



## Standards and General Purposes Committee agenda

Date: Thursday 25 February 2021

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Via Video Conference: Accessible to members of the public at  
<https://buckinghamshire.publici.tv/core/portal/home>

### Membership:

J Waters (Chairman), H Mordue (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, S Adoh, M Appleyard, J Bloom, A Collingwood, C Etholen, G Harris, M Knight, S Lambert, G Moore, L Smith BEM and M Stannard

Independent Persons: A Austin, S Boyce and T Dobson

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>1 Apologies</b>	
<b>2 Minutes</b> To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December, 2020, copy attached.	<b>3 - 10</b>
<b>3 Declarations of Interest</b> Members to declare any interests.	
<b>4 Buckinghamshire Electoral Review - Final Council numbers submission</b> To consider the attached report.	<b>11 - 236</b>

Contact Officer: [nick.graham@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:nick.graham@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

Annex A Council size template

Annex B Options paper with annexes

Annex 1: Introduction to Community Boards

Annex 2: Community Board in practice

Annex 3: Town & Parish Charter

Annex 4: EY Report

Annex 5: BCC Unitary proposal

Annex 6: Spreadsheet of Councillor time calculation

**5 Model Member Code of Conduct**

**237 - 308**

To consider the attached report.

Contact Officer: [maria.damigos@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:maria.damigos@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

**6 Constitution Working Group - Update**

To receive a verbal update.

Contact Officer: [nick.graham@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:nick.graham@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

**7 Work Programme**

**8 April 2021**

1. Annual Review of Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure
2. Standards Complaints Monitoring Report 2020-21
3. LGO Annual Report
4. Bucks Electoral Review: Member Working Group update (if required)
5. Compliments and Complaints Report 2020-21 (Mid Year update)
6. Constitution Working Group (Update)
7. Draft Work Programme for 2021-22

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Clare Gray - [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) on , email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).



Agenda Item 2  
**Buckinghamshire Council**  
**Standards and General Purposes**  
**Committee**

## Minutes

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER 2020 IN VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE: ACCESSIBLE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AT [HTTPS://BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.PUBLICI.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.PUBLICI.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME), COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.35 PM**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

J Waters (Chairman), H Mordue (Vice Chairman), B Adams, S Adoh, M Appleyard, C Etholen, G Harris, S Lambert, L Smith BEM and M Stannard.

**INDEPENDENT PERSON(S):** T Dobson.

**APOLOGIES:** J Bloom, M Knight, G Moore, A Austin (Independent Person) and S Boyce (Independent Person)

### Agenda Item

**1 MINUTES**  
RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October, 2020, be approved as a correct record.

**2 REVIEW OF MEMBER INDUCTION AND TRAINING ON STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

The Committee received a report that explained that a Member Induction Programme had been delivered from April 2020 when the new Buckinghamshire Council had been established. This training which included Code of Conduct training that had been delivered virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The code of conduct training had been delivered by Hoey and Associates through a two part training video – 20 minutes each, with accompanying powerpoint slides (Appendix 1 to the Committee report), and a number of scenarios for Members to consider in connection with declarations of interest and Member behaviour. The training had been produced specifically for the Buckinghamshire Council and was available for Members to access in the Members' area of The Source on the Council's intranet. The training had been made available on 4 May and as of 21 October, there had been a 95% completion rate. The webpage with the supporting information had been viewed on 744 occasions.

Democratic Services were planning for Member Induction training following the May 2021

elections and feedback was sought from Members to help inform the content of training and the overall combination of formats for the training. Whilst in person training could be more interactive and colleagues can also learn from each other's experiences, some Members, particularly those who worked, found it helpful to have the online training. Online training materials could also be revisited later on enabling Members to refresh their knowledge.

Members discussed the overall Member Induction programme that had been delivered in May-June 2020 and commented that many of the sessions had involved facilitators reading out powerpoint slides that had appeared on their screens. Members preference was for sessions to be briefer (provide slides in advance of training sessions), with the sessions then being more interactive. It was also commented that some legacy Councils had involved political Group Leaders in introducing training sessions which had helped Members to understand the relevance of the training to their Councillor role.

RESOLVED –

That the report and Members' comments on the 2020 Member Induction programme be noted.

### **3 PROTOCOL ON THE ROLE OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

The Committee received a report which explained the role and functions of the Monitoring Officer, to support their overview and implementation of effective governance arrangements for the Buckinghamshire council. The purpose of the protocol was to supplement the roles and functions already detailed in the Council's Constitution.

Under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council was required to appoint an officer to act as the Monitoring Officer (MO) who was responsible for reporting to the Council any matters that were unlawful, amounted to maladministration or created injustice. The MO also had further statutory responsibilities, most notably in relation to standards and ethics.

Although there were many individual functions and responsibilities assigned to the MO both via legislation and the Constitution, they mainly centred around governance, ethics and standards. As the Committee had responsibility for supporting the MO in discharging their role in respect of standards of conduct and behaviour and to receive reports relating to maladministration causing injustice it was considered that the Committee was the appropriate body to approve the Protocol.

The Protocol was intended to support and assist the MO by promoting understanding and effective discharge of the responsibilities and was a reflection and summary of the current arrangements. It was considered that setting this out strengthened the exercise of the Monitoring Officer's role.

Members considered the draft Protocol that was attached as an appendix to the Committee report and agreed that additional information should be included explaining the independence of the MO role and what would happen if, for example, the MO had to report an issue relating to the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED –

That, subject to the change agreed at the meeting, the protocol on the role of the Monitoring Officer be agreed.

#### 4 REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS

Social Media was a key communication tool used by the Council and many Councillors. It was also used by service users and key stakeholders. It had a significant role in the reputational management of the Council and the personal reputation of Members. As such, the Council had developed and adopted a suite of documents giving guidance to staff and Councillors.

The Committee received a report which explained that during the transition period to the new Buckinghamshire Council a set of Social Media standards had been developed and approved alongside a suite of documents setting out the Council's approach to the use of social media, which included advice and guidance for Councillors. Copies of those Standards and the Social Media Policy, Strategy and Guide were attached as appendices to the Committee report.

The Council's general approach to social media and managing its corporate accounts was set out on the Council's public website. This included a set of standards for conduct on social media use indicating that abuse and threatening posts would not be tolerated, together with advertising, 'trolling' and 'spam'. Residents were advised to not use social media for complaints and were directed to the complaints process.

As well as a set of Standards, the Guidance to Councillors is set out in the following the documents:

- **Social Media Strategy** – which outlined in broad terms the aims and objectives of social media use by the Council and set this in the wider context of the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy. The Strategy encouraged Councillors to use social media and also advised them to read the Strategy alongside the Code of Conduct.
- **Social Media Policy** – which applied to Staff and Councillors and set out a significant amount of detail on social media use including detailed guidance on the use of the corporate social media accounts. This covered topics such as advice on posting; offensive content; misuse and offences; security and privacy; videos and images. Councillors were again reminded of the Code of Conduct and that Councillors who posted content were likely to be seen as acting in their role as Councillors rather than in a private capacity. The Policy emphasised that care needed to be taken when posting content to ensure that confidential information was not disclosed. Tips on content were also given together with a link to the Local Government Association's comprehensive set of policies on how to make the best use of social media, including 'Do's and Don'ts' referred to in the appendices.
- **Social Media Guide** – was a practical introduction to social media with numerous tips and advice on how to use the different social media network.
- **Training on Social Media** – was provided to Members as part of Induction and general development. To date, 66 Councillors have undertaken this training.

Members were informed that inappropriately using or misusing social media could have legal ramifications. Councillors could also face allegations that they had breached the Code of Conduct and be subject to sanctions as a consequence. Clear guidance was important in ensuring that Councillors could use social media safely and effectively.

Councillors considered the social media documentation and commented on the risks in forwarding, re-tweeting or commenting on social media posts. Planning Committee Members who commented on an application could lead to them being accused of pre-determination.

Members requested that an A4 card of Social Media Do's and Don'ts be put together for Buckinghamshire Councillors.

RESOLVED –

That the Council's Social Media guidance and documentation be noted.

## **5 COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020**

The Committee received a report and the Council's Compliments and Complaints report for 2019/20. The report detailed compliments and complaints received by the 5 legacy Councils for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, to allow Members to maintain an overview of their number and nature.

Whilst the report covered all 5 former councils the information available primarily related to the former Buckinghamshire County Council with some additional high level information from the former District Councils.

The new Buckinghamshire Council welcomed feedback – compliments, comments and complaints from customers – and procedures were now in place to ensure all compliments and complaints received for the new Council could be captured, responded to and reported on in the future. This would also ensure that the Council demonstrated that it was listening to the experiences of its customers, positive or negative, to bring about improvements in services.

Members considered the Annual Report, sought additional information and were informed:

- (i) That statutory processes prescribed how reporting was recorded for Children's and Adult services and how these complaints were investigated.
- (ii) That the annual report included a definition of 'what was a complaint' and information on the complaints process. On occasion, it was difficult to distinguish between what was a complaint and a report of service failure, e.g. missed bin collection.
- (iii) That it would be possible in the future to provide Members with more detail on different Services and complaint areas, as well as reporting to Members in a more timely manner.
- (iv) That Officers or Service areas that received compliments or complaints were aware that they should ensure that the information was also then reported and recorded centrally, although it was acknowledged that this might not always happen.
- (v) That the number of compliments received since April 2020 had increased compared to the previous year, although it was difficult to assess this given the impacts of the Covid-19 impact on reporting.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Council's Compliments and Complaints Annual report for 2019/20 be noted.
- (2) That a report on the compliments and complaints received for the first half of the municipal year be reported to the Committee as soon as practicable.

## **6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN REPORT - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee had received a report to the 8 October 2020 meeting which provided a summary of a recent Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman report, published on 24 July 2020, that had found the Council to be at fault for the way in which it had provided home to school transport for 2 children with Special Needs and Disabilities.

Members were informed that the Council had accepted all the findings of the Ombudsman report and had taken steps to complete the recommended actions. A summary of the actions

and action taken by the Council was contained in the Committee report and in the Minutes of that meeting. The Committee had noted the Ombudsman's report and had requested that a further progress report be made to the December 2020 meeting.

The Committee received a further report detailing information in implementing the recommendations required by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's report of 24 July 2020. Members' attention was also drawn to a supplementary agenda that had been published on 4 December, which included a copy of a letter the Council had received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has now confirmed by letter (dated 27 November 2020) that they were satisfied the Council had addressed all of the recommendations in their maladministration report. As such, the Ombudsman had recorded a compliance outcome of Remedy complete and satisfied. No further action was required by the Council in relation to this case.

Members considered the further report which stated that the outstanding actions at the date of the last report had been actions 6, 8 and 9. These had been addressed as follows:

**Action 6:** Take action to address the Council's apparent lack of suitable transport provision to ensure other children who require home to school transport were not adversely affected.

**Outcome:** Completed. Details of actions taken were included in the Committee report.

**Action 8:** The Council should update its Local Offer on the Bucks Family Information Service to reflect the transport provision available.

**Outcome:** Further to the information reported in October, Members were informed that the Local Offer website content was currently undergoing a complete overhaul as part of a project to design a new microsite for the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service. It was anticipated that this would go live in mid December. The information would be added to and enhanced over time to ensure it remained current and relevant for families.

The Service Director (Transport Services) provided Members with information on the Client Improvement Programme, including that the Council now had 2 strategic transport assessors in post, that SEND provision was currently being re-tendered to improve the quality of the Council's offer, and that the Council was now able to provide personal transport budgets for SEND parents which gave people more flexibility to find the arrangements that best worked for them.

**Action 9:** The Council should provide the Ombudsman with a report confirming the actions it had taken.

**Outcome:** Further to the information reported in October, a further update had been provided to the Ombudsman on 20 November 2020 on the Council's actions in satisfaction of the Ombudsman's recommendations. A final report would be provided in January 2021, in line with the timescales set out in the report.

In addition to the outstanding actions, the Committee had raised additional questions in October in relation to the completion of Action 5 (Review other parents' and carers' mileage arrangements). The Service Director for Education and for Transport Services attended the meeting and informed Members that the circumstances of the 117 other families who were in receipt of 2 way mileage had been reviewed, which had confirmed that there was no evidence that appropriate arrangements were not in place.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Children's Services team be thanked for the work they were doing to school transport for parents and children.
- (2) That the further progress made in implementing the recommendations required by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman report of 24 July 2020, as well as the confirmation letter of 27 November 2020, be noted.

## **7 BUCKS ELECTORAL SERVICES REVIEW - MEMBERS' WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the work that had been undertaken by the Bucks Electoral Review – Member Working Group (MWG), since the October 2020. The 9 Members of the MWG had been drawn from membership of the Standards and General Purposes Committee, so most Members were aware of the work undertaken.

The MWG had met on 5 occasions since formation in July 2020 and had received information from Officers who have populated the LG BCE's Council size numbers template with statistical / factual information such as the Council's profile (geography, demographics, population and forecast population growth, deprivation and housing costs, electorate forecasts), and on 3 broad aspects relating to the role of Councillors:

- Strategic Leadership.
- Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships).
- Community Leadership

It was important for the submission to be evidence based as much as possible and to this end all Members had been invited to complete a survey during September-October 2020 to gain an insight into how they undertook their role, their involvement in Council work and the community, and the time commitment. In total, 103 (53%) of Councillors responded to the survey. The last question in the survey had been used to verify to what extent Members felt that an average of approximately 16 hours per week carrying out their community leadership role, responding to casework, attending meetings (including Council/Committee, community, Town and Parish Council) and supporting residents was an accurate reflection of their experience. The responses had indicated that:

- 10% - spend less than 16 hours per week for their Councillor work.
- 40% - spend, on average, about 16 hours per week for their Council work.
- 50% – spent more than 16 hours per week for their Councillor work.

Alongside the statistical / factual information in the Council size numbers template, the MWG had been putting together an Options Paper to clearly explain what the Council believed was the correct number of Councillors to represent the Buckinghamshire Council from 2025 onwards. The Options Paper had been considered by the MWG on Monday 7 December and Officers had been tasked with further updating it discussing it again at the next MWG meeting on 5 January, 2021.

RESOLVED –

That the update and work undertaken by the Member Working Group since 8 October 2020 be noted.

## **8 DELEGATION TO RETURNING OFFICER**

The Committee received a report that explained that Local Authorities were responsible for designating polling districts for elections. Within polling districts the local authority was also



responsible for designating a polling place. A polling place can be a single building or a wider area.

Polling Stations were within polling places, and the Returning Officer was able to designate and change polling stations. The Service Director Legal and Democratic Services had been designated as the Council's Returning Officer.

Responsibility for electoral arrangements was within this committee's terms of reference. The next elections were set for May 2021.

It was explained that although there were statutory requirements to make polling places available there were circumstances when a change to the polling arrangements may still be required at short notice, for example fire, lack of availability. Due to current uncertainties with the pandemic there was also concern regarding Covid restrictions and requirements as regards both availability and inadequate facilities. Committee approval would be required for any change.

Due to the timescales it was recommended that the Committee grant authority to the Service Director Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with political group leaders, to make any change to a polling place that might be required to negate the need for any special meetings to be called at very short notice. Relevant Ward Members would also be consulted on any such changes in advance and all Members would be informed.

The delegation to the Returning Officer would not affect the statutory requirement to undertake the 4 yearly review of polling places which would come through the Council's decision making process in the normal way and be subject to full consultation, and a report to Members.

RESOLVED –

That the Service Director (Legal and Democratic Services) be authorised, in consultation with political Group Leaders, to make any change to polling places that might be required.

## **9 CONSTITUTIONAL WORKING GROUP (UPDATE)**

The Committee received a verbal update that the Constitution Working Group, comprising the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of this Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee, had met on 28 October 2020 to discuss a log of issues that Members and Officers had raised over the last few months in relation to the Constitution. Many of the issues raised had been minor in nature whilst others had wider implications.

The Monitoring Officer had authority to make minor amendments and corrections to the Constitution as detailed in Part A paragraph 1.62 of the Constitution. As part of this it was expected that the Constitution would be maintained and kept up to date. It was considered that minor amendments included clarifications, necessary textual revisions to ensure separate sections of the Constitution were consistent, worked together as a whole and reflected any changes to legislation. A report on minor amendments had been reported to, and approved by, full Council on 9 December, 2020.

The Working Group would next be meeting in the New Year to consider what were deemed to be issues with wider implications, e.g. the role of Parish Councils in planning, and to look at the remits and responsibilities of Area Planning Committees / Strategic Sites Committee re. decision-making.

RESOLVED –

That the update on the work of the Constitution Working Group be noted.

**10 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered their future work programme, that was updated during the course of the meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the future work programme be approved, as follows:

**25 February 2021**

1. Electoral Review: Final submission of Council size numbers to the LG BCE
2. Constitution (updated Member Code of Conduct), if required.
3. Compliments and Complaints Report 2020-21 (Mid Year update)

**8 April 2021**

1. Annual Review of Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure
2. Standards Complaints Monitoring Report 2020-21
3. LGO Annual Report
4. Bucks Electoral Review: Member Working Group update (if required)
5. Compliments and Complaints Report 2020-21 (Mid Year update, if not reported to 25/2/2021)
6. Draft Work Programme for 2021-22



## Report to Standards and General Purposes Committee

**Date:** 25 February 2021

**Reference number:** TBC

**Title:** Buckinghamshire Council Electoral Review: Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

**Relevant councillor(s):** Cllr Jonathan Waters

**Author and/or contact officer:** Nick Graham, Director of Legal & Democratic Services

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Recommendations:**

1. To note the work of the Member Working Group set up by this Committee in July 2020 to consider its response to the first phase of the Boundary Commission's Electoral Review.
2. To approve the completed Council size template for submission to the Boundary Commission.
3. To approve the Working Group's Options paper and recommendation as to the appropriate Council size of 120 (one hundred and twenty) Councillors to the Boundary Commission
4. To delegate to the Director of Legal & Democratic Services in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee to make any amendments to the submissions to the Commission in the light of any further comments from the Committee and any minor/typographical changes.
5. To confirm that the Working Group should continue to meet so as to address any queries or questions that the Boundary Commission may have regarding the submission, and to plan for Phase 2 of the Electoral Review.

**Reason for decision:** To update the Committee on the work of the Member Working Group and to agree a submission to the Boundary Commission.

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Boundary Commission wish to undertake an Electoral Review of Buckinghamshire Council. The first phase of that Review seeks to determine what should be the appropriate size of the Council in terms of the number of Councillors.
- 1.2 The process requires the Commission to seek representations to assist its deliberations. In July 2020 the Standards & General Purpose Committee (the Committee) set up arrangements for how the Council proposed to respond to the Boundary Commission's Electoral Review of the Council, establishing a Member Working Group and an agreed timeline. The attached documents are the culmination of the work of the Working Group.
- 1.3 The Committee are being asked to approve the completed template and Options paper with the recommendation that the Commission should approve a Council size of 120 elected Members.

## **2. Content of report**

- 2.1 The template document in Annex A largely sets out factual and contextual information about Buckinghamshire Council, its governance arrangements and structures and information regarding the electorate, housing growth etc.
- 2.2 In the Options paper (Annex B) the Working Group have set out what it considers to be the key considerations including the future agenda for the Council, its ambitions concerning the involvement of Members in the strategic direction of the Council, the Scrutiny and Regulatory functions, and the role of Members as leaders in their localities. Evidence is provided of comparator unitary Councils largely drawn from recent data, but also referencing the earlier Ernst & Young report and the Unitary proposal from the former Buckinghamshire County Council. There is then an analysis of workload on Councillors by reference to Council size – with the Working Group's argument that a smaller size could increase workload significantly and would involve a departure from its 'Member-led' ambitions.
- 2.3 Having considered their ambitions for Councillors in the new Council the Working Group have recommended a figure of 120 Members

### **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 The only other option is not to submit a view about the Council size to the Commission, but that would be inadvisable.

### **4. Legal and financial implications**

- 4.1 This is an Electoral Review undertaken by the Boundary Commission. The basis of the Commission's decision will accord with their published criteria. The template and Options paper sets out the proposed recommendation that the Council will urge the Commission to adopt. A formal submission is required to the Commission who will take account of those submissions in their deliberations.

### **5. Corporate implications**

- 5.1 The decision of the Commission will clearly impact the democratic decision-making of the Council and the role of all elected Members. The submission to the Commission makes a number of assumptions about the future governance structure of the Council and the role of Councillors when fulfilling their role.

### **6. Consultation with local councillors & community boards**

- 6.1 In September 2020 all Members were invited to a presentation by the Boundary Commission who addressed various questions regarding the process and decision-making.

### **7. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

- 7.1 Members were sent a survey regarding the Electoral Review and asked to feedback their views on the time commitment required in undertaking the work of a Councillor. 98 responses were received.
- 7.2 Regular updates of by the Member Working Group have been made to the public meetings of the Standards & General Purposes Committee and the minutes of the working group have been available to all Members. Key stakeholders have been informed about the Commission's review, including towns and parishes and the business community.
- 7.3 The Boundary Commission can, but do not ordinarily, consult on this phase of the Review, but have an extensive consultation plan – informed by the Council – for phase 2 of the Review.

## **8. Boundary Commission decision**

- 8.1 It is anticipated that the Commission will consider their decision and make it known after the elections in May 2021. The decision will be either of the following: they accept the proposed number; or, they may accept a number as proposed by another group who makes a submission; or, they may seek further information from the Council. It is highly unlikely they will simply substitute a number without further reference to the Council.
- 8.2 Once a determination of the Council size has been made phase 2 of the work will commence. This will involve the drawing up of boundaries for the new wards. It is anticipated that this will commence from June 2021 and the work will be carried out during the Summer and Autumn of 2021.

### *Appendices*

- Annex A** Council size template
- Annex B** Options paper – with annexes

Buckinghamshire Council

# Draft Council Size Submission

Buckinghamshire Council

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## How to Make a Submission

1. It is recommended that submissions on council size follow the format provided below. Submissions should focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal.
2. The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses are should unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

## About You

3. The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, or an individual.

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This submission is made by the Standards & General Purposes Committee of Buckinghamshire Council. Under the Council's Standing Orders this Committee has the delegated authority to address electoral arrangements. The Committee formed a Member Working Group who undertake the work to complete this template and the Options Paper that accompanies it. Members were assisted in their work by senior officers of the Council.

## Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

4. Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

The Commission will be aware that following local government reorganisation it was both the ambition of the new unitary Council and the expectation of the Ministry of Housing & Local Government that an Electoral Review would be undertaken in the first year of the new Council.

## Local Authority Profile

5. Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description may cover all, or some of the following:
  - Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraint for example that may affect the review?

- Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
- Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transitional populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

#### Buckinghamshire Council's response – Local Authority Profile

- Buckinghamshire became a Unitary Authority on 1 April 2020. The Unitary Authority, Buckinghamshire Council, replaced 5 legacy councils: Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils, and Buckinghamshire County Council.
- Covered by the Chiltern Hills, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Buckinghamshire is characterised by historic market towns, ancient woodlands and beautiful countryside. There are 55 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), more than 8,000 Hectares of ancient woodland, and a national nature reserve (Burnham Beeches) which has shown inhabitation as early as the Iron Age. Buckinghamshire also has more National Trust properties than any other county in England.  
Source: Natural England; Woodland Trust; National Trust
- Buckinghamshire has one of the highest life expectancy rates, lowest percentage of residents with limiting long-term illnesses and some of the best educational attainment results in the country.  
Source: Department for Education / ONS (2011 Census)
- Buckinghamshire is a prosperous County, with a higher percentage of economically active residents and lower percentage of workless households compared to the South East Region and compared to England overall. The County also has a higher proportion of residents employed in occupations as Managers, Directors and Senior Officials (Standard Occupational Classification groups 1-3) compared to the South East Region and England overall.  
Source: ONS annual population survey
- Average annual household income in Buckinghamshire is almost one third higher than the national average. The County has a modern service-based economy and is part of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire NUTS-2\* region, which in 2018 had the highest GDP per capita outside Inner London.

Source: ONS Annual household earnings 2017/18 & ONS Regional gross domestic product all NUTS level region 2018

\* 'NUTS-2' is the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the EU and the UK for the application of regional policies

## Population growth in Buckinghamshire

- In 2019 the total population of Buckinghamshire was 546,033 which is an increase of 7.8 % (47,220) since 2011 and is 2.5% higher than the national increase in population during the same period. Buckinghamshire now has the largest population compared to the other 13 Unitary Authorities in the South East region.

Source: ONS 2018 Population projections for local authorities (Table 2)

- The rate of growth for the 18+ population is similar to the overall Buckinghamshire figures, with 7.3% growth between 2011 and 2019, and 4.8% growth between 2014 and 2019. This is higher than growth reported in England and Wales of 5.5% between 2011 and 2019 and 3.5% between 2014 and 2019.

Source: ONS 2018 Population projections for local authorities (Table 2)

- The population size of the Wards within the county vary from Gatehouse, which is the largest at 13,348 people, to the smallest Ballinger, South Heath and Chartridge, with 2,103 people.
- Although the Buckinghamshire population increased during 2011 and 2019, at a ward level these population changes ranged from a 3% reduction in Austenwood and in Greater Hughenden, to a 36% increase in Buckingham South, a 27% increase in Grendon Underwood and a 24% increase in Luffield Abbey. The wards with the biggest population growth correspond to the areas with major new housing developments.

Source ONS Ward-level population estimates

- In 2019 Buckinghamshire had an old age dependency ratio of 32 (65+ year olds) per 100 working age (16-64 year olds). This compares with an old age dependency ratio in England of 28.6 (65+ year olds) per 100 working age (16-64 year old) population.

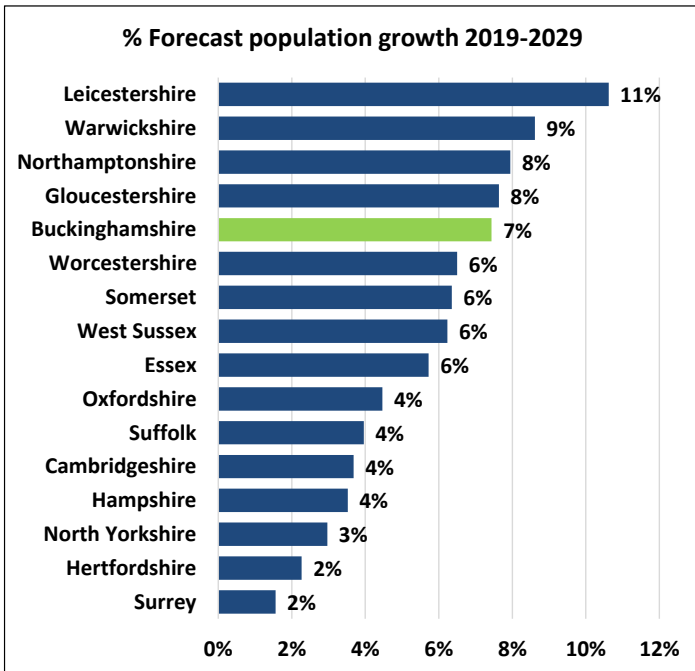
Source: ONS Old age dependency ratio

- Of the 546,033 people in Buckinghamshire, 23% (126,481) are children aged under 18 years old, 58% (316,071) are adults aged 18 to 64 and 19% (103,481) are aged 65 and over. 3% (14,925) of the resident population are 85 and over.

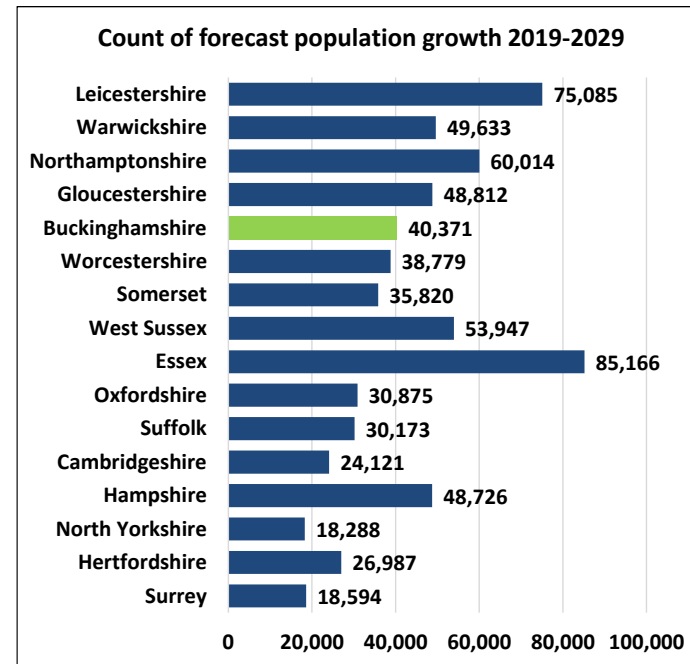
Source: ONS Old age dependency ratio

- Chart 1 and Chart 2 illustrate the forecast population growth in Buckinghamshire compared to our comparator local authorities.

**Chart 1: % Forecast population growth 2019-2029**



**Chart 2: % Forecast population growth 2019-2029**



Source: ONS 2018 Population projections for local authorities (Table 2) / Buckinghamshire Council housing-led population projection produced using Edge Analytics PopGroup software.

## Migration

- The main component of Buckinghamshire's population change is Net Internal UK Migration as a result of house building within the county.
- Population growth is measured using births and deaths (known as 'natural growth') and migration. Between 2011 and 2019 natural growth resulted in an additional 17,025 people in Buckinghamshire. Over the same period, migration within the UK accounted for an additional 20,300 people and international migration (outside the UK) for an additional 6,600 people. Migration accounts for almost two thirds of the growth experienced between 2011 and 2019, with the majority of people moving from other parts of the UK.  
Source: ONS population data modelled in Edge Analytics Popgroup software
- A sizeable proportion of internal UK migration to Buckinghamshire comes from people moving from West and North London boroughs as well as adjacent authority areas such as Oxfordshire, Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, and Northamptonshire.  
Source: ONS Internal migration: matrices of moves by local authority and region (countries of the UK).

## Demographic Profile

- According to the 2011 Census, 13.6% of the population in Buckinghamshire were from a non-White ethnic background compared to 14.6% in England. The largest non-White ethnic minority group were Asian or Asian British, comprising 8.6% of the Buckinghamshire population compared to 7.8% in England and 5.2% in the South East Region.  
Source: ONS (2011 Census)
- In Buckinghamshire, 5.3% of households (10,550 households) were classed as lone parent households with dependent children, compared to 7.1% in England. The proportion of households which were classed as pensioners living alone was slightly lower in Buckinghamshire (11.8%) compared to England (12.4%)  
Source: ONS (2011 Census)

## Deprivation and housing costs

- Although Buckinghamshire is a prosperous county, there are also struggling communities in Buckinghamshire with acute pockets of deprivation and greater need predominantly located in the urban areas of Aylesbury and High Wycombe. No areas within the county are classified as within the 10% most deprived in the country, but there are a cluster of areas that fall within the 10% most deprived for income deprivation affecting older people. There are also some areas that are in the highest decile nationally for childhood obesity.

PHE: The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) & ONS: English indices of deprivation 2019

- In 2019 the average house price in Buckinghamshire was 14 times the cost of the average salary and 60% more expensive than the national average. High housing costs and a lack of affordable housing are issues predominantly in the South of the county, where, in towns such as Beaconsfield, the average house price during the same period was more than one million pounds.

ONS: Median house prices for administrative geographies / Earnings and working hours

## Electorate forecast

- The forecasts produced for the electoral review have made use of the methodology set out by the LGBCE in their guidance for the Polling District Forecasting Tool. However, they have also incorporated local intelligence about housing completions and future forecast housing growth.

Source: The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE); Electorate Forecasts – A Guide for Practitioners.

- We have taken the average ratio of electors for 2018-2019 (0.97) and applied this to the 18+ population in 2026. This gives a total number of electors of 427,057. This is an increase in the electorate of 27,086 (7%) compared with the 2019 figure. This increase is down to two key elements, population increase by natural change (37%) and net migration (63%).

Source: ONS Electoral statistics for the UK / Buckinghamshire Council population forecast based on ONS data using Edge Analytics PopGroup software

## Council Size

6. The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership. Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

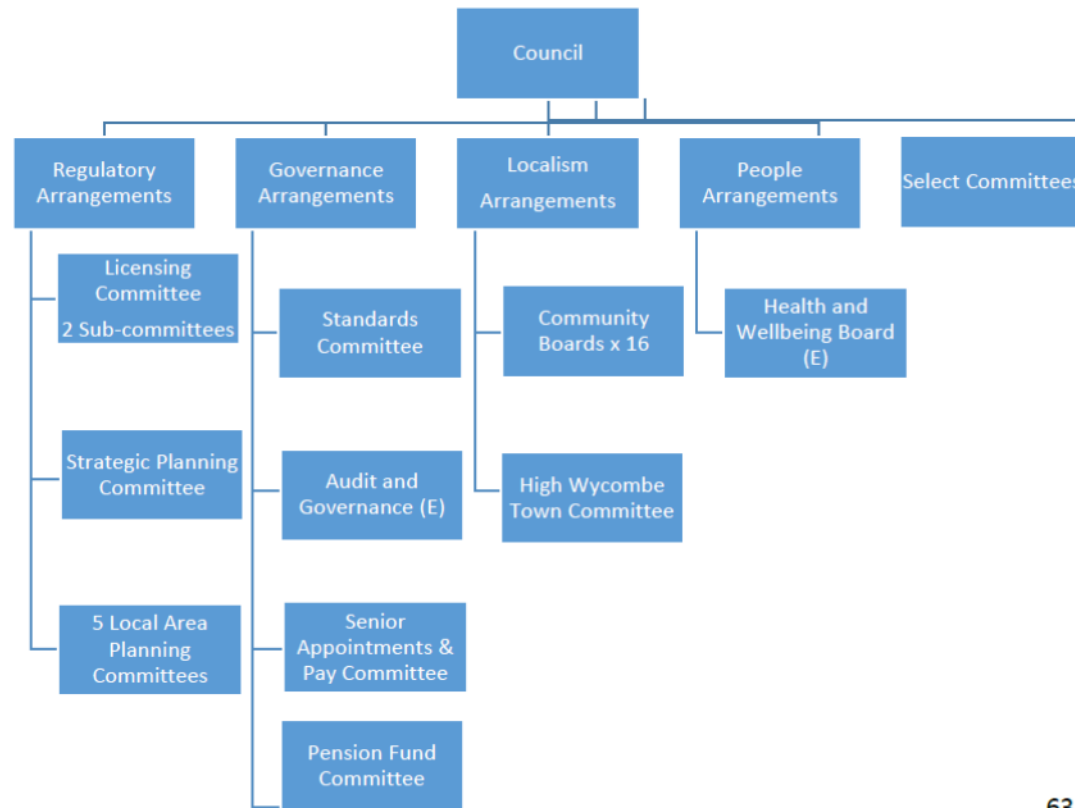
## Strategic Leadership

7. Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified.

Topic		
<p><b>Governance Model</b></p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>The Council has adopted the Leader and Cabinet form of governance.</p> <p>The Cabinet is made up of the Leader and up to nine other Cabinet Members. These may include up to two Deputy Leaders who are chosen and appointed by the Leader.</p> <p>The Leader may also appoint Deputy Cabinet Members to advise and assist Cabinet Members in the discharge of their duties within their portfolios. In the absence of a Cabinet Member a key decision may be taken by a Corporate Director or relevant senior officer in consultation with the appropriate Deputy Cabinet Member but a Deputy Cabinet Member is not authorised to make any decision normally made by a Cabinet Member. The number of any appointed Deputies will not exceed the number of Cabinet Members.</p> <p>For the purposes of context, there are interim governance arrangements currently in place as a result of the recent unitary transition. These arrangements will continue until the first election, which was initially anticipated to take place in May 2020, however this has been deferred until May 2021 as a result of the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>The interim arrangements are that the Leader of the former Buckinghamshire County Council, and a further 16 councillors derived from the legacy councils (who together comprised the Shadow Executive) continue in those roles until the first full election to Buckinghamshire Council. Full details of the interim arrangements are set out in Part J of the Council’s Constitution, and reflect the requirements of the Buckinghamshire Structural Changes Order 2019 and</p>

related legislation pertaining to reorganisation.

The Council has decided that certain non-executive functions which are not reserved to the Council as a whole will be the responsibility of the Committees listed below, and to officers as described later in this submission.



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The Council considers the above committee structure to be appropriate for the type and scale of the Authority, and in keeping with other similar local authorities. Whilst some of the committees are not statutory, they are considered



critical to the efficient organisation of Council business. Some advisory and operational matters may also be carried out by panels, boards or forums.

It should be noted that the committee structure set out above was designed to address the anticipated workloads of the new unitary Authority ahead of it coming into existence, and was based on a council size of 147 Members. During its first year of operation, the Council will be able to more accurately gauge its requirements and confirm a suitable future committee structure after the 2021 election. This review would also be influenced by the outcome of the boundary review and the final determination of Council size.

