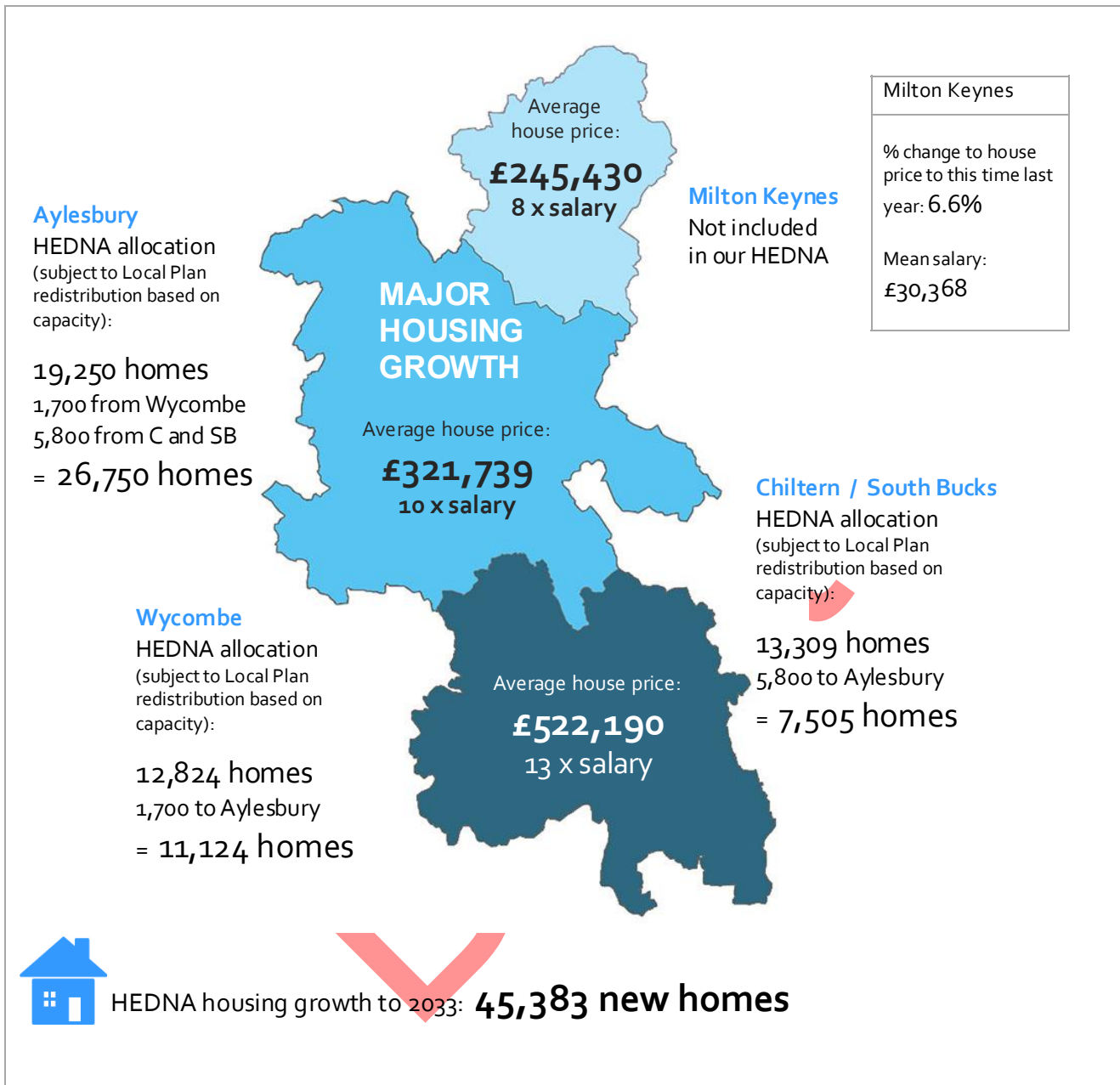
North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
Total businesses: 10,520	Total businesses: 22,590	Total businesses': 10,450	Total businesses': 6,605	Total businesses: 5,530
Micro (0-9) 88.3% (9,295)	Micro (0-9) 88.1% (19,895)	Micro (0-9) 86% (8,995)	Micro (0-9) 90.8% (5,995)	Micro (0-9) 88.7% (4,905)
Small (10-49) 9.6% (1,010)	Small (10-49) 9.9% (2,210)	Small (10-49) 11.2% (1,170)	Small (10-49) 7.9% (515)	Small (10-49) 9.5% (525)
Medium (50-249) 1.8% (190)	Medium (50-249) 2% (440)	Medium (50-249) 2.5% (260)	Medium (50-249) 1.3% (85)	Medium (50-249) 1.7% (95)
Large (250+) 0.2% (25)	Large (250+) 0.2% (45)	Large (250+) 0.2% (25)	Large (250+) 0.2% (10)	Large (250+) 0.2% (10)

Source: ONS Interdepartmental Business Register (2016) NOMIS: Businesses = local units (totals vary on Nomis due to rounding)

Map 12 Our Economy: Our key economic assets in Buckinghamshire



Map 13 Our Economy: Housing Growth
DRAFT MK housing forecast figures to be added



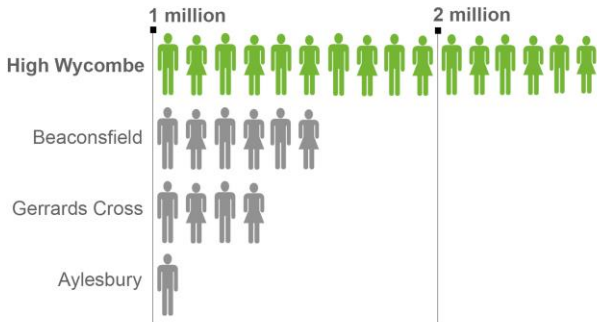
North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
Average house price: £321,739	Average house price: £522,190	Average house price: £390,858	Average house price: £556,187	Average house price: £619,526
% change to this time last year: + 12.2%	% change to this time last year: : 12%	% change to this time last year: : 11.7%	% change to this time last year: : 12.6%	% change to this time last year: 12.2%
Mean salary: £31,871	Mean salary: £40,286	Mean salary: £36,963	Mean salary: £39,759	Mean salary: £44,135
Price v Salary: 10 times	Price v Salary: 13 times	Price v Salary: 11 times	Price v Salary: 14 times	Price v Salary: 14 times

Source: HEDNA Update (Dec 2016); ONS earning and working hours (2016); Land Registry House Price (Oct 2016)

Map 14 Our Place: Accessibility

We are well connected to the motorway and rail networks in Buckinghamshire which makes us a desirable place to live and do business. The tube line connecting Chesham and Amersham through to London make these popular commuter towns. High Wycombe train station on the Chiltern Line has a direct service to London Marylebone that takes just 23 minutes – making this the station with the most usages in Buckinghamshire.