Part H of the Council's Constitution sets out the general responsibilities associated with the role of councillor, and details of additional responsibilities and tasks expected of Executive Members.

In addition to Members' attendance at meetings, Members will also on occasion need to take a place on a committee for which they are a substitute. Depending on the frequency of substitution, this could significantly impact on the level of commitment required of those Members. Substitutions are arranged in accordance with the Council's Constitution, Part D (Committees), Appointment of Substitute Members on Committees and Sub Committees (paragraphs 2.76 to 2-80).

Further detail regarding the time commitment required by Members is addressed in the accompanying Options Paper with an analysis of the impact of a smaller or larger cohort of Members on that commitment.

The Council also appoints Members to a number of outside bodies. A full list of the current appointments is available at <https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgListOutsideBodies.aspx?bcr=1>. As a result of unitary transition, there are many instances of duplicate membership of Outside Bodies arising from legacy council arrangements. Work is underway to identify and therefore reduce these duplications and ensure there is an appropriate level of representation on appropriate Outside Bodies by the new Council. Outside bodies range in frequency, location and complexity, with some appointments more onerous than others.

	Analysis																			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Portfolios</b></p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>At the conclusion of the current interim arrangements, it is anticipated that the Council will have the maximum number of Executive Members permissible (10) and each of these Members will be assigned a specific portfolio. The particular functions to be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet by the Leader, within those specific portfolios, are set out in Part E of the Council’s Constitution.</p> <p>It is anticipated that portfolios themselves will be designed to provide a focus on the key challenges and opportunities faced by the new Council, and to deliver the benefits of integrated services. Portfolios will need to include combinations of the following areas of responsibility:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>• Adults Services</td> <td>• Property</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Health</td> <td>• Waste</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Housing Services</td> <td>• Communities &amp; Local Partnerships</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Children &amp; Young People’s Services</td> <td>• Leisure</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Highways &amp; Transportation</td> <td>• Culture</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Economic Development &amp; Skills</td> <td>• Environment &amp; Flooding</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Growth Strategy – Planning, Housing and Transport</td> <td>• Resources</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Planning</td> <td>• Customer Service</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Communications</td> <td>• Business Transformation</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Leader may also appoint non-Cabinet Members as Deputy Cabinet Members, provided that the total number of Deputy Cabinet Members does not exceed the number of Cabinet Members. Deputy Cabinet Members will advise and assist Cabinet Members in the discharge of their duties within their portfolio(s). In the absence of a Cabinet Member, a key decision may be taken by a Corporate Director or relevant senior Officer in consultation with the appropriate Deputy Cabinet Member, although a Deputy Cabinet Member would not be authorised to make any decision normally made by a Cabinet Member.</p>	• Adults Services	• Property	• Health	• Waste	• Housing Services	• Communities & Local Partnerships	• Children & Young People’s Services	• Leisure	• Highways & Transportation	• Culture	• Economic Development & Skills	• Environment & Flooding	• Growth Strategy – Planning, Housing and Transport	• Resources	• Planning	• Customer Service	• Communications	• Business Transformation
		• Adults Services	• Property																	
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• Growth Strategy – Planning, Housing and Transport	• Resources																			
• Planning	• Customer Service																			
• Communications	• Business Transformation																			

Portfolio holder's responsibilities necessitate attendance at a greater number of committee meetings within the Council. The role of Executive Member also necessitates undertaking work in partnership with other local authorities and external organisations.

For the purposes of context, interim arrangements have seen the establishment of 17 portfolios under the following key areas of responsibility:

Portfolio	Responsibilities
1. Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Strategy</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Strategic Infrastructure</li> <li>• Policy, Communications and Democratic Services</li> </ul>
2. Executive Member for Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Relations</li> <li>• Digital Strategy</li> <li>• ICT delivery</li> <li>• Financial reporting</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Legal</li> <li>• Member Development</li> <li>• Corporate Performance Reporting</li> </ul>
3. Executive Member for Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding Older People</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Physical Disability</li> <li>• Learning Disability</li> </ul>
4. Executive Member for Property & Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Estate management</li> <li>• Property Management</li> <li>• Property Rationalisation</li> <li>• Acquisitions</li> </ul>

		5. Executive Member for Communities & Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locality Working</li> <li>• Libraries/Customer Access Points</li> <li>• Voluntary and Community Sector</li> <li>• Health Partnerships</li> <li>• Public Health</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> </ul>
		6. Executive Member for Sports & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Parks</li> <li>• Country Parks</li> <li>• Leisure Centres</li> <li>• Sports facilities</li> <li>• Input to S106 Sports provision</li> </ul>
		7. Executive Member for Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Strategy</li> <li>• Museums</li> <li>• Historic Buildings</li> <li>• Archaeology Services</li> <li>• Archives</li> </ul>
		8. Executive Member for Children’s Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Children with Disabilities</li> <li>• Children in Need</li> <li>• Early Help</li> </ul>
		9. Executive Member for Youth Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostering and Adoption</li> <li>• Corporate Parenting delivery</li> <li>• Transition to adulthood</li> <li>• Youth skills and apprenticeship for Care Leavers</li> </ul>
		10. Executive Member for Education & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring Education Provision</li> <li>• School Improvement</li> <li>• Adult Learning</li> <li>• Life Long Skills</li> <li>• SEND</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years</li> <li>• Home to School Transport Policy</li> </ul>
		11. Executive Member for Housing & Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing stock allocation and management</li> <li>• Liaison with Registered Providers</li> <li>• Eliminating Homelessness</li> <li>• Rough Sleeping</li> <li>• New Affordable Housing strategy</li> </ul>
		12. Executive Member for Regulatory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trading Standards</li> <li>• Licencing</li> <li>• Registrars</li> <li>• Coroners</li> <li>• Crematoria</li> <li>• Cemeteries</li> </ul>
		13. Executive Member for Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport Strategy</li> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• Asset management</li> <li>• Footpaths, bridges, structures</li> <li>• Strategic Flood Management</li> <li>• Rights of Way</li> <li>• HS2 interface</li> </ul>
		14. Executive Member for Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home to School Transport Delivery</li> <li>• Integrated Transport</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Buses</li> </ul>
		15. Executive Member for Planning & Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Planning</li> <li>• Development of Council Owned sites</li> <li>• Development Management</li> <li>• Affordable Housing Development</li> <li>• Housing Delivery Test</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Building Regulation Enforcement</li> </ul>
	16. Executive Member for Town Centre Regeneration		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration of Aylesbury Town Centre</li> <li>• Aylesbury Garden Town</li> <li>• Implementation of Wycombe Town Centre Strategy</li> </ul>
	17. Executive Member for Environment & Climate Change		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Policy</li> <li>• Waste Strategy and Management</li> <li>• Action on Mitigating Climate Change</li> <li>• Energy Policy</li> <li>• Natural Environment Partnership</li> <li>• Agricultural estate policy</li> <li>• Member of Aylesbury Garden Town Board</li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>Given the level of responsibility, it is expected that the role of Executive Member is a full-time one. It should be emphasised however that those Members who are not Executive Members have more flexibility in terms of assuming additional responsibilities and therefore can manage the associated time commitments. It should be looked at as a sliding scale with more time being committed by Committee Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, and members of committees which meet more frequently such as Planning and Strategic Sites. The new Community Boards impact all Councillors and the time required will depend on the number of Boards they attend. The Council strives to attract elected Members that truly represent the areas' entire population, and it is desirable that the Council attracts people who are engaged in full or part-time work as well as being a Councillor.</p> <p>In terms of decision making, the Council has decided that other than certain functions reserved to Council, all other functions including local choice functions, are to be executive functions. Responsibility for these functions rests with the Leader of the Council who will decide which of these functions s/he wishes to perform personally and which are to be delegated to Cabinet, a Cabinet Committee, individual Cabinet Members, or to officers. Part E of the Council's Constitution offers further explanation on the operation of the Executive.</p>	

<b>Delegated Responsibilities</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>There is a scheme of delegation to senior officers laid out in the Constitution at Part I which permits officers to take delegated decisions, many of which are in consultation with the relevant Executive Member. Supplementary schemes of delegations are in place in relation to key individual service areas, further delegating certain responsibilities to appropriate officers in the Authority.</p> <p>The mechanics of the decision making process employed by the Council is set out in the Council's Constitution at Part A, paragraph 1.26 onward.</p>

## Accountability

8. Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role.

Topic	
<b>Internal Scrutiny</b>	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority. Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i></li> </ul>
Analysis	<p><b>Buckinghamshire Council Response</b></p> <p>The principal means of accountability within the authority is delivered through the Council’s overview and scrutiny process. Since 1 April 2020 (when the Buckinghamshire Council was created) six Select Committees have operated and cover the following areas of responsibility (the detailed functions are set out in Part G of the Constitution):-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Education</li> <li>• Communities and Localism</li> <li>• Finance and Resources</li> <li>• Growth, Infrastructure and Housing</li> <li>• Health and Adult Social Care</li> <li>• Transport, Environment and Climate Change</li> </ul> <p>In addition, an Overview and Scrutiny – Budget Task and Finish Group will be put together in early January each year to scrutinise Cabinet’s proposed budget for the following year. This process will involve 3-4 days of meetings with each of the Cabinet Members to scrutinise the draft budget proposed for their area of responsibility. Recommendations are</p>



then agreed and submitted to Cabinet for consideration before they submit their budget to full Council for approval in February.

Whilst providing the opportunity for elected Members to hold the Cabinet to account it also provides a forum for residents to seek answers to questions from Cabinet Members and in some cases external organisations, and to challenge proposals. As the Buckinghamshire Council is a new organisation it is not possible to provide comparative information on the number of residents or partners who have attended Select Committee meetings over time. However, as stated in the Constitution, one of the 6 expectations within the remit of Select Committees is that they will, “Work to ensure that communities are engaged in the scrutiny process; and consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options.”

These select committees have a dual role in that they support the Cabinet in developing policy (overview), whilst they also hold it to account (scrutiny).

The Council also has a call-in process that allows elected Members to request the call-in of decisions that have been taken by the Cabinet. However, as it is anticipated that the majority of controversial items or those on which there might be a public interest will be considered by the Select Committees before a decision is taken by the Cabinet, it is estimated that there will be a small number of call-ins. This has been the situation for all five of the legacy Councils that came together to create the Buckinghamshire Council, as follows:

- The County Council had 7 call-ins during the period February 2011 to March 2020
- Aylesbury Vale District Council had 10 call-ins during the period February 2011 to March 2020 (none in the last 2 years)
- Chiltern District Council had 0 call-ins during the period February 2011 to March 2020.
- South Bucks District Council had 1 call-in during the period February 2011 to March 2020.
- Wycombe District Council had 3 call-ins during the period February 2011 to March 2020.

Select Committees may also carry out detailed task and finish reviews, as required, with the membership of reviews

		<p>drawn from the select committee. These reviews may involve an additional time commitment for Members.</p> <p>The Council currently has six Select Committees, with 92 members between them.</p> <p>Minutes and agenda of the Select Committees will be published online at <a href="https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1">https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1</a></p>
	<b>Statutory Function</b>	This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?
<b>Planning</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by Members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will Executive members serve on the planning committees?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committees for Members?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p><b>Proportion of applications determined by Members</b></p> <p>The Buckinghamshire Council Constitution aims for 100% delegation to officers. However, certain applications can be 'called in' to committee by any Member, subject to providing material planning reasons for doing so and following consultation between the Chairman &amp; Lead Planning Officer.</p> <p>These include anything which is submitted under the relevant applications seeking full planning permission, outline planning permission or a reserved matters approval. This also includes variations of conditions but excludes Permission in Principle (PIP).</p> <p>It also does not include any applications that fall outside this bracket which are referred to as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Related Matters and</li> <li>• Follow On Decisions</li> </ul> <p>as set out below:</p>

Related matters:

There are many types of planning decisions in addition to actual planning applications, notifications and consents which are defined above and these are being called Related Matters and they include, but are not limited to:

- Permitted Development,
- Prior Approvals,
- Advertisement Consent,
- Tree Preservation Orders,
- High Hedges
- Listed Building Consent

Follow On Decisions:

Once a decision to approve has been issued there are often consequent matters that need resolution. These are referred to as 'Follow On Decisions' and they include, but are not limited to, discharges of conditions, Legal Agreements and non-material amendments. Furthermore, any applications submitted by the Council, a councillor, a Chief Officer, Corporate Director, Service Director, a Planning Officer or other officer of the Council will automatically have to be considered by the relevant planning committee.

It is early days in the operation of the committees but at the moment it is considered that in the region of 2-3% of applications may be determined by Members.

How has this changed in the last few years?

Prior to the formation of the Buckinghamshire Council the former legacy councils each had different constitutions and therefore different call-in procedures applied.

### Area Planning Committees

Within Buckinghamshire Council there are 5 Area Planning Committees covering the Council Area – West (previously Wycombe), East & South (previously Chiltern and South Bucks) and Central & North (previously Aylesbury Vale) as well as the strategic planning committee.

### Strategic Planning Committee

This committee has responsibility for:

- a. wider strategic development;
- b. sites which have a significant impact beyond the specific local area; and
- c. sites fundamental to the implementation of an adopted or emerging Local Plan, including i) Major infrastructure; ii) Minerals and Waste; iii) Secondary Schools; and iv) Large Scale Major Development comprising:
  - Housing (approx. 400 dwellings or more)
  - Employment (approx. 10,000 sq m or 2 hectares or more)
  - Retail (approx. 10,000 sq m or 2 hectares or more)

The Strategic Planning Committee also determines all public rights of way, Common Land and Town or Village Green applications where the Service Director of Planning and Environment or the Service Director Highways and Technical Services elects not to exercise delegated authority and refers the application to committee.

Will executive members serve of the committee?

In respect of the five Area Planning Committees, at Para. 4.5 of the Constitution, it states that “*Cabinet Members and Deputy Cabinet Members may not be a member of these Committees*”. Furthermore, it also states that the “*Chairman of*

*Strategic Sites Committee may not sit on any Area Planning Committee”.*

In respect of the Strategic Planning Committee, at Para. 4.4 of the Constitution, it states that *“Cabinet Members or Deputy Cabinet Members may not be a member of this Committee”.*

What will be the time commitment for members of the planning committee?

It should be acknowledged that presently all Committee meetings, both Area and Strategic, take place virtually. It is not yet known when meetings will re-commence within respective council chambers.

Essentially, a planning committee for each area and one strategic planning committee are programmed to take place each month. Area Planning Committee meetings take place on a Tuesday, Wednesday or a Thursday, starting at either 2:30pm or 6:30pm. The Strategic Planning Committee takes place at the Gateway in Aylesbury on a Thursday and starts at 2:00pm.

TABLE.1: Committees having taken place since Buckinghamshire Council came into being on 1 April, 2020 and up to 19 October, 2020.

Planning Committee	Day of the week	Committees between 1/4 - 12/8/20	No. of app's on agenda	Duration of meeting	Average length of time per application
West	Tues	23 June	4	2 hrs 16 mins	34 mins
West	Tues	18 August	1	15 minutes	15 mins
West	Tues	15 September	4	2 hrs 15 mins	34 mins
West	Tues	13 October	3	1 hr 26 mins	29 mins
East	Tues	16 June	7	3 hrs 26 mins	29 mins
East	Tues	30 June	2	1 hr 5 mins	32.5 mins
East	Tues	28 July	2	2 hrs 10 mins	65 mins

East	Tue	25 August	5	2 hrs 6 mins	25 mins
East	Tue	20 October	4	1 hr 50 mins	27.5 mins
South	Tues	9 June	3	2 hrs	40 mins
South	Tues	7 July	2	1 hr 42 mins	51 mins
South	Tues	4 August	3	1 hr 50 mins	37 mins
South	Tues	1 September	1	1 hr 54 mins	114 mins
South	Tues	29 September	3	1 hr 26 mins	29 mins
South	Tues	27 October	3	2 hrs 8 mins	43 mins
North	Weds	10 July	1	2 hrs 15 mins	135 mins
Central	Thurs	25 June	3	4 hrs 25 mins	89 mins
Central	Thurs	23 July	2	2 hrs 5 mins	62.5 mins
Central	Thurs	17 September	1	1 hr 40 mins	100 mins
Strategic	Thurs	11 June	3	4 hrs 13 mins	84 mins
Strategic	Thurs	9 July	3	2 hrs 42 mins	54 mins
Strategic	Thurs	6 August	1	1 hr	60 mins
Strategic	Thurs	3 September	3	3 hrs 21 mins	67 mins
Strategic	Thurs	1 October	3	2 hrs 42 mins	54 mins

It should be noted that some Members currently sit on both an area planning committee and the strategic planning committee (currently 7 Members sit on two committees).

However, the commitment is not just to the meeting itself. Any potential planning committee member needs to be aware of the need to account for:

Site visits – this is referred to/clarified in Paragraphs 3.28 and 18.1 – 18.2 of the Constitution. Furthermore, paragraph 15.3 of the Planning Protocol states that committee members should *“Try to attend site visits organised by the Council*

		<p><i>where possible</i>". However, since the new Buckinghamshire Council came into being it has not yet been possible for Committees to operate in this way due to restrictions imposed as a result of COVID. Members have where possible done individual site visits.</p> <p>Briefing meeting(s) - these are normally attended by the Chair and Vice Chair of the planning committee meeting as well as the presenting &amp; lead planning officer(s) and a principal Solicitor. These meetings can take place some days before or on the day of the committee meeting itself. These meetings can take anything from half an hour to a couple of hours, depending on the complexity of the planning applications which are to be considered by the relevant committee meeting.</p> <p>Preparation for the meeting itself</p> <p>All members will need to make adequate time to read and fully comprehend a planning committee agenda. Again, the complexity of the applications being considered will determine how long members will need to devote to reading and research, and whether there is a need to visit the site. Prior contact with a planning officer, in order to seek clarification on a matter(s) is encouraged as this can ultimately save time at the planning committee meeting itself.</p>
<b>Licensing</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Council has a standing Licensing Committee (of 15 Members) and also arranges Licensing Sub-Committee hearings (to conduct hearings and make determinations in respect of the Council's statutory licensing functions) and Regulatory Sub-Committee hearings (to conduct hearings and make determinations in respect of the Council's regulatory licensing functions), as necessary, constituting 3 of the 15 Members of the Licensing Committee. Meetings of the Licensing Committee are arranged every 2 months, with 6 meetings taking place between July 2020 and March 2021. Ten Licensing Sub-Committee meetings have been held since April 2020, although 3 of those meetings were cancelled before the hearings were held. Any Member of the Licensing Committee can serve on the Sub-Committees with training being provided on an annual basis for Members.</p>

<b>Other Regulatory Bodies</b>	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Council has appointed a number of other Committees to assist with the discharge of its functions as set out in the Council’s Constitution. The cycles of the meetings vary but generally they are programmed to meet between four and six times per year. These committees are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and Governance</li> <li>• Aylesbury Vale Estates Board</li> <li>• Buckinghamshire Historic Buildings Trust</li> <li>• Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum</li> <li>• Buckinghamshire Council and Surrey County Council Joint Trading Service</li> <li>• High Wycombe Town Board</li> <li>• High Wycombe Town Committee</li> <li>• Local Access Forum</li> <li>• Pension Fund Board</li> <li>• Pension Fund Committee</li> <li>• Pinewood Community Liaison Committee</li> <li>• Rural Forum</li> <li>• Schools Forum</li> <li>• Senior Pay and Appointments Committee</li> <li>• Standards and General Purposes</li> </ul>
<b>External Partnerships</b>	Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.	
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Will Executive Members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i></li> </ul>	
Analysis	<p>The Council is involved in numerous bodies at a local, regional, sub-regional and national level with a range of partners, many of which have decision-making powers that includes the following: -</p>	



- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire authority
- Buckinghamshire Growth Board
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel
- Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Chiltern AONB
- PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee
- Buckinghamshire Business First
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Health & Well-Being Board

In addition, the Council is also involved in a wide range of strategic, general and ward-based outside bodies all of which impact on the time commitment of Members. Representation on these bodies is drawn from all Members of the Council, although some of the appointments are required to be Executive Members or local Ward Members. A total of 11% of these appointments must be filled by an Executive Member. For all others any Member could take part, these are not politically proportionate appointments. The majority of appointments to outside bodies are non-Executive Members. The commitment for these outside bodies is set out below:-

External partnerships	Current (195 Members)	From 6/5/2021 (with 147 Members)
External partnerships and outside bodies	122	122
Total appointments	198	198
Total meetings (est. at 2-3 meetings per body, per year)	305	305
Average appointments per Member	1.0	1.35
Average meetings per Member (per year)	1.54	2.07

Information on outside bodies is available at <https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgListOutsideBodies.aspx?bcr=1>

	<p>In addition to the above Members can also seek appointment to local school governing bodies. Whilst the number of Members appointed as governors of maintained schools in the area has fallen from 92 to 11, this reflects the general movement towards academies which now make up 40% of schools in Buckinghamshire. Whilst being a Governor is a matter of personal choice for any Members, it is seen by many as an important way in which Councillors can support their communities. This is a further commitment for these Members, which will continue in the future.</p>
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## Community Involvement

9. The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties?

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i></li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>The Council has a number of joint committees who influence decisions, support local place-shaping and encourage local participation. These committees support local governance and engagement to resolve matters locally and usually meet quarterly.</p> <p>The Council has established 16 Community Boards covering the whole of the Council area. The Boards are a new initiative to bring the Council, groups, organisations and local people together to look at local issues and find creative ways of improving local areas. These are at an early stage of their development. In some areas, they have replaced previous arrangements; in other areas they are completely new.</p> <p>The Boards set priorities and the majority have established working groups on specific projects and issues. Each Community Board will have five formal public meetings each year, with the working group meetings held in addition to these meetings. Whilst it is envisaged that not all working groups will need to involve councillors in the longer term, at</p>

this stage of their development local councillors are attending all meetings. The Community Boards have been allocated funding totalling £3.9m which can be allocated in areas including health and well-being, transport and road safety, the environment, and Covid-19 related issues. Minutes and agenda of Community Boards will be published online at <https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

Each Councillor is automatically a member of the Community Board for their Ward. Due to the postponement of the 2020 elections, and complications around the lack of co-terminus boundaries between the predecessor County Council and the four District Councils, 42 Councillors are currently serving on more than one Community Board. However, this position will change for some Councillors only participating on one Community Board following the 2021 local elections but for others it will increase with some members being on three Community Boards (for example the Penn Wood and Old Amersham Ward). Information on Community Boards is available at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/improving-your-local-community/>

It is envisaged that the boundaries of the Community Boards would become co-terminus with the new ward boundaries of the Council following the electoral review.

In addition to Community Boards, it is for local Members to determine how to undertake their representational roles. In those areas where growth has been highest Members have advised that they spend more time than previously with third parties and developers, engaging in the design and development of infrastructure projects. This requirement is likely to continue into the future.

There is a mix of approaches across the Council that includes use of social media and surgeries. Some Members are also town and parish councillors but there is no minimum requirement in relation to this. The increase in the use of social media has a significant impact on the role of elected Members with regard to expectations and changing the nature of the conversation that Members have with their residents. Social media provides a platform for Members to engage with residents; gather knowledge and feedback; canvas opinion; and publicise local campaigns. If Members elect to use social media to communicate with their constituents in this way, those Members would need to allocate a commensurate amount of time for this, and also to accommodate the sense of immediacy associated with the medium.

		<p>Anecdotal evidence suggests that some Members and residents prefer traditional face to face meetings, although this approach is necessarily more time consuming and would not allow the same degree of coverage facilitated by social media.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire is nearly fully parished, with the notable exception of the Wycombe Town area, and accordingly Members will in all likelihood have one or more parish / town councils within their ward area. Should Members wish to attend meetings of these parishes (or if they are members of those councils themselves) this would impose an additional time commitment. Similarly, regular engagement with these councils will often give rise to additional casework in order to help resolve issues of importance to local communities, particularly where the solution may involve liaison with the principal Authority.</p>
Casework	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</li> <li>➤ What support do members receive?</li> <li>➤ How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</li> </ul>
	Analysis	<p>There is no mandatory scheme for responding to casework neither is there guidance provided to Members, it is a matter of individual preference how Members undertake their casework. Officer support is provided to the Leader and Cabinet Members to support them in their role, which sometimes includes minor support on casework. However, no officer support is provided to non-Executive Councillors. Councillors contact Democratic Services for advice in relation to casework, usually involving help finding the relevant person or department to contact.</p> <p>Residents do expect Councillors to be available at short notice to respond to their issues. This can make it difficult for Members to work within any planned programme of activity, and creates significant pressures in some weeks, which increases for those on Committees like Planning where controversial issues are regularly being dealt with.</p> <p>Proposals for the new unitary Authority were carefully developed to ensure that residents would benefit from an</p>

appropriate level of representation from their local councillors, in the context of the then current warding arrangements. Should warding arrangements and council size be altered as a result of the boundary review, care should be taken to ensure continued appropriate levels of representation remain in place at a local level. It is also important that elected Members reflect the demographics of the communities that they represent, and as such, the role of councillor should be sufficiently flexible that it attracts individuals from all walks of life and with differing amounts of time to commit to the role.

A survey of Members was undertaken by the Member Working Group in September-October 2020 to provide an indication of how many times they were contacted (via email, phone or by mail) on a weekly basis, as well as:

- on average, how many hours were spent on a weekly basis on casework, representing / supporting the community, and attending Town / Parish Council meetings.
- on average, how much time was spent on a monthly basis preparing for / attending meetings of outside bodies, Community Boards and their Working Groups, and Council/Committee meetings.
- the extent to which they felt that an average of approximately 16 hours per week for all Councillor related work was an accurate reflection of their experience.

To add some context to the time commitments estimated by members, during the period that the Buckinghamshire Council has been formed, meetings have taken place remotely, so no time has been added in for travelling to meetings in this Survey. Most of these meetings will be held in Aylesbury where in normal times traffic can be unpredictable and everyone adds in extra travel time. Distances have also increased for most Councillors as District Council Offices were nearer to their homes / places of usual work. This additional travel time needs to be estimated and added to Councillor hours.

A questionnaire was sent to councillors during September-October 2020 following the LGBCE briefing, which was responded to by 98 Members (50.5% of the current membership). The survey results were as follows:-

Summary

Overall Time Commitment – (with the current 194 Members) – Those councillors who responded feel that the average of 16 hours a week underestimates the work required of them, with 50% (49 out of 98 responses) saying this was “Not enough”. 39.8% (39 responders) thought that 16 hours was “About right” whilst 10.2% (10 responders) felt this figure was “Too much”.

The survey asked councillors to summarise time spent on weekly contact, casework, representation in the community, town/parish councils and other work for outside bodies and Community Boards on a monthly basis. There was a lot of variation in the responses, depending on whether Members were Cabinet members, involved in multiple parish councils and even the type of Ward (i.e. urban, rural, urban/rural mix) they represented.

Contact/queries – the majority of Members stated they were contacted via email. Some councillors were only contacted a few times per week whereas others had a very high number of contacts. The average is between 20-50 instances of contact per week.

Time spent on casework – responses varied greatly, with some councillors spending under 10 hours a week on casework whilst others detailed over 20 hours. A few councillors mentioned that casework had increased due since the start of the Covid-19 epidemic but found it hard to quantify as they dealt with residents’ issues as and when they arose.

Time spent on Town/Parish Councils, Outside Bodies and Community Boards – responses again varied greatly. On average, Councillors spent 2-4 hours per work on Town/Parish Council related issues, with a couple of Members stating over 20 hours per week had been spent, as they had to attend multiple Parish Councils and resident associations.

For those who are Board Members or governors of outside bodies, there can be bulky paper packs to read and digest, and some of the administration work takes up time, for example writing up questions for Cabinet and Select Committees – which can take on average around 10 hours per month.

The majority of Councillors felt that the time spent on preparing for Community Boards would increase as they found

their feet (e.g. many were now establishing sub-Groups), although at the moment the time commitment was a few hours a month. For other council/committee meetings, some Councillors spend under 10 hours a month, while others spend over 20 hours. This rises sharply for Cabinet Members, with one stating over 100 hours, but it was mentioned that Covid had reduced travelling time with the lack of site visits and physical meetings.

Other issues for consideration – the final survey question asked Councillors for other issues that they believed should be considered when deciding on future Councillor numbers. By far the most common response was the time-consuming nature of being a councillor and how this isn't compatible for those with full time jobs, for example many meetings are held during working hours. Many expressed concerns that this excludes a diverse range of people from representing their communities, and councillors want to ensure that it's not just business owners, full time politicians or those who are retired who have the opportunity to be a councillor.

The second most common theme was that planning is by far the most time-consuming work. Also mentioned was the time spent reading documents in preparation for meetings and the unofficial work undertaken – administrative tasks, attending briefing and training sessions, responding to officer emails and other ad hoc tasks and finish groups, ie. Budget Scrutiny. It was noted that community-based work with Town and Parish Councils appeared to have risen, possibly as a result of the amalgamation of council functions into the new Authority, and would be likely to continue to rise. This would affect some councillors more than others, as some lived in densely populated areas with a couple of Parish Councils whilst others lived in rural areas with multiple very active Parish Councils.

In summary, the role of the elected Member varies greatly, and the level of involvement and time committed to the role. Members are appointed to roles and Committees by their political leadership, so they may indicate areas of interest and hours of availability but are not guaranteed anything. Though in theory Councillors can reduce hours by not accepting positions, like any work environment in reality this is rarely done in practice as it also limits their input into decisions and future opportunities to make their expertise count. There is naturally a direct correlation between the ability of a Member to be involved and influence the work of the Council and the amount of time a Member can commit. Adopting an efficient approach to managing casework and communications with residents is a great help in managing time and only seeking nomination to a particular number of committees can make the role flexible to individual circumstances but



		this is not fully in the control of the Member.
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Other Issues

10.

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<b>Legal Changes &amp; Notices</b>	
<a href="#"><u>10 Local Orders</u></a>	<p>Provide copies of all Orders made since the last Electoral Review was implemented.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council is a newly formed unitary Council which came into being on 1 April 2020, and it is anticipated that an Electoral Review would be necessary during the formative years of the new Council. Therefore to date there have been no relevant Orders made. For context, the Commission will be aware of the following Orders made in relation to the former District and County Councils of Buckinghamshire:</p> <p>The Local Government (Coronavirus)(Structural Changes)(Consequential Amendments)(England) Regulations 2020 Buckinghamshire (Structural Changes) Order 2019/957 Aylesbury Vale (Electoral Changes) Order 2014 The South Bucks (Electoral Changes) Order 2014 Buckinghamshire (Electoral Changes) Order 2012 (Buckinghamshire County Council) The District of Chiltern (Electoral Changes) Order 2002 The District of Wycombe (Electoral Changes) Order 2002</p>
<a href="#"><u>11 Governance Changes</u></a>	<p>Provide copies of any resolutions that have been passed regarding changes to electoral cycles or governance arrangements.</p> <p>None</p>

## Summary

11. In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future. Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate any other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

Please see accompanying Options Paper.

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## Annex B DRAFT (Version: 11)

### Council Size Options Paper - Councillor Numbers

#### Introduction and General Principles

1. This paper should be read alongside the Local Government Boundary Commission's (LGBCE) Council size completed template.
2. Whilst acknowledging that each Council and Council area is different, the Guidance from the LGBCE makes clear that the determination of the appropriate number of Councillors for any given Council requires a consideration of the number of factors, specifically: the size of the Council must enable it *'to take its decisions effectively, to discharge the business and responsibilities of the council successfully, and to provide for effective community leadership and representation'*.
3. The Member Working Group of the Council's Standards & General Purposes Committee has spent some considerable time considering the data that has informed the Council size template and sets out below the Group's thinking and recommendations on the Council's requirements in the 3 areas that the LGBCE seeks to understand: strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership.
4. In setting out the Options below the Member Working Group has been mindful that the size of the Council must be sufficient to ensure that the Council can fulfil its statutory functions; but also it is of a size that ensures it is effective, and Councillors are enabled to make a meaningful and purposeful contribution to the Council's political leadership.
5. The paper sets out the Member Working Group's key considerations in their analysis of the various issues to determine the appropriate Council size, and what weight should be given to those considerations. A number of options are examined with a view to how and whether they meet these key considerations. Whilst there are number of options, there are two distinct models used. The first model starts from a proposed number and align the Council's arrangements. Option 1 references a size with from benchmarking data taken from data in 2014 and more recent existing or proposed unitary councils, and Option 2 reviews the number as proposed in the former County Council's unitary business case. The second model could be characterised as a 'workload' model, which provides an analysis of the demand on Councillors in undertaking their role which varies depending on the number of elected Councillors. 3 options of differing size are considered under this second model.

## Key Considerations

6. It is worth noting that that the total number of Council positions in the legacy Councils amounted to 236. 34 of those positions were held by dual-hatters (ie, they were elected for both the district and county councils) giving a total number of elected Councillors as 202. 8 of the original cohort of Members no longer hold positions so the current number of Buckinghamshire Councillor is 194. As from May 2021 it is anticipate that the number of 147 will come into effect.
7. The Working Group have been set the task to review the appropriate number of Councillors for Buckinghamshire Council. The case for the new Unitary Council was accepted by the Secretary of State. The decision was to create an initial Council due to be elected in 2020 now 2021 of 147 Councillors and following that decision the proposal of 98 made in the original case fell away. The Working Group consider that their role, in the absence of any other confirmed or adopted number, was to start from 147 Councillors and review fully the number of Councillors for the Buckinghamshire Council, looking at all factors that impact the decision afresh.
8. The Member Working Group consider that a sustainable workload for any unitary Councillor is important whilst retaining links with the community so that Councillors are able to work in partnership with Parish and Town Councils in particular, but also with a whole range of other bodies. These links have been key during the Covid-19 crisis and will continue to be in the recovery period, which will now include the redevelopment of Buckinghamshire's town centres.
9. The fundamental choice will be to (a) keep the Committee structure unchanged or (b) to reconsider size and frequency of meetings, particularly the size and nature of the Community Boards. It is inevitable that elements of the structure will change and new Committees or working groups will form looking at areas of the Council's functions - like the Buckinghamshire Local Plan, for example. The main Committee Structure is considered robust and will need to be as the Council fits all the parts together.

### **The Council's Changing Agenda**

10. The Member Working Group has reviewed the earlier considerations of the Council size as set out in the reports undertaken in support of the proposal to reorganise local government within Buckinghamshire. The Group notes that those reports were commissioned in 2014 and 2016 and considers that the Council's agenda has changed significantly during that time and, consequently, as has the demands on Councillors. That changing agenda has included the following:
  - (a) Covid: it has become trite to say that the pandemic has been unprecedented but the demands on the public sector generally, but also on local authority front-line services specifically, has been immense, particularly in the front-line social care functions. The Group consider that a post-Covid local authority will

require a thorough analysis of the role of local authorities and will inevitably require a reconsideration of the governance arrangements in place and an identification of service improvements and resources which will need heavy Councillor input and guidance to shape the delivery of services to their communities.

- (b) The environment: the climate change agenda has radically changed in the last 5 years with Councils, including Buckinghamshire, signing up to a radical reduction in carbon emissions and the development of a climate change strategy requiring significant changes to the way in which the Council does its business. Again, close oversight, accountability and strategic direction will be required by Councillors to succeed in this critical area of work. In addition, the Council's ambitious infrastructure projects, including the construction of highways, housing growth and the rebuilding of town centres (in part suffering from the economic effects of the pandemic) are all critical matters that the future Council will be concerned with at least for the next 10 to 15 years.
- (c) Large infrastructure projects: given Buckinghamshire's location and it being one of the regions of the UK with the highest productivity, it has been the focus of a number of planned infrastructure proposal. The biggest infrastructure project facing the Council is the HS2 project impacting on a swathe of communities throughout Buckinghamshire. As well as the formal process of Councillor consultation on the activities of HS2 there are innumerable issues and concerns raised by communities relating to construction traffic, highway diversions, noise, protestors, to name a few. As well as impacting on casework for many years to come, it is considered that Member involvement will continue and increase during the lifetime of this project. In addition to HS2 the Government's East-West Rail Project seeks to establish a significant and much-needed transport infrastructure connecting communities between Oxford through to Cambridge, impacting on large parts of Buckinghamshire. Alongside this, Highways England have advanced plans for a proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway. Although this is currently paused, proposals are being developed for road projects that will support the Government's ambitions for the region. These large-scale projects will facilitate very significant housing growth in the area, bringing new communities and extending other local communities which will inevitably place additional burdens on the elected Membership of the Council.

## **Allowances & Savings**

11. The determination of the appropriate allowances for Councillors is informed by the Independent Review Panel. The IRP considers a range of factors including: benchmarking data, surveys, specific demands on Councillor time, whether the allowance is sufficient compensation to those who might be foregoing paid employment.

12. At the last review in January 2020, the IRP recommended that it review Councillor allowances before 2024 and any changes before that next review should match those paid to officers.
13. It is acknowledged that a smaller number of Councillor overall will likely result in financial savings. Using the current figure given for the basic allowances for Buckinghamshire Councillors by way of an indicative example, the financial costs range is:
 

147 x £13,000 = £1,911,000 (post May 2021)

120 x £13,000 = £1,560,000

95 x £13,000 = £1,235,000
14. The basic Member allowance for the 87 Councillors in Cornwall in 20/21 is : £14,870.50 (total: £1,293,734); for the 98 Councillors in Wiltshire for 20/21 is: £13,833 (total: £1,355,634).
15. The delivery of the £18m unitary savings included a saving of £635,000 from the legacy council allowances budgets. The savings achieved from the reduction of the number of Councillors arising from the formation of the unitary Council was £156,000.
16. The budget for allowances set out in the unitary business case was £1.4m, assuming a basic allowance of £14,000 for 98 members. The Council has put this saving on hold pending the electoral review.
17. Any changes in the number of Councillor will likely trigger a reconsideration by the IRP who will consider those factors that Councillor will want to emphasise. It is clear that savings would be a factor that would inform the determination of an appropriate allowance, and, as the IRP is advisory, it would be a matter from the new Council to follow or depart from any recommendation should they be concerned to achieve the savings originally envisaged.
18. However, the Member Working Group does not consider that the number of Councillors should be dictated by an undue concern about the costs of allowances and that it was more important to ensure that local communities had a Council that met their needs and could represent their interest appropriately.

### **Representation**

19. Another key consideration of the Group was to ensure that the Council had strong representation from across Buckinghamshire, but also to not create committees that lack focus, or prevent detailed discussion and debate by making them too large. Some committees may be able to reduce in size if experience dictates this is right, while others due to workload and the number of working groups, may need to increase.



20. One example is the Local Planning Committee. Each Committee requires enough members so that at times when an interest is declared a balanced number of Councillors remain. Though some may suggest increasing numbers for these Committees the Member Working Group consider that even at the current 197 Councillors it would be difficult to find the numbers who would wish to take on this specialist and 'heavy-lifting' role. Currently all wards are not represented on these committees and nor should this be envisaged in the future.
21. Enabling Members from across the Council to serve on main committees is also considered important for the unitary Council so as to maintain a balance of representation from all parts of the Council's geographical areas. This would require the development of significant detailed knowledge for each Member if they are to play a full part in the business of the Committee and any additional working groups.
22. Furthermore, given the size the majority political group on the Council the proportionality rules mean that significant reductions in the size of committees could result in some groups or parties not being represented. At present, and pending the May 2021 elections, a committee would be need to have 11 Members to have the 3 main political groups represented.

### **Casework**

23. It is difficult to judge the level of casework, local issues and queries that will correlate to size of the Council, but by reducing the number of Councillors significantly without further support the Member Working Group consider that this would increase proportionately.
24. From the calculations attached the average hours that will be spent by Councillors will increase to 32 hours a week, an increase from the current 21 hours, a change of 52%. These hours are significant with the baseline well above the 16 hours initially estimated.
25. The concern with reducing the number of Councillors significantly would be an increase in meetings, and an increase in casework. The modelling suggests that these estimated hours extends to the limits what Councillors can achieve. This reduction in engagement would cut across a key commitment to residents. As already stated, workload is a significant factor if those with other commitments are to be encouraged to make up a significant number of Buckinghamshire's Members.
26. It is acknowledged that time Councillors devote to casework is very much dictated by the particular demands of a locality. The type and nature of the issues in a rural community differ from those in more urban areas, but Members considered that the frequency and volume of matters that those in more rural wards had to address (fly tipping, planning enforcement, flooding, highway related matters, HS2) matched those of their counterparts in larger conurbations where often the focus was on social welfare issues, anti-social behaviour, support for the vulnerable etc.

## Community Boards

27. The Member Working Group acknowledge that Community Boards account for a significant commitment of Councillors' time. In the future the Council needs to review attendance at the 16 Community Boards after the boundary changes and ensure that no Councillor covers more than one Community Board. Each Community Board equals 15 meetings a year, for example Penn Wood and Old Amersham ward currently has three Community Boards in its area. This equates to 45 meetings a year and is not sustainable alongside other local commitments, including the attendance at Parish Councils.
28. Community Boards are a major platform for local engagement of the new Buckinghamshire Council and to be successful needs commitment from all the Local Councillors. The concern is that if the number of Councillors reduce the workload will increase further, requiring members to be part of most focused working groups created by the Community Board. The Group acknowledge the Community Boards are in their initial phase and have developed with their own distinct autonomy and character. They will need to develop further with the likely resumption of face to face engagement with residents. However, the vision for these Boards should not be limited to just a forum for debate and consultation but could stimulate direct action in localities.
29. Annex 1 is a document 'Introducing Community Boards' which set out the Council's approach to the Community Boards, including their purpose, membership, budget and operating principles alongside how they are supported by officers.
30. Community Boards have now been in operation for 9 months of the new Council's existence and have been well-received amongst Councillors and their communities. As well as providing direct input into community leadership, the Boards have been involved in critical projects ranging from Climate Change to community resilience and health and well-being. For much of 2020 the Boards have provided vital support to the vulnerable in their communities during Covid-19. Annex 2 is a set of slides from a recent presentation on how Boards are working in practice, the projects that they are involved in and how they are making an impact on their communities and the Council – together with how Councillors are involved with them.
31. Buckinghamshire has 169 Parish and Town Councils with many Members regularly attending a number of Parishes in their area. The Council has committed itself to a comprehensive Charter outlining its commitment to localities through this Charter (Annex 3). This Charter has been co-produced with Parish & Town Councils and has been widely circulated for consultation. Community Board alignment with Parish & Town Councils was considered a significant benefit and facilitated a forum where issues of mutual interest could be raised and, where appropriate, resources and assistance could be aligned without trespassing on Parish & Town Council responsibilities and duties. This was in addition to getting good, local responses and input into Council decisions.

32. Notwithstanding the evident time commitment, the Member Working Group were of the view that significant attendance and engagement will continue to be required by Councillors. The Community Boards have large delegated budgets, and scope for offering grants to local groups through a range of sub-committees. This involves a lot of extra work on matters that are of considerable importance to local communities.

### **Scrutiny**

33. It was an ambition of the unitary Council as articulated in the former County Council's business case, that the new Council have robust scrutiny arrangements to ensure transparency and accountability.

34. The Working Group acknowledge that the Council is a very complex organization with, for example, over 1700 property assets and trading estates which raised £10-12m p.a. in revenue. It was important to have Councillor oversight of the this work both to ensure democratic accountability but also to utilize the specific skills that Members had.

35. The current arrangements for Scrutiny provide for:

- Children & Education
- Health & Adult Social Care
- Transport, Economy, Climate Change
- Communities & Localism
- Growth, Infrastructure & Housing
- Finance & Resources (including Budget Scrutiny Inquiry)

36. These have a wide-ranging remit and are involved in detailed analysis of Cabinet proposals. They have extensive work programmes and the respective Chairman meet regularly with relevant Cabinet Members and Directors to consider how they can remain effective and add value to the Council. They currently have 15 Members reflecting a broad representation from a range of Members and political groups.

37. The Council has a large Scrutiny function forged out of a commitment to invest in a culture of challenge and improvement. The model adopted allows the Select Committees to broadly align with the political portfolios of the Cabinet and so hold Cabinet Members to account on a wide range of issues, seen as essential given the significant change agenda for Buckinghamshire. The current size of the committees is proportionate to the total number we currently have. Another option would be to reduce membership size, to say, 10 and have the option of co-opting external stakeholders onto the committees where appropriate. Reducing the number of committees is also an option but having fewer than 5 would limit the work programme. As well as the 'challenge and improvement role' the Member Working Group were also keen to involve Councillors in the role of policy formation as a way of non-Executive Members being able to influence the development of key decisions.

38. It is considered that alternative approaches – such as one committee commissioning smaller task and finish groups, or broader committees covering, say, people and place – would similarly not have the capacity to cover the significant work programme.
39. The rationale for the current approach follows the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's guidance – The Good Scrutiny Guide. That sets out the principles of good scrutiny: (1) critical friend challenge (2) hearing the voice of the public (3) independence (4) drive improvement. It is considered that the current approach to Scrutiny fulfils those principles as well as the broader values of accountability, transparency and involvement.

### **Strategic involvement**

40. Members need to have the time to engage with the development of the strategy and the big picture for the Council as this is where the largest area of delivery, and impact is made on the community by the Council. Each Member needs to have time to input into the major areas of work for the Council and the thinking that goes behind that delivery. Through their involvement of with Committees and sub-committees, Councillors are keen to influence the development of Local Plans, affordable housing etc. A lower number of Councillors would run the risk of leaving the key areas of responsibility to the Executive and Officers with very little input from Members. The Member Working Group want a Member-led Council and the number of Councillors will be the defining element of this.
41. At paragraphs 27 – 31 is a reference to the work of the Community Boards. In addition to being a key focus of community leadership, the Boards also feed into strategic decisions making as is evident from slides attached at Annex 2 and the way in which the Boards acts as both the way in which Council delivers its priorities at a local level, but also feeding back key issues from communities which inform the strategic direction of the Council.
42. Furthermore, many Members are formally involved with the Council's key strategic partners, for example, holding key appointments on the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Fire Authority as well as regular involvement with bodies such as the Clinical Commissioning Group, Buckinghamshire Business First and the Local Enterprise Partnership. To ensure continued and meaningful participation in these strategic partners it is considered essential that there are sufficient Councillors with sufficient availability.
43. In addition, the Council and its Committees has been keen to establish working groups to consider key aspects of the Council business. The Member Working Group for the Electoral Review is a case in point, but additional Group have been formed to look at the Constitution, HS2, the Council's Highways Maintenance Contract to name a few.

44. The Group were also aware that Councillor not only have a lot of experience and knowledge of their local communities, but their involvement in the regulatory work of the Council – eg, planning, licensing – requires a degree of specialism only acquired with good training and over a period of time.
45. Immersion in the detail of that work is considered critical to be able to ensure competent and lawful decisions however it is acknowledged that that commitment impacts on Councillor time.

#### **Meeting arrangements**

46. Having a larger number of Councillors does raise the difficulty of running the Full Council meeting where all members attend. Larger numbers make this more difficult and would require the procedures for the meeting being reviewed to ensure that questions could be asked and motions debated fully. This is not impossible to fix with learning from other Councils of a similar size.

## Council size - Options

### Option 1

47. Table 1 identifies recently established unitary councils alongside the relative projected population size for their area and either their actual, or proposed Councillor number. The most obvious comparators for Buckinghamshire is: Cornwall with a projected population size of 449,000, with 89 Councillors; West Northants – 441,000 population and 93 Councillors; Wiltshire with 417, 000 population and 98 Councillors.

48. Whilst there are other Councils (eg, Durham) with a similar population size which have 120+ Councillors, the decisions of the LGBCE in the last 10 year have been significantly lower than that number. Birmingham, for example, have a projected population of over 813,000 and have reduced their size to 101 Members. Other recent decisions for Unitary Councils have not been over 100 Members.

Authority	Total electorate (at time of review)	Forecast electorate	Proposed Wards	Proposed Council size	Area (sq mi)	Average electors per councillor (at time of review)	Average electors per councillor (forecast)	Last review date
BCP	301,183 (2018)	309,792 (2023)	33	76	62.3	3,963	4,076	2018
Birmingham	728,730 (2015)	813,981 (2021)	69	101 (-19)	103.4	7,215	8,059	2016
Buckinghamshire	419,552 (2019)	427,057 (2026)	49	120 (-27)	604	2,854	3,496	2021
Cornwall	425,514 (2016)	449,182 (2023)	87	87 (-36)	1,375	4,891	5,163	2018
Dorset	295,195 (2018)	308,050 (2023)	52	82		3,600	3,757	2018
Durham	407,527 (2011)	411,788 (2016)	63	126	859	3,234	3,268	2011
North Northants	343,614 (2018) (population)		26	78	380.9	3,186	4,405	N/A
West Northants	401,996 (2018) (population)		31	93	531.8	3,186	4,322	N/A
Wiltshire	367,686 (2018)	417,228 (2024)	98	98	1,346	3,752	4,257	2019

**Table 1**

49. On the basis of the recent previous decisions of the LGBCE alone, it could be argued that the appropriate size for Buckinghamshire falls within a range of 87 to 98 Members. Taking that as a starting point inevitably requires a review of what can reasonably be expected of Councillors in terms of meeting attendance and size of committees whilst still ensuring that the Council met its statutory functions and Members played a purposeful role.
50. Recently the Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government confirmed that 3 further unitary proposals could go forward for approval: Somerset, North Yorkshire and Cumbria.
51. As a further comparator, Table 2 below identifies the proposed number of Councillors together with the associated electorate, and electors per Councillor for these new authorities. (It should be noted that these numbers are proposals and these Councils will be subject to an electoral review before the final number is determined.)

<b>Council</b>	<b>Cllr Number</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Electors per Cllr</b>
North Yorks	90	?	6850
Somerset	100	430,171	4302
Cumbria	84	392,191	4669

**Table 2**

52. These newly proposed authorities suggest that an appropriate range for a similar sized electorate might extend the Council size to 100 Members.
53. The published unitary proposal for Somerset, as an example, acknowledges that there is a risk with a smaller number of Councillors of a democratic deficit, this risk can be mitigated by appropriate representations on their Local Area Committees and significant delegations to their many (218) Town and Parish Councils. All the authorities' proposals acknowledge consolidating the number of Councillors requires a detailed consideration of appropriate officer support and assistance to enable them to fulfil their role.
54. By way of a further comparison Table 3 below sets out a comparison of the number of Committees that non-executive Member sit on, using data from Buckinghamshire's current frequency and size of Committee meetings. This gives an indication of how decision-making arrangements might need to change if the number of Councillors were reduced to below 100.

	Wiltshire		West Northants		Cornwall		Bucks	
	Frequency	Size	Frequency	Size	Frequency	Size	Frequency	Size
<b>Scrutiny</b>	6 - 8	13 - 15			6	15	5	15
<b>Area Planning</b>	10 - 15	8 - 11			12	13 - 15	12	12
<b>Audit</b>	5	12			6	8	2	12
<b>Licensing</b>	5	12			4	15	5	15
<b>Community Boards</b>	5 - 8	3 - 9			4	4	2 - 4	6 - 27

**Table 3**

55. Whilst Scrutiny, Area Planning Committees, Audit and Licensing are broadly comparable in terms of frequency of meeting and size, it is notable that there is a considerably fewer Members who attend Community Boards/Community network meetings. Cornwall have a total of 19 Community Network Panels. (It is assumed that attendance on outside bodies and Parish & Town Council meetings would also be broadly comparable across the Councils considered.)

56. The Member Working Group acknowledge that the LGBCE assessment of what is the appropriate size Council for Buckinghamshire will not be based on comparator data but will be considered on the criteria set out in paragraphs 2 and 4 above. However, the Working Group noted that the earlier proposals regarding Council size had been based on a comparison of similar Councils and gave a context to the earlier size proposals. The Working Group further noted the more recent decisions of the LGBCE. Having regard to the comparator data has led the Working Group to consider further why Buckinghamshire Council distinguishes itself from the way in which other Council's would fulfil the criteria of strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership, as outlined in the key considerations above and the recommendations below.

### Ernst & Young proposal

57. In 2014, Buckinghamshire Business First, on behalf of the business community in Buckinghamshire, commissioned Ernst & Young to develop a strategic business case for the reorganisation of local government in Buckinghamshire. Whilst undertaken some 6 years ago, the context for the Ernst & Young report was *'on-going reductions in the amount of resources Councils have to deliver services and increased demand ... [predicated to] result in a national funding gap of £16.5 billion by 2020. Our own analysis demonstrates that by 2016, without intervention, the funding gap in Buckinghamshire could reach £40m per year'*.

58. Due to the efforts of the legacy Councils the anticipated concern regarding the funding gap did not materialise although there remain some uncertainties over the future funding of local authorities with only a short-term financial settlement outlined by Government. Post Covid-19 there is the real possibility that local government is likely to face similar on-going reductions in funding.



59. The focus of the Ernst & Young report is the savings that could result from reorganising local government, including savings attached to a single unitary which was ultimately approved by Government. It was hoped at the time that with the harmonisation of Council Tax this would result in reduced Council Tax payments for residents. The report further maintained that a unitary Council would bring other tangible benefits, such as: (a) having a greater strategic impact with simpler organisational structures (eg, a unified planning authority; a single housing strategy) which would contribute to an enhanced economy; (b) having a greater locality focus by abolishing municipal boundaries in favour of natural communities alongside a simpler delivery model for services ; and (c) having a greater opportunity to develop more local democratic accountability.
60. Appendix 2 to the EY report addresses council size. Factors considered at that time were: the ratio of electors to Councillors; benchmarking data from other authorities; unique features of Buckinghamshire; and LGBCE guidance.
61. Of note is that, in EY's view, the benefits to be derived from a unitary Council could be achieved with a relatively low number of Councillors. The report does not analyse the detail of the likely anticipated number of Committees, or Councillor's time commitment, but it does include comparisons with other Councils on a range of measures, including electorate size; electors per Councillor and geographical area.
62. Table 4 set out a comparison by electorate size placing Buckinghamshire in the upper quartile of authorities nationally.

### Comparison of prospective size with other Unitary Councils

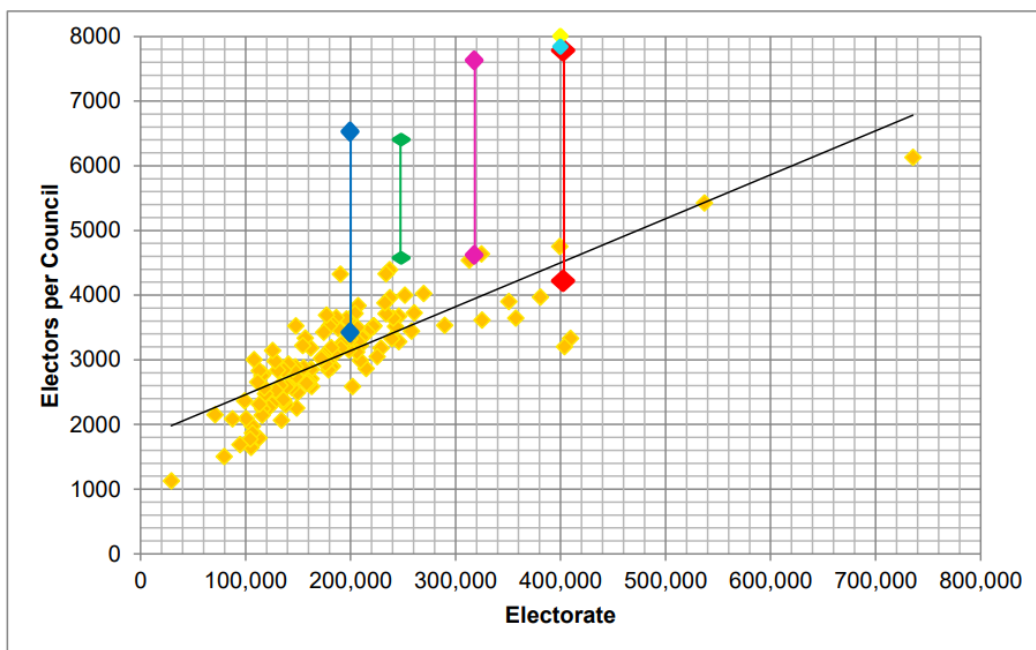
With an electorate of approaching 400,000 Buckinghamshire is toward the upper quartile in terms of size nationally, though it is by no means the biggest council as the table below sets out.

Authority Name	Total Electorate	Council Size	Electors per Councillor	Council Type
Leeds	537,163	99	5426	Unitary District
Cornwall	409,639	123	3330	Unitary County (2009)
Durham	403,742	126	3204	Unitary County (2009)
Sheffield	399,131	84	4752	Unitary District
Manchester	380,930	96	3968	Unitary District
Wiltshire	357,240	98	3645	Unitary County (2009)
Bradford	350,882	90	3899	Unitary District
Liverpool	325,125	90	3613	Unitary District
Bristol	324,584	70	4637	Unitary District
Kirklees	313,233	69	4540	Unitary District

**Table 4**

63. Table 5 below shows a comparator for democratic representation for single-tier councils outside London. The red line identifies the range of electors per Councillor based on electorates of 400,000.

In terms of democratic representation, the scatter diagram below sets out ratio for all single-tier councils in England outside London. Based on the line of best fit, each option has been included with the lower and upper figures set out below.



**Table 5**

Table 6 show the number of Councillor relative to geographical size.

Authority Name	Area in Hectares	Council Size	Hectare per Councillor	Council Type
Northumberland	501,300	67	7482	Unitary County
Cornwall	354,594	123	2883	Unitary County
Wiltshire	325,535	98	3322	Unitary County
Shropshire	319,731	74	4321	Unitary County
East Riding Of Yorkshire	240,763	67	3593	Unitary District
Durham	222,605	126	1767	Unitary County
Herefordshire	217,973	58	3758	Unitary District
Cheshire East	116,637	82	1422	Unitary District
Cheshire West & Chester	91,664	75	1222	Unitary District
North Lincolnshire	84,631	43	1968	Unitary District
Central Bedfordshire	71,567	59	1213	Unitary District

**Table 6**

64. Noting that 'an indicative 65 member council would put Buckinghamshire nearer the mean of single tier upper tier councils outside London in terms of the ratio of councillors and area'.

65. But considering the factors of electorate size, democratic representation and geographical areas, the report's conclusion is that '*the optimal size of a future unitary authority in Buckinghamshire would be between 65 and 80 elected members*'.
66. A copy of the EY report is at Annex 4.
67. **Summary:** benchmarking data from comparable size Councils from the (historic) data in the EY report, from decisions of the LGBCE on unitary Councils in the recent past and on the newly proposed unitary authorities in 2020 suggests the appropriate number of Councillors could be set at below 100, within a range from 65 – 100.
68. It is the view of the Member Working Group that taking the benchmarking data alone as the basis of determining the appropriate size does not adequately address the workload that will fall to a smaller number of Councillors and greater delegations to Parishes or officers is not considered compatible with a Member-led authority. There is also insufficient consideration given to the democratic deficit that will arise by having fewer Councillors and smaller committees.

## Option 2 – Unitary Proposal

69. *Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire* was published in September 2016 and set out the business case for a single unitary Council for Buckinghamshire. Reference is made to the earlier EY report throughout. The 2016 Report was the proposal formally approved by Government. The business case set out the aims for Buckinghamshire with a vision for single tier of local government that: had a single voice; was more local; had better public services and provided better value for money, as well as contributing to public sector reform more generally with other partners.
70. The detailed report set out the drivers for change and the way a unitary Council would be well-placed to meet future challenges, including a greater level of annual revenue savings, a single accountable body to the public and the delivery of a comprehensive offer to communities.
71. The business case sets out in some detail the blueprint for a new single unitary Council including the governance arrangements. As proposed, the business case envisaged that local Members would play a pivotal role between the Council and residents, with the Council providing the necessary support for their expanded community leadership role. Engagement with Community Boards, town and parish Councils would become an important part of the role of a unitary Councillor. Training and development, digital and ICT and administrative support were seen as enabling Councillors to meet the demands of their role and to make it 'as easy as possible for those with full-time day-time commitments to serve as an elected councillor' meetings would be arranged appropriately.
72. For the transition period to the new unitary it was proposed that the number of Councillors would be 98. The business case acknowledged that this was higher than the number set out in the Buckinghamshire Business First/EY report offering a more

straightforward approach in terms of a boundary review *'and would also ensure sufficient capacity to lead the council during a period of transformation'*.

73. The report acknowledges that the dividing of the County Council's 49 divisions into two would create 98 single Member wards was a simple way to achieve the reduction. It would also mean reducing the Councillor number by 138 and contributing a £1.2 million saving, which would increase to a saving of £1.6 million with a reduction in the number of overall committees and support. (This would appear to be a similar approach in the newly proposed unitary Council for Cumbria where the adoption of (in their case) 1 Unitary Member for each of the County wards was seen as the simplest and most administratively convenient arrangement with the advantage of making significant savings.)
74. Appendix 3 of the business case gives more detail on the proposed governance model. There are 8 guiding principles in determining the governance arrangements for the new unitary Council reflected in the report. These are:
- Representation of all communities
  - Transparent and open decision-making
  - Responsiveness to the needs and ambitions of local communities
  - Accountability to local residents, communities and businesses
  - Robust assurance and regulation of the use of public funding and assets
  - Scrutiny of services
  - Strong partnership
  - Civic leadership and pride in Buckinghamshire which respects values of local communities and heritage
75. In terms of decision-making, there is a strong emphasis on consultation and that local Councillors and Community Boards are properly consulted on proposals that have a local impact and that communities are able to inform area and strategic planning decisions.
76. To realise these aspirations, it was proposed that the structure and composition of the key Committees would be as follows:
- 10 Cabinet Members (for the first term; fewer for a 'steady state')
  - 5 Strategic Scrutiny Committees (supplemented by the local scrutiny by the Community Boards)
  - Strategic Sites and 5 Area Planning Committees
  - Regulatory Committees – pensions, licensing, senior appointments, audit
  - 19 Community Boards
77. A copy of the former Buckinghamshire County Council business case for the unitary Council is at Annex 5.

78. **Summary:** extensive consideration was given by the former County Council as to the appropriate decision-making arrangements that the unitary Council should adopt with an emphasis on strong relationships with local communities and robust scrutiny and accountability. Whilst no detail was provided as the size of the key Committees, each Councillor was eligible for appointment on decision-making Committees and Community Boards.
79. The Member Working Group applaud the vision in 2016 for the unitary Council, however, in the line with the comment on Option 1, the post-April 2020 reality for Councillors is a heavy workload to facilitate and bring into effect that original vision. It is considered that the desire to ensure robust scrutiny, proper accountability, and good relationships with localities requires a higher number of Councillors than that originally envisaged in the County Council model. The Working Group also were of the view that the 2016 business case had advocated a number of changes and, also, savings arising from a reduction in the number of Councillors; however, since then the landscape for public authorities had changed significantly. The pandemic has meant a rethink of the role of public authorities generally, but in addition the reality of the obligations on Councillors in undertaking the work of unitary Council (the Community Boards is one example) was significantly underestimated and the original proposal for 98 Councillors was considered unrealistic.

## The Workload Model

80. This model envisages 3 options ranging from 90 – 140 Councillors as an appropriate size for the Council. In Annex 6 to this Options Paper is a set of calculations which provide a broad outline of the workload and commitment required of Councillors currently and sets out three options with alternative numbers.
81. The key considerations that have informed Options 3 – 5 are as follows:
- Councillors should be drawn from the widest range of backgrounds, ages, knowledge and experience to better represent the communities served.
  - The amount of time required to become a Councillor should not be at a level that is prohibitive, particularly for those who are employed or in a caring role, or just wish for a balanced life. It should not be considered a full-time role.
  - Councillors should come from the community and be part of the community (local government should be local) and a Councillor needs to be accessible to their residents when issues arise, and not remote. It was considered that the establishment of the unitary Council the number of 147 Councillors was deemed an appropriate number where this connection could be maintained as a first step in the amalgamation of all the councils.
  - The Cabinet needs to be held to account by the Members through its Committees and with an appropriate level of Scrutiny. There needs to be enough Councillors to cover the current core structure and, where the need arises, to create additional Committees to cope with future challenges facing Buckinghamshire.

- The Cabinet will be made up of ten members, but some portfolios will need Deputies to assist due to the scale of the role. In the main, these would be considered as a full-time commitment.
  - There is a concern that casework increases with the reduction of the number of Councillors. If this becomes too great then the ability for a Member to significantly play a part in building the strategy of the Council reduces, and more powers are delegated to Officer discretion. For the smooth running of the Council it is acceptable to delegate powers to the Officers, but this should be done out of choice, not necessity, and where it is appropriate.
  - Allowances will be reviewed taking into account the number of Councillors and be relative to the workload reducing additional cost.
  - If the number of Councillors was set at 120, this would equate to 3,500 electors per Councillor, a number projected to increase over the next few years, and in line with a number of comparable Unitary Councils.
82. The calculations and assumptions sheet in Annex 6 give three options, which gives an indication of the time commitment on Councillors depending on the Option chosen. Option 3 notes the impact on Councillor time-commitment if the number were fixed at 90. Option 4 envisages 120 Members, and Option 5 sets out the impact at 140 Members.
83. **Summary:** the work of Councillors is demanding but must be sustainable in order for it to be carried out effectively and so as to attract candidates for elected office from a diverse background. The modelling provided suggests that with a lower number of Councillors using current commitments there is a danger that the role will become unsustainable.
84. The Member Working Group were unanimously of the view that the new Council brought with it greater challenges on individual Councillor time and commitment and that to fulfil the original vision and realise the benefits of local government reorganisation for Buckinghamshire, and afford appropriate and proportionate representation for communities, the number of Councillors required was higher than originally envisaged. Accepting that a Council size had to be practically and administratively manageable, the Member Working Group considered that 120 Councillors would be the appropriate size.

## Recommendation:

85. The Member Working Group have given close scrutiny to key considerations that ought to inform the Commissions determination of the appropriate size for the Council. Significant weight has been given to a range of issues which the Member Working Group consider will meet the Commissions requirement '*to discharge the business and responsibilities of the council successfully, and to provide for effective community leadership and representation*'. Those issues include the new Council's demanding agenda over the next few years; the Council's ambition to ensure involvement of communities through its Community Boards; the desire to have

accountability and transparency through its Select Committees and to ensure Councillors involvement in both the strategic and regulatory work of the Council.

86. Noting that the decisions of the Commission in the recent past have rarely exceeded the 100 number, having considered the feedback from Councillors and analysed the time demands in fulfilling their role in the new unitary Council, the Member Working Group consider that a higher number of Councillors is required to meet the objectives the Council has set for itself.
87. The Working Group has reviewed the information and the key considerations and have considered the hard evidence on key matters such as: the work of Cabinet Members, and the work on Committees, Community boards, Parish Councils, Casework, developing expertise, inputting into Strategy and the many other things that form part of the role of being an effective Councillor. To assist the decision-making they have evaluated metrics on how this role changes as Councillor numbers reduce. This has helped guide the Working Group towards a number and comparison of the options. The analysis demonstrate a number of tipping points in the work of a Councillor and the impact they can have, especially where the workload could act as a disincentive to younger working people and those with young families or acting as carers to take on this role. There is also the impact on the level of connection with local communities. The Working Group consider that a point would be reached where decisions are delegated not out of choice but through necessity. The analysis gives us an indication of these tipping points and although this cannot give a precise answer it does demonstrate a point differentiation. These tipping points significantly change what a Councillor can achieve for the community they serve.
88. Balancing the considerations as set out above the Member Working Group recommend that the Standards Committee should propose Option 4 (a number of 120) to the LGBCE as the appropriate Council size for Buckinghamshire Council.

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# Creating community conversations

## Introducing Community Boards



Community boards will bring the council and community together to find creative ways of improving their local area

## TACKLING LOCAL ISSUES TOGETHER



Building strong connections with communities



Responding to local needs



Improving outcomes for residents

# Creating community conversations

- ❖ This is an exciting new initiative backed by £3.9 million to make a real difference to local communities
- ❖ 16 Community Boards will:
  - ❖ Enable local conversations about local priorities
  - ❖ Identify needs within local communities and work to produce creative solutions
  - ❖ Represent the voices of local people
  - ❖ Be creative in how thoughts, ideas and suggestions are captured
  - ❖ Take a collaborative approach
  - ❖ Explore areas of interest
  - ❖ Influence decision making and delivery of public services
  - ❖ Support Covid-19 local recovery

## KEY BENEFITS



Stronger connections between Buckinghamshire Council councillors and communities.



Better and more responsive public services that meet the different needs of communities.



Greater resident and community involvement in decisions about how services are run locally.

# How will Community Boards work

- ❖ We want them to be vibrant, creative and take action locally
- ❖ Mixture of core meetings and working groups
- ❖ Focused working groups will explore and deliver projects on specific issues
- ❖ Engage with the community in lots of different ways to collect ideas and focus on what matters to them the most
- ❖ Involve a wide membership that provides valuable intelligence, helping to understand and respond to local need
- ❖ Using technology and getting creative to be inclusive
- ❖ A tailored approach for each board
- ❖ Good links back into the council

## POTENTIAL AREAS OF FOCUS



# Who is involved

Anyone can support their community by getting involved with a Community Board



# Public engagement is key



- ❖ We are creating a space and facility for community conversations on local issues
- ❖ Engaging with the public will be a key element of this
- ❖ The boards and the issues they are working on will be open and accessible to all
- ❖ They will bring people together to work on specific projects, initiatives or look into local issues together
- ❖ Involving people across the whole community, making use of their skills and knowledge to make real change
- ❖ Using innovative and audience specific tools to engage on different topics, priorities and projects, for example:

Focus groups Petitions OnLine forums Social media Polls

# Working with our partners

- ❖ No one organisation can solve complex problems
- ❖ We have a wide range of partners in Buckinghamshire and we're excited about this new way of working
- ❖ Local partners will be key to making the boards effective
- ❖ Have seen an impressive community spirit in Buckinghamshire
- ❖ We will build on the great connections made already
- ❖ Sharing data, insight and resources to make a real difference
- ❖ Local recovery plans focused on understanding local need
- ❖ We will be making connections and reaching out over the coming weeks to talk about and co-design how to get involved



**Martin Gallagher**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

*‘Over recent weeks we have worked hard to strengthen partnership working, building capacity and coalescence around common issues. Right from the start of lockdown we’ve helped those who need it and just get things done.*

*Its critically important that we continue to foster, nurture and develop partnerships - there’s no doubt the Community Boards will support this way of working.*

*The Chairman and Coordinators will be mindful of the expertise, knowledge and leverage that the voluntary sector has. I see the Clare Foundation working closely with the Coordinators, helping with issues, coalescing and hosting other key partners and organisations to make things happen*

*Relationship building is all about leadership and creativity in addressing issues and setting clearly achievable objectives. In our case I’d like the Clare Foundation to be talking to the boards, finding out local needs, building capacity and creating roundtable type workshops with the appropriate VCS organisations, charities and any other organisation that is fit for purpose.’*





**Buckinghamshire**  
**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*we save lives*



**David Norris**  
**Head of Prevention,**  
**Response & Resilience**

*'The Community Boards bring a new opportunity to work together more effectively to address directly local issues, and for us as a service to identify any new or emerging risks enabling a more effective and timely response to concerns raised. Additionally we would be keen to work with communities to equip them with the capability for increased local resilience.'*

*These boards will provide a forum for strengthening the working between multiple partners and enable us to refresh how the partnership engages, which will provide the best benefit for the public.*

*Our service would like improve our integration with communities, and to work in partnership to address local matters at source. Our Community Safety staff will be available to support the set-up of the community boards and share our understanding of how best we can help communities.'*

# Community Board Budgets

- ❖ Overall budget for community boards is £3.9m:
  - £1.5m Community Area Priorities Fund
  - £500K Health & Wellbeing Fund
  - £1.9m Local Infrastructure Fund
- ❖ Budgets based on population, levels of deprivation and proposed housing growth
- ❖ Coronavirus Councillor Crisis Fund £250k and an additional £50k from Rothschild Foundation has been allocated to support local initiatives across the county
- ❖ Budgets will be allocated to projects that directly address agreed local priorities and represent good value for money
- ❖ Local organisations will be able to apply online for funds for projects that address the agreed local priorities

# New Highways conversations

- ❖ Highways and network improvement conversations will take place outside of the formal meetings in new focused sub groups
- ❖ 2 meetings a year in each of the north, central and south areas with senior highways officers providing a more strategic approach to maintenance concerns like pot holes, gullies, grass cutting, weeding and trees
- ❖ Smaller sub groups will address local network improvement issues in the community board area like road safety, traffic calming, parking (waiting) restrictions
- ❖ This will give residents, community groups and local organisations the opportunity to discuss in detail with the right people
- ❖ Other elements of transport such as growth, strategy, sustainable transport and passenger services would still continue to interact with community boards

# The benefits of a more focused approach

- ❖ Opportunities for Town and Parish Councils and residents to report and track issues via fix my street
- ❖ Opportunities for Town and Parish Councils and Buckinghamshire councillors to meet 3 times a year (including the TfB conference) with senior highways officers to discuss issues more strategically
- ❖ Prevents community boards becoming too dominated by highways issues
- ❖ More efficient use of LATs and Senior Managers time and ensures expertise in focused sessions
- ❖ The opportunity to invite a highways officer to a formal Community Board to address a specific issue is still available

# How you can work with community boards

- We want to have a two way conversation with services about issues that come up through community boards, share the key priority areas and projects that boards identify and involve you in those where relevant and necessary
- We're asking that you also keep us involved in and aware of consultations and local engagement plans and proposals

# Where are we so far

- Chairmen and coordinators in place
- Initial introduction meetings in July
  - Start of the conversation
  - Looking at a local area and health profiles
  - Identifying key areas of focus
- Coordinators engaging with local community, setting up action groups to explore areas of focus
- Wider public engagement and official launch to take place throughout September
- September meetings to be more inclusive and recorded

# Key themes

- Each boards will have a series of priorities based on their area and local needs. They will build an action plan to explore and address these with their community.
- Boards have identified interim areas of focus and are engaging with people and organisations in their community.