Station usage: entries and exits

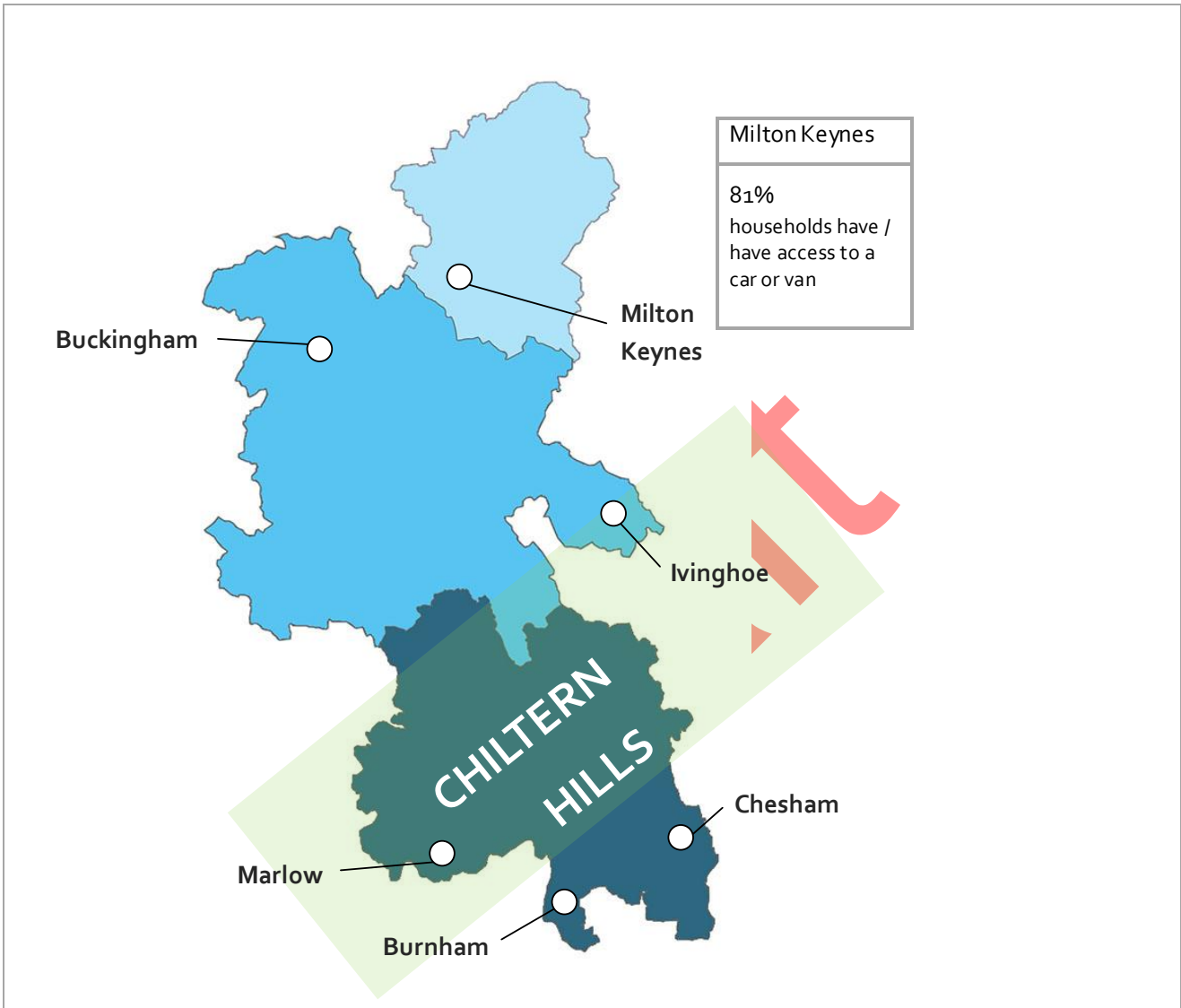


Source: Chiltern Railways Jan 2016



Map 15 Our Place: Accessibility around Buckinghamshire

That said, the challenges for more local trips in and around Buckinghamshire, whether that be by car or by public transport are often challenged by the Chiltern Hills factor. Two new unitary councils will enable us to be **even more local** and to keep travel for our residents – and our elected members on council matters closer to home.



North Unitary	South Unitary	Wycombe	Chiltern	South Bucks
87% households have / have access to a car or van	88% households have / have access to a car or van	86% households have / have access to a car or van	89% households have / have access to a car or van	89% households have / have access to a car or van
		Marlow to Milton Keynes:	Chesham to Ivinghoe:	Burnham to Buckingham:
		61 miles	12.6 miles	57.6 miles
		Car: 1.15 hours	Car: 23 minutes	Car: 1.30 hours
		Public transport: 2.11 hours	Public transport: 1.56 hours	Public transport: 3 hours

Source: Google maps trip planning

APPENDIX B: FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS

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

Costs

Assumption category	Assumption description and Source
Council tax	<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 £5 for the district councils with the exception of Wycombe District Council which is assumed to freeze council tax at the 2016/17 rate until 2019/20. From 2019/20 onwards, which is when the new UA(s) are assumed to be formed, the council tax rates are assumed to increase by 3.99% annually.</p> <p>The 2016/17 average band D council tax rates¹¹ 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 base¹² 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

¹¹ Council Tax rates for 2016/17 are based on CTR and CTB forms and include special expenses

¹² Council tax base for council tax setting purposes in 2016/17

Change programme costs	<p>The financial analysis assumes the following for each option:</p> <p>Two new unitary model – creating two new unitary councils will require (over a two-year change programme):</p> <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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One new unitary model – creating one new 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 • More detailed work on the costs of reorganisation will be performed at the full business case stage, a contingency cost of £2m per annum has been included for each option for the first two years following reorganisation.

Savings

Assumption category	Assumption description Source
Senior staff restructuring (estimated savings from comparing current cost to new structure cost)	<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 + 40% 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"> • Two new unitary model <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 + 40% on costs per annum 6 Strategic Directors at £110,000 + 40% on costs per annum 21 Heads of Service at £70,000 + 40% on costs per annum</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single new unitary model <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 + 40% on costs per annum 3 Strategic Directors at £120,000 + 40% on costs per annum 13 Heads of Service at £70,000 + 40% on costs per annum</p>
Democratic	<p>Publicly available data on member allowances and expenses from comparable Unitary Councils in England has been used to establish An assumption for member allowances and expenses of £15,000.</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 number of members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new unitary model – creating two unitary councils <p>59 members in the north unitary council and 80 members in the south unitary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single new unitary model <p>90 members in the unitary council</p> <p>In the north unitary the number of members would remain the same as in the currently Aylesbury Vale District Council and these members would represent the same wards under the north unitary as is currently the same. Therefore, no Boundary Commission review would be required under the north unitary council. In the one newunitary and the south unitary the distrubution of members will be determined by a Boundary Commission review as part of the reorganisation process.</p>
Corporate services	<p>Strategic Financial Case reports for three local government reorganisations in England (for two tier to a one newcounty unitary) which suggest Corporate Services, including ICT, savings are possible when combining authorities. Using the information from these studies it is assumed that as a percentage of total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from Revenue Account (RA) statistics, the estimated average saving across the proposed two Council reorganisations is 2.10%.</p> <p>The 2.10% has been applied to the total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from the RA statistics for 2016/17 for the five councils to calculate the estimated annual saving. It is assumed that in the first full year following reorganisation 33.3% of the estimated annual saving will be 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 one new unitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two</p>

	<p>new unitary option. Therefore, the following adjustment has been made to reflect this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two new 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 one newcounty unitary) which suggest service optimisation efficiency savings are possible when combining authorities. Using the information from these studies it is assumed that as a percentage of total net service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from RA statistics, the estimated average saving across the proposed two authority reorganisations is 1.62%.</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 one newunitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two unitary option. Therefore, the following adjustment has been made to reflect this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two new 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 one newcounty unitary) which suggest property rationalisation savings are possible when combining authorities. Using the information from these studies it is assumed that as a percentage of total net service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from RA statistics the estimated average saving across the proposed two authority reorganisations is 0.35%.</p> <p>The 0.35% has been applied to the total service expenditure (excluding schools expenditure) from the RA statistics for 2016/17 for the five councils to calculate the estimated annual saving. It is assumed that in the first full year following reorganisation 33.3% of the estimated annual saving will be 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 one newunitary option will receive a greater benefit from potential efficiencies when compared to the two unitary option. Therefore, the following adjustment has been made to reflect this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two new unitary model – benefit reduced by a factor of 0.10

Dates

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

Draft

APPENDIX C: MODEL FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Proposed Service Delivery Model

We want all our children to be safe, confident and happy, with the opportunities to achieve through learning and reach their full potential as they become adults.