These include:

- Covid 19 recovery
- Transport and Road safety
- Improving the environment
- Health and wellbeing
- Supporting older and vulnerable people
- Young People

# Community board coordinators

Will:

- ❖ Be dedicated to championing the local area
- ❖ Be the driving force for a new style of collaborative working which stretches far beyond traditional meetings
- ❖ Be creative at collating local voices and supporting informal discussions
- ❖ Develop a board action plan that helps tackle issues
- ❖ Support local devolution conversations
- ❖ Be the connector to engage local partners, groups and organisations
- ❖ Energise the boards and harness ideas
- ❖ Work closely with the Chairman

For more information on the 16 Community Board areas, chairmen and coordinators visit <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/improving-your-local-community/>





# Member Briefing Community Boards

*8 February 2021*

# Community boards

An update on the progress of Buckinghamshire Community Boards including examples from Community Board chairs and coordinators

## 1. Welcome

Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member Communities and Public Health

## 2. Community Boards: Seven months on

Claire Hawkes, Service Director Localities and Strategic Partnerships

## 3. The role of the chair

Arif Hussain, Chairman High Wycombe Community Board

Anne Wight, Chairman Wing and Ivinghoe Community Board

## 4. The role of the coordinator

Amy Jenner, Aylesbury Community Board Coordinator

Jack Pearce, Beeches Community Board Coordinator

## 5. The journey continues

Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member Communities and Public Health

## 6. Questions

# Working together: Local voices, local choices, local action

## Community boards aim to:

Put people at the heart of everything we do and be a council that thinks local.

Create vibrant, inclusive and creative community-led partnerships that actively improve the lives of people living and working in Buckinghamshire.

Celebrate and understand the diversity of our local communities, giving local people a voice and empowering councillors and communities to influence local services design and delivery.



# Our vision for community boards

## Collaboration

Lots of people from across the community coming together to understand and build a picture of local need and exploring solutions. 'Everyone is welcome' ethos. Fully representative of the local community, working together with key partners to make Bucks a great place live, work and grow up.

## Activity

Boards established as the place to talk with a focus on being local. Community feels ownership and actively drives discussion. Wide variety of activity including smaller pop up creative initiatives as well as deep dives to get under skins of local issues. Informed by data and insight to deliver projects that meet local need and matter to their local community. Open to the art of the possible.

## Impact

Feedback demonstrates the positive impact on priority areas. Local data and intelligence shows greatly improved outcomes for local people. Boards recognised nationally as good practice examples of localism. Able to leverage external funding.



## Dedicated local go to

A key local link between the council and community, championing their local area and an ambassador of community needs. Trusted and well known in the area. A friendly community ear, open to exploring ideas and opportunities for the local area. Networking, facilitating and signposting as well as building fantastic local relationships and making things happen.

## Meetings

Innovative inclusive approach to 5 active public meetings with excellent representation. Considerable activity outside formal meetings with range of thematic working groups that are the 'engine room'. Extensive community engagement gathering critical intelligence and views to feed into discussions.

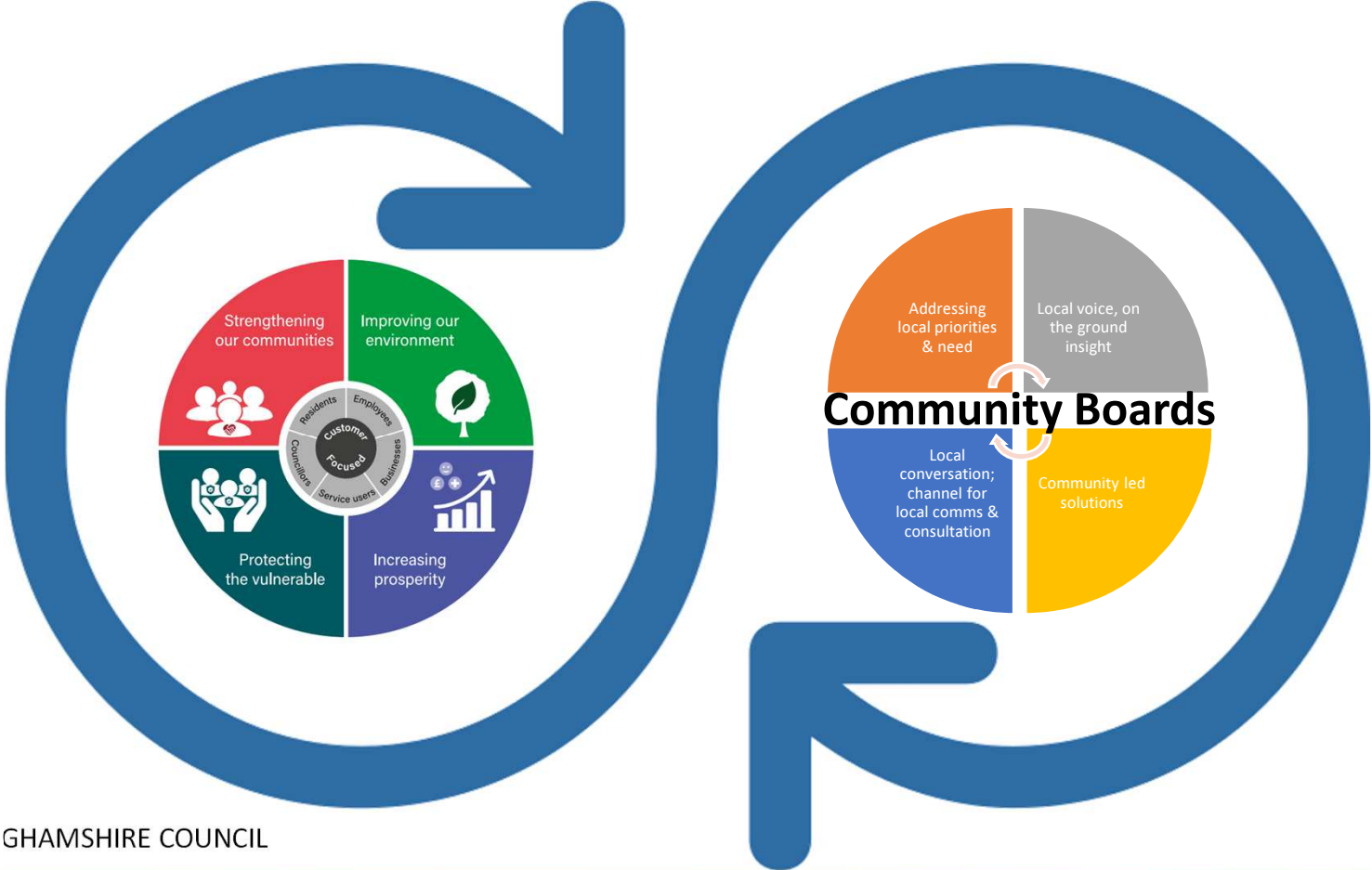
## Engagement

Lots of community conversations to enable the local voice to be heard and empowered to be involved in things that matter to them. Effective, vibrant and diverse communication channels to keep people informed and involved. Innovative engagement tools to gather peoples' thoughts. Boards well known in their area. Council wide approach to using local boards for early engagement on potential service design or change.



# Local Face of the Council

- 16 Community Boards are at the heart of our commitment to localism
- Essential way of delivering our council priorities at a local level
- Critical part of knowing our communities well
- Invaluable insight by listening and feeding back into the council



# The boards are brand new

- They have started their journey and because of Covid lost significant planning time
- Launched in July 2020 – team of newly recruited chairs, vice-chairs and coordinators – all of whom had to hit the ground running and learn the ropes on the job!
- Over the summer the new service created a back office (3 staff teams) and some comms to have a more formal launch in September and enable the boards to begin considering local priorities and release funding. This would not normally be the timetable!
- Great public health and local profile data to help priority setting conversations
- It's a new way of working that we're all getting used to – culture change for all, the council and partners
- Some stakeholders really embracing the boards and giving really good feedback. We know some are feeling the loss of the LAF structure. Evidence of Town and parish councils coming on board and engaging in their local boards – still more to do
- Lots of partners and community groups involved in boards and keen to work together – opportunity to do more
- Embracing digital - engaging and including the community through online and recorded meetings, getting used to more innovative engagement tools and virtual working groups. Better attendance than drafty village halls – people can catch up or pop in for part of the meeting.
- Stepping into digital comms – a number of boards have Facebook pages and setting up e-newsletters to keep people informed and involved
- Summary progress dashboards for each board in place and council reports being planned
- Had some excellent use of funds clearly linked to council priorities. Some good use of services driving council priorities through boards for local buy in
- The board set up has enabled a swift local focus in emergencies – Cllr crisis fund, Buckingham floods



Amersham Board at the market

*“ It takes time to create a new infrastructure. Great to see your boards have started and you’ve had to do introduce something new in a pandemic too. Although it will be tricky at first keep going, its worth it!”*

*Durham*

# Localities & Strategic Partnerships is also brand new

Localities and Strategic Partnerships is a brand new service area that includes:

- Community safety
- 16 Community Boards
- Community engagement and development
- Specialist projects team
- Town and Parish liaison
- Voluntary and Community Sector Partnerships
- Devolution
- Welfare team
- Helping hands



# Who's involved

*Thanks for last night. I'm really excited by this new way of working. Your meeting was a breath of fresh air. Great to see the community and councillors looking at things together.*  
Resident

*I can see the Boards are going to be a real opportunity with so many different connections from maternity services to health inequalities. Looking forward to getting more involved.*  
Health

*I'm totally bowled over at how the new community board was so generous and thoughtful with the Christmas voucher and card to our young people. Shows they really care*  
Care Leaver Manager

*They are much better than the LAF's.*  
Parish Council



*At first I thought here we go 16 mini councils but I can actually see the benefit of them now, the starting of some great conversations*  
BBF

*Overall its working well, keep it up.*  
LPA Commander

*Community boards have so much potential, really looking forward to working with them on community resilience*  
Bucks Fire

*These new boards seem to be working well – the meetings are getting quite a turnout*  
Charity Trustee

*Thanks for last night. I'm really excited by this new way of working. Your meeting was a breath of fresh air. Great to see the community and councillors looking at things together.*  
Community Youth Ventures





## Key areas of focus: Common themes

Environment/ climate change	Young people
Older people	Transport
Covid recovery	Health and wellbeing
Infrastructure	Community resilience

## 10 examples of board projects

**01** Cross board funding extra capacity for local sexual assault and abuse support service

**02** Crisis funding for covid related groups and initiatives including hot food and support for holiday periods

**03** Town Centre development and recovery initiatives including shop local campaigns and supporting reopening of high streets

**04** Community transport project across 5 boards to support vulnerable people accessing Covid vaccinations

**05** Initiatives to encourage food education and healthy active lifestyles for families

**06** Be your own Boss project across 5 boards with BBF to support new businesses to get up and running

**07** Youth focus - Youth councils being explored, youth reps on working groups, surveys and engagement asking for youth views

**08** Expanding existing projects - new Dementia friendly communities, Street Associations in Beeches, promoting Neighbourhood Watch & volunteering

**09** Exploring opportunities for social isolation projects

**10** Lots of focus on environment projects to encourage green spaces, planting trees and encouraging wildlife



# My role and High Wycombe Community Board

Cllr Arif Hussain, Chairman

“We have encouraged everyone to reach out to us and work together for the benefit of our residents. It has been a pleasure to be a part of a hugely committed community.”

## Our Board:

- We are a team!
- The board is about everything outside of the meetings – we’re about proactively going out to find things we can do to improve the community in High Wycombe
- Raising awareness of the board throughout summer and supporting awareness days in town centre
- Making connections with partners, groups and the community to create a network
- Exploring issues like town centre regeneration with Richard Barker and Steve Bowles
- Bringing the board together with local groups and organisations for regular Covid briefings with Public Health
- Christmas lockdown support: LEAP activity bags, gift cards for care leavers, hot meals

## What works for our community:

- No stuffy meetings! Keeping meetings informal with a bit of humour and making people feel comfortable and involved
- Listening to feedback and ideas and being open to mould and change the board as it grows
- It’s lots of work but we’re making a difference on the ground and there’s a real opportunity for members to be involved

“Thank you for the professional, friendly, human & yet efficient Wycombe Community Board meeting tonight.”  
Covid Community Group



# My role and High Wycombe Community Board

Cllr Arif Hussain, Chairman



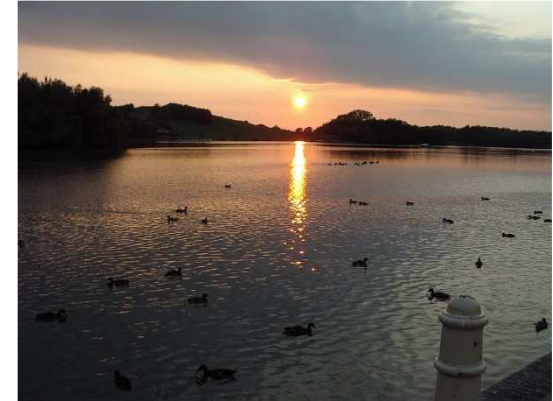


# My role and Wing and Ivinghoe CB

Cllr Anne Wight, Chairman

“Inclusivity for us is key. From the outset our moto has been that everyone is welcome regardless of background or experience.”

- Large rural board - including Watermead on the Aylesbury border – lots of different priorities
- Building an inclusive and welcoming board the key focus – forming good relationships across all political parties and local councils, bringing everyone together
- Board steering group set up as a sounding board – includes residents, community members and key players to help us to bounce ideas around and steer the board in the right direction
- Our sub groups is where all the excitement takes place with community members as the coordinator – informal community sessions exploring issues
- Lots of engagement - residents involved, using Facebook to promote events and generate conversation, working with schools to hear the views of young people



## Projects and priorities:

- Focus on Covid and crisis support for the community including funding for PPE and food storage
- Joining with other boards on cross boarder projects for wider impact – e.g. extra support for abuse victims
- Improving travel and traffic issues including traffic calming projects and exploring new cycle ways
- Improving the environment, green spaces and outdoor activities exploring green energy use in older buildings, wild flower meadows, outdoor gym equipment, walking trails
- Youth projects and improving health and food education with family cooking lessons and the **Fun, food and fitness fair – May 2022!** Keep an eye out!





**Amy Jenner**

Aylesbury Community  
Board Coordinator



**Jack Pearce**

Beeches Community Board  
Coordinator

## What does our day to day role look like?

- **Communication** – every day we speak to different internal and external partners and stakeholders, including members, parishes, VCS organisations and residents, by email, phone, on Teams or via social media.
- **Collaboration** – we attend meetings with our internal services to understand how we can work with them to serve our residents. We also engage with external partners to learn about what they do and identify opportunities to involve them with the Boards.
- **Organisation** – we organise and support our Board meetings and sub-groups, assess and process funding applications, and work to keep our budgets and key documents up to date.
- **Covid response** – we work with our local VCS organisations and liaise with colleagues within the Council to support the Covid response.



*'Cannot praise my Board coordinator highly enough – working flat out, keeps in regular contact, comes up with ideas, is well respected in the area – great job!' Chair*

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

## What do we enjoy about our role?

- **Variety** – we deal with such a variety of issues, from very local problems to more strategic projects, every day is different and brings new challenges.
- **Learning & Development** – we benefit from a mixture of formal and informal development sessions, and we are always learning more about our local communities and how we can best meet the needs of our members and residents.
- **Working in our Communities** – we have the chance to facilitate important conversations and bring positive change to our local communities. We enjoy hearing about the great work our local organisations are doing and exploring how we can support them.
- **Good Support** – we are fortunate to have a great team and have developed lots of good relationships quickly (even whilst working remotely). We also have excellent support from our managers, Chairs and members.

# The journey continues

- We have made a great start in difficult times, it will take time for the boards to become established
- Carrying out a review during March to identify opportunities to refine our approach next year
  - Conversations with internal and external partners
  - Reflecting on what's worked well and what could have been better
  - Learning from each other – as each board has developed it's own style and approach
- Thank you for your involvement so far in helping the boards get up and running
- There is more to do and we're looking forward to watching the boards shape into community partnerships and improving the lives of our residents
- Interesting journey so far, lots of activity and lots of learning – opportunity for new council to be seen as coordinated, collaborative, and a good local listener



# Questions to the panel







# Town and Parish Charter



Working together for the people of Buckinghamshire



A shared commitment between Buckinghamshire Council and the parish and town councils of Buckinghamshire

## Contents

1. Welcome
2. Introduction
3. Understanding town and parish councils
4. Respecting and valuing each other
5. Effective communication
6. Local democracy and community leadership
7. Collaboration
8. Consultation
9. Advice and Support
10. Shared commitments
11. Planning
12. Making it happen
13. Appendix 1 - Engagement and Representation in High Wycombe

## 1. Welcome

### **Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health, Buckinghamshire Council**



Strong local working relationships is essential in supporting the council and our services to understand and respond to what matters to our local people and communities. Local councils are at the heart of their communities; their connections, relationships and local knowledge is invaluable in supporting the council with local service design and delivery and they will play a key role in the council's new approach to locality working through Community Boards.

The council is committed to working closely with local councils, understanding and complementing each other's roles for the benefit of our people. We share the goal to make our county, towns and villages, great places to live, work and bring up a family and know that there is strength and value in doing that together.

The tremendous community spirit and dedication we have seen across Buckinghamshire of people coming together to support our communities and the vulnerable during the pandemic of 2020 has been overwhelming and we want to continue to build on this for the future. Relationships have been built, local links strengthened and there are many great examples of collaborative working. This has demonstrated the huge impact we can have when we work together, and I look forward to seeing this develop and grow.

We have a diverse range of local councils across Buckinghamshire, from town councils and large parishes, to small parish meetings in our rural villages and are committed to a flexible and adaptable approach to working with you all.

### **Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (BMKALC)**



#### **Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils**

We are a membership organisation representing the majority of town and parish councils and parish

meetings across Buckinghamshire. We give advice on best practice as well as updating members on the changes to statutory law that affects them to keep them operating legally and not making ultra vires decisions.

By working in partnership with the unitary authority we ensure that the views of local councils, who are the first tier of government and closest to the residents, are taken into consideration by Buckinghamshire Council to establish good working relationships between all parties. As Buckinghamshire is a very diverse county with a range of local councils both large and small, it is important that we work together to continue with a flexible way forward to benefit all groups.

To this end we have worked closely with Buckinghamshire Council before and during the transition to a unitary authority to ensure an understanding of local council structure, statutory law as well as their processes and procedures. We will continue the close working relationship ensuring the views, concerns and suggestions for the way forward are still taken into account by Councillors and officers of Buckinghamshire Council as each level strives to improve the lives of their communities and residents.

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## 2. Introduction

Buckinghamshire is a newly formed unitary council area (from April 2020), with a secondary tier of local councils known as town and parish councils governed by locally elected representatives.

Both the unitary and local councils want Buckinghamshire to be a great place to live, work and bring up a family and know that by working together we can serve our residents better and improve their lives.

All 171 town and parish councils play a valuable role in local life, are trusted within their communities and possess local knowledge and insight that can help the process of community planning and decision-making. The town and parish councils across Buckinghamshire are the first and most local tier of government in the county with powers and duties laid down in law, and the ability to shape the decisions that affect communities at a local level. The establishment of the new unitary council offers an exciting new beginning for Buckinghamshire, including the opportunity to strengthen and build upon existing relationships and partnership arrangements.

Local councils in Buckinghamshire range from town councils with tens of thousands of residents and budgets in the hundreds of thousands, to parish meetings with under 100 residents and in many cases no budget at all. One size does not fit all, and Buckinghamshire Council is committed to working with all town and parish councils, and their representative bodies, in the most effective way possible so that together we can improve services and outcomes for all our residents.

This charter has one simple aim - to provide a framework for us to work together to serve the people of Buckinghamshire. We have a common purpose to promote the wellbeing of Buckinghamshire, and we serve the same residents. This is the foundation of our charter.

This sets out the relationship between the new Buckinghamshire Council and the town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire, including how we will harness the opportunities presented by this exciting new beginning for Buckinghamshire to strengthen partnership working and improve services for our residents. It sets out the joint principles and respective roles, responsibilities and expectations, and it will be a live document which will be refreshed regularly in consultation with town and parish councils.

Diversity across the local council sector is recognised. Whilst the impact of these shared commitments on individual councils will vary according to scale, its principles are consistent and by signing up to this document councils agree to:

- work together to promote the best interests of the communities we serve;
- provide quality, value for money public services and;
- promote opportunities for greater public participation and involvement in public life

The charter is founded on mutual respect of all member councils and between the two tiers of local government as democratically accountable bodies. By working together Buckinghamshire Council and town and parish councils to strengthen relationships and work in partnership for the benefit of our local communities.

For this charter to work, it needs to be picked up, read, understood and referred to at all levels throughout our organisations. The charter and its principles will be disseminated throughout the unitary council and local councils as the basis for working together to achieve greater efficiencies and better outcomes for our local communities.

Town and parish councils represent most of Buckinghamshire except the unparished area of High Wycombe which is represented by the High Wycombe Town Committee and High Wycombe Community Board. Appendix 1 provides details of how the council will continue to engage with residents of the unparished area of High Wycombe through these forums.

*The development of this charter was informed by feedback from town and parish councils, input from discussions with Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils and discussions as part of the unitary programme.*

For more information about the charter please contact [localities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:localities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

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### **3. Understanding town and parish councils**

There are 171 town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire ranging from town councils and larger parishes to small parish meetings.

#### **The role of local councils**

“Local councils work towards improving community well-being and providing better services. Their activities fall into three main categories: representing the local community; delivering services to meet local needs; striving to improve quality of life and community well-being.

Through an extensive range of discretionary powers local councils provide and maintain a variety of important and visible local services including allotments, bridleways, burial grounds, bus shelters, car parks, commons and open spaces, community transport schemes, community safety and crime reduction measures, events and festivals, footpaths, leisure and sports facilities, litter bins, public toilets, planning, street cleaning and lighting, tourism activities, traffic calming measures, village greens and youth projects.” (source NALC website <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/about-local-councils>)

#### **The role of the clerk**

Town and parish council clerks are the ‘engine’ of the council. The clerk is the principal executive and adviser for the council, and for the majority of smaller parish councils, clerks are responsible for the administration of its finances.

Clerks carry out the role of the Proper Officer of the Council and as such are under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions, and in particular to serve or issue all the notifications required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer. The Clerk is totally responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Local Authority are carried out. Alongside this, many clerks also hold the position of the Responsible Financial Officer and are therefore responsible for all financial records of the council and the careful administration of its finances.

#### **The role of elected town and parish councillors**

Town and parish councillors are elected representatives of their community. They are unpaid for this role.

Local councillors have three main areas of work:

- **Decision-making:** through attending meetings and committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.
- **Monitoring:** councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.

- Getting involved locally: as local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. This often depends on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available.

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## **4. Respecting and valuing each other**

Successful partnership working at a local level can only be achieved if all parties - the unitary council and town and parish councils - understand and respect each other's roles and work to complement those roles in serving the community.

In general, officers, councillors and other partners involved in joint working value the helpfulness and professionalism of their colleagues. There is openness and a willingness to work together.

There is always room for improvement and through this charter we will recognise the impact of how we behave with each other and our commitment to building strong partnerships.

### **Buckinghamshire Council recognise that town and parish councils:**

- Are a vital part of local democracy and represent communities at a truly local level.
- Serve their residents by addressing the most local needs and concerns of their communities
- Are a primary source of information about community aspirations and opinions and a key connection between the unitary council and their community
- Provide an opportunity to foster greater community empowerment, in particular through devolution and Community Boards

### **Town and parish councils recognise that Buckinghamshire Council:**

- Represents the interests of local communities at a unitary county level
- Has strategic roles and responsibilities and has to work within government financial constraints
- Has to take into account community interests wider than the town or parish

### **We will:**

- Work together to raise awareness and support a greater understanding of town and parish councils across the unitary council to strengthen working relationships.

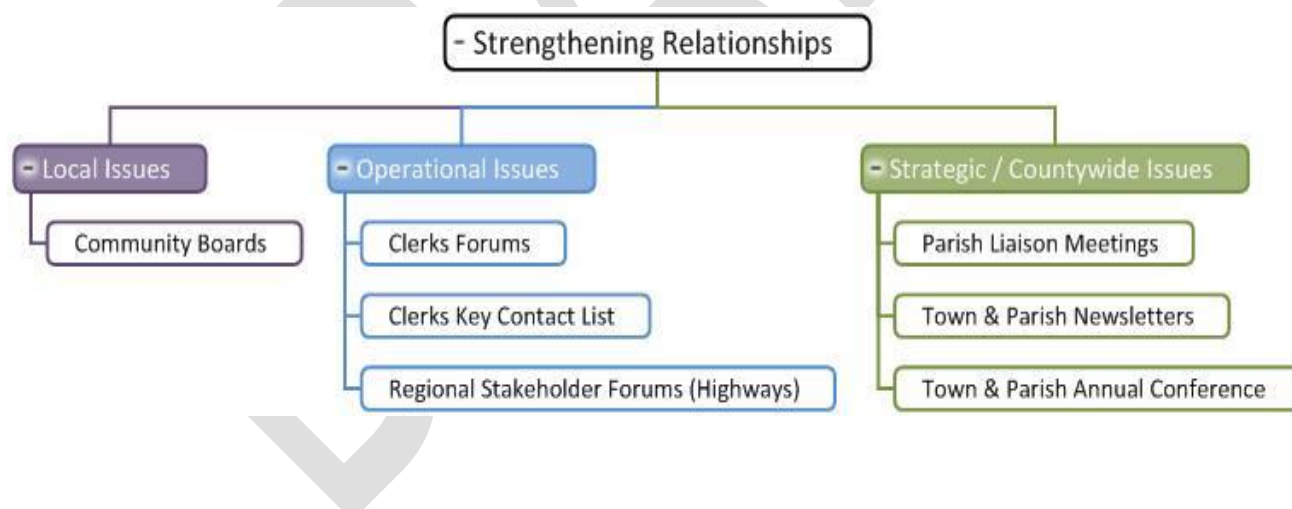
## 5. Effective communication

Working together effectively is founded on good relationships and regular opportunities for discussion, sharing and keeping one another updated. To facilitate this regular and effective communication channels are required.

As a democratically elected council, the first point of contact for town and parish councils will be their local Buckinghamshire Council councillors. Buckinghamshire Councillors are able to escalate and pursue local issues on behalf of local councils and residents, including through Community Boards if appropriate.

Operational day to day matters can be dealt with directly with council officers such as highways, playgrounds, waste and recycling. Parish clerks will be provided with key contacts in all services with which they need to interact as well as a dedicated phone line into the customer contact centre and dedicated parish liaison officers.

To ensure effective engagement at a strategic, regional and county-wide level, regular strategic forums and conferences will be held to enable discussions with services such as Highways.



There are several mechanisms in place to facilitate closer working relationships and the opportunity for regular dialogue.

- **Community Boards**

The Community Boards will be the key forum for the council to connect with local communities, groups and organisations. Community boards are a new way of working with our communities to explore issues that matter most to them and find creative solutions together with those who can make them happen. They will not replace the role or work of

town and parish councils but complement all public services, with specific projects and funding. The dedicated chair and coordinator will be the main council link for local issues.

Community boards are the local forum for addressing local issues and enabling local solutions by working together, including delivery of devolved budget and influencing local service design and delivery. Community boards will be tailored to their local area so each one will be different, with the common goal on bringing communities together to make a difference. They will use local data and intelligence, together with extensive engagement and listening to the people in their communities to prioritise areas of focus and explore issues that are of most importance.

Community Boards are open to all members of the community to attend and get involved. This includes Buckinghamshire Council officers, town and parish councils, public, partners, local community groups and organisations.

They are chaired by an appointed local Buckinghamshire Council councillor.

Councillors and clerks of town and parish councils are encouraged to take an active role in their community board, through attendance at meetings and involvement in the working groups and wider work of the boards.

- **BMKALC Town and parish councils' liaison forum**

The county-wide liaison forum supports two-way communications on strategic issues of common interest (e.g. service changes, budgets, etc.).

Town and parish councils (up to two representatives per local council, councillor or clerk) meet with Buckinghamshire Council senior officers on a quarterly basis. The forum is chaired by a BMKALC executive board representative with Buckinghamshire Council executive officers in attendance.

- **Clerks' Liaison Forum**

The Clerks' Liaison Forum is a quarterly forum for clerks and council staff to liaise on both practical and strategic issues. This forum is open to all clerks to meet with Buckinghamshire Council senior officers, chaired by Deputy Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire Council.

- **Town and Parish Councils' Conference**

The conference will be an annual event to share best practice and strategic updates, open to all local councillors and clerks involving a range of services from across Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Council senior officers and councillors.

### **To support effective communication Buckinghamshire Council will:**

- Provide Town and parish councils with a named officer for each Community Board area

- Provide a named officer with overall responsibility for strategic support and liaison with Town and Parish Councils
- Develop and maintain effective communication channels for Town and parish councils including:
  - A single priority telephone number for Town and parish councils to use when contacting Buckinghamshire Council
  - Newsletters with local updates for each community board area
  - Key contacts list for council service areas
- Ensure proactive and timely communication on key issues that will have an impact on Town and Parish Councils
- Ensure timely responses to information requests from Town and Parish Councils
- Advise Town & Parish Councils of changes to contact details
- Maintain a single database and website list of all town and parish councils
- Work in partnership with town and parish councils to enable the transfer of services and assets where this will benefit local communities, in accordance with the Council's agreed Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy

### **To support effective communication Town and parish councils will:**

- Progress enquiries and resolve issues through the communication channels promoted
- Provide feedback to ensure that channels remain effective and fit for purpose
- Maintain relationships with named officers in Buckinghamshire Council to facilitate effective joint working and communications
- Ensure timely responses to information requests from Buckinghamshire Council
- Advise Buckinghamshire Council of changes to contact details so that a single list can be maintained.

### **Joint communication**

The council and BMKALC joined forces to send weekly, and then fortnightly updates during the first 3 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This proved to be a key channel to keep everyone up to date with changes during a difficult time that was welcomed by town and parish councils and has paved the way for regular communications going forward.

*“It was extremely helpful and very valuable for our community – great job.”*

*“It is by far the most informative, concise and best structured of all the Bucks communications and it is not being replaced by anything nearly as good in terms of communication flow. The lack of Covid does not mean that a lack of communication is ok. Indeed most of what has been interesting about this newsletter has been non-Covid content”*

## 6. Local democracy and community leadership

Local democracy and community leadership is about ensuring elected representatives can fairly and effectively represent their wards and electors. It is important that the relationship between Buckinghamshire Councillors and Town and Parish councillors is open, and information is readily shared between these groups.

### **Buckinghamshire Council will:**

- Assign the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health lead responsibility for relationships with Town and Parish Councils to champion town and parish councils
- Encourage Buckinghamshire councillors to attend Community Board meetings
- Encourage Buckinghamshire councillors to attend local town and parish council meetings, as appropriate and work constructively with town and parish councils
- Invite town and parish councils to attend local Community Board meetings and get involved
- Ensure that support is provided for the administration of Town and Parish Council elections, polls and referendums, as required
- Provide guidance on producing neighbourhood plans
- Provide guidance on producing local emergency plans
- Provide planning training to town and parish councils
- Provide the opportunity for strategic conversations with Cabinet Members on specific issues where appropriate

### **Town & Parish Councils will:**

- Invite Buckinghamshire Council councillors to attend Town and Parish Council meetings
- Ensure agendas and papers are available in the public domain, as appropriate
- Attend Community Board meetings and get involved
- Produce neighbourhood plans, as required
- Produce local emergency plans, as required

## Partnership working on flood defences in Aylesbury

In February 2014, over 80 properties flooded on the Willows estate to the west of Aylesbury. Working with residents, the former Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council purchased temporary defences (a 700m long barrier and several pumps) on behalf of the residents, using Central Government Resilience funding. The defences are designed to protect the estate in the future against flood events like that in 2014.

Aylesbury Town Council (ATC) and Buckinghamshire Council (BC, previously BCC) agreed for the defences to be stored at and deployed from the Aylesbury Town Council depot. Buckinghamshire Council staff watch the weather forecast and water levels in the Stoke Brook alongside the Willows estate and take the decision with Aylesbury Town Council on when to use the defences. Aylesbury Town Council take responsibility to deploy the defences as required on site. There has been training with ATC and BC staff and residents to ensure the deployment is done safely and in accordance with the plan. The plan was put into action during Storm Alex in early October 2020 and internal property flooding on the estate was largely successfully avoided. The partnership between Buckinghamshire Council, Aylesbury Town Council and residents demonstrates excellent partnership working to manage this flooding issue.

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## 7. Collaboration

Buckinghamshire Council and town and parish councils are both responsible for serving our communities, residents, visitors, and businesses. This means that Buckinghamshire Council and town and parish councils will need to work together (including delivery of services where appropriate) to deliver the best outcomes for Buckinghamshire. There are a number of examples of good collaboration already taking place, for example in highways devolution and Buckinghamshire's response to Covid - we want to build on this further.

### **Buckinghamshire Council will:**

- Recognise the diversity and variety of Town and Parish Councils, and tailor approaches accordingly (i.e. one size does not fit all)
- Work in partnership with Town and Parish councils to enable the transfer of services and assets, in accordance with the Council's Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy
- Encourage and support the development of local solutions to local problems, for example through innovative projects
- Support Town and Parish councils to address local needs through the provision of advice and signposting

### **Town & Parish Councils will:**

- Consider opportunities for the transfer of services and assets to benefit local communities
- Contribute to the work of Community Boards by participating and contributing ideas, supporting the development of ideas/projects, and considering match-funding, as appropriate
- Work with Buckinghamshire Council to address local needs, including through advice and signposting, as appropriate.

### **Co locating local services**

The vision for Council Access Points was that they would be a place in a local area where residents can go to access information about a wide range of topics, a social space that they can enjoy, and a place where they can get support from different services.

Local Access Points are an integral part of the Buckinghamshire Council's Customer Service Strategy. They are particularly important to ensure that all residents across Buckinghamshire continue to have access to services more locally, without the need to travel long distances.

Local councils have offices often located in the heart of their communities. Iver Parish Council office was agreed as a County Council 'community hub pilot' and has now become a Council Access Point for the new unitary council. Parish council staff have been trained to be able to support residents that visit the access point with their queries. An iPad and printer were installed in the office to enable residents to access Buckinghamshire Council services online and complete transactions. The Iver office also has a direct dial line into the Buckinghamshire Council customer services team to be able to transfer residents directly or gain support for more difficult queries.

Iver Parish Council said they were "looking forward to supporting the new unitary council in this exciting new venture".

## 8. Consultation

Consultation provides opportunity to hear from businesses and residents on our proposed changes to policy, planning, and strategies. Effective and meaningful consultation is essential in empowering local communities and ensuring local voices are heard.

### **Buckinghamshire Council will:**

- Ensure that Town and parish councils have their say on proposed changes to services, as consultees
- Ensure that information about all public consultations are communicated to town and parish councils in a timely manner with proportionate notice period for responses
- Prepare a summary report for any BC consultations that are more than four pages long
- Provide briefings to Town and parish councils on complex consultation issues
- Recognise Town and Parish Council's cycles of meetings, precept timelines, etc.
- Consult with Town and parish councils on planning issues, as appropriate

### **Town & Parish Councils will:**

- Endeavour to take part in consultation exercises and respond within the given period
- Submit feedback on proposed changes through the most appropriate channel
- Cascade information on consultations to Town and Parish councillors and residents, as appropriate
- Submit local views on planning matters

## **Working with Town and Parish Councils on service design**

As part of the Planning and Environment service review the council has gathered views of town and parish councils through engagement and briefing sessions. Theme led focus groups will take place as part of the service design stage to help develop ideas further.

The Planning and Environment Service have also delivered training sessions on how planning works in the new council.



## 9. Advice and Service Support

Residents, visitors and businesses benefit from well trained and skilled local government members and officers. We recognise the resourcing difference between the councils and therefore want to ensure we are able to provide opportunities for Town and Parish Council members and officers to receive relevant training and advice.

### **Buckinghamshire Council will:**

- Promote a 'think local, think parish' approach in how the Council makes decisions. This means that members and officers will consider the impact of changes in service delivery/policy on town and parish councils, including consulting, where relevant.
- Develop, in partnership with Town and Parish Councils, guidance and training for councillors and staff on how best to work with local councils.
- Provide briefings on service changes where there is a significant impact for Town and Parish Councils
- Support BMKALC in providing training resources for Town and Parish Councils, as required. This may include specific training or briefing sessions on services where relevant (i.e. emergency planning, planning policy, etc.)

### **Town & Parish Councils will:**

- Promote and support training and briefing opportunities to Town and Parish Council staff and councillors
- Work with BMKALC to support the delivery of training and identify training needs
- Feedback on training, advice and support, as appropriate
- Take advantage of training available from a wide range of sources including BMKALC and NALC to maintain and develop skills.

## **10. Shared Commitments**

### **Equality of opportunity**

Buckinghamshire Council embraces equality and diversity in all its work. The issue of equality is not the responsibility of one section or service area solely, it is owned by all Members and staff at all levels of the Council.

In Buckinghamshire we recognise the value difference can make and we are committed to serving the diverse needs of our communities. We are committed to treating everyone fairly, openly and honestly and the Council is striving to achieve equality for the diverse mix in our communities and our own workforce, recognising that people have different needs, cultures, experiences and expectations.

The Council recognises that valuing equality and diversity will lead to more sensitive services that are responsive to the needs of the communities, a workforce that is representative of the community, and a commitment to participation by all.

Local Councils in Buckinghamshire are encouraged to make the same commitments and to eliminating discrimination in all its forms, providing equality of opportunity to all the communities we serve.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding responsibilities encapsulate our duty to reduce accidental harm and to protect vulnerable adults and children and young people from abuse. This includes harassment and discrimination, neglect, emotional abuse, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, and financial abuse. Safeguarding should ensure that all reasonable actions and approaches are taken to minimise the risk of accidents and harm, and to enable individuals to make appropriate choices and have opportunities to take part in day to day life.

Buckinghamshire Council responds to all concerns about the safety of a vulnerable adult, child, or young person. In doing so it takes appropriate actions to address the concerns and reduce risk by working to the agreed policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies. The Council considers safeguarding in a proactive manner to raise awareness of issues and take actions to minimise potential risks occurring.

Local Councils in Buckinghamshire are encouraged to think about safeguarding and to help to protect vulnerable adults, children and young people as part of our shared responsibilities to the people of Buckinghamshire.

### **Ethical Standards**

All elected councillors of the unitary and town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire have a duty to adhere to the highest ethical standards and, when undertaking their role, to comply with their Council's adopted Code of Conduct.

Buckinghamshire Council is committed to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst elected councillors and have adopted a Code of Conduct setting out the behaviour we expect of our councillors as they carry out that role. The council recognises the importance of good governance in preserving the confidence of local communities and the benefit of learning from and adopting best practice to achieve this. The council responds to all concerns about the behaviour of councillors and takes appropriate action to address these concerns through the council's member complaints process.

Local councils in Buckinghamshire are encouraged to make the same commitment in promoting the highest ethical standards and behaviours amongst their councillors.

Buckinghamshire Council has a statutory duty to investigate complaints and concerns against town and parish councils and will do so fairly and expeditiously in accordance with the council's complaints procedure. The council will also share good practice and training with town and parish councils.

### **Review and operation of the charter**

The charter will initially be reviewed after a twelve-month period and again after a further three years. However, changes in functions or legislation may dictate that it be updated as and when required. It will also be reviewed following any Local Government Elections. The Charter will be monitored and evaluated regularly, through liaison meetings with BMKALC, Liaison Forums, direct communications and further opportunities to raise issues of common interest or concern through Community Boards.

## 11. Planning

Buckinghamshire Council aims to create an outcome focused planning service that places customers at the heart of service delivery. All elements of service delivery will be continuously tested against an ambition for the service to be:

**“Shaping and enhancing the County to secure the quality of life in Buckinghamshire now and the future.”**

To do this the council will work closely with town and parish councils to:

- Ensure that there is engagement at a local level;
- Enable town and parish councils to share the views of the communities they represent;
- Recognise the importance of local knowledge held by town and parish councils; and
- Equip town and parishes with knowledge and skills to be able to contribute to the planning process.

### Neighbourhood planning and local plans

Town and parish councils will be able to set policies for their own local areas by preparing Neighbourhood Plans. The Buckinghamshire Council recognises the importance of a plan led system and will support local councils in the production of these where possible.

The Buckinghamshire Council will produce a Local Plan that will replace the current adopted local plans on completion, in addition to the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

### Planning Applications

Town and parish councils are a statutory consultee in the planning process. Buckinghamshire Council notifies town and parish councils received in their area, whom have 21 days to submit any representations. These are very important in highlighting issues, particularly local issues that you have knowledge of, called material planning considerations, which need to be taken into account when applications are decided.

Town and parish councils should make comments using the Public Access section of the relevant part of the website (or Consultee Access where available). This ensures that comments are automatically and immediately published on the website. When commenting on applications, Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to also highlight any potential infrastructure issues in their local area that may be addressed through Section 106 negotiations with applicants.

### Planning Committee

The power to determine applications rests with either a planning committee or more usually delegated to officers. In accordance with best practice over 96% of applications are usually determined under delegated authority. This allows Planning Committees to focus their resources more effectively on cases of local or strategic significance, which would benefit

from scrutiny. Where an application is referred to an area or strategic planning committee, town and parish councils will be given a dedicated speaking slot where they have made representation. The speaking slot for town and parish council's is 3 minutes shared. At the strategic planning committee, more time can be allocated, at the discretion of the chairman, to allow parish and town councils to participate fully.

### **Enforcement**

The Buckinghamshire Council recognise that the Town and parish councils have an important role to play in the enforcement of planning control. The council are keen to use the parish and town councils as our 'eyes and ears'. Local knowledge when dealing with planning enforcement matters can often turn up important information and we are keen to tap into the local resource. We also see Town and Parish Councils assisting us in our monitoring of formal notice compliance.

### **Training**

The Buckinghamshire Council will ensure that town and parish councils receive training to enable full participation in planning processes. Training sessions will be provided through BMKALC by officers of the service. In addition, the council will provide updates on the service at BMKALC meetings.

### **Newsletter**

Buckinghamshire Council will provide quarterly planning updates to town and parish councils advising of changes in national and local planning policy, legislation and guidance.

## Making it happen

This charter's implementation is the joint responsibility of Buckinghamshire Council and Town and Parish Councils.

This charter will be published and communicated widely to Buckinghamshire Council staff, members and all Town and Parish Councils.

Through their work in developing relationships with town and parish councils the Localities and Strategic Partnerships Service in Buckinghamshire Council will monitor and progress the implementation of the charter. Where there may be areas of concern raised these will be resolved collaboratively.

This charter is a statement of intent on the relationship of the new Council. It will be reviewed annually and will continue to develop over time.

### Signed

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**Buckinghamshire Council**

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**BMKALC**

.....

**Local Council in Buckinghamshire**

# Appendix 1 - Engagement and Representation in High Wycombe

The town of High Wycombe remains an unparished area and does not have a town or parish council. Buckinghamshire Council is fully committed to ensuring that residents and businesses in the town are engaged and supported.

Two of the ways in which the council supports residents in High Wycombe are through the High Wycombe Town Committee and the High Wycombe Community Board.

## 1. High Wycombe Town Committee

### Role, Purpose and Membership

The High Wycombe Town Committee was established as a committee of the former Wycombe District Council (now adopted by the new Buckinghamshire Council) to act as an advisory body to the council, cabinet and other relevant committees on any issues affecting the unparished area of High Wycombe.

The membership of the High Wycombe Town Committee is restricted to Buckinghamshire Councillors\* representing the wards of High Wycombe that cover the unparished area.

The High Wycombe Town Committee can consider any issue referred to it by the council, the cabinet, or other committees. It also considers any issues, which in the opinion of the Chairman, or at least 5 members of the committee, is of particular relevance / importance to the residents of High Wycombe town.

The committee must meet at least twice a year, but in practice often meets four or five times a year. Meetings are webcast and can be accessed through the Buckinghamshire Council website.

In the past year the committee has discussed topics such as the High Wycombe Market, Allotments, High Wycombe Transport Strategy, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations and Climate Change Projects.

### Special Expenses

One of the key functions of the committee is to make recommendations to the cabinet / full council as to which services should be deemed a Special Expense. The committee also recommends the amount required to be raised each year for Special Expense purposes and is consulted on any schemes or proposals that would alter these levels significantly. Special Expenses currently include: Public Halls and Community Centres, Cemeteries, Recreation Grounds, Allotments, Footway Lighting, War Memorials and grants to voluntary and community sector groups.

In addition to this the High Wycombe Town Committee monitors and reviews those services provided under Special Expenses and makes recommendations for changes or improvements to the Cabinet, appropriate Committee or Service Director.

## **Grants for Voluntary Sector Organisations**

The High Wycombe Town Committee also runs two grants schemes for voluntary sector organisations operating within the town. The community facilities grants, awarded for one-off projects which must be for the improvement/upgrading of a community facility and community support grants, awarded for one-off projects, events or activities.

## **2. High Wycombe Community Board**

### **Purpose and Style**

The High Wycombe Community Board is an exciting new initiative, enabling local people to have a voice, helping them to work with the Council, local agencies and other community organisations to make a real difference within their communities.

The Community board will represent the voices of local people and is creative in how thoughts, ideas and suggestions are captured, enabling local residents and partners to work with Buckinghamshire councillors to identify need, priorities and creative solutions.

The community board has a dedicated coordinator who will champion the local area and help to drive forward an action plan of collaborative working through informal working groups and projects to improve outcomes for residents.

### **Membership, Meetings and Budgets**

The membership of the High Wycombe Community Board includes councillors representing the unparished area of High Wycombe as well as statutory partners from police, fire & rescue and health, voluntary and community sector partners, residents and businesses.

The High Wycombe Community Board meets 'formally' around 5 times per year and has a budget of £312,000 which can be spent on local projects that address the agreed local priorities. The budget consists of three funding streams, community areas priorities fund, health and wellbeing fund and local infrastructure fund.

The High Wycombe Community Board is a public meeting which members of the public are encouraged to attend. Decisions are usually made by consensus although Buckinghamshire councillors may be asked to vote on specific issues such as budget allocation or when a consensus cannot be found.

*\*Please note this only refers to Buckinghamshire Councillors who were members of the former Wycombe District Council until formal elections to the Buckinghamshire Council take place in 2021.*





## Buckinghamshire Business First

Strategic Financial Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Buckinghamshire

September 2014



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# 1. Executive summary

## 1.1. Overview

This report sets out a strategic business case for changing the way local government is organised in Buckinghamshire based on analysis of four potential structural models.

The strategic business case is rooted in the context of on-going reductions in the amount of resources Councils have to deliver services and increased demand which the Local Government Association (the cross-party representative body for local government in England) predicts will result in a national funding gap of £16.5 billion by 2020. Our own analysis demonstrates that by 2016, without intervention, the funding gap in Buckinghamshire could reach £40m per year.

Whilst the report is focused on the local councils which make up Buckinghamshire; it has been commissioned by Buckinghamshire Business First on behalf of the business community. Consequently, independent of the five councils in the county, the report objectively explores various options for local government reorganisation in the county. These are summarised below:

1. One Unitary Council to replace the existing five Councils;
2. Two Unitary Councils which would create North and South Councils;
3. One County Council and one District Council; and
4. Creating new authorities outside County boundaries.

We have assessed the four options against the following criteria:

- The potential level of savings that can be delivered;
- The impact of changes on service users;
- The practicality of proposed options;
- Implementation cost and likely timeline; and
- Overall payback period.

In order to maintain the objective integrity of the analysis within the report, the evidence base on which the assumptions are made has been gathered from publicly available data and, wherever possible, 13/14 data sources were used. The main publicly available information used to build the financial baseline within the Districts and County, and to develop the financial case for include:

- Budget books and statement of accounts;
- Pay policy statements and organisational charts;
- Medium term financial plans (MTFP) and Annual Reviews; and
- Official Local Authority data and reports from industry recognised professional bodies (i.e. CIPFA and SOCITM)

Local government reorganisation is not a straightforward process and each option presents both challenges and opportunities. This objective assessment presents a series of initial, high-level insights which will need to be subjected to further detailed analysis as part of any next steps.

### 1.1.1. The Financial case

The four options could produce a range of potential savings by removing managerial duplication, reducing the costs associated with elections, streamlining services and back office costs while protecting front-line delivery through optimising the considerable sums spent on a wide range of services.

We have produced financial assumptions for each option based on lower and upper estimates which have then been applied to produce an annual savings range. We have also assessed the likely cost of implementation based on factors such as reducing FTE, and one-off investment costs associated with reorganisation.

Finally, we have modelled the cumulative savings over a five year period for each option, factoring in implementation costs and noting that savings are unlikely to be immediate - a phased five year timescale for benefits realisation has been modelled.

The table below sets out these figures for each of the four options.

Option	Annual Savings Range	Implementation Cost Range	Net Cumulative Savings Range over 5 years
One Unitary	£15.7m - £20.7m	£10.7m - £11.6m	£44.6m - £58.3m
Two Unitaries	£6.6m - £11.1m	£9.4m - £10.0m	£13.4m - £26.9m
One Unitary / One District	£9.6m - £12.8m	£10.2m - £11.2m	£24.7m - £34.9m
Two out of County Unitaries	£6.6m - £11.1m	£13.1m - £13.4m	£10.7m - £24.4m

### 1.1.2. Reducing council tax

Currently there are variations in the amount of Council tax paid across the County due to the fact that while the County has a single level of Council tax, the Districts each set their own level. A new Council structure could provide the opportunity to harmonise Council tax and set these at the current lowest level (or even lower), resulting in a reduction in Council tax for the majority of residents across the County.

The harmonisation of Council tax could result in Buckinghamshire residents sharing in a £2.8m reduction in their Council tax bill meaning that over 147,000 households would see an average annual reduction of 1% in their Council tax bill. This is based on harmonisation of Council tax to the lowest level currently in Buckinghamshire Districts and is likely to vary for the other options that involve the creation of two Councils.

### 1.1.3. Locality focus

The removal of municipal boundaries could enable a greater focus on natural and historical communities. This is a factor in each of the potential options and may allow boundaries that are ideally designed.

In all cases there is potential for:

- The elimination of existing municipal boundaries; one Unitary option and one Council and one District option being more straightforward, two Unitary option and out of County Unitaries option less so;
- Simplification of the delivery and commissioning apparatus, again with one Unitary option and one Council and one District option presenting a more straightforward transition than two Unitary option and out of County Unitaries option; and

- The opportunity for greater local democratic accountability, except in the case of one Council and one District option which has the potential to lead to increased confusion and ambiguity.

#### **1.1.4. Strategic impact**

Simplifying organisational structures along with the clarification of roles and responsibilities presents an opportunity for the County of Buckinghamshire to present a more unified and integrated approach and as a result, articulate a much clearer message to external investors, stakeholders and opinion formers.

A single County Unitary could help to:

- Facilitate the creation of a single planning Authority for the County;
- Improve the ability to integrate housing strategy more clearly with investment and social/demographic planning; and
- Enhance economic development planning.

A two Unitary Council solution enables the same benefits to be realised in two distinct organisations.

The one Council and one District option clarifies this to some extent though some of this is lost due to potential role confusion borne of creating two geographically co-terminus Councils with differing responsibilities.

## **1.2. Conclusions and next steps**

Each of the options presents an opportunity to realise a range of financial savings in addition to other tangible and qualified benefits. There are also a number of risks inherent in each of the options which we have identified. It is important to recognise that this is a high-level strategic business case and preferred option(s) will need to be subject to further detailed financial scrutiny and modelling.

### **1.2.1. Next steps**

This report sets out the potential options which could form the blueprint of the future of local government in Buckinghamshire. The next stage will be to decide on the most appropriate option through extensive consultation, and build on this strategic case by producing a detailed business case for change.

## 2. Introduction and background

This report sets out an objective strategic business case for reorganising local government within the County of Buckinghamshire.

In order to investigate a broad range of future models for reorganisation, the following options have been considered:

- One Unitary Council to replace the existing five Councils;
- Two Unitary Councils which would create North and South Councils;
- One County Council and one District Council; and
- Creating two new authorities outside County boundaries.

This strategic business case and options appraisal has been developed on the basis of assessing the viability and potential for Unitary government for Buckinghamshire with two central tenets:

- To contribute towards meeting the considerable financial challenges facing the County; and
- To facilitate the protection and enhancement of services.

### 2.1. Locality overview

Buckinghamshire has a population of 516,000 residents excluding the borough of Milton Keynes which became a Unitary Council in 1997. The County is made up of a County Council (Buckinghamshire) and four Districts Councils (Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe). The County Council is responsible for a number of pan County services such as highways, transport and waste disposal, along with supporting schools and providing support and care for both vulnerable children and adults. The District Councils are responsible for the provision of leisure services, housing and collection of domestic waste and is also the planning Authority for their specific area. Each District is also responsible for the administration of its own local taxation and benefit services.

In recent years, there have been several attempts to streamline and integrate services both between Districts and between Districts and the County. In 2012, the senior management teams of South Bucks and Chiltern Councils were integrated under a single chief executive. This model of shared management has become increasingly popular with Councils as the effects of financial austerity continue to exert pressure on front line services.

Council	Members	Population	13/14 net expenditure
Buckinghamshire CC	49	516,096	£414.7m*
Aylesbury Vale DC	59	181,071	£24.2m
Chiltern DC	40	93,250	£10.9m
South Bucks DC	40	67,941	£10.1m
Wycombe DC	60	173,834	£23.8m

\*13/14 DSG grant removed

## 2.2. Efficiency savings to date

English councils are in the midst of an era of severe financial austerity. At the same time they are dealing with significant and in some cases unsustainable increases in demand for many services. In this context, local councils in Buckinghamshire have already delivered significant financial savings and undergone considerable change. Buckinghamshire County Council, working with the four District Councils, has delivered savings of £85 million (c.20%) over the last four years.

In addition to this, following the national debate on reorganisation, a number of Councils including Buckinghamshire, which had opted to remain as two-tier Counties, were invited to become Two-Tier Pathfinders. This process began in the summer of 2007 with the Councils making various attempts to change the way they deliver services, share costs with each other and reduce their running costs.

Further reductions in funding are projected for the period 2015-20 meaning additional savings are therefore likely to be required.

By combining and therefore reducing many of the back office and administrative functions associated with the cost of being in business, Unitary Councils can provide opportunities to drive out greater levels of efficiency. Additionally, the notion of removing municipal boundaries can increase the potential to create greater levels of managerial and resource simplification without the potential obstacle of conflicting managerial and governance structures delivering services to the same area. This in turn enables a much clearer focus on natural communities.

Progress based on the combined efforts of the councils over the last seven years is not to be underestimated. However, the reality is that with a potential funding gap of approximately £39m within a few years, allied with the fact that many of the more apparent savings have already been realised, serious consideration now needs to be given to reorganising the structures of local government in order to realise the quantum of savings required without the need to make drastic reductions to front-line services.

## 2.3. Proposed options for Unitary Council(s)

A Unitary Council differs from a two-tier system as it assumes responsibility for all aspects of services which are currently within the remit of local government. The majority of Unitary Councils were created as a result of the last major review of local government which came into effect in 1974. Since then, there have been subsequent attempts to reorganise local government, for example Milton Keynes, which is situated in the historic County boundary of Buckinghamshire became a Unitary Council in 1997. More recently, in 2007 the then Secretary of State responsible for local government called for proposals for some of the remaining two-tier Counties to become Unitary Counties. Subsequently, in 2009 a number of new Unitary County Councils were created. These were a mix of single Unitary County Councils such as Cornwall, Wiltshire, Shropshire, Durham and Northumberland and others who split in two such as Cheshire (which became Cheshire West & Chester and Cheshire East) and Bedfordshire (Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough).

### 2.3.1. Exploring different Unitary options for Buckinghamshire

Based on the four options set out in section 2.1, this report explores two basic and two slightly more complex approaches to Unitary status in Buckinghamshire:

- A **single County Unitary** which is established by merging all previous County and District functions into one entity with a clear management structure and democratic accountability;
- The creation of **two Unitary Councils** within the existing County boundary achieved by separating functions into two distinct organisations;
- A **one County and one District** established on the maintenance of a County structure based on the existing premise with all District functions being amalgamated into a single organisation; and
- The creation of an **out of County two-Unitary** solution which includes areas outside the current County boundary

There are many local and historical factors to take into account when considering these options and unsurprisingly in 2009, much of this was dominated by political debate as well as financial analysis. Notwithstanding the emotions and passions that local identity can stir, it is important to create an objective and dispassionate set of principles which should be considered when shaping new forms of government, these are to:

- Improve the efficiency of services by integrating service and management streams which were previously separated by different organisational responsibilities in the same geographical area;
- Ensure that democratic representation is both accessible and unambiguous, ensuring that elected Members are available to their constituents and that their role is clear and understood;
- Reduce overheads by eliminating duplication and ensuring that any additional resources are available for investment in front-line delivery; and
- Ensure that proposed boundaries have sufficient 'resonance' with local people which reflect local identity and history.

There are potential merits and drawbacks to each of the possible options and these are explored in more detail against the above criteria in the following table.



FACTOR	OPTION 1 (SINGLE UNITARY)	OPTION 2 (TWO UNITARIES)	OPTION 3 (ONE UNITARY, ONE DISTRICT)	OPTION 4 (TWO UNITARIES OUTSIDE COUNTY BOUNDARY)
<b>Improved service efficiency</b>	A single County Unitary could generate the greatest amount of potential savings, and based on the creation of a single, accountable Authority, should be the most straightforward for service users	Two Unitary Councils may not generate long term savings on the scale of a single Unitary as there is a need to create two, rather than one management and back office structure	The creation of a single, County wide District could create less service disruption and incur reduced implementation costs than the two Unitary option	This option produces similar results to option 2 with the additional complexity of negotiating with two neighbouring Counties
<b>Democratic representation</b>	While the single County Unitary model reduces the overall number of elected Members, it removes much of the ambiguity which exists currently and offers the potential for a clearer link between County Councillors, parish Councillors and local community activists	This option would produce a higher Councillor to resident ratio which could be seen to enhance democratic representation	There are considerable practical drawbacks to this option in terms of democratic representation. To create two co-terminus Councils but with different responsibilities could prove extremely confusing. Avoiding this confusion could create a democratic deficit	This option may require a great deal of initial negotiation and consultation across three geographical Counties and involve over 1.5m people. The option could be achieved but the challenge in terms of democratic representation should not be underestimated
<b>Reduce overheads</b>	A single Unitary model has the potential to be the most effective in reducing back office and overhead costs as the annual savings of a single County Unitary of up to £20.7m	A two Unitary model could produce annual savings of up to £11.1m	This option could produce annual savings of up to £12.8m which makes it the second strongest financial case	This option could produce annual savings of up to £11.1m
<b>Identity and resonance</b>	The County of Buckinghamshire has a clear and distinct identity.	While this option should produce change, the changes would be in County and could be accommodated with a sensible communications strategy	This option would leave the historic County boundary in tact	This option may be complex as it requires the creation of an administrative County or the annexation of two Districts from neighbouring Counties. This could present challenges in disaggregating existing services from three separate Counties

## 3. Case for change

### 3.1. Introduction

Local government is already changing fast. Many upper-tier Councils predict that their real terms revenue could fall by at least 25% over the course of the current parliament. This reduction in revenue spending exists alongside a period of considerable growth borne out of demographic and social changes which are stretching the traditional care services (Children's and Adult Services) to breaking point.

In June 2012, the Local Government Association (LGA) published a report which outlined these challenges based on a model of projected Council revenues (e.g. central grants, Council tax, fee income and reserves) to the year 2020, set against projected demand over the same period. The LGA built into this model some assumptions about efficiency using the same model which Councils have used relatively successfully over recent years to reduce their costs.

The report states that while based on cautious figures, the assumptions show that there may be a funding gap of £16.5bn per year by the year 2020 which represents a 29% shortfall in funding between available spend and cost pressures. Furthermore, due to the increased and in many cases unavoidable costs of adult and children's social care, many 'frontline' budgets such as roads and leisure services, including libraries, could reduce by as much as 90% in that period.

Within this context, there are considerable limitations to the ability of Councils to respond given that demand, based on shifting demographics, and the annual formula grant received from central government are both beyond their direct control. However, there are opportunities to greatly influence both cost and demand by streamlining services through better management of resources and collaborating more effectively with delivery partners such as health services.

While some of these necessary changes can happen within the existing arrangements, the current two tier structure has inherent limitations which could make it difficult to realise change and efficiencies at the scale and speed required to meet the challenges identified by the LGA.

Limitations of the current two-tier structure are detailed in the table below.

<b>Cost of overheads</b>	Aside from Chiltern and South Bucks Councils which have a shared chief officer team, each Council is currently administered as a separate entity. Given the financial predictions for local government, is the administrative cost of five separate Councils sustainable?
<b>Confusion over roles and responsibilities</b>	Do residents, potential investors, strategic partners and other key stakeholders understand the often complex lines between the different tiers of local government in the County?
<b>Bargaining power</b>	Would a single organisation have greater negotiating power than five separate organisations?
<b>Ability to act in a genuinely strategic manner</b>	Not only do potential investors have to negotiate with two separate organisations, there are then four separate planning authorities across the County, each of which make independent planning decisions within their own area.
<b>Potential duplication</b>	The same family could well be receiving support for social care from one organisation while at the same time be receiving support for social housing from another - is this the best use of resources given the financial pressures faced?

While much of the potential savings can be clearly quantified and are set out in this report, there are more intangible problems associated with the current two-tier structure. In terms of planning a

clear strategy to meet the quantum of savings required, the five Councils must come together and closely co-ordinate their strategies, and in the process align their culture, politics, managerial capacity and resources to meet this end. No matter how well the Councils might work together, the need to align these core competencies, rather than them being in a single organisation, must be considered sub-optimal. The current structure also mitigates against close co-ordination of economic planning and maximising commercial opportunities given that both organisationally and democratically each area is, in effect, in competition with the other.

This sentiment was recently echoed by Lord Heseltine in his review 'No Stone Unturned: in pursuit of growth' which recognised that confusion between different types of Council is a potential barrier to growth and investment:

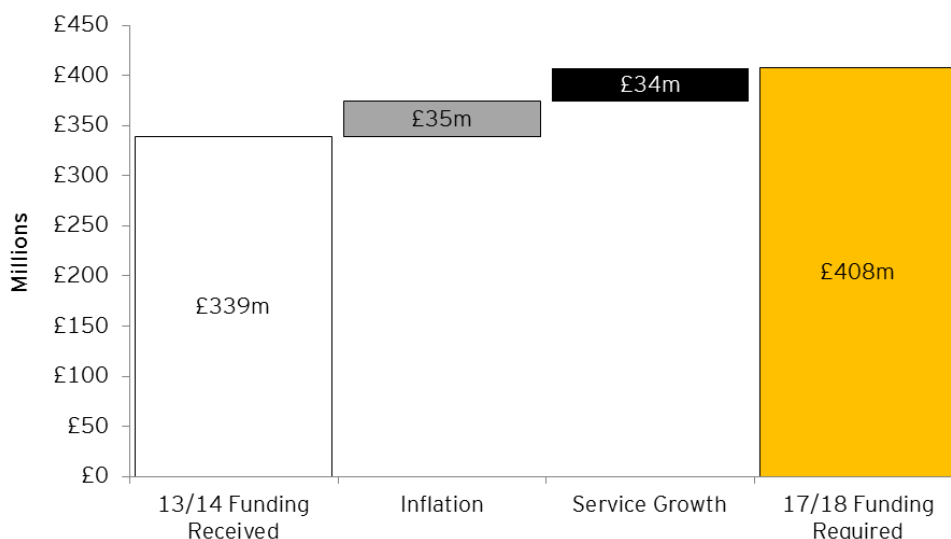
*"...England has 353 principal authorities. Some of these are single Unitary authorities, others operate in tiers of District and County Councils. The number of different Councils doing similar things remains costly and confusing. For many, the range of different systems is baffling too"*

## 3.2. Local government funding projections

### 3.2.1. Funding projections for the County Council

#### Funding required

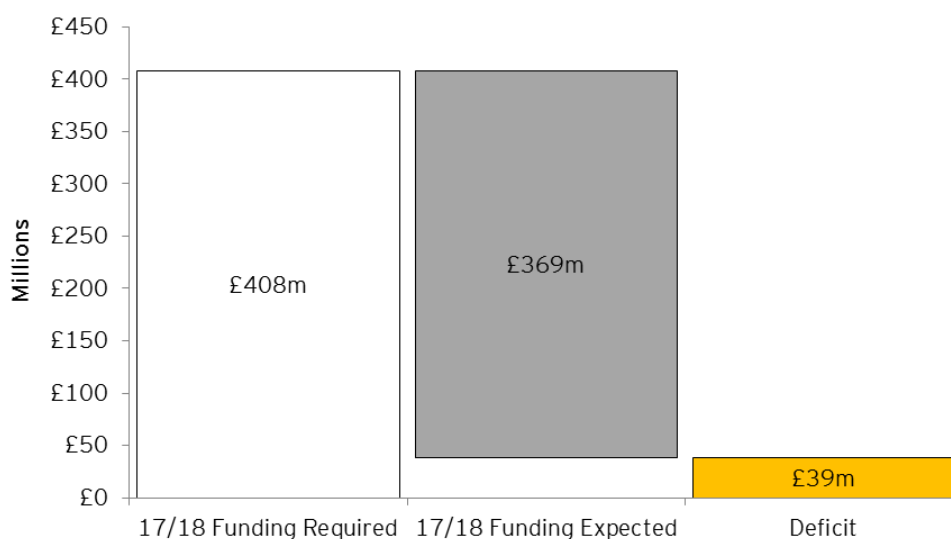
Based upon data from the DCLG, Buckinghamshire County Council received £339m from its main sources of funding in 2013/14. It is estimated that demand for services may grow by an annualised rate of 1.9% which is in line with figures published in the latest JSNA for Buckinghamshire and equates to a £34m increase over the next four years. To maintain current levels of service, it is therefore estimated that funding may need to increase by £69m over the next four years.



#### Funding expected

Based upon the DCLG data, Buckinghamshire County Council should receive £354m from its main sources of funding in 2015/16 and, upon applying an average yearly increase, this should rise to

£369m by 2017/18. This may leave a £39m funding deficit, which Buckinghamshire County Council will have to meet by either reducing expenditure or increasing income.

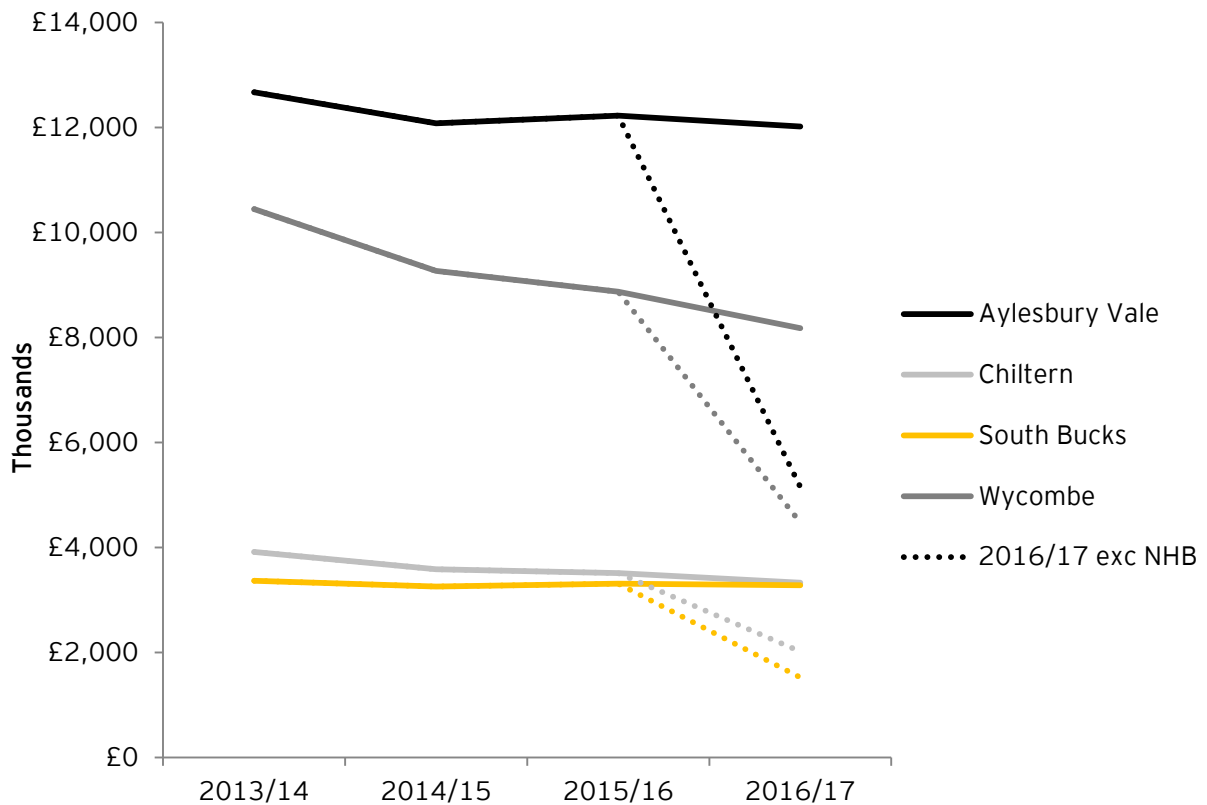


### 3.2.2. Funding projections for the District Councils

Based on published data available from the DCLG, the following funding projections illustrate the level of financial pressure that the District Councils may face over the next four years. The table below shows the decrease in the settlement funding assessment (SFA) that is anticipated for the District Councils. The funding for 13/14, 14/15 and 15/16 is based on published data, and 16/17 is based on the average funding reduction across the Districts from the previous three years.

	Total Settlement			
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Aylesbury Vale	£12.7m	£12.1m	£12.2m	£12.0m
Chiltern	£3.9m	£3.6m	£3.5m	£3.3m
South Bucks	£3.4m	£3.3m	£3.3m	£3.3m
Wycombe	£10.4m	£9.3m	£8.9m	£8.2m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£30.4m</b>	<b>£28.3m</b>	<b>£27.9m</b>	<b>£26.8m</b>
<b>NHB as a % of Total Settlement Funding</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>51%</b>

The New Homes Bonus (NHB) forms a significant percentage of the settlement funding as illustrated in the table above. The graph below illustrates the significant risk should NHB be removed or reduced from 2016/17 and in particular the risk for Aylesbury Vale who receive over half their settlement funding in the form of NHB. It is understood that the future of the NHB is not assured, and is due to be reviewed later this year. Furthermore, it is anticipated that were it to continue, it is likely to be reviewed following the next election. With this in mind, it may be prudent to model the potential impact of this income being lost.



The potential to come together into one or more single Unitary Councils to replace the existing two-tier arrangements could enable the following:

- Plan the reduction of back office costs in a manner that could protect service delivery and enable increasing financial pressures to be tackled more effectively;
- Drive the growth potential of the County by taking a Unitary approach to Buckinghamshire and its regional partners, providing a more comprehensive offer to the investor market and better co-ordinating growth critical services such as economic planning, skills and development control;
- Clarify alignment between services and the outcomes across the County increasing the positive impact for service users; and
- Renew focus on individual localities by streamlining the relationship between County and individual settlements

### 3.3. Increasing value for money

A new Unitary Council in Buckinghamshire could reduce the revenue cost of local government in Buckinghamshire by up to £20.7m per annum once implemented.