We recognise that the current context of reduced public spending, growing population and the challenges for our communities.

We acknowledge that we need a step change in the way that we meet the different needs of our communities; we now have the opportunity to achieve this. We are clear about our priorities and will work in partnership to address them. We will be community focussed but outward looking keen to engage in purposeful partnership with neighbouring councils and further to share best practice and work together within a culture of continuous improvement.

Our objectives are:

- Help families to deal with challenges and develop resilience, embrace opportunities and stay together whenever possible.
- Make sure all children attend school regularly so they can achieve and excel with the support of the best teachers.
- Support children and young people through transitions to become adults who contribute positively to society.
- We will improve the physical, emotional and mental health of children, ensuring the best start in life and long term healthy lifestyles.

We want children and families to thrive and be resilient. Our aim is that all children and young people live in families where they are safe, confident and happy and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and strengthen their community.

Supporting the family to maximise their wellbeing is at the centre of our approach: Empowering and enabling the family by providing the right services, in the right measure at the right time, when a problem is first identified, ensuring children can thrive, is our goal. We will build on the Government's Troubled Families agenda by using a whole family approach, keeping the child at the heart of our work, building resilience and enabling families to achieve positive outcomes and a positive future through efficient, effective and economic partnerships with the family at their core.

We want families to:

- be resilient, thrive and strengthen their community
- preserve family life wherever possible
- have the best physical and mental health and wellbeing
- support children in their learning and education
- be as economically self-sufficient as possible
- live free of crime and domestic abuse

We will achieve this by working closely with partners across Council services, including Adult Services, the Clinical Commissioning Group and its providers, the voluntary and community sector – including Parent Champions – and the Police and by making best use of our collective resources.

We will align our priorities through our strategic partnerships ensuring a more local focus in order to effectively engage with the different issues and challenges that arise in our different communities. Active strategies with effective implementation through embedding culture change and robust performance management will maximise coterminous, integrated multi-agency teams co-located when possible. We will need to ensure this includes joint commissioning with that of other partner agencies. Building on and developing new relationships with schools, colleges and early years' settings will be important. Teams will need to undergo some retargeting, restructure and realignment while maintaining professional lines of accountability.

There will be new opportunities to developing council wide support services including strategy, policy, performance and finance. All of which must be providing comprehensive data, analysis, feedback and future forecasting in order to deliver ever better and more cost-effective services.

There will be a shared responsibility for vulnerable children and those in need of protection and a very strong focus on delivering the necessary improvements in Children's Social Care identified elsewhere in the document.

There will need to be a strong emphasis on Early Help and Prevention in order to achieve better outcomes for our children, families and communities. Reduce the need for expensive statutory interventions or unnecessary assessments and referrals allowing best practice in direct work with the most complex and high risk children and young people. In this way, scarce resources can be targeted most effectively.

An Early Help and Prevention Model agreed across the partnership with Health, Housing, Adult and Mental Health Services, Police the Community and Voluntary Sector and the whole system will be agreed to ensure complete alignment of effort, identification and understanding.

Different children, young people and families have different needs. Some children will flourish in a family accessing universal services which are available to everyone, such as health visiting, children's centres, schools and leisure services. Others will require more targeted intervention to tackle emerging additional needs, such as family support services, or additional help and support at school. Some families will have more complex issues which require either a multi-agency response from targeted services, or specialist services from children's social care, youth offending teams or specialist health services.

We will assess the need for early help services by utilising The Local Safeguarding Children Board Threshold Guidance, which is a tool designed to inform practitioners, volunteers and those working with children, young people and families in how to assess and identify a child's level of need and how to access the right level of support. "The Right Service at the Right Time"

Our approach to providing the services will be informed by this and delivered following shared training in a way to enable practitioners across different disciplines to work collaboratively and in partnership with families and children.

There could be 4 Thresholds of need:

- Universal Parent/Carer meeting child's needs with support of Universal Services E.g. Health Visitor, School or Early Years
- Early Help Children with additional needs e.g. extra help at school, developmental, speech and language.
- Targeted Early Help Children with multiple or complex needs targeted youth support, mental health, youth justice, edge of care

- Children's Social Care and Specialist Children in Need, Child Protection, Looked After Children, Mental Health

Effective universal services will enhance families' unique qualities, strengths and skills to encourage them to cope with future challenges. We will work with families in a way that empowers and motivates them to develop routines, relationships and coping strategies so that they can respond as positively as possible to any future difficulties.

Targeted and specialist support services to families have to be time-limited. We will empower families by giving those tools, skills and information that they will be able to use for themselves, after their support programme has ended and they no longer have a lead practitioner working with them. Before lead practitioners stop working with a family, they will have helped the family to establish longer term support networks in their community - whether through children's centres, school, family and friends and the voluntary and community sector, including services such as Parent Engagement Panel.

A parent engagement panel (PEP) is a network of parents and carers, who share ideas, give each other support, take part in events and activities and represent the views of parents in consultations and meetings with the council. Parents and carers who would like to gain further skills and knowledge can take part in parent champion training. Parent champions offer support to other parents or carers in their communities and volunteer in a range of organisations. They can offer important support for parents and carers when their family finishes a more intensive intervention programme with the council, health or police or voluntary sector.

PEP offers community support and information for vulnerable families, and helps to raise aspiration and family resilience by equipping families with new skills and knowledge to support their own and other families. PEP is particularly valuable in engagement of BME communities and new arrivals. There can be cultural barriers to safeguarding and improving outcomes for children families and communities. Dialogue leading to shared understanding and clarity over the information, advice, guidance and support available from both statutory and community and voluntary agencies helps take up of services and greater community awareness of issues relating to safeguarding. These may include issues of CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), Radicalisation, Forced Marriage and Domestic Abuse. Such initiatives can reduce the overrepresentation of some groups involved with statutory services and provide.

Empowering families means listening to what they have to say, respecting their views, priorities, goals and aspirations – and also listening when they have something to tell us about the way we have provided our services. We will listen to families throughout our working relationship with them, and we will also ask them to give us feedback on how we have provided our services.

We will only turn around the lives of families needing support and facing complex and multiple disadvantages if front line staff have the competencies and tools to work effectively with them. This means practitioners across all agencies having access to the right training, information and guidance at the right time which equips them for taking an effective whole family approach to working with families

We recognise the important role that Children's Centres play in providing support to families with children under the age of five. By broadening the remit of Children's Centres, we will develop 'Family Hubs', which will provide holistic support for families with school age children, encompassing:

- Health and child development
- School readiness
- Employment support and access to childcare
- Parenting

- Support for families with more complex needs
- Early identification of Special Educational Needs

We will take a collaborative approach to co-locating and delivering services using a lead professional and Team Around the Family model.

Providing support around the health and develop of children aged 0-5 will still form a large part of the work undertaken by these hubs, as it is known that it is in the early years that this support has the biggest impact on long-term outcomes. However, we will expand the offer to include wide-ranging family support for local communities.

We will ensure that all agencies recognise their responsibility to think in terms of the whole family, in order to provide holistic support. Rather than individual agencies working with individual family members in isolation, agencies will work as part of a team around the family, recognising the needs and aspirations of all family members, and supporting them to make positive changes. Families' information will be shared with other relevant agencies once explicit consent is given, with exception to child protection concerns where no consent is necessary. Practitioners will help family members consider all the issues impacting on their family life and what their priorities are for change, in order to create an action plan with the family. This will be used to measure progress over time, so that everyone is working toward measurable improved outcomes for the whole family we want to be providing family focused and outcome based services long into the future, and will work are work to embed this way of working so that we can continue to work holistically with families despite future funding reductions.

To coordinate an effective multiagency approach, professionals will agree a lead practitioner who will act as a single point of contact for the family. They will be someone that the family can trust, who is able to engage and support them in making positive choices and in effecting change. The lead practitioner could be from the family's children's centre, school, health service provider, or a family support service. If a specialist or statutory service is working with the family – for example if there is a child protection case or a youth offending order – the practitioner from that service will take the lead.

In order to ensure children do not "slip through the net" when being referred to services for children, to reduce inappropriate referrals and ensure the most effective use of scarce resources a new front door to services for children and family's will be developed. Building on the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) model a separate MASH would operate in each of the Unitary Councils. We will further develop the Family Support Panels currently operating such that key agencies attend daily and others on specified days of the week. This will enable all referrals requiring more than a single agency service to be subject to a multi-agency view as to the need according to the thresholds identified above. This would become a single point of entry (SPOE) for each Council and partnership.

A SPOE is designed to make it easier for professionals and agencies to access relevant early intervention and support for a child, young person or family who requires targeted or specialist services. The SPOE includes the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), with representation from key agencies; parent support, housing, education welfare, social care, police, Troubled Families and Health Services. These professionals will jointly risk assess referrals and decide which services need to be involved and which agency should take the lead. The SPOE would be managed by experienced social care professionals who would ensure any referrals meeting the threshold for children's social care is passed to them in a timely way. Inappropriate referrals to children's social care would be eliminated and children and families would receive the right service at the right time. They would be helped before difficulties became crises specialist services would be able to target their work with the most complex high risk children and young people Early Help can provide a step down from statutory

services and will provide earlier identification of neglect, the most common cause for formal child protection plans.

We are mindful of the increasing issue of Domestic Abuse and will ensure appropriate engagement in the SPOE. We also recognise an increasing level of need around social and emotional mental health for our families. We therefore propose to incorporate the "Thrive Model" into our service delivery, which brings services together in a way that is more responsive to the needs of children and young people. When implemented this model has received very positive feedback from professionals, including schools all welcoming the simplicity of having one place to refer concerns without being "bounced from one team or agency to the other"

Protocols, data sharing, performance management, quality assurance systems with response times etc. would be developed. Governance would be through a combination of the multi-agency Safeguarding Board, Departmental Management Team, Council Management Board, Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council.