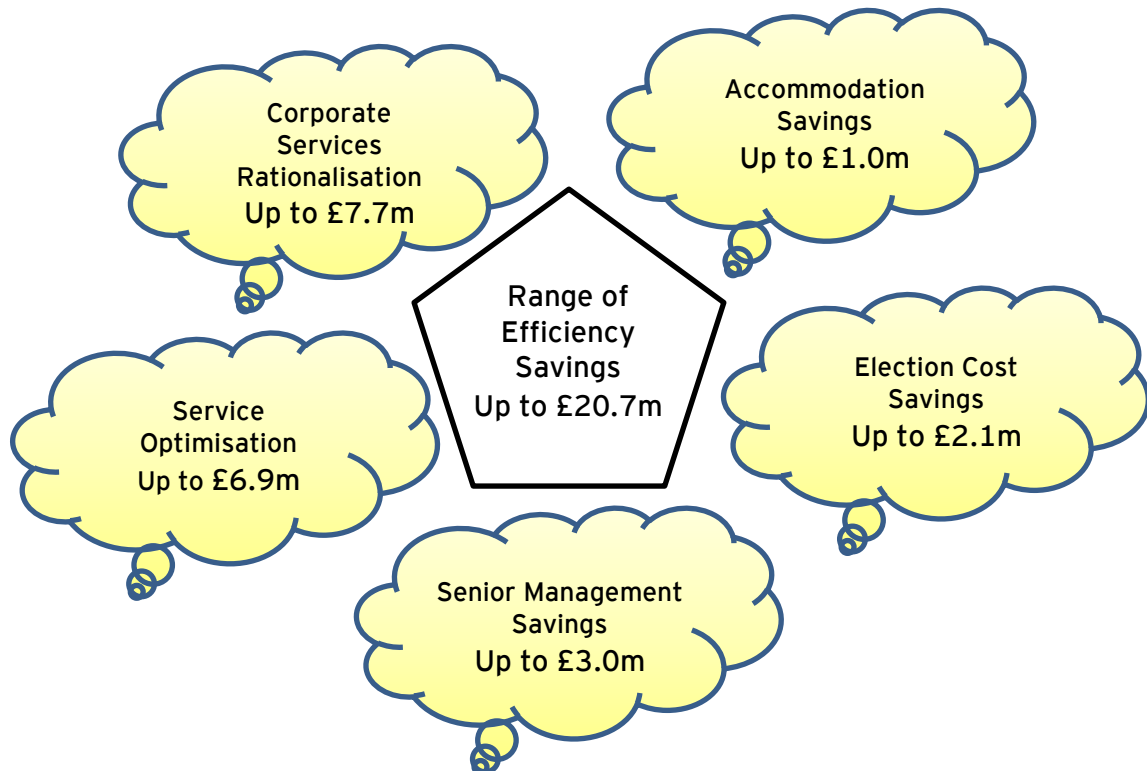
#### 3.3.1. Efficiencies

Reflecting on the financial challenges set out in the previous section, there is a pressing case for Councils to make urgent but sustainable savings in the way they operate. The reorganisation of local government in Buckinghamshire could offer opportunities to reduce costs, increase the effectiveness of service delivery and improve service user satisfaction.

A summary of potential efficiencies is set out in the table below:

CATEGORY	SCOPE FOR EFFICIENCY
<b>Management Costs:</b> Reducing the cost of senior management across the County	There are currently 4 Chief Executives, 11 Directors and 34 Heads of Service across the County
<b>Assets and Resources:</b> Reducing the cost of ICT	ICT is currently managed independently by each Council
Reducing the cost of Accommodation	Each Council currently maintains its own portfolio of buildings
Reducing the cost of back office services such as HR, Communications	Each Council currently has to bear the costs of being 'in business'
<b>Democracy:</b> Reducing the number of elected Councillors and streamlining the election cycle	There are currently 248 elected Members in total across the two-tiers with different election cycles for County and District Councillors.
<b>Value of Services:</b> Reducing the cost of middle management	Each service needs to be managed, but each Council has its own services with its own managers.
Renegotiating and cutting the cost of contracts	Negotiating bigger contracts generally gives better bargaining power
Reducing the cost of delivery	Combining services needs less management

Each of these categories has been analysed to explore the potential to create reductions in cost while enhancing levels of service delivery. We have modelled a series of financial assumptions which underpin this analysis and can be seen in the next section. The savings in the diagram below relate to the option with the potential to provide the greatest financial savings (option 1 - one Unitary Council). The potential financial savings for all options are set out in section 4.



Potential efficiency savings for the one Unitary Council option

### 3.3.2. Harmonisation of council tax

There is currently significant variation in Council tax levels across the County. A new Unitary Council would need to harmonise Council tax levels so that each household across the County pays the same level of tax. There are a number of ways this could be done depending upon the Council tax level that the new Unitary Council would set.

For example, by harmonising Council tax at the lowest level currently paid in the County (£1,221), Buckinghamshire residents could benefit from a £2.8m share of the potential £20.7m that has been identified as potential savings from reorganisation. This would need to be implemented in phases, alongside the realisation of savings through the identified efficiency savings.

In this instance, the overall average for band D properties would reduce by 1% which equates to an average saving of £13 per year on a Council tax bill. Again, based on the lowest Council tax level, some 147,000 households would find themselves better off because of reduced Council tax, with just under 70,000 (Wycombe) seeing no change as they currently pay the lowest in the County. The table below illustrates the current District and County Council Tax Charges for an average Band D property and sets out these potential changes.

	Aylesbury Vale	Chiltern	South Bucks	Wycombe	County Average
District	£137	£163	£143	£127	£142
County	£1,094	£1,094	£1,094	£1,094	£1,094
Combined Fire	£59	£59	£59	£59	£59
Police & Crime	£163	£163	£163	£163	£163
Parish Council and Other	£40	£57	£50	£37	£46
<b>Total Band D</b>	<b>£1,493</b>	<b>£1,535</b>	<b>£1,509</b>	<b>£1,480</b>	<b>£1,504</b>
<b>Band D District + County</b>	<b>£1,231</b>	<b>£1,256</b>	<b>£1,237</b>	<b>£1,221</b>	<b>£1,234</b>
<b>Proposed Unitary Council Tax Charge</b>	<b>£1,221</b>	<b>£1,221</b>	<b>£1,221</b>	<b>£1,221</b>	<b>£1,221</b>
<b>Savings per Annum (£)</b>	<b>-£10</b>	<b>-£36</b>	<b>-£16</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>-£13</b>
<b>Savings per Annum (%)</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>	<b>-2.8%</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

For completeness, the following table also sets out figures for harmonised Council tax being set at the highest and at a County average as well as the lowest.

	Aylesbury Vale	Chiltern	South Bucks	Wycombe	County Average
<b>Lowest Charge</b>	£1,221	£1,221	£1,221	£1,221	£1,221
<b>Savings per Annum (£)</b>	-£10	-£36	-£16	£0	-£13
<b>Savings per Annum (%)</b>	-0.8%	-2.8%	-1.3%	0.0%	1.0%
<b>Average Charge</b>	£1,234	£1,234	£1,234	£1,234	£1,234
<b>Savings per Annum (£)</b>	£3	-£23	-£3	£13	£0
<b>Savings per Annum (%)</b>	0.3%	-1.8%	-0.3%	1.1%	0.0%
<b>Highest Charge</b>	£1,256	£1,256	£1,256	£1,256	£1,256
<b>Savings per Annum (£)</b>	£26	£0	£19	£36	£23
<b>Savings per Annum (%)</b>	2.1%	0.0%	1.5%	2.9%	1.8%

Of course, based on the assumed savings set out in the financial case, council tax levels could be set at a lower level than the current lowest level in the county (Wycombe DC), then 100% of houses would benefit from reduced levels of council tax. This would be a decision for the newly constituted council and would depend on the quantum of savings achieved.

### 3.4. Locality focus

Local government reorganisation is not simply about financial efficiency, it also presents a genuine opportunity to simplify and streamline services which in effect removes some of the barriers which can exist between elected Members, service professionals and service users. It can also present an opportunity to reset services in line with outcomes which balance the relevance of services with the resources available to commission them.

There are three potential levers which could improve locality focus and these are discussed below:

- Eliminating municipal boundaries
- Streamlining delivery
- Enhancing democratic accountability

#### 3.4.1. Eliminating municipal boundaries

The creation of Unitary local government could simplify boundaries which exist across the County. This enables services to be delivered more effectively to whole communities without the need for multiple organisations, and therefore multiple bureaucracies, to become involved in delivery. On this basis, services can be better targeted, they can be planned in a more efficient manner and can be better aligned with resources.

#### 3.4.2. Streamlining delivery

It is not just communities which suffer from the imposition of boundaries. The creation of Unitary local government could also reduce the number and simplify the role of delivery partners, removing the administrative and managerial confusion, or even territorialism, which can exist with a large number of organisations working in a relatively small geographical space. The opportunity



to reshape services around clear outcomes allows the integration of management and financial resources around service users rather than historical organisational hierarchies. It could also assist with the integration of multi-agency working, for example with health service providers, community safety partners and economic development units who currently have to deal with five different Councils in addition to other stakeholders. There is also an opportunity to pool resources, eliminating direct and indirect costs which exist in service delivery while enhancing levels of service.

### **3.4.3. Enhancing democratic accountability**

Currently there are two tiers of democratically elected Members in Buckinghamshire with County and District Members being accountable for different services across the same geographical area. This can create confusion for the public when wishing to contact their elected representative about a particular local issue. For a one Unitary, two Unitary or out of County Unitary option, unification could simplify this as there would be only one tier of elected Members accountable for all services across all communities. In this way, the link between County through to smaller parish communities could be greatly enhanced, as consultative structures could be created around natural communities and communities of interest. This democratic streamlining would potentially provide a huge boost to localism as it would greatly enhance the role and standing of parish and town councils and enable the unitary body to engage much more clearly and directly with them. Consideration could also be made to using some of the savings realised to create a capacity building fund, to support the growth of a much stronger network of community focused councils than currently exists. However, the one Council and one District option presents a significant challenge in this regard. Administratively, the creation of a two organisations with different responsibilities but with a co-terminus geographical scope is possible and from an efficiency perspective, it is the second strongest option behind a single Unitary. Democratic accountability is a different matter as this option requires the creation of two Councils covering the same area, one for County services and one for District. The potential for general confusion with this model is considerable, potentially much more so than exists presently.

## **3.5. Strategic impact**

There are many factors which must combine to enhance the economic competitiveness and growth of an area. Some of these are global factors such as investment decisions made by international capital markets; some are influenced at national level, for example taxation and national infrastructure. However, many of these factors are greatly influenced at local level such as available skills, transport infrastructure, housing, the quality of the built environment and leisure and recreational activities. In addition to this there are more intangible factors such as cultural identity, social makeup of areas and local pride. This is brought into sharp focus with the division between County and District functions in Buckinghamshire when considering economic competitiveness and growth. For example, across the County there is currently:

- No single planning Authority (overseeing new development);
- No single housing strategy (managing provision of social housing in addition to general supply and demand); and
- No strategic planning function for the entire County (co-ordinating policy and exploiting opportunities).

In addition, the link between the general health of the public and a range of both social and economic factors is well understood. Responsibility for public health is now a County wide function, managed by the County Council since April 2013. Once again, the ability to plan coherently and County wide could enhance the opportunity to influence and improve a range of health outcomes and link them directly to services such as housing, transport and economic development.

### 3.6. Fit for the future

#### 3.6.1. Building resilience through Unitary status

Councils of all types have had to make cuts to their budgets in recent years as a result of reductions to local government funding and this trend is widely expected to continue for several more years to come. On top of this, demand for services is almost certain to rise as an effect of an ageing population and several other factors. Given the challenges facing local government, it is a prudent question to ask as to whether different structures of local government, in particular two-tier and Unitary, are better or worse set up to deal with these future challenges.

A summary of potential advantages from becoming one or more Unitary Councils over remaining as two-tier organisations is set out in the table below:

Category	Potential Advantage
<b>Talent</b>	A new Unitary Authority may be able to retain the highest calibre staff from the existing Councils to provide a talented and high performing management team who are best positioned to develop solutions to future financial challenges. Additionally, teams could share skills and knowledge from a broader range of experiences and contexts.
<b>Governance</b>	A two-tier model introduces the potential for conflicts between District and County Councils, which is particularly problematic when reducing budgets. One or more Unitary Authorities could help to streamline decision making and enhance political accountability.
<b>Resilience</b>	One or more new Unitary Authorities could implement the best practises from within each of the County and District Councils, which could help to shape a resilient corporate core to support the Council.
<b>Lean Infrastructure</b>	One or more Unitary Authorities should have a leaner infrastructure and no need for time consuming discussion and negotiation between the two-tier bodies. This could increase accountability, and streamline service delivery and decision making.

Quantitative evidence highlighting how Unitary Authorities are better able to deal with challenging savings targets is evidenced in a 2011 report produced by Deloitte 'Sizing up; Local Government Mergers and Service Integration'. This report sought to compare savings for those Councils which had transferred to Unitary status in 2009 with those remaining as two-tier. Using published data from DCLG and covering a 24 month period, there was an overall savings total of 13.4% on services (within the scope of the analysis) for the new Unitary Authorities compared to an increase of 2.1% for those remaining as two-tier.

#### 3.6.2. The experience of other authorities from 2009 Unitary changes

Generally, local authorities that have moved to a Unitary structure have delivered the financial savings they set out to deliver. Set out below are some of the summary financial outcomes from the 2009 Unitary changes.

Unitary	Projected Saving	Estimated Saving Delivered*
Cornwall	£17m per year	£25m per year
Northumberland	£17m per year (£51m over three years)	£85m over three years
Durham	£22m per year (£66m over three years)	£130m over three years
Shropshire	£20m per year	£20m per year

\*Information for estimated savings delivered is not readily available and in some cases the numbers include general efficiency savings which are not possible to separate from reorganisation savings. Figures have been sourced from either interviews with key stakeholders or other publicly available reports/analysis.

Key officers of other Unitary Authorities have been interviewed to understand their experiences during design, implementation and integration of the Unitary Council in the build up to 2009. The interviews identified a number of common themes that emerged during transition.

### Benefits realisation

The following areas delivered savings:

- Back office rationalisation;
- Staff reduction through management streamlining;
- Reduction in democratic costs;
- Consolidation of IT and accommodation;
- Procurement and contract management;
- The creation of a single senior management team; and
- The merging of a number of other professions across the county.

### Key challenges

The following key challenges were observed:

- A perception of a democratic deficit at local level. One Council introduced area action partnerships and strengthened the role of the Parish Council. Another of the Councils felt that they needed a localist agenda which was achieved through town and parish councils. Also the same council introduced a system of area committees initially which were later disbanded as they were deemed unnecessary;
- Agreeing an approach to harmonisation of pay and conditions;
- There was a concern that local access to services may reduce if the District offices providing local services were rationalised. In one Authority there was a focus on retaining physical presence in key towns and not pulling back into one location. There is a delicate balance of pulling some areas into the centre and devolving some to local level;
- Convergence of services; and
- Prior to merger, not all the councils were supportive of the move to Unitary local government and, in some cases, actively resisted the change.

### 3.6.3. Authorities that had Unitary status rejected

The last round of local government reorganisation resulted in the creation of nine new Unitary Councils. Prior to the constitution of these new authorities, no less than 26 proposals were received by the Secretary of State for consideration, these being a mixture of new District Unitary Councils and a mix of single and multiple County Unitary Councils. Of these, three of the proposals related to single County Unitary Councils, these being Somerset, Cumbria and North Yorkshire.

The reasons for these Councils not proceeding to Unitary status were varied and for the most part complex - they were all subject to political debate at both a local and national level. Analysis of the debate indicates that negative factors such as geographical and population sizes were pitted against the positive notions of streamlining and efficiency savings. Indeed, these are in effect the two central but opposing variables of any Unitary case and are also likely to be central to the political debate which surrounds it.

## 3.7. Conclusion

The case for change in Buckinghamshire is compelling, particularly when considered within the context of the severe financial and demand pressures being faced by the County. While the one Unitary option scores highest on each of the critical success factors established at the beginning of this process, there are advantages associated with the other models, particularly with regard to elected Member representation.

To reiterate, the potential benefits of moving to Unitary status are:

- A reduction in year on year expenditure through a range of efficiency savings which protect and enhance front-line service delivery of up to £20.7m;
- The opportunity to harmonise Council tax, potentially reducing Council tax by an overall figure of £2.8m per year;
- Create a much stronger focus on localities, stripping away a layer of municipal bureaucracy by eliminating the current two-tiers;
- Enable a much greater level of co-ordination and strategic planning across the County for services which are currently split between two tiers; and
- To be fit for purpose in dealing with the forthcoming challenges facing local government.

Unitary local government could provide the opportunity for significant efficiencies which can then be reinvested in services which are subject to on-going pressure from either financial or demand pressures.

## 4. Financial case and options appraisal

### 4.1. Introduction and summary

The summary of the analysis illustrates that Unitary Local Government in Buckinghamshire could significantly mitigate growing pressure on frontline service budgets. Each of the four options assessed aims to reduce the cost of maintaining five independent government organisations each with their own management teams, infrastructure and bureaucracy. Furthermore, all of these options provide the opportunity to direct more funding into frontline services.

Summarised in the table below are the ranges for savings targets, implementation costs, payback period and FTE reduction for each option. These ranges reflect the lower and upper estimates of what could be achieved for each option.

Option	Lower to upper ranges				
	Saving	Reduction to addressable spend (exc. Care and Education)	Implementation	Payback period	FTE reduction
One Unitary	£15.7m - £20.7m	10.6% - 14.0%	£10.7m - £11.6m	1.5 - 1.8 years	236 -271
Two Unitaries	£6.6m - £11.1m	4.5% - 7.5%	£9.4m - £10.0m	2.3 - 3.0 years	116 - 134
One County and One District	£9.6m - £12.8m	6.5% - 8.6%	£10.2m - £11.2m	2.0 - 2.3 years	153 - 182
Out of County Unitaries	£6.6m - £11.1m	4.5% - 7.5%	£13.1m - £13.4m	2.7 - 3.3 years	116 - 134

The largest potential annual savings figure of up to £20.7m (for the one Unitary option) comprises the following savings areas:

- £3.0m in senior management savings;
- £2.1m in having fewer Members and running fewer Elections;
- £1.0m in accommodation savings;
- £7.7m in corporate service rationalisation; and
- £6.9m in service optimisation.

This annual saving of up to £20.7m represents 4.3% of total net expenditure of £483.8m across all services within the five Councils. Notably, to protect the integrity of Care and Education services, which are uniquely provided by the County Council, expenditure for these services were not included in the addressable spend figures in the savings quantification. Therefore, the savings actually represent up to 14.0% of the addressable net expenditure of £148.5m.

The cost of implementing the proposed changes is estimated to be £9.4m - £13.4m, depending on the option selected, and largely relates to FTE reduction. Based on implementation of a one

Unitary Council, the process of optimal integration has been forecast to take three to four years, as follows:

- Year 1: Senior Management & Democratic change;
- Year 2 & 3: Service & middle management restructuring, redesign of support services / infrastructure & rationalisation of assets; and
- Year 4: Full service integration and contract harmonisation.

This high level integration plan is applicable to all the options and dictates the timeline for realisation of savings and implementation costs. Given this plan, the payback period across the range of options has been modelled between one and four years post implementation.

Overall a Unitary Council merger could generate a net cumulative saving of up to **£58.3m across five years**, which can be used to protect frontline services for Buckinghamshire residents.

It is notable that, splitting Buckinghamshire into two Unitary Councils could reduce the saving by £9.6m per annum (amounting to a 46% reduction in financial benefit). Furthermore, it is likely that a two Council model may cost significantly more to implement (as a percentage of total savings). In particular, approximately 50% of the current County Council's staff may need to be accommodated elsewhere in the County, with the potential need for a new HQ if existing convenient accommodation could not be found.

In subsequent sections there is a detailed breakdown of the analysis and assumptions that sit behind savings quantification and implementation costs.

## 4.2. Financial case components

The following section sets out the components of the financial case, the data used, assumptions applied and indicative stable annual saving from the option that provides the largest financial saving (i.e. One Unitary). Section 4.3 sets out a sensitivity analysis showing how the two Unitary, one County and one District, and out of County Unitary options measure against the one Unitary option across the components of the financial case.

### 4.2.1. Senior management savings

Data used to estimate savings includes:

- Actual roles sourced from published data including County and District organisational charts; and
- Salaries sourced from published financial statements.

Type of saving	Description	Rationale/Assumptions	Indicative annual value
Senior management	Reduction in senior posts	Assumption that the new Council will need a single Chief Executive (reduction of 3 FTE)	£2.4m-£3.0m
		Assumption that the new Council will need 4-5 Directors (reduction of 6-7 FTE)	
		Assumption that the new Council will require 14-18 Heads of Service (reduction of 16-20 FTE)	
	Additional unquantified benefits and potential savings opportunities		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bringing together diverse expert management resource to help devise and implement tactical decisions and policy initiatives</li> <li>Retention of the best leadership talent</li> </ul>		

#### 4.2.2. Election savings

Data used to estimate savings includes:

- Actual Member numbers and allowances (including basic allowance, special responsibility allowances and travel and subsistence) sourced from County and District websites; and
- An average unit cost per Member per election estimated from information published by Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils.

Type of saving	Description	Rationale/Assumptions	Indicative annual value
Democratic costs	Reduction in Members	Assumed that the number of Members for the new Unitary Authority would be 50-90 (rationale is outlined in appendix A). This would see a reduction of 158-198 Members. Cost savings relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic allowance</li> <li>Special Responsibilities</li> <li>Travel and Subsistence</li> </ul>	£0.6m-£1.3m
	Reduced election costs	Unit cost applied to reduction in number of Members. This saving relates to every election event and cannot be spread per annum	£0.6m-£0.8m (every 4 years)
	Additional unquantified benefits and potential savings opportunities		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlined political accountability and clarity within a single-tier system</li> <li>Reduced bureaucracy and perceived uncertainty around the roles and responsibilities of Members</li> </ul>		

#### 4.2.3. Accommodation savings

The baseline for the data was established using the following sources:

- Unit cost of workspaces in High Wycombe from the Total Office Cost Survey (TOCS) 2010.

Type of saving	Description	Rationale/Assumptions	Indicative annual value
Accommodation	Reduction in office space required	There are a number of options for assessing the potential accommodation savings. For the purposes of this strategic case a saving figure has been estimated based on a reduction in workspaces required as a result of estimated total FTE reduction (this equates to a reduction of 236-271 workspaces).	£0.8 m- £1.0m
	Additional unquantified benefits and potential savings opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of fit for purpose properties</li> <li>Enhanced opportunity for departmental integration through co-location</li> <li>Encourage the locality and community based reconfiguration of services</li> </ul>		

#### 4.2.4. Corporate service rationalisation

The baseline for the data was established using the following sources:

- ICT spend as a percentage of total service expenditure sourced from SOCITM data and corroborated by evaluating ICT service spend in other Unitary Authorities;
- A baseline total FTE in Districts was established from gathering data in 2013/14 budget books, where available. An estimate of the split of FTE across support service areas was profiled using data from Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils and extrapolated to Aylesbury Vale District Council;
- The overall FTE split for management versus staff in the District and County were calculated by observing actual organisational structures in Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils. This was assumed to be generally representative to Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council. We obtained pay grades across all Councils and assumed grades of £40,000 and above represented management salary; and
- Pay grades for all Councils were obtained.



Type of saving	Description	Rationale/Assumptions	Indicative annual value
ICT	Rationalisation of resources	<p>Assumed baseline non-pay spend on ICT in County and Districts represents 1% of total service expenditure, which is in line with 2010 SOCITM benchmarking survey. ICT savings (excluding staff) therefore represent 1% of current and revised service expenditure after potential efficiencies from other areas were removed.</p> <p>Achieved for example through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidation of applications</li> <li>• Consolidation of help desk</li> <li>• Rationalisation of infrastructure</li> <li>• Purchasing power with suppliers</li> </ul>	£0.1m -£0.2m
	<p>Additional unquantified benefits and potential savings opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to attract and retain high calibre ICT professionals to support frontline service innovation and transformation</li> <li>• Ensuring hardware, applications and infrastructure are fit-for-purpose</li> <li>• Selective retention of ICT that optimises service delivery</li> </ul>		

Type of saving	Description	Rationale/Assumptions	Indicative annual value
Corporate services (including HR/ICT/Legal/Democracy)	Reduction in Middle Management	Assumption that number of managers needed would be equal to current County managers plus 10%-20% of District managers (Reduction of 35-39 FTE)	£2.0m-£2.2m
	Reduction in FTE	Assumption that the number of staff required would be equal to current County staff plus 10%-20% of District staff (Reduction of 153-172 FTE)	£4.8m-£5.3m
	<p>Additional unquantified benefits and potential savings opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to integrate the best talent and optimise the quality of internal support services</li> <li>• A resilient corporate core that shares a unified view of how best to support the Council</li> <li>• Improved streamlined decision making through implementation of robust corporate governance structures</li> </ul>		

## 4.2.5. Service optimisation

The baseline for the data was established using the following sources:

- A baseline total FTE in Districts was established from gathering data in 2013/14 budget books, where available. An estimate of the split of FTE across support service areas was profiled using data from Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils and extrapolated to Aylesbury Vale District Council;
- The overall FTE split for management versus staff in the District and County were calculated by observing actual organisational structures in Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils. This was assumed to be generally representative to Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council;
- Pay grades across all Councils were obtained.

Type of saving	Description	Rationale/Assumptions	Indicative annual value
Management duplication	Reduction in FTE	Assumption that management roles sit in salary grades earning £40,000 and above. This equates to 18% of total FTE (excluding senior management posts) in managerial and senior professional roles based upon available published role profiles. The number of managers needed would be equal to current County managers plus 60%-70% of District managers (reduction of 23-30 FTE).	£1.3m-£1.8m
	Additional unquantified benefits and potential savings opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign the overall structure and management roles to reflect the needs, values and target culture of the new organisation</li> <li>• To attract and retain high performing talent across key services, supporting innovation and change</li> <li>• Facilitation of knowledge and skills sharing from a broader range of experiences and contexts</li> </ul>		

Type of saving	Description	Rationale/Assumptions	Indicative annual value
Non-pay service delivery Costs	Front line service optimisation	Assumption that there will be a saving of 3-5% of total frontline service expenditure due to economies of scale and service optimisation. It is assumed that no savings would be made from Care and Education services. Appendix B sets out some general examples of how these efficiencies could be achieved.	£3.1m-£5.1m
	Additional unquantified benefits and potential savings opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to move towards outcomes based service delivery</li> <li>• Consolidated and strengthened business relationships with external providers</li> </ul>		

## 4.2.6. Implementation costs

Implementation costs relate to the investment required for the creation of one or more Unitary Councils. The non-recurrent costs detailed below are for the implementation of the One Unitary option but apply to all other options. These have been developed on the basis of the following assumptions and include:

- The cost of FTE reduction is based on removing 25 - 30 of the most senior posts at an average cost of £50k, and the remaining 211 - 241 posts at an average cost of £16k. This assumption is in line with published data and averages across the public sector from the "CIPD/KPMG 2008 LMO Survey";
- The approach and cost estimates for the implementation project team, Member induction, corporate communications, branding and professional services are largely based on the experience of other Authorities;
- The ICT costs are based on the integration and replacement of core service systems (e.g., housing, planning, local taxation, regulatory services);
- The implementation team costs reflect the costs to employ 25 FTE at an average salary of £38k; and
- Additional transition contingency funds of £2m been built in to the 3 year delivery timescale to reflect the experience of other authorities from 2009 local government re-organisation.

Investment area	Overall	YR 0	YR 1	YR 2
Planning and prelaunch	£0.5m	£0.5m		
IT costs and new system training	£2.0m	£1.0	£1.0m	
FTE reduction	£5.0m	£1.3m	£1.5m	£2.2m
Implementation programme team	£1.0m	£0.5m	£0.3m	£0.2m
Professional services	£0.5m	£0.2	£0.2m	£0.1m
Corporate comms and branding	£0.3m	£0.1m	£0.1m	<£0.1m
Staff induction	£0.1m	£0.1m		
Member induction	£0.2m	£0.2m		
Transition contingency	£2.0m	£1.0m	£0.6m	£0.4m

## 4.3. Sensitivity analysis of options

### 4.3.1. Introduction and approach

There are a number of different Unitary options that could be considered. This report has considered the following four options:





- One Unitary;
- Two Unitaries;
- One County and one District; and
- Out of County Unitaries.

A sensitivity analysis of the options considered in this report has been carried out based on assessment of the following areas:

- **Potential Savings** - to understand the impact of each Unitary option on overall savings targets;
- **Impact for service users** - to capture the positive and negatives aspects of how District and County services could change from the perspective of the service user and the level of disruption they may experience;
- **Practicality** - to understand feasibility of shared working across services and restructuring political landscape; and
- **Implementation** - to provide an overview of the relative costs and challenges to implement.

Ratings (red/amber/green) have also been applied to each of the assessment areas for each of the options as follows:

- **Red** - provides a poor result relative to other options;
- **Amber** - provides a satisfactory result relative to other options; and
- **Green** - provides the best result of all of the options.

Assessment area	Rating	Comments
Potential Savings		NARRATIVE
Impact for service users		NARRATIVE
Practicality		NARRATIVE
Implementation		NARRATIVE

Underneath each table is a quantification of how each option performs within distinct areas of the financial case. Detail has been provided to indicate whether performance sits in the upper (▲), middle (▶) or lower (▼) range of the following:

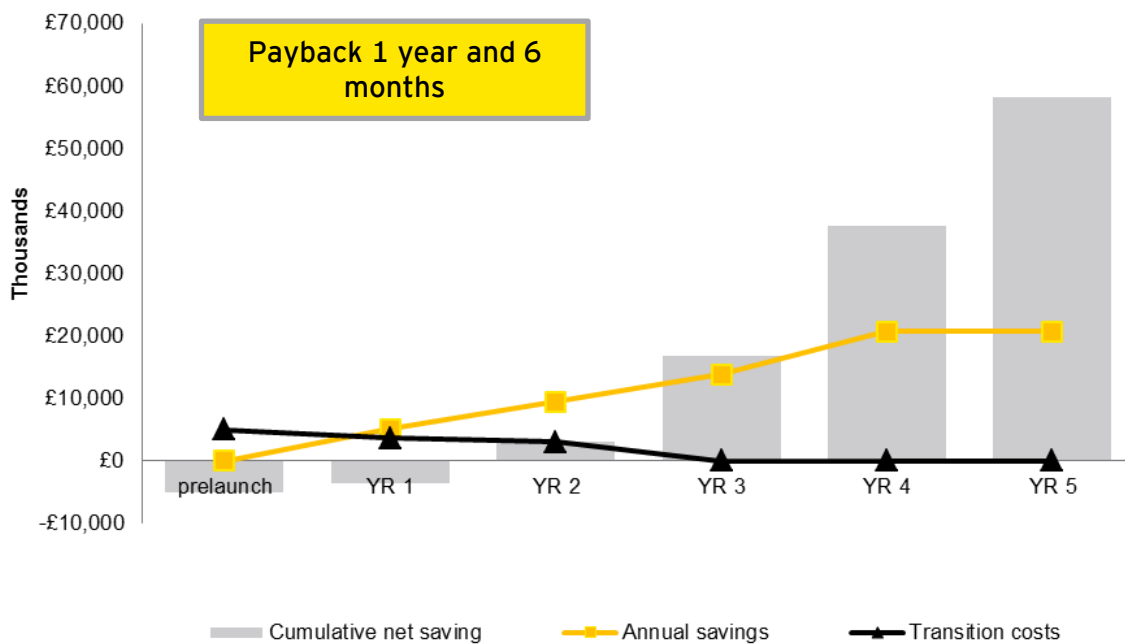
- ▶ Savings from senior management;
- ▶ Savings from elections;
- ▶ Savings from accommodation;
- ▶ Savings from corporate service rationalisation;
- ▶ Savings from service optimisation; and
- ▶ The % of annual savings in non-recurrent implementation costs and related payback period.

### 4.3.2. One Unitary Council - option appraisal

Assessment area	Rating	Comments
Savings	G	This option has the potential to deliver the greatest amount of financial savings at up to £20.7m.
Impact for service users	G	Potential improvements via streamlining services, removing duplication, reducing bureaucracy and optimising delivery.  Service users could benefit from continuity in the delivery of care, education and community services.  However, suggested levels of political representation are lower under one Unitary than for other options.
Practicality	G	There is likely to be limited requirement for service redesign and this option provides intuitive restructuring of democratic landscape.  A single Unitary structure supports transfer of skills, capabilities, knowledge and best practice through shared working arrangements.
Implementation	G	As this option involves the greatest reduction in FTE, implementation costs are higher - however, this still represents the fastest payback period across all the options.  Implementation is likely to be challenging, but this has been successfully done elsewhere and there are ample opportunities to learn from others in this respect.

Potential overall savings target range for this option is **£15.7m - £20.7m**, this breaks down as follows:

- ▲ **£2.4m - £3.0m** savings from senior management;
- ▲ **£1.2m - £2.1m** savings from elections;
- ▲ **£0.8m - £1.0m** savings from accommodation;
- ▲ **£6.9m - £7.7m** savings from corporate service rationalisation;
- ▲ **£4.4m - £6.9m** savings from service optimisation; and
- ▲ Non-recurrent Implementation costs of **£10.7m - £11.6m** result in a payback period of 1 year and 6 months. The graph below represents the payback period for this option given the upper range of savings and implementation costs across the proposed high level implementation timeline.



**One Unitary Council option - What does this mean?**

The one Unitary option offers the highest potential level of financial savings. This is because the formation of a single Unitary offers the greatest scope to reduce duplication in areas such as management, property and service optimisation.

As most of the services currently in the County are likely to remain unaffected, impact on services under this option should be minimal. Although existing District services will need to be reshaped, any potential disruption could be mitigated by the fact services will be combined rather than fundamentally redesigned.

In terms of practicality, the one Unitary option fares well based on the potential relative simplicity of creating a single organisation. Staff, Councillors and service users may experience less disruption during the transition and other potentially costly elements such as branding, signage and stationary should be relatively unaffected.

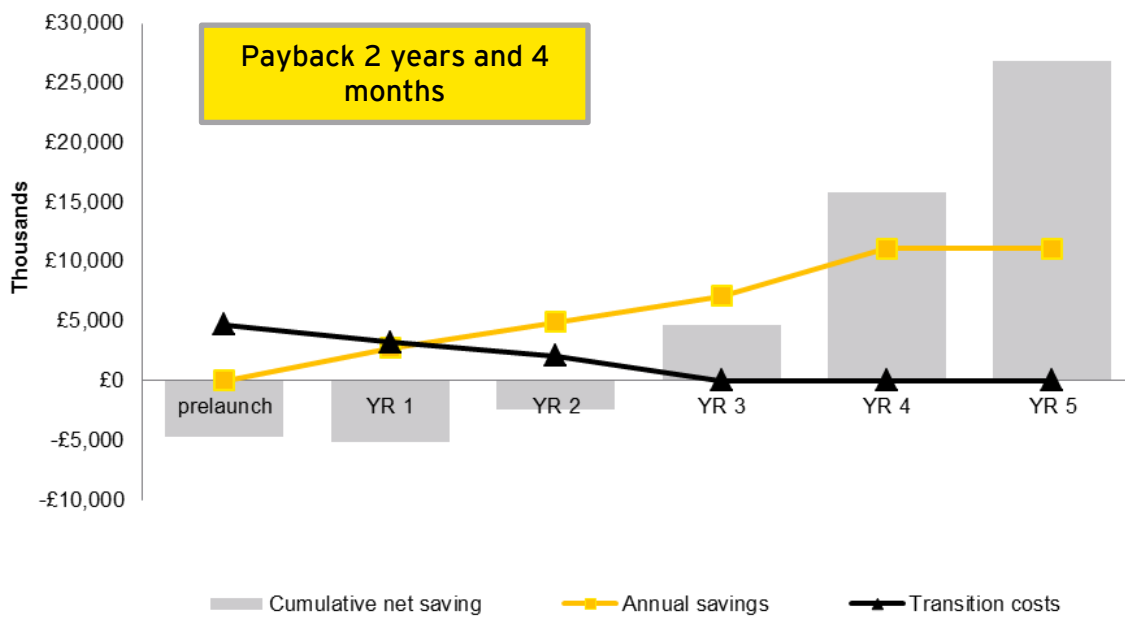
Finally, given the scale of restructuring associated with this option, implementation does not come without its challenges. Fortunately, there is much previous learning from other Authorities that have become Unitary to support and guide the Council around in this regard. Moreover, application of a single existing organisational infrastructure should also help to ease the process.

### 4.3.3. Two Unitary Councils - option appraisal

Assessment area	Rating	Comments
Savings	A	Savings are significantly lower than the one Unitary Council option. This is driven by the extra costs of an additional senior management team, required duplication of corporate services and service managers across the two Councils, and reductions in service delivery efficiencies due to decreased potential economies of scale.
Impact for service users	A	<p>There is still scope for potential improvements via streamlining services, removing duplication, reducing bureaucracy and optimising delivery but on a smaller scale to a single Unitary.</p> <p>The two Unitary option requires the merger of District Councils and further disruption by splitting the current County Council's functions in two. As such, service users with care needs will fall under the remit of an entirely new Council.</p> <p>Suggested levels of political representation are higher than for a single Unitary, and the creation of two Councils may offer a greater locality focus.</p>
Practicality	A	<p>Shared delivery of services will need to be redesigned around new agreed Council boundaries.</p> <p>As this option requires additional political representation it may be more straightforward to restructure the democratic landscape.</p> <p>Forming two unitaries could reduce the scope to transfer capabilities, knowledge and best practice via shared working arrangements.</p>
Implementation	A	<p>Due to considerable reductions to savings, overall implementation costs represent a higher percentage of annual savings.</p> <p>Disaggregating the existing County Council structure is likely to introduce additional complications, as well as time and cost pressures. Notably, however, a two Unitary option has also been implemented successfully in other Counties.</p>

Potential overall savings target range for this option is **£6.6 - £11.1m**. Main financial considerations for this option include:

- ▼ **£0.5m - £0.8m** savings from senior management;
- ▶ **£0.6m - £1.9m** savings from elections;
- ▼ **£0.4m - £0.5m** savings from accommodation;
- ▼ **£3.4m - £3.9m** savings from corporate service rationalisation;
- ▶ **£1.7m - £4.0m** savings from service optimisation; and
- ▶ Non-recurrent Implementation costs of **£9.4m - £10.0m** result in a payback period of 2 years and 4 months. The graph below represents the payback period for this option given the upper range of savings and implementation costs across the proposed high level implementation timeline.



**Two Unitary Councils option - What does this mean?**

This option proposes the creation of two new Unitary Councils in Buckinghamshire. It is important to see this option in terms of the creation of two new organisations rather than a split in existing provision. Notwithstanding these challenges, it is worth reflecting that sub County Unitary Councils were created with relative success in Bedfordshire and Cheshire in 2009, so these challenges are by no means insurmountable.

While overall savings are still likely to be considerable, a two Unitary option is likely to produce a lower level of savings than the one Unitary option. These savings largely fall out of the requirement for two managerial administrations, greater number of elected Members and duplication across corporate services.

Although the benefits of streamlining services also apply to this option, the creation of two new County level organisations carries an increased risk of considerable service disruption.

From a political standpoint, the creation of two sovereign Councils provides a preferable solution as this model could increase the ratio of elected representation across the County. This political advantage should be considered alongside potential practical complications in splitting and realigning services around new Council boundaries. Moreover, creating two Unitaries may reduce the scope to transfer skills and capabilities across the County and District workforce.

Despite the caveats outlined above, implementation of this model is possible; it has been done elsewhere and there is therefore practical prior learning available to support this option.

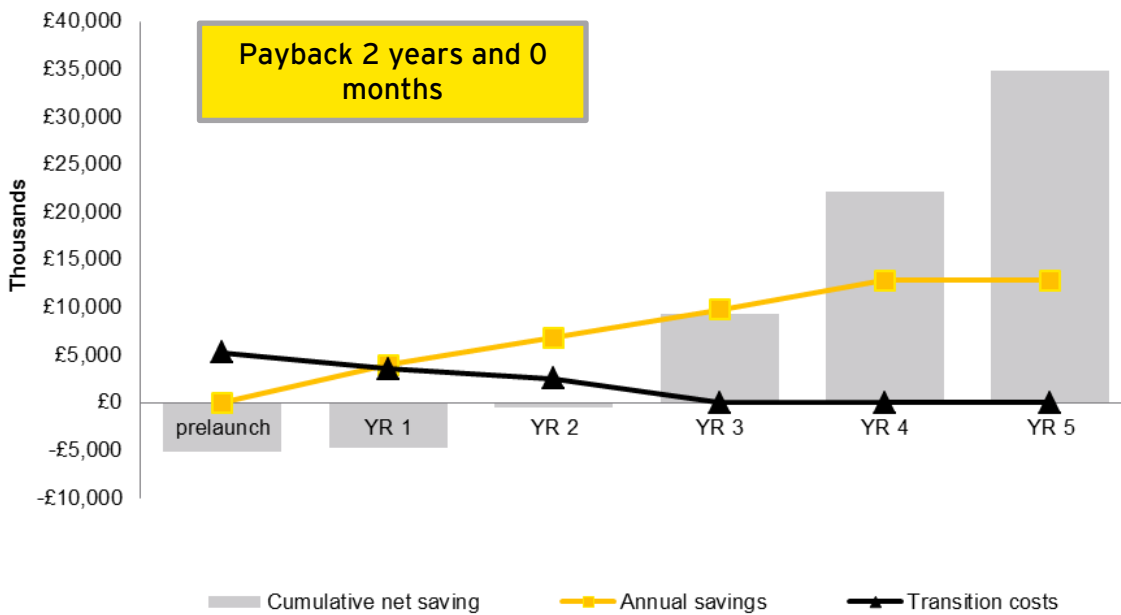


#### 4.3.4. One County and one District - option appraisal

Assessment area	Rating	Comments
Savings	A	Savings are likely to be significantly lower than those for the one Unitary option. This is driven by the extra costs of retaining a senior management team for the District, and reduced scope to capitalise on optimising contracted spend across the existing County and District Councils.
Impact for service users	A	<p>There are opportunities to streamline services, remove duplication, reduce bureaucracy and optimising delivery of services but these are constrained to the boundaries of a two tier service delivery model.</p> <p>Service users will benefit from continuity in the delivery of care, education and community services. However, the creation of Councils with distinct service agendas within identical geographical boundaries could create confusion.</p> <p>Suggested levels of political representation could be higher than for a single Unitary.</p>
Practicality	R	<p>Delivery of District services would need to be redesigned around new agreed Council boundaries.</p> <p>Although having one County and one District Council calls for additional political representation, this intensive restructuring of democracy is both unfeasible and impractical.</p>
Implementation	R	<p>Due to considerable reductions to savings, overall implementation costs represent a high percentage of annual savings.</p> <p>Currently no other Authorities have implemented or considered a one County and one District option. As such there is no concrete guidance and/or evidence for the implementation of County wide two-tier service delivery models.</p>

Potential overall savings target range for this option is **£9.6m - £12.8m**. Main financial considerations for this option include:

- ▶ **£1.3m - £2.1m** savings from senior management;
- ▶ **£1.1m - £1.8m** savings from elections;
- ▶ **£0.6m - £0.7m** savings from accommodation;
- ▶ **£4.6m - £5.1m** savings from corporate service rationalisation;
- ▼ **£2.0m - £3.1m** savings from service optimisation; and
- ▶ Non-recurrent Implementation costs of **£10.2m - £11.2m** result in a payback period of 2 years and 0 months. The graph below represents the payback period for this option given the upper range of savings and implementation costs across the proposed high level implementation timeline.



**One County and one District - What does this mean?**

This option proposes the creation of a new County-wide District Council to take over the functions of the other three, creating coterminous County and District Councils. This is an innovative idea, however, it does pose some challenges in terms of practicality and implementation.

In terms of savings, this option has the potential to produce a higher level of savings than the two Unitary solution, as some of the costs of establishing new organisations are reduced. However, the potential efficiency savings remain some way behind the figures generated by the one Unitary option.

Impact on service users offers a relatively low level of risk given that existing County services should remain largely untouched. Similarly, District services could combine administratively, but remain relatively unchanged in operational terms.

The major challenge with this option relates to practicality, particularly in terms of democratic representation. One of the major criticisms of the existing two-tier model is the potential for confusion between different service functions and democratic accountabilities. This is somewhat amplified by a One County and one District option, which would require the creation of a new County-wide District Council. The new District Council could mirror the existing County Council but would be responsible for different services. Given that these would operate within identical boundaries could create confusion. Alternatively, if the District was to be created on a purely administrative basis, it has the potential to result in an unacceptable deficit in representation. Finally, if the two were democratically aligned but with separate administrations, then it results, in effect, with the creation of a Unitary Council, similar to the one Unitary option, but with additional cost. It is difficult to see how these challenges could be realistically overcome.

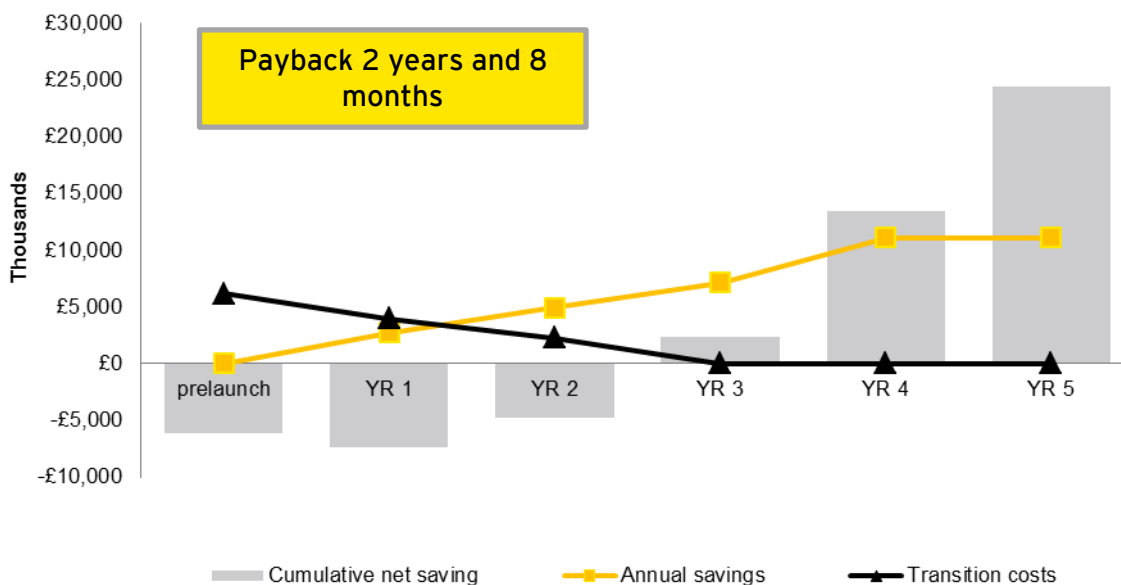
The implementation of a One County and one District option presents a clear dichotomy between administrative and democratic structures as set out above.

### 4.3.5. Out of County Unitary Councils - option appraisal

Assessment area	Rating	Comments
Savings	A	<p>Assuming the expenditure baseline for the savings quantification matches that for the other three options, savings align with those for Option 2 (two Unitary Councils). These are similarly driven by the extra costs of an additional senior management team, required duplication of corporate services and service managers across the two Councils, and reductions in service delivery efficiencies due to decreased potential economies of scale.</p> <p>Notably, the introduction of new out of County Districts could offer additional savings premiums. However, as this saving represents a proportion of an unknown expenditure baseline this has not been quantified as part of this report.</p>
Impact for service users	R	<p>There is scope for potential improvements via streamlining services, removing duplication, reducing bureaucracy and optimising delivery but on a smaller scale to a single Unitary.</p> <p>This option requires the merger of District Councils and further disruption by splitting the current County Council's functions in two. This could be further exacerbated by creating new service arrangements outside of County boundaries.</p>
Practicality	R	<p>Shared delivery of services will need to be redesigned around new agreed Council boundaries that will extend out of the County. This has particular implications for the integration of policies, culture and ways of working across Councils that currently operate in versus out of County.</p> <p>It would be crucial to understand scope and clarify the delivery of care services to those who currently fall out of Buckinghamshire's remit. Work also needs to be done to understand and deliver services within a completely new provider landscape.</p> <p>Political restructuring of democracy also likely to be complicated and impractical.</p>
Implementation	R	<p>To date, no other Authorities have considered/attempted implementing an out of County Unitary option. Without concrete empirical examples of forming out-of County unitaries it is difficult to fully understand and employ a model of best practice. Furthermore, there is also little guidance on identifying and mitigating potential risks.</p> <p>Implementation costs are likely to be extensive given the scale of potential contingencies which would be required for consultation over three counties (possibly involving referenda), potential contract novation, and the transition costs associated with staff, infrastructure, branding and administrative materials. There would also need to be consideration of how to amalgamate discrepancies in working practice, culture and business processes across three disparate education and social care systems.</p>

As per Option 2, the potential overall savings target range for this option is **£6.6 - £11.1m**. Main financial considerations for this option include:

- ▼ **£0.5m - £0.8m** savings from senior management
- ▶ **£0.6m - £1.9m** savings from elections
- ▼ **£0.4m - £0.5m** savings from accommodation
- ▼ **£3.4m - £3.9m** savings from corporate service rationalisation
- ▶ **£1.7m - £4.0m** savings from service optimisation
- ▼ Non-recurrent Implementation costs of **£13.1m - £13.4m** result in a payback period of 2 years and 8 months. The graph below represents the payback period for this option given the upper range of savings and implementation costs across the proposed high level implementation timeline.



### Out of County Unitary Councils - What does this mean?

The out of County Unitary option proposes the creation of two new Unitary Councils (as per the two Unitary option) but additionally suggests that this involves existing District Councils from neighbouring County Councils.

In terms of service impact, this option would be largely similar to the two Unitary option discussed above, though this would be further exaggerated by the inclusion of Districts from neighbouring counties.

There are, however, considerable challenges associated with the practicality of this proposal as well as the ability to implement it. This proposal would require a major electoral boundary review which would be conducted by the Local Government Boundary Committee for England and would involve the three affected County Councils and their existing Districts which would present a considerable logistical and political challenge from the outset. The option would also require the unprecedented step of subsuming existing County territory into a new County, or the creation of a wholly new

administrative area - both of which would require primary legislation - i.e. the consent of parliament.

The potential for disagreement with this option is significant; it is by far the option with the greatest level of inherent risk and presents a number of challenges which may be practically insurmountable.

There is potential to realise additional financial benefits from the introduction of new out of County Districts. Without fully understanding the new service baseline, however, this has not been quantified as part of this analysis. Furthermore, the delivery of any additional savings needs to be considered alongside the significant increases to the costs of implementing this option. The implementation costs for this option may far outstrip all of the other options as there is requirement for extensive expenditure on public consultation, transition and contract novation. There is likely to also be a requirement for additional investment in ICT, professional services, communications and branding and Member induction.

Finally, there are also likely to be further costs associated with the effective disaggregation of the three existing counties and the transfer of complex service, administrative and corporate infrastructure to a new entity. This would incur potentially significant reorganisation costs which would need to be compensated for before the equally complex debate about the repatriation of benefits could commence. Option 4 is quite simply unprecedented in terms of complexity and this would need to be considered very carefully if pursued further.

## 5. Conclusions and next steps

### 5.1. Conclusion

Buckinghamshire has made considerable progress over recent years in reducing the cost of services in the County and mitigating the impact of reduced funding for services from central government.

However, as our analysis shows, these financial pressures combined with increased costs associated with demographic and social changes over the coming decade mean that even after the £85m+ of savings already delivered, by 2017/18 the County are facing a potential funding deficit of £39m per year.

This report has explored four options for reorganising the function of local government in Buckinghamshire as a response to this financial challenge in addition to protecting and enhancing the quality of front-line services across the County. A summary of conclusions is set out below:

#### 5.1.1. Financial savings

All of the options above have the potential to deliver significant financial savings across Buckinghamshire local government, with the one Unitary option having the potential to deliver the greatest level of financial savings with an annual recurrent saving of up to £20.7m. This saving breaks down as follows:

- £3.0m in senior management savings;
- £2.1m in having fewer Members and running fewer Elections
- £1.0m in accommodation savings;
- £7.7m in corporate service rationalisation; and
- £6.9m in service optimisation.

The other options all carry significant additional costs (effectively reducing overall financial benefits) through:

- The extra cost associated with two senior management teams over a single senior management team could diminish potential savings by up to 80% (nearly £2.2m depending on which option is selected);
- The increased number of Members required for two authorities, and their associated allowances also weakens the savings that could be achieved by up to 14% (up to £0.3m). This is based on the assumption that each Authority would have approximately 30-60 Members (still amounting to a Member reduction of over 50% across Buckinghamshire) and the special responsibilities allowances should be double across two organisations compared to one. There may also be an increase in associated election costs and democracy support;
- The accommodation required by two organisations has been estimated to diminish savings by up to 50% (£0.5m), based upon a proportional reduction in facilities costs based on FTE reduction. This is a prudent estimate, as in reality, it could cost significantly more to re-align the current property portfolio to accommodate two Unitary Councils;
- Additionally, the consolidation of other corporate services (HR/Finance/ Legal/property etc.) into two organisations rather than a single organisation could reduce possible savings further (i.e. 50% - £3.8m).
- Any efficiency from frontline service area optimisation that could be achieved through creation of a single Unitary Council is likely to be diluted by a two Unitary option. An

analysis of this has indicated a potential reduction in saving of approximately 55% (up to £3.8m);

- There are likely to be increased transitional costs related to training, communications, inductions and implementation for creation of two new organisations.

### 5.1.2. Impact on services

It is highly likely that the structural changes associated with each of the four options may lead to some degree of impact on service delivery and we have therefore made an assessment of the likely impact of this against each option.

- The creation of a single County Unitary should have the lowest relative impact on services given that a County wide structure already exists with the assumption that existing District services can be up scaled and subsumed into this structure;
- The creation of two Unitary Councils is likely to have a greater impact given that both existing County and District services may have to be split down and amalgamated simultaneously and migrated into two wholly new organisations;
- The County/District model should benefit from County services remaining intact and District services being up scaled. The likely impact could come from potential confusion for service users associated with the distinction between different services being delivered in the same geographical area; and
- The greatest level of impact on services may result from creating new Authorities outside the County boundaries given the requirement to first disentangle services from three existing County organisations before integrating them into a newly created organisation. This option has the greatest potential for disruption.

### 5.1.3. Practicality

Each of the options should involve local consultation, the creation of a detailed business case and primary legislation to proceed in the next parliament. In addition to this we have considered:

- A single County Unitary represents a straightforward organisational platform through which all existing services could be delivered;
- Two Unitary Councils should still be relatively straightforward, though there may be a need for service and democratic boundaries to be redrawn, which would need to be clearly communicated. This option may also require the two new Councils to replace all existing stationary, branding, road signs etc.; and
- Both of the latter options score poorly for practicality based on the scale of the task involved in creating a co-terminus County and District Council in terms of democratic representation and in negotiating the creation of a new Unitary Council made up from elements of three existing County Councils. This should require extensive consultation involving myriad stakeholders and interest groups covering a significant geographical area, it may also involve potentially prohibitive implementation costs given the logistical challenge of reorganising three separate County Councils.

### 5.1.4. Implementation

Implementation in each case has been assessed in terms of the relative challenges and associated costs of change:

- A single County Unitary is relatively the most straightforward to implement as there is minimal disruption to existing County services and agglomeration of District services;

- A two Unitary solution requires the separation of existing County services in addition to the agglomeration of four sets of District services into two newly created organisations; and
- The remaining two options again face the challenges set out above in terms of implementation, these being the creation of a practical and understandable democratic settlement for the one Council and one District, and the relative complexity of negotiating a new settlement.

The table below sets out an assessment of each of the options against each of the key assessment areas.

Option	Savings	Impact	Practicality	Implementation	Payback period
One Unitary Council	Up to £20.7m				1.5 years
Two Unitary Councils	Up to £11.1m				2.3 years
One County and One District Council	Up to £12.8m				2.0 years
Creating new authorities outside of County boundaries	Up to £11.1m				2.7 years

## 5.2. Next steps

While the coalition government has made it clear that there should be no consideration of further Unitary bids during the current parliament, the debate over local government reorganisation and especially two-tier areas has seen increasing interest in recent months. It is likely to be an important factor in the debate about local government in the forthcoming general election campaign.

Notwithstanding this, the lead in time for the last round of reorganisation was approximately two years from concept through to the new organisations being established. Therefore, the suggested next steps are:

- Undertake consultation with stakeholders as required;
- Once a preferred option or has been identified, this strategic business case will need to be developed into a detailed business case which involves a much more granular assessment of the numbers, issues and context involved;
- From the detailed business case, develop service planning and transition arrangements for the new organisation(s); and
- Create an indicative overarching implementation plan, including timescales, key Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) and resourcing.



## Appendix A Estimating Council Size

### Context

There is no fixed formula for calculating the size of the 'ideal' council across the country. This is recognised by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) who attempt to take into account local considerations when recommending council size and composition. The balance to be struck in proposing council size is between access to representation (expressed as a ratio of electors per councillor) and the practicalities of council size in terms of decision making and strategic planning. Clearly, either of these variables affects the other; more councillors will produce a better ratio per elector but will increase the overall size of the council and vice versa.

In deciding the most appropriate size for the Council, a number of factors have been taken into account including:

- Ratio of Electors per Councillor;
- Buckinghamshire in comparison with all single tier authorities outside London;
- Specific characteristics of Buckinghamshire; and
- The guidance from the Boundary Commission.

### Ratio of Electors per Councillor

The total electorate in Buckinghamshire is estimated to be 396,753. The table below sets out a range of options for the composition of a new unitary council and the implications for electors in terms of the ratio of councillors per elected member.

#### Option 1 - One County Unitary

Based on a current county-wide electorate of 396,753

No. of Councillors	Electors per Councillor
50	7,935
65	6,104
80	4,959
95	4,176

#### Option 2 - Two Unitary Authorities

Based on two unitary councils with nominal electorates of 198,000

No. of Councillors	Electors per Councillor	Total Councillors Across County
30	6,600	60
40	4,950	80
50	3,960	100
60	3,300	120

#### Option 3 - County and District

In terms of the electoral implications, option 3 becomes more difficult. In effect this option would produce a county and a district with coterminous boundaries but with different service accountabilities. The potential for conflict and confusion is therefore considerable as electors may have to contact different councillors for different services within the same electoral division. Creating a single democratic structure for say the county, with districts continuing to deliver the services they remain responsible for could produce a democratic deficit in terms of there being no direct representation for district services, or vice versa. If the county took over democratic responsibility for all services, it effectively takes us back to option 1 - a single county Unitary.

No. of Councillors in County (no change)	Electors per Councillor	No. of Councillors in District (based on average of current arrangements)	Electors per Councillor	Total Councillors Across County
49	8,097	50	7,935	99

#### Option 4 - New Unitary Authorities Outside the County Boundary

Based on two newly created unitary councils:

- Council A indicative population: 259,308
- Council B indicative population: 318,507

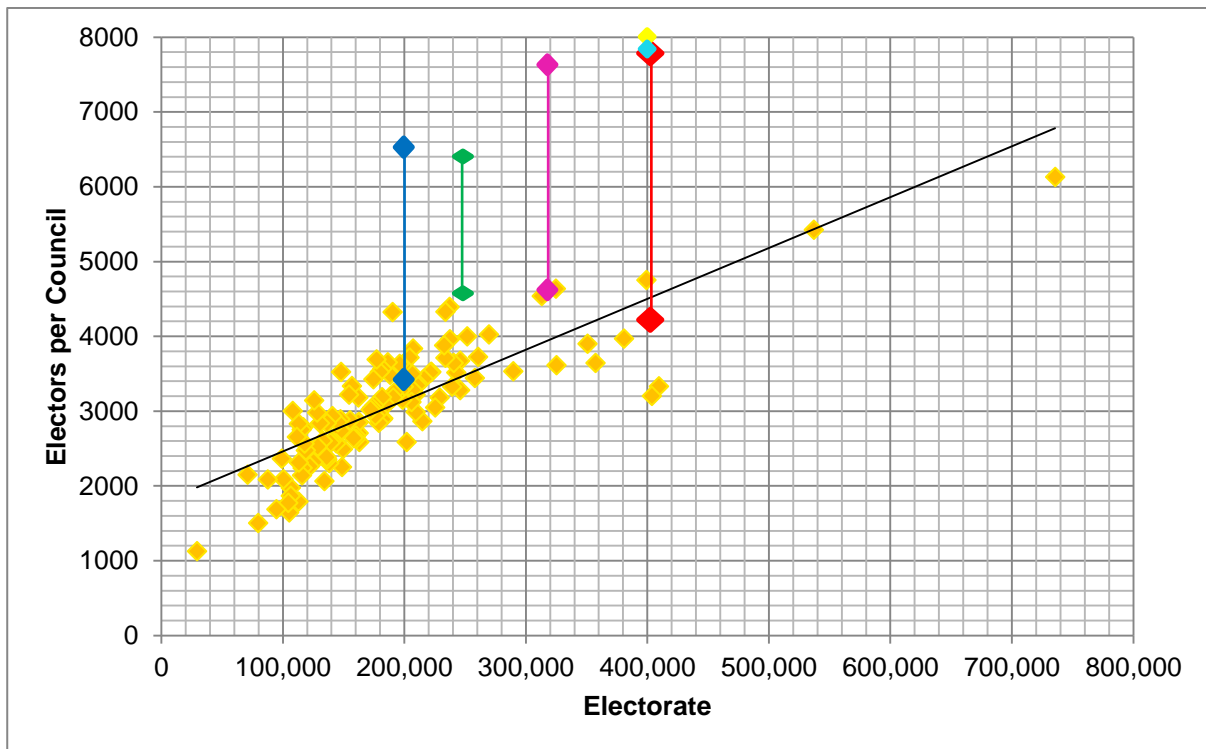
No. of Councillors in Council A	Electors per Councillor	No. of Councillors in Council B	Electors per Councillor	Total Councillors Across County
40	6,483	40	7,962	80
50	5,186	50	6,370	100
60	4,322	60	5,308	120
70	3,704	70	4,550	140

#### Comparison of prospective size with other Unitary Councils

With an electorate of approaching 400,000 Buckinghamshire is toward the upper quartile in terms of size nationally, though it is by no means the biggest council as the table below sets out.

Authority Name	Total Electorate	Council Size	Electors per Councillor	Council Type
Leeds	537,163	99	5426	Unitary District
Cornwall	409,639	123	3330	Unitary County (2009)
Durham	403,742	126	3204	Unitary County (2009)
Sheffield	399,131	84	4752	Unitary District
Manchester	380,930	96	3968	Unitary District
Wiltshire	357,240	98	3645	Unitary County (2009)
Bradford	350,882	90	3899	Unitary District
Liverpool	325,125	90	3613	Unitary District
Bristol	324,584	70	4637	Unitary District
Kirklees	313,233	69	4540	Unitary District

In terms of democratic representation, the scatter diagram below sets out ratio for all single-tier councils in England outside London. Based on the line of best fit, each option has been included with the lower and upper figures set out below.



Option	Range	Key
Option 1	7935-4176	
Option 2	6600-3300	
Option 3 Council A	8097	
Option 3 Council B	7935	
Option 4 Council A	6483-3704	
Option 4 Council B	7962-4550	

## Specific Characteristics of Buckinghamshire

The county of Buckinghamshire covers a relatively small geographical area at 156,000 hectares and is much smaller than some of the other recently converted unitary counties. This is a significant consideration in terms of potential future size of a unitary council as access to constituents in a more densely populated geographical area with reasonable transport links provides greater flexibility in terms of the electors to councillor ratio. From the table below, we can see that an indicative 65 member council would put Buckinghamshire nearer the mean of single tier upper tier councils outside London in terms of the ratio of councillors and area.

Authority Name	Area in Hectares	Council Size	Hectare per Councillor	Council Type
Northumberland	501,300	67	7482	Unitary County
Cornwall	354,594	123	2883	Unitary County
Wiltshire	325,535	98	3322	Unitary County
Shropshire	319,731	74	4321	Unitary County
East Riding Of Yorkshire	240,763	67	3593	Unitary District
Durham	222,605	126	1767	Unitary County
Herefordshire	217,973	58	3758	Unitary District
Cheshire East	116,637	82	1422	Unitary District
Cheshire West & Chester	91,664	75	1222	Unitary District
North Lincolnshire	84,631	43	1968	Unitary District
Central Bedfordshire	71,567	59	1213	Unitary District

## Boundary Commission Guidance

Guidance from LGBCE strikes a balance between the ratio of representation to elector and the effective and efficient management of the council. They specifically suggest that they would want to look closely at any proposal which involves a council of 100 upwards.

## Conclusion

Our data and analysis demonstrates that the optimal size of a future unitary authority in Buckinghamshire would be between 65 and 80 elected members. We have also modelled numbers against options 2, 3 and 4 with the potential ranges set out in the scatter diagram above. In each case we have attempted to set out to balance the demands of representation, practicality and efficiency.

## Appendix B Service optimisation assumptions

### Savings Assumptions: Service Optimisation

This area of savings relates to reductions in the cost of delivering non-corporate services (i.e. those services not classified as corporate services for the purpose of this analysis). It breaks down as two key categories:

- Savings through duplication of roles across the District Councils (for the purpose of this analysis, it has been assumed that there is no duplication in service delivery roles but there is 30% duplication across middle management of those service delivery roles).
- Savings through optimising the way services are delivered. The efficiencies are based on taking a whole systems approach to service redesign without the boundaries of two-tier government impeding innovation. Specifically, savings should be achievable through procurement scale and contract management, convergence of systems and processes, better use of assets and optimising processes through utilising regional best practice.

A 3-5% optimisation savings range has been assumed across non-corporate services after staffing costs have been extracted from the cost base. However, it should be noted that there is an assumption that across care and education (accounting for £253m of a total £356m net spend) optimisation savings cannot be made.

Set out below are some examples with evidence from other local authorities of the types of service optimisation savings that can be delivered through this process. More detailed analysis of service delivery across all Buckinghamshire authorities to understand the specific opportunities service by service would be required to quantify how the 3-5% could breakdown across services.

#### 1. Waste

It is assumed that a reduction could be achieved through, for example:

- i. **Moving to a single waste collection service**

Better shift management, reduction in the number of vehicles, consolidation on to a single contract, unification of collection methods, reduction in team management but perhaps less opportunity across the team. Requirement to retain local knowledge.

Evidence from other case studies indicates considerable savings can be achieved.

  - Dorset Waste Partnership - £1.4m p.a.
  - Somerset Waste Partnership - £1.5m p.a.
  - East Sussex - £30m over 10 years
  - East Kent Waste - £30m over 10 years
- ii. **Reduction in the collection cost per head**

There is considerable variation in the cost of collection per head. Whilst some of this variance may be due to geography and local context, there is an assumption that the service could reach the benchmark unity cost per head.

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| iii. | <b>Unification of pay</b>                           | Eliminating the variation in pay across the Districts which could increase the retention of staff in teams.  |
| iv.  | <b>Greater market presence and commercial clout</b> | Through joint procurement, savings could be achieved through standardisation of specifications, reduced number of procurements and leveraging a greater volume of spend. |

## 2. Regulatory

It has been assumed that a saving against current budgets can be achieved through, for example, using a more efficient delivery model across Buckinghamshire for the delivery of regulatory services, ensuring greater integration across historically two-tier functions.

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| i.  | <b>Creation of a Single Building Control Service</b>        | There is an opportunity to create a single Building Control service, which could involve the consolidation of multiple services into one.  |
|     |   | Efficiencies through a reduction in senior management posts, in sharing facilities, integration of local teams, and scheduling of work.  |
| ii. | <b>Integration of pest control and environmental health</b> | Efficiencies can be achieved through the integration of pest control and environmental health, which are currently fragmented across the two-tier structure. This could allow the integration of roles, teams and functions. |

## 3. Planning

It is assumed that a reduction against net budgets could be achieved through service optimisation as a result of creating a single planning Authority.

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| i. | <b>Creation of a Single Planning Authority</b> | <p>The efficiencies of a single planning Authority include the reduction in the number of local plans produced leading to efficiencies in the consultation process, and elimination of inefficiencies resulting from the 4 plans being unaligned.</p> <p>Professionalisation of the planning service leading to attracting greater expertise and retention levels, leading to better quality decisions and fewer appeals. There could also be some efficiency in the planning policy process.</p> <p>There may be efficiencies in closer and more co-ordinated working between the Highways Authority and the Planning Authority.</p> |
|----|--|---|

An ability to plan more strategically across the area and to direct resources where there is greatest need.

ii. **Business Application Consolidation**

A single planning Authority could facilitate the consolidation of planning case management systems, and building control. The support and maintenance of these systems can also be significant.

#### 4. Local Taxation & Benefits

There is currently a significant variance in the unit cost and performance of this administrative and support function across the County.

It has been assumed that the unit cost of local taxation collection and benefits administration could be harmonised to achieve the current upper quartile performance across Buckinghamshire District Councils. If this performance improvement were achieved, significant savings could be realised.

Furthermore, the analysis does not include any savings associated with housing benefits due to the national implementation of the "Universal Credit" and welfare reform, led by DWP.

i. **Creation of a Single Revenues & Benefits team**

Achieving an efficiency level equating to current upper quartile performance, through integrating teams and distributing workloads to improve productivity

ii. **Business Application Consolidation**

Consolidation of the IT systems, resulting in reduced support and maintenance costs. This is taking account of a number of outsourced teams.

#### 5. Highways & Street Cleaning

It has been assumed that a saving could be made against current service expenditure for open spaces and street cleaning through service efficiencies. The opportunity areas include asset management (e.g., plant rationalisation and vehicles), procurement (consolidating contracts, rationalise suppliers), integration of contract management teams, combining roles such as parking with environmental enforcement, better shift management and scheduling.

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# Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire

Business Case  
September 2016

Buckinghamshire  
Council

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## Executive Summary

Buckinghamshire is an attractive county. It is a successful place to do business, contributing £14.8bn in Gross Valued Added (GVA) to UK economy and ranking 3rd in terms of GVA productivity.

The county enjoys low unemployment, higher-than-average household incomes and good health outcomes, yet we also have a number of challenges. This paper sets out why there is a compelling case for change.

## Change is essential for future growth in Buckinghamshire

The profile of Buckinghamshire is set to change significantly over the next twenty years. Emerging local plans identify a need for 50,000 new homes by 2033. Buckinghamshire is becoming even more multi-cultural and diverse. The population over the age of 65 is increasing, as are levels of disability, leading to significant pressures on services.

Past success is no longer a guarantee of continued prosperity. The need for change has become all the more apparent in recent years, a period that has seen rapid changes in attitudes and expectations amongst residents and businesses alike, together with rapid increases in demand. Future public services need to be fit to meet these challenges.

Services provided by the public sector are increasingly unaffordable, particularly in the context of fiscal constraint. By the end of 2016/17, the county council will have delivered £145m savings since April 2010. Collectively, the county and district councils have to deliver further savings in excess of £30m by 2020. Traditional approaches are not sustainable.

The role of the public sector is being transformed, driven by a growing demand for a new form of civic leadership that works with communities to realise a shared vision for their future, whilst being a powerful advocate in partnership and sub-regional arrangements. Residents want better quality services that are easier to access, and they want a real say in services and decisions that affect them. Ambitious town and parish councils want greater responsibility for assets and services so that they can tailor these to community needs. We want to play our part in relieving the acute pressure in the housing market alongside providing sustainable infrastructure for our communities.

The resources and energy tied up in coordinating five individual councils in a relatively small county not only frustrates the effective use of public resources but also prevents the agile leadership that is critical to meet the mid 21st century challenges of shaping sustainable communities, delivering new homes and jobs, devolving power to communities, promoting economic prosperity and ensuring the health and wellbeing of residents.

## Now is the time for change

The current configuration of local government within Buckinghamshire is no longer fit for purpose. Furthermore, it is not affordable. Reform will take time but, if implemented now, is achievable within existing resources and manageable without jeopardising the performance of front line services. Any delay brings further risks to the sustainability of essential services and the successful delivery of growth across the county, whilst the capacity to manage a recovery strategy will diminish.