The costliest interventions for children are Looked After Children (LAC) placements, effective commissioning including cross council, investment in carer recruitment campaigns, and the development of "Edge of Care" services for young people can all reduce costs, but clearly quality must be maintained. It is also vital to have a clear focus on the gatekeeping of LAC and effective planning so that children do not drift but move on to permanent or long term placements, supported housing or exit care through a planned return home. Many authorities have implemented panel systems. Chaired by a Senior Social Work Manager at AD level a weekly panel agrees or directs alternatives to admissions to care, care proceedings, reviews other admissions, scrutinises and challenges planning, placement, outcomes etc. this should complement the work of the offline reviewing officers. Key partner agencies can be present to ensure appropriate tripartite funding across children's social care, education and health. These processes deliver efficiencies that can be reinvested into early help and prevention while developing best practice.

Children in receipt of Child Protection Plans need constant scrutiny of progress, with smart and realistic timescales, reviews must be held on time with good multi-agency attendance with conference chairs escalating any concerns. In the same way, Children in Need plans require regular and timely reviews of progress. Effective work with Children with Disabilities is crucial to ensure family support and respite is available to prevent family breakdown resulting in the need for high cost placements often at distance from home and trusted networks.

Work force costs can be managed by an effective recruitment and retention strategy, a reliance on agency and temporary staff increases costs and the lack of a consistent work force has a detrimental impact on children's outcomes. Permanent Senior Management posts are necessary to develop a high performing team Consistent front line managers are needed to ensure consistent practice and compliance with procedures. Poor practice must be challenged. All staff need the tools for the job including regular high quality, training and professional development, regular appraisal, access to research, best practice models, clear accountabilities, manageable workloads with a culture of support and sense of direction from leaders who are visible and encourage clear communication right through the system A good work environment evidences the Council and its partners cares about staff who deal with difficult challenges on a day to day basis. The use of shared capital assets is both cost effective and improves partnership working as evidenced in many Children's Services.

APPENDIX D: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The governance arrangements will support the vision and objectives of the unitary councils. In particular they will be designed to ensure that:-

- Decision-making is streamlined, accountable, transparent and efficient
- Democratic representation lies at the heart of local communities providing strong leadership and responding to local needs
- There is effective and innovative partnership working at all levels to deliver joined up services and empowered communities

New arrangements will seek to minimise local bureaucracy, achieve more efficient use of resources, ensure that decisions can be scrutinised and support community involvement in democratic processes.

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

Currently across Buckinghamshire County Council and the 4 District Councils there are 236 elected councillors at principal authority level (County and District Councils) serving a population of 528,400. This equates to a ratio of 1 principal authority member to 2,238 potential electors. In Milton Keynes there are 57 Members serving a population of 261,732. This equates to a ratio of 1 member to 4,592 potential electors.

In addition there are over 1000 town and parish councillors representing 168 town and parishes councils with a further 39 in Milton Keynes. Moving to a north and south unitary model will provide an opportunity to streamline decision-making processes, reduce local bureaucracy and provide clearer accountability for the provision of services. However, it will also be vital to ensure that elected members are available to support and engage with their local communities and represent the views and needs of local residents, organisations and businesses. It is also important that local Members can engage with residents at a local level and still have the opportunity to take part in decision making on the strategic management of the Council whether as part of the Executive or Scrutiny arm of the Council. The poor transport links between the north and south of the county will disadvantage members travelling from the extreme areas if there is a single administrative centre in either Aylesbury or High Wycombe.

A reduction in the number of elected members at principal council level would achieve cost-savings. However local Members in receipt of a basic allowance represent value for money where they operate as effective community leaders and engage with their communities and individuals within communities directly. They have the potential to work across business, parish councils, community groups and the voluntary sector as individuals without the need to set up another tier of local consultative bodies. A reasonable balance therefore needs to be struck between agile and cost-effective decision-making arrangements and robust and responsive democratic representation for local communities. An analysis has been carried out which would provide this balance.

Council Size

It is proposed that there will be 59 Councillors in Aylesbury Vale Unitary Council and 80 Councillors in the Southern area. This would provide an electoral ratio across the northern council of 3200 potential electors per Member. In the South the population of 339,693 potential electors would have a ratio of 4246 per Member.

This reflects the greater rural nature of the Northern Unitary. The allocation of boundaries in the North is based on the District Council existing ward boundaries.

In the South an exercise has been conducted which allocates the electors on the register between the existing district areas according to the number of electors on the register in that area. The allocation has been done to keep variances to a minimum and a maximum variance of 50% has been achieved. This will ensure that the Council can be implemented on existing district boundaries without the need for an immediate electoral review by the LGBCE. However, given the variances in the South an electoral review would be triggered.

By comparison the County Council has simply doubled the number of members using the existing County Divisions across the electoral area without any regard to electoral numbers or variances. The result has been that in some areas it is arguable that the proposed elector numbers are not capable of being implemented.

The LGBCE guidance states that

'the accessibility of elected members to their electorate should be, as nearly as possible, equal. This can only be quantified by reference to the numbers of electors.' The guidance goes on to explain the circumstances in which they consider the lack of equality is notable and a review is triggered.

- More than 30% of a council's wards/divisions having an electoral imbalance of more than 10% from the average ratio for that authority; and/or
- One or more wards/divisions with an electoral imbalance of more than 30%; and
- The imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.

The variances in South Buckinghamshire in the County Council's model are extreme. There are variances of +80% in one ward compared to variances of -60% in another. So that one member may be representing 3000 Members where another may be representing 13000.

An Electoral Review would therefore be required before the implementation of the County proposal and the business case appears to acknowledge the need for this to happen at page 94 of the Business Case. The final decision on the number of elected members would be subject to a formal review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England within their published timetable.

WORKING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Ensuring that decisions are taken at the most appropriate level, that local communities are engaged and empowered and services are joined up and meet local needs will be a key focus of the new governance arrangements. The approach is set out in the section **Even More Local**.

Key features of future community engagement are likely to be:-

- **Parish and Town Council Conferences**
Liaison meetings with parish and town councils already take place across the 4 districts to discuss service provision at both district and county level. Building on these existing relationships, the Conference could meet up to 3 times a year and give Parish and Town Councils an opportunity to meet with senior Members and officers of the Council to discuss and raise matters. All parish and town councils would be

invited to submit suggested topics for discussion and debate, and the Council would also add topics to the agenda.

The venue for Conferences would move around the council area and could be hosted by a town or parish council. Chairmen and Clerks of each council would be invited to each Conference meeting. Depending on the nature of the business at each Conference, the Leader of the unitary council or a Cabinet Member would be invited to attend to respond to any matter on the agenda, together with relevant officers.

The unparished area of High Wycombe Town is currently represented by the High Wycombe Town Committee which is a committee of the Council but operates to serve the unparished area in the way that a parish and town council would. This arrangement could continue as it does now under the new unitary arrangements but this is for the new unitary to determine. High Wycombe Town has Charter Trustees, who were set up to maintain the continuity of the Town Charter. Their duties are limited to ceremonial activities such as the election of the Mayor and preserving the Charter and this can continue under the two new unitary system.

- **Charter for Town and Parish Councils**
This would set out clearly how the unitary council would engage and consult with town and parish councils. It would also include a memorandum of understanding on how the devolution of powers and transfer of assets would be achieved. There is already a strong track record of shared and partnership working between local and principal councils across the county and 4 districts, including asset transfers upon which to build the Charter. This is already a tried and tested approach elsewhere.
- **Area Panels**
Existing community based forums and meetings would be brought together and combined into Area Panels. These area panels would not be a standing meeting but would meet as and when the meetings were required for example during a period where the relevant area was facing a specific change or redevelopment; where there was a community interest in carrying out a targeted piece of work to tackle an issue or where there was a specific project which an area wanted to take forward such as celebration or festival. These would be constituted as formal meetings to enable action to be agreed and taken and they would be supported by the Council, but would arise in response to local need.

The Committees would provide a further opportunity for Parish and Town Councils to raise issues, and also for any community or voluntary organisations and individuals to engage with the Council, present suggested agenda items and matters of concern for discussion, and to meet with Members direct. The meetings would be held in the relevant area to enable as many local residents and organisations to attend as possible.

Representatives from the local community and relevant local organisations would be invited to participate and could also be co-opted on to any working groups.

These are indicative of various approaches to community engagement that would be developed in detail and subject to full consultation.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The proposal will be to adopt a Leader and Cabinet form of governance. A leader with 8 cabinet members is considered appropriate for a two unitary model. Cross-cutting cabinet portfolios will be introduced to prevent silo working with the exception of children's service and social care which requires a focussed approach.

The size and range of portfolios will be a matter for detailed consideration once a decision on unitary structure is taken but would cover a combination of the following main services :-

Children and Young People	Leisure and recreation	Community Safety
Strategic Planning	Economic Development	Highways Transport planning
Finance and resources	Public Health	Waste collection and disposal
Transformation	Commercialisation	Sustainability
Education and skills	Environmental Health	Adult services
Property and regeneration	Housing	Emergency Planning
Culture	Environment,	Property and parking
Communities and partnerships	Customer services	

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION

Councils that adopt a Leader and Cabinet form of governance are required to have at least 1 overview and scrutiny committee with powers to review and scrutinise decisions or actions of cabinet and other committees of the council.

There are some examples of unitary councils with only 1 overview and scrutiny committee. However, it is not considered that this provides sufficient opportunity for non-cabinet members to carry out an effective scrutiny role at unitary level with the breadth of services provided, particularly in the areas of children and adult social care. It is therefore envisaged that 4 committee would be constituted covering the following areas:-

- Children's Services
- Social Care, Health and Housing
- Sustainable Communities
- Corporate Resources

The suggested arrangements for community engagement through regular Parish and Town Council Conferences, Area Action Forums and convening democratic boards for specific issues would also provide a robust level of local scrutiny.

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

In order to reduce local bureaucracy and stream line decision-making the number of council committees will be kept to a minimum. Regulatory committees dealing with planning and licensing applications are required to apply national and locally adopted policies to their decision-making. Where these policies differ across council areas the committees need to align to the plan area.

In terms of planning policy there are currently 4 local plan areas for each current district council, although a joint local plan is being developed for Chiltern and South Bucks councils. In a two unitary model it would be necessary to have 3 planning committees; 1 for the Aylesbury Vale area and 2 for a southern unitary (one covering the current High Wycombe district area and 1 for the current Chiltern and South Bucks Districts).

The statutory statements on Licensing of Premises and Gambling can be developed for each of the new unitary council. Therefore one main Licensing Committee and a Licensing Sub-Committee to hear appeals will be sufficient for each new unitary council.

An indicative list of all committees for each unitary council, including statutory committees would therefore be:

- Council
- Cabinet
- Planning Committee (x1 for Aylesbury Vale and x2 for southern unitary)
- Licensing Committee
- Licensing Sub-Committee
- Audit and Governance Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Rights of Way Committee
- Schools Forum
- HR and Appointments Committee
- Appeals and Complaints Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees (x4)
- Corporate Parenting Committee
- Parish Conference
- Area Action Forums (x 3 for Aylesbury Vale and 5 for southern unitary)
- Pensions Fund Committee
- High Wycombe Town Committee (for Southern Unitary only)

This indicates that an Aylesbury Vale unitary would have 21 committees and a southern unitary would have 24 committees. This would be a significant reduction in the overall number of committees and meetings held across the current 4 districts and county council with a consequential saving in administrative costs.

COUNCILLOR ROLES

The roles needed in a new unitary council are very similar to those in the existing authorities, except that the Cabinet has a wider portfolio of functions and this is mirrored in the areas covered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Planning Committee would take on both existing district and county planning function.

There would be a Council Chairman to represent the Council at ceremonial occasions. Agreement would need to be reached with Milton Keynes Council on which authority hosted the Clerk to the Lord Lieutenant following any reorganisation

A set of role profiles for each position in the new unitary councils would be developed in consultation with stake holders including:-

- Individual councillors – this will articulate the role of members as Community Leaders
- The Cabinet Leader
- Cabinet portfolio holders
- Chairman of the Council
- Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- All other Chairman and Mayors, as appropriate.

Key roles and expected behaviours for all members would be:-

- To participate constructively in the good governance of the Council
- To act at all times in accordance with the Council's ethical and other codes of conduct and with high standards of honesty and integrity
- To develop open government by encouraging active community and individual participation in the governance of the area
- To represent effectively Ward interests and engage with social media
- To manage and assist with constituents' enquiries and representations making full use of digital technology
- To promote the interests and sustainability of the community in order to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Council area
- To represent the Council or the Ward on outside bodies
- To undertake training and development as appropriate in order to enhance corporate and personal effectiveness

APPENDIX E: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The chart below shows an indicative plan for implementing the reorganisation split into 3 phases: design and planning, transition management and delivering transformation. These phases are explained further below.

Design and Planning

During this phase new operating models for the new councils would be designed with associated implementation plans and consultation undertaken with stakeholders. These need to be clear and coherent, owned by stake holders and explain what services the future councils would deliver; how they would be organised; how the support functions would be managed; where they would be based; how performance would be managed; and what technology they would rely on.

This phase enables the councils to consider the capabilities required in the future, the organisational structure for each of the new councils and cultures they want to foster. Subsequently more detailed implementation planning would need to be undertaken to establish how these new arrangements would move forward into actual operation.

Transition Management

Once the design and planning stage is complete the transition from the existing to the new council structures would need to begin. Decisions would need to be taken on the scale and pace of this change. The timeframe in which the councils would like to achieve the anticipated benefits will be a critical consideration here.

Delivering Transformation

This phase would take place after the vesting of the new unitary authorities. It would see further benefits being delivered as a result of the new councils refining their approach to transformation and the day-to-day management of services. A formal date for completion of the transition programme would also be decided.

Also identified on this high level implementation plan are 4 work streams covering programme management and governance; technology and property; people and culture; and the service offer. The key issues to be addressed within each work stream as set out below:-

Programme Management and governance

This work stream would procure and establish the programme management arrangements required to deliver the reorganisation project on time and within budget. It would also establish the member oversight arrangements for the design and delivery of the new councils and provide necessary support.

Technology and property

This work stream would look at the key assets and enablers that the future council would need in order to deliver services effectively. The future technology architecture would need to be designed to support the transition to a new operating model and there would need to be a clear understanding of the phasing and pace of technology change required.

Decisions would also need to be taken about the physical locations that the new councils would occupy. This could involve investment in some cases but this is likely to be offset by savings made from surplus space elsewhere.

People and Culture

This work stream would identify activities required to support the transition of staff to a new model of operation as defined by the organisational structures of the new councils and their working practices. The new councils would need to consider what kind of culture they want to develop, as well the initiatives they would put in place to support staff and the pay/salary structures.

Services Offer

This work stream would develop customer service strategies and focus on front line delivery, ensuring there is seamless transition to the new council for customers and that ambitions for performance standards are set at a high level.

Key Dates

The plan has also been overlaid with key dates which identify milestones in implementation as follows:

16 January 2017	Report on unitary options considered by each Council
January 2017	Submission to the Secretary of State
January – March 2017	Secretary of State Decisions
February 2017	Shadow Board in Place
March 2017	Appointment of Programme Director
May 2017	County Council Elections
June 2017	Draft orders laid before Parliament
July 2017	Draft orders debated and agreed
July 2017	New structures exist legally
July-Sept 2017	Appoint Chief Executives
October 2017	Electoral Review starts
May 2018	Proxy council established
October 2018	Electoral Review reports back
April 2019	New Councils take over services and former Councils abolished
May 2019	Elections to new council/s