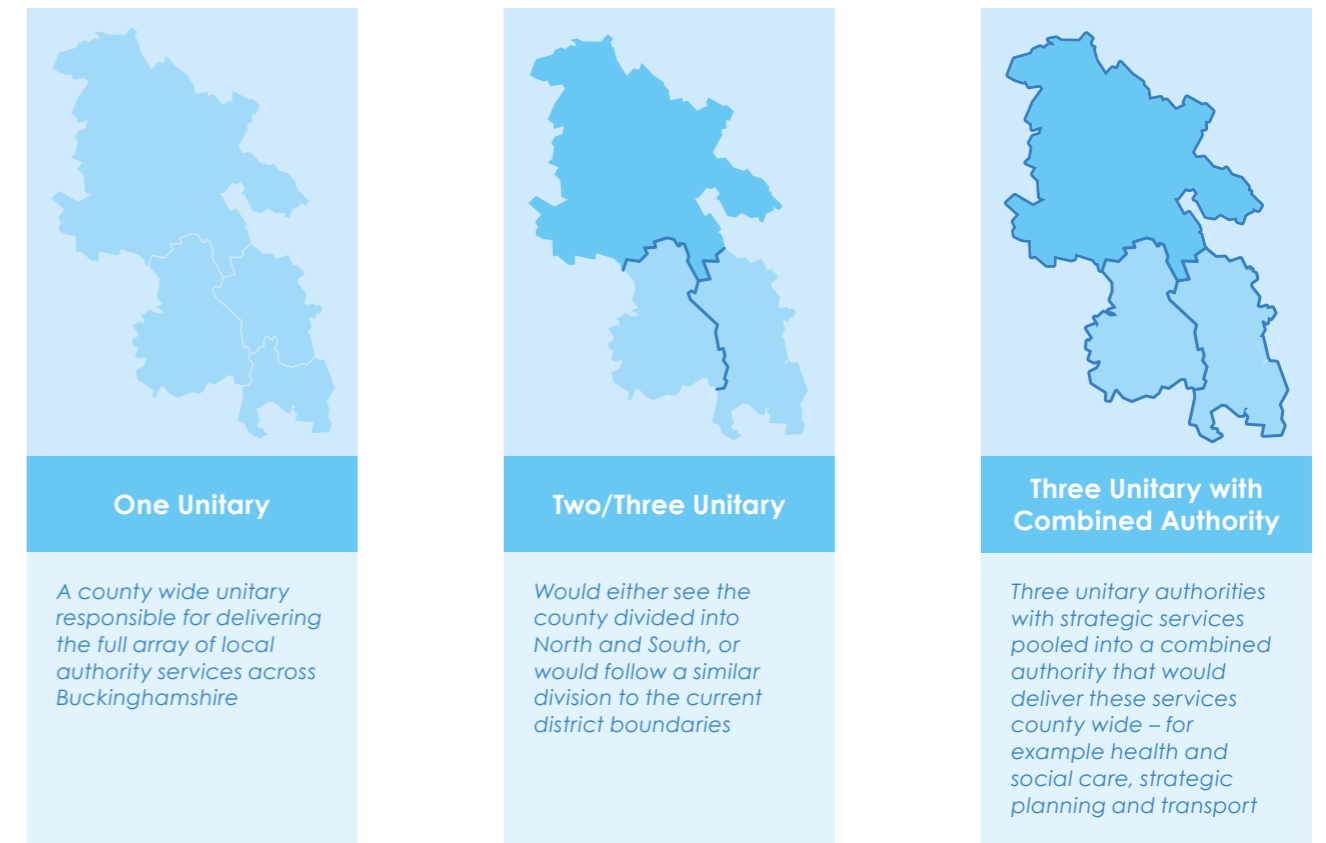
**“No change” is the highest risk strategy.**

## The options

Unitary government offers significant benefits for residents, communities and businesses in Buckinghamshire. Other Local Authorities who have made this transition have identified a variety of opportunities, including cost savings, service improvements and growth.

Three options have been considered for the future configuration of local government in

Buckinghamshire based on the economic geography of the areas that make up Buckinghamshire, travel to work patterns, the urban and rural nature of the county, and population size. A detailed appraisal of these options has been undertaken and externally validated by Grant Thornton. The options considered are as follows:



### The financial assessment

Option	Reasons	Rank
Option 1 - One Unitary Authority	Net 5 year revenue savings of £45.4m (£18.2m annual) - 4.7% *	1
Option 2a - Two Unitary Authorities	Net 5 year revenue savings of £17.3m (£10.3m annual) - 2.7% *	2
Option 3 - Three Unitary Authorities + Combined Authority	Net 5 year revenue savings of £11.1m (£5.4m annual) - 1.4% *	3
Option 2b - Three Unitary Authorities	Net 5 year revenue savings of £5.6m (£5.5m annual) - 1.4% *	4

\* of estimated net budget requirement

## The non-financial assessment

The options have also been evaluated against a set of non-financial criteria, based on discussions with senior civil servants at the Department for Communities and Local Government, together with similar studies that have been undertaken elsewhere within the country. In summary:

- **Option One:** A single county-wide unitary model would achieve the highest annual revenue savings for investment in local priorities, whilst offering clear accountability, simplified arrangements for partners, and a strategic focus to maximise opportunities for communities and businesses. The challenge would be to develop a model that balances strategic coordination with local need;
- **Option Two:** A multiple unitary model offers clear accountability, together with a focus on the distinctive characteristics and challenges in different parts of the county and delivery of modest savings. However, the multiple unitary options would increase complexity for local partners and present risks in terms of the disaggregation of critical child and adult safeguarding services. This option would not provide the scale and capacity to offer significant efficiencies or longer term sustainability;
- **Option Three:** A 'Combined Authority' option offers a potential model for balancing the benefits of multiple unitaries with county-wide scale for strategic services such as social care and strategic planning. However, this model offers the lowest level of savings and risks recreating the issues of a two tier system, with reduced local accountability. A major challenge would be designing the governance arrangements to allow quick and effective decisions and balance potentially conflicting interests to mutual benefit. The 'Combined Authority' model is untested in the context of replacing a two-tier system.

The non-financial appraisal is summarised in the matrix below.

Option	Service Performance	Democratic Leadership & Accountability	Local Engagement & Decision Making	Sustainability				Average sustainability score	Total score	Non-Financial Rank
				Economic Growth	Skills & Capacity	Engagement of supply chain (business and supply chain)	Coterminosity with partners (partnership working)			
Option One: Single Unitary	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1.25	6.25	1
Option Two: Multiple Unitary	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	2.75	9.75	3
Option Three: Combined Authority Option	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1.75	7.75	2

1 - high scoring, 2 - medium scoring, 3 - low scoring

## The conclusion

The options appraisal has identified that a single county-wide unitary model offers the greatest likelihood of meeting the needs of Buckinghamshire in the future. Key benefits highlighted in the options appraisal were:

- **a single point** of accountability and responsibility for the quality of all local authority services within the area, supported by a single executive function
- **enhancement** of existing county-wide social care and safeguarding services through closer connection with related services such as housing, leisure and benefits
- **simplified** arrangements from the perspectives of the public, partners and businesses
- **protection** of a robust platform for further health and social care integration
- **opportunities** to improve the conditions for economic growth by bringing together related services such as spatial planning, housing, transport and infrastructure
- **ability** to maximise the investment over the longer term in preventative services

The key challenge identified with this option would be to provide confidence to residents that a large single unitary council would be able to respond to distinctive local needs, respect local identity and put decision-making in the hands of local communities.

## Blueprint for a new county-wide single unitary council for Buckinghamshire

Our proposition is to abolish the county council and the four district councils and establish a brand new, county-wide single unitary council at the forefront of modern local government, committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all local residents, designed to engage effectively with each of the multiple communities county-wide, and to develop

a prosperous and sustainable future for Buckinghamshire.

This section sets out a blueprint for what a new council could look like. This is for illustrative purposes; ultimately it will be for a brand new council to design its own vision, priorities and operating model.

### A new vision

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

Our proposal is for a brand new form of local government which builds upon the strong track record of the four district councils and the county council, whilst seizing the opportunity to design and establish new structures that ensure interests are represented at the right level, so that decisions can be taken to deliver the best outcomes.

Our vision is to redefine the role of the public sector from one of control and top down dialogue to one of enabling and facilitating initiative, innovation and ambition, whilst at the same time strengthening the safety net for the most vulnerable and removing the gaps that people can slip through.

To date it has not been possible to achieve a consensus between the county council and the district councils on the preferred end state of any reorganisation. Our proposition has been developed to reflect what we have heard from residents, businesses, parish and town councils and other key stakeholders.

## Our ambition for a new county-wide single unitary council for Buckinghamshire:

- **Single voice** – speaking up on behalf of residents, businesses and partners
- **More local** – delivering an innovative locality based structure built on the ambition of our town and parish councils who are leading the way both locally and nationally, local area planning committees, and new, legally constituted Community Boards with decision making powers
- **Better quality** – improving the quality, cohesiveness and accessibility of services, with local delivery enabled by a network of multi-agency Community Hubs
- **More efficient** – moving £18m of council tax payers money each year away from management overheads and investing it in priority, front line services

### Single Voice

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire, aligned with key partnership structures already in place such as the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group Federation, would have the strategic accountability to deliver a place shaping agenda, seizing the opportunities of growth as the catalyst for change.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire, with a single strategic voice, would be able to be a powerful advocate for ensuring that the opportunities and needs of Buckinghamshire shape the emerging sub-national agenda and the commitment (through the National Infrastructure Commission) to address barriers to growth. It would be able to build upon the initiative that has created England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance – an emerging Sub-National Transport Board – using the ability of its civic leaders to develop momentum and deliver a change agenda. It would have the professional skills required to deliver an ambition for Buckinghamshire in a way that has not previously been possible.

### More Local

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would have the confidence to enable greater empowerment at a local level. Through the implementation of new, stronger and well-resourced local area structures, transparency and accountability of decision making could be strengthened and the delivery of things that matter most to residents could be managed wherever possible at the local level. Key features could include:



a new devolution **offer to town and parish councils**, with flexible opportunities and support to enable them to take on responsibility for services and assets currently run by county and district councils and to deliver these far more locally – with packages tailored according to local ambition and priorities;

5

**local area planning committees**, which ensure that decisions on planning issues continue to be taken at a local level;

19

**new local 'Community Boards'**, which give local councillors the authority and the resources to take local decisions on the issues that affect local people.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be better for businesses, working in partnership to set the long-term direction and create the conditions that allows businesses to thrive, with a focus on investing in skills, transport infrastructure, encouraging business growth and playing to the strengths of the county's economy, particularly those sectors that will shape the lives of our residents in the future.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to maintain the excellent quality of education across Buckinghamshire, sustain the momentum in transforming health and social care, and improving children's services, and lead whole system integration to meet the growing demands of a changing population.

By reducing from 236 two tier Councillors to 98 single tier Councillors, a new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire could deliver clearer local accountability, with a saving of £1.2m.

### Better Quality

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would clarify accountability and enable customer needs to be managed simply and holistically, taking a customer focused approach to supporting need at every stage of life to improve outcomes for all.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to deliver a **single point of contact and a single website** for residents, businesses and town and parish councils. The county council currently receives 680 telephone calls per month from residents trying to access district council services, with an annual cost of £34k. A single telephone number,

with clear links to town and parish councils, would put an end to this frustration for residents.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to use its resources to develop a network of **multi-agency community hubs**, enabling residents to access services from a place local to them.

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to eliminate duplication and deliver faster, leaner decision-making, ensuring that Buckinghamshire remains a place in which entrepreneurs want to create the future.

### More Efficient

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire provides the greatest potential to cut bureaucracy and release efficiency savings for investment in local priorities, whilst ensuring at the same time that the safeguards valued by local communities are maintained.

A new county-wide unitary council would be able to deliver **£18.2m ongoing annual net revenue savings**. One off transition costs of £16.2m would be affordable within existing resources and repayable within three years. Council Tax equalisation is achievable within five years, and would cost £2.2m in year one. A return on investment of **£45m (282% over the 5 year period) in net revenue savings would be achievable over the first five years of the new council**.

Together, the five councils hold up to **£1bn** in assets. A recent property review highlighted the potential for net capital receipts of up to £48m by rationalising the county council's assets alone. This could be significantly enhanced by looking at the

opportunities across the wider public estate.

A new county-wide unitary council would be able to ensure that the total reserves currently held by the five councils (**£285m as at 1 April 2016**) are effectively deployed to manage risks and invested in delivering the priorities of our residents, communities and businesses.

Council tax can be equalized at the lowest level in the first five years of a unitary, meaning council tax payers in Chiltern, South Bucks and Aylesbury Vale districts would have their bills reduced to the level paid in Wycombe district.

A single unitary council would not only be able to maximise the resources available to local government but would release efficiencies across county-wide partners, including housing associations and local charities, who allocate considerable resource in navigating their way through the different operating models of five councils.

## Transition to Transformation

A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be built on the strong track record of the legacy councils, which collectively have the delivery credentials to underpin this vision, together with recent relevant experience of local government reform in areas such as Wiltshire, Durham and Shropshire.

The transition plan illustrates that a new county-wide unitary council could be in place by 1 April 2019. The establishment of a new council would be phase one of a journey, not the end in itself. It would provide a building block for a future which will be connected to growth in the

region and in the UK as a whole, and offer the potential for developing a devolution deal with government in the future.

The implementation of a major change project inevitably comes with transitional costs as well as potential short term risks to service continuity. The costs will be significantly outweighed by the long term gain to local residents and businesses. Risks can be systematically mitigated, as demonstrated by evidence of successful change already managed by the councils in Buckinghamshire, and from the experience of other new county-wide unitary authorities.

**Public sector reform is essential for the future of Buckinghamshire and now is the time for change**

## What will a new county-wide single unitary council mean?

### For residents

- Less confusion about who does what
- Simple access to all services - one phone number, one website, local community hubs
- Consistent quality of service throughout Buckinghamshire
- Joined up, integrated services tailored to local needs
- Resources targeted at individuals/communities in need to maximise life chances
- Services for all residents, and particularly the most vulnerable, protected and enhanced during a period of change
- Less taxpayers money spent on management overheads and more on front line services
- More influence at local level to tackle community issues and shape local services
- Stronger, clearer local leadership through single tier elected councillors
- Strong voice for Buckinghamshire at a national level

### For businesses

- Collaboration at a strategic level on issues such as use of Business Rates
- Single interface with local government for the Local Enterprise Partnership/business community
- Single account for businesses in accessing council services such as planning, licensing, trading standards
- Streamlined inspection regime with speedy decision making and reduced red tape

- A council using its resources and buying power to add value for business growth
- A single Buckinghamshire wide tourism offer
- Opportunity to discount business rates in certain parts of the county through enterprise zones to stimulate growth and start-ups

### For parish and town councils

- Opportunities for more devolved accountability, resources and choice
- Local decision making on services, assets and choices specific to a locality
- Support with capacity, expertise, infrastructure and technology
- Single contact point for accessing support and advice from the unitary council
- Single consultation on all unitary council decisions that impact on the locality through Community Boards
- An end to the tensions between two-tier councils

### For the voluntary and community sector

- Easier to do business - one council to work with in partnership
- Streamlined opportunities for accessing capacity building support
- Streamlined decision making on local funding through the new Community Boards
- Stronger engagement at a strategic level through a new Cabinet/Voluntary and Community Sector Forum and at a local level through participation in the new Community Boards

### For elected members

- Influence over the full range of local government responsibilities in their local area
- The resources and decision making authority to quickly resolve issues
- Investment in training, development and support
- Stronger, clearer strategic leadership through one Executive
- Opportunities to represent Buckinghamshire in regional and national partnerships

### For council employees

- One vision and one set of values
- Improved opportunities for career progression and opportunities for specialist work
- Larger teams, with increased capacity and resilience against absence
- Greater opportunities to resolve issues for customers first time
- The data and information needed to work effectively

### For partners

- Less complex partnership working landscape, with aligned boundaries
- Single local government authority to talk to
- Efficiencies through collaboration at scale on a Buckinghamshire platform
- Consistent set of messages from local government in Buckinghamshire about priorities
- Single voice to represent Buckinghamshire's interests at national and regional levels

### For central government

- Single council to talk to on public policy issues – including devolution, business rates, housing growth
- Sustainable local government model that minimises reliance on central government funding whilst ensuring ongoing investment in essential front line services
- Value for money service delivery and efficient use of public sector resources and estate.

# A

## Part A

### The Need for Change

## Buckingham Public Services Landscape

### Local government

The county of Buckinghamshire has been an administrative unit for over 125 years. The current distribution of responsibilities between the county and district councils dates back to the 1974 reorganisation of Local Government, although there have been some changes in responsibilities since then (such as the move of Public Health responsibilities to the county council from the NHS in April 2013). Local Government comprises:

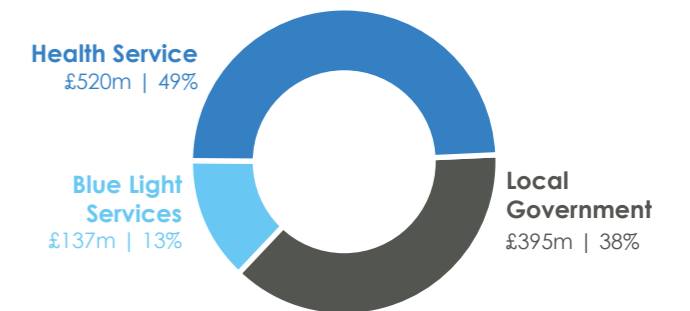
Buckinghamshire County Council	49	elected county councillors
Aylesbury Vale District Council Chiltern District Council South Bucks District Council Wycombe District Council	187	elected district councillors

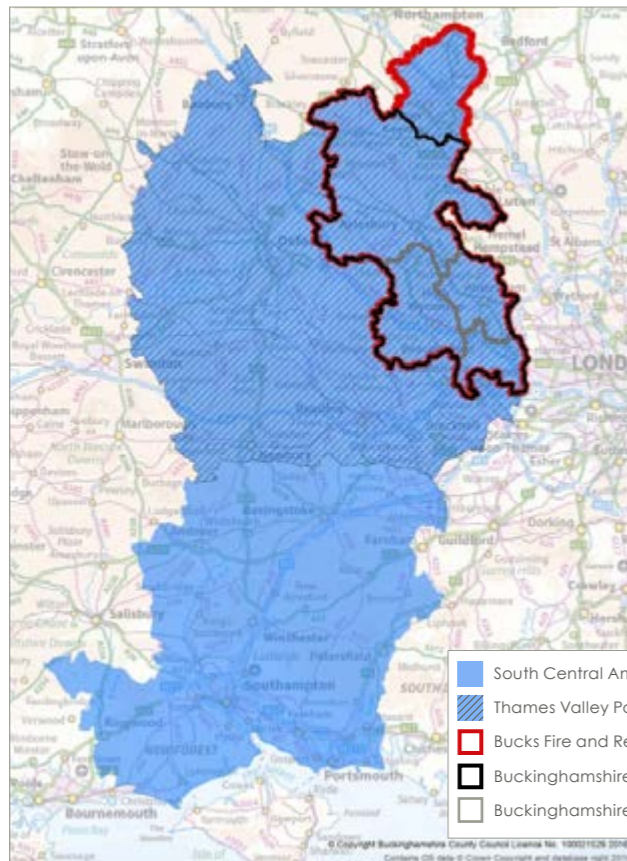
168 parish and town Councils cover all areas of Buckinghamshire, with the exception of the unparished area of High Wycombe.

The county, district and town/parish councils have a combined net budget of £394.5m of which £331.7m is spent by the county council and £50.4m by the four district councils. Together, the parish and town precepts raised £12.4m in 2016/17. Buckinghamshire currently generates £162m in business rates, £50m of which is retained by the county and district councils.

**Across the county and district councils, 21% of councillors are accountable for 86% of the local government resources.**

### Local Public Sector Spend (net budget requirement 2016/17)





### Blue light services

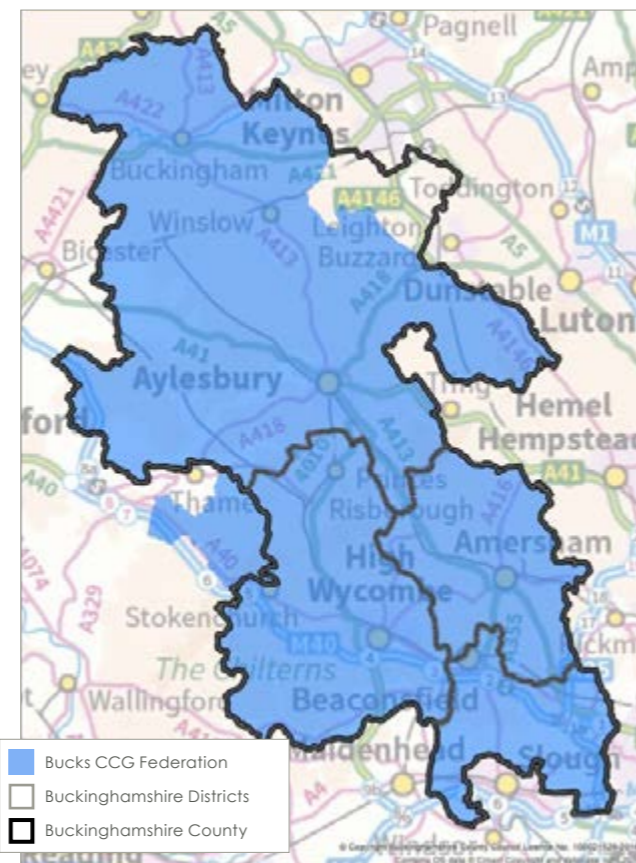
Buckinghamshire is served by:

- **Thames Valley Police constabulary** (Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes Berkshire and Oxfordshire)
- **Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service**
- **South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust** (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Oxfordshire)

### Health Services

Health services are provided by

- **Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Federation** – Aylesbury Vale & Chiltern CCGs have recently decided to create a federated 'one team' approach in order to improve patient care and save money by avoiding duplication and improving efficiency.
- **Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust**
- **Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust** (Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire)
- **Health Watch Bucks** is the independent champion for residents working to shape and improve health and social care services across the county.



*"Our strong relationships with our communities, member practices and partner organisations have enabled us to work as an integrated health and social care system in order to improve health and wellbeing across our population. We will continue to build on this and ensure that as far as possible our work and services become even more aligned across Buckinghamshire"*

**Aylesbury Vale CCG** Annual Report 2015

### Skills

As a result of the recent Thames Valley Area Review, Amersham and Wycombe FE College and Aylesbury FE College have agreed to combine to create a single FE College on Buckinghamshire geography. This will provide the strategic capacity to work with partners in tackling the skills shortages in Buckinghamshire, linked to the unfolding growth agenda.

**Buckinghamshire Advantage** is a limited company which acts as the operational arm of BTVLEP on the delivery of its capital schemes, ensuring local growth funds are invested to maximum effect. It also promotes and delivers capital projects helping Buckinghamshire's economy develop sustainably.

### Business & Economic Development Infrastructure

**Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP)** is a business-led 'partnership of equals' between local government and the private sector, focused on building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the county, including through securing Local Growth Funds and engaging with government on strategic infrastructure requirements. The county and district councils all occupy seats on the BTVLEP Board.

### Voluntary & community sector infrastructure

**Community Impact Bucks (CIB)** is the umbrella organisation providing support services to over 900 local charities and voluntary and community groups across Buckinghamshire. CIB is also the nationally accredited Volunteer Centre for Buckinghamshire. CIB receives financial support from both county and district councils.

**Heart of Bucks** is the Community Foundation for Buckinghamshire which promotes charitable giving and provides project funding for local charities and not-for-profit organisations.

**Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF)** is a business-led business focused organisation which exists to support businesses in the County to reach their full growth potential. It provides an information and support hub for new, established and growing businesses across Buckinghamshire. There are 32,050 businesses in Buckinghamshire and currently almost 9,000 are Buckinghamshire Business First members. 62% of the county's private sector workforce is employed within those member companies. 50% of the BTVLEP Board are BBF directors and BBF is recognised by Government as the BTVLEP Growth Hub.

**The Clare Foundation** supports voluntary sector organisations in becoming more efficient and effective through programmes, mentoring, shared best practice and networking forums

### Local councils infrastructure

**Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils (MKBALC)** is the membership organisation representing the needs of parish and town councils across the historic county.



## Strategic Partnership Working

The key public service providers in the county all operate across a Buckinghamshire geography and strong strategic partnership arrangements are firmly embedded on a Buckinghamshire platform.

### Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health & Wellbeing Board and the Buckinghamshire Healthy Leaders Group already provide a forum for progressing the joint commissioning of services between local government and the NHS. The Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP) footprint includes Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Councils. There is a strong relationship between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the independent Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Boards for Children and Adults. The Boards also include representatives from both county and district councils.

### Children's Improvement Board

The Buckinghamshire Children's Improvement Board was established in response to the 'inadequate' OFSTED rating received by the county council and the Safeguarding Board in 2014. The multi-agency Board has overseen a focused improvement journey, achieving significant

improvements to services for children and their families, including a stronger partnership approach. It will be important to ensure that the improvement momentum is sustained and that partners continue to work effectively together with the shared ambition of keeping children and young people in Buckinghamshire safe, healthy and happy.

### Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

The Buckinghamshire Safer and Stronger Communities Board operates as a county-wide crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP). The district councils also operate district based CDRPs.

### Natural Environment Partnership

The Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership brings together partners to work together in driving positive change for the natural environment. The Partnership includes representatives from both county and district councils.

## England's Economic Strategic Alliance

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance is a partnership of nine Local Transport Authorities and four Local Enterprise Partnerships, working together with the shared aim of addressing identified barriers to economic activity and raising productivity to match, and where possible exceed, that of our global competitors. The Alliance represents a population of 3.35 million, with an economy valued at £92.5bn.

Buckinghamshire County Council has taken a leading role in the development of the Alliance. The Leader of the county council currently chairs the Joint Leaders Board, and the county council also hosts the officer support.

The initial focus for the Alliance has been the development of an overarching transport



strategy. The partners have established a Strategic Transport Forum and are currently working on a proposal for a statutory sub-national transport body which could see the devolution of responsibility for national and regional transport infrastructure and for bus and public transport, together with the funding to support local bus services and highways improvements previously undertaken by the Highways Agency. The Alliance also has an ambition to tackle priorities such as digital infrastructure, energy networks, waste and water. In time, this Alliance may provide the partnership working to underpin a potential Combined Authority and devolution deal.

## The Case for Public Service Reform

### A Changing County

Buckinghamshire is an attractive and relatively affluent county. It is a successful place to do business, contributing £14.8bn in GVA to UK economy and ranking third in terms of GVA productivity. The county enjoys low unemployment, higher-than-average household incomes and good health outcomes, yet we also have a number of challenges.

The profile of Buckinghamshire is set to change significantly over the next twenty years. By 2033, there could be an additional 60,000 plus residents, plus a further 50,000 houses if the emerging local plans are approved. The lower and mid-range socio economic groups are increasing, whilst the higher socio-economic groups are decreasing. The population over the age of 65 is increasing, as are levels of disability. Buckinghamshire is becoming even more multi-cultural and diverse.

Past success is no longer a guarantee of continued prosperity. The need for change has become all the more apparent in recent years, a period that has seen rapid changes in

attitudes and expectations amongst residents and businesses alike, together with rapid increases in demand.

Set against this backdrop the role of strong and effective strategic leadership is critical if we are to seize the opportunities of growth and balance these with the need to protect and enhance the quality of what makes Buckinghamshire the special place it is. It is vital that the model of local government is able to transform to provide this leadership for the future.

### Sustainable Services

Changes in public expectation and demand are increasingly placing pressures on our public services that make them unaffordable in the medium to long term. Research conducted by Ipsos Mori identifies that, whilst residents may not fully appreciate the extent of the challenges, they accept that there is simply not enough money to go around and the need to do things differently. Fiscal constraint is impacting not just on local government but also on other critical public services providers, such as health services, as well as the voluntary and community sector, placing pressure on the system as a whole.

All councils in Buckinghamshire have worked hard to drive efficiencies in back office services, innovations in delivery and income generation opportunities in order to relieve the burden on both national and local taxation.

However, it is increasingly apparent that this strategy will just not be sufficient to deliver sustainable public services for the future. By the end of this current financial year, the county council will have delivered annual savings totalling £145m since April 2010. The county and district councils are already facing further savings in excess of £30m over the three years from 1st April 2017.

Bringing together the two tier system provides significant opportunities to streamline functions and design services to meet future, rather than historical, needs. Experience in those counties that have established unitary authorities provides clear evidence that savings will be significant, and greater than originally forecast. Two years after the creation of Wiltshire Council, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Leader of the Labour Opposition Group which had opposed the creation of the unitary council said "the projection that merging the former Wiltshire councils would produce considerable savings has happened, cushioning the blow of government funding cuts".

### Customer Expectations

The two tier system has long been seen as overly complex and ineffective at managing end to end customer demand. Repeatedly we hear that no one would design such a system today – for example, where county council public health responsibilities for addressing such long term issues as obesity and healthy lifestyle choices are split from the district council decision makers who determine priorities for leisure and housing.

Residents continue to be confused about the respective roles of different councils and the reason for the split of responsibilities. 78% of people believe that the county council is responsible for rubbish collection and 64% think that they are also responsible for sports and leisure, when both of these functions are the responsibility of the district councils (Buckinghamshire County Council Reputation Tracker April 2013). The county council receives an average of 680 calls per month for district related services, at a cost of £34k pa, creating a dis-jointed and confusing customer journey.

As the pace of technological change continues, so the need for reform in public service delivery becomes all the more pressing.

**78%** | people believe that the County Council is responsible for rubbish collection

**64%** | think that they are also responsible for Sports and Leisure

The number of council managers has reduced significantly over the past five years, but those who remain have to spend time trying to broker agreements across separate policy frameworks and independent decision making bodies, to try and manage the risk that vulnerable people could fall through the gaps in services. For example, many of Buckinghamshire's adult social care clients receive one or more benefits administered by the district councils yet they have to provide information to both county and district councils and this data is not used proactively to promote their independence and reduce the need for intensive social care services.

### Public Service Landscape

Across public services, the meaning of what is strategic and what is local is rapidly being redefined. Representing the interests of Buckinghamshire residents increasingly means being a powerful advocate in a complex network of partnership and integration arrangements on a bigger geography – from the Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP) footprint for health and social care to England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance. There are also growing opportunities for scaling up public services across traditional boundaries to drive efficiencies and service improvements.

At a more local level, the increasing shift towards community empowerment has led to a move by the county council to devolve services to communities, and in particular to town and parish councils, putting local services in the hands of local people. 86 of the 168 town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire have taken on county council services through devolved arrangements. Roles and responsibilities in the current 'three tier' system are called further into question by the changing landscape of national devolution



which places Buckinghamshire in the context of a larger regional geography. For example, the Government has recently tasked the National Infrastructure Commission with reviewing the governance needed to enable integrated planning and infrastructure decision making across the wider Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford region. England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance, the partnership of nine Local Transport Authorities and four Local Enterprise Partnerships, will be key to giving Buckinghamshire a strong voice in future governance arrangements.

Bringing together the two tier system provides the opportunity for better strategic decision making on issues such as strategic planning, housing, transport and closer integration of health and social care, together with better local decision making reflecting different local priorities.

## Consensus

**Everyone is in agreement that a change is needed. The debate now is about designing the right model for future public services in Buckinghamshire.**

In May 2016, Buckinghamshire County Council took the decision to carry out a review into the options for modernising local government and invited interested parties to collaborate in this process. We have greatly appreciated the very positive response from a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders, and their willingness to engage with us in this debate, sharing their views, experiences and aspirations for Buckinghamshire.

Local employers have a genuine concern over the sustainability of the current system as evidenced by the fact that Buckinghamshire Business First, on behalf of the business community, independently crowd-funded and commissioned a report into the financial case for reorganisation in September 2014.

The Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership is clear that reform is necessary, particularly given recent government policy. The current governance arrangements fail to drive the unified team approach needed to drive economic and housing performance. The business community are keen to work with the public sector to reach the best future outcome.

The current arrangements make no sense from a resident perspective. This quote is drawn from the discussions with local residents, presented in the research report provided by Ipsos Mori (Local Government Reorganisation in Buckinghamshire, September 2016)

*"Our local authorities need to look to rationalise their organisations and make the best use of taxpayers' money for the benefit of businesses and residents alike"*

**Guy Lachlan** Buckinghamshire Business Group

*"I think we all agree that a unitary authority makes sense. I'd like to keep the local parish and town councils. They'd have to have a real say, not like now, but have a real say in what happens in their communities."*

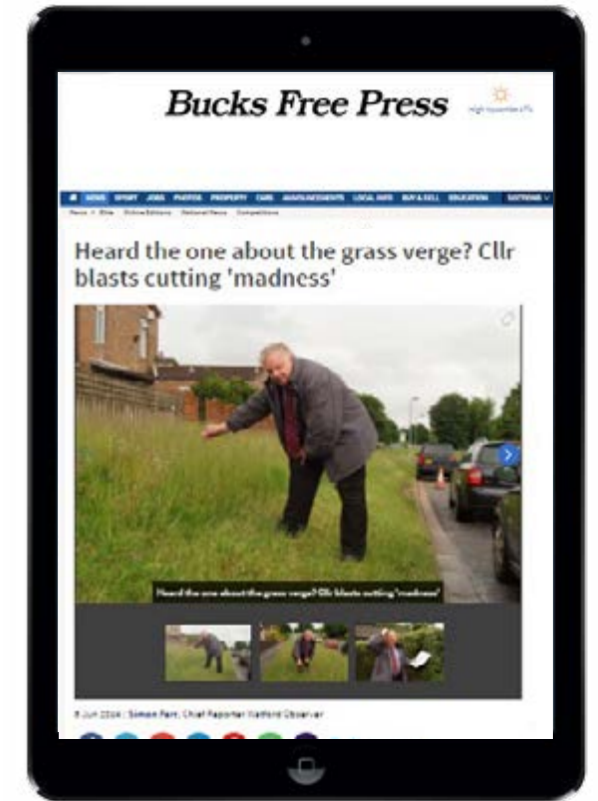
**Female resident** Buckingham

One parish councillor's comment on the online survey conducted across parish and town councils summed up many of the responses:

*"I do not see that much works well within the 3 tier government system. It is antiquated and needs changing. Local residents are usually very vague about which group handles which responsibility and thus have to chase around each one to find out."*

**Parish Councillor**

Whilst the four district councils declined the county council's invitation to collaborate on the development of this business case, they have acknowledged the need for a debate on the future delivery of public services in Buckinghamshire. In September 2016, the leaders of the four district councils announced that they had commissioned Deloitte to undertake a separate review into the future of local government in the county.



A Buckinghamshire verge cut by the contractors of three different authorities was described as 'complete madness' by a local councillor.

## Now is the Time for Change

The current structure is not fit for purpose for current challenges, nor is it sustainable in terms of managing the future needs of residents or businesses. In Buckinghamshire, the opportunity is not just to release resources to cushion the reduction in funding, but also to lever positive growth for the future.

**Now is the time for change.**



## Buckinghamshire's Future Needs from the Public Sector

Buckinghamshire is an attractive county with rich heritage and landscape. Over a quarter of the county is included within the Chiltern area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a further third covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt. The county enjoys good transport links, particularly to London. Buckinghamshire has a long heritage as an entrepreneurial county. It plays an important role in the overall economy of the UK, ranking 3rd among England's 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships in terms of GVA productivity.

Many parts of Buckinghamshire are relatively affluent with low unemployment, higher-than-average household incomes and good health outcomes. The workforce is highly skilled and levels of educational attainment are generally high. There is a strong sense of community spirit - with many residents actively participating in community life and engaging with local issues. There is also a strong sense of pride in the local area, although there are different challenges faced by rural and urban communities. A detailed profile of Buckinghamshire is at Appendix 1.

The profile of Buckinghamshire is set to change significantly over the next twenty years which brings significant challenges and opportunities for the local public sector.

### A Changing County

Buckinghamshire has a population of 528,000 residents, made up of approximately 212,000 households.

ONS projections show expected population growth of 66,000 people between now and 2031. However this projection does not take into account recently emerging local plans which suggest that approximately 50,000 new homes will be built over the next 15-20 years. Early estimates suggest that the total population increase could be up to 120,000 people over this period.

The lower and mid-range socio economic groups are increasing, whilst the higher socio-economic groups are decreasing. We experience a net loss of young educated adults, but net gains of families with children and mid-life adults. The population over the age of 65 is increasing, as are levels of disability.



**66k** | expected population growth between now and 2031

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

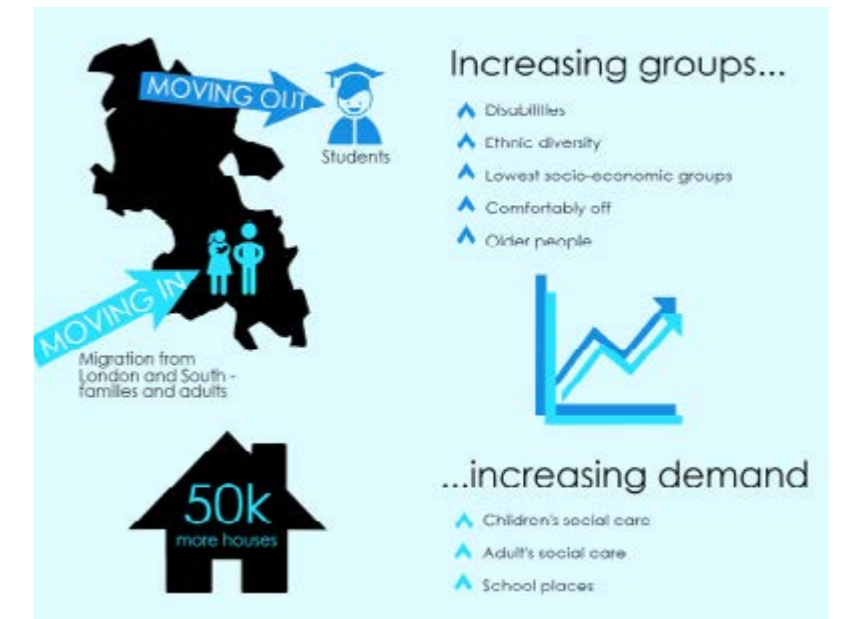
In 2016 the 65+ age group in Buckinghamshire accounted for 18% of the population – by 2031 we expect this to have increased to 23%. This accounts for 62% of total population growth over this period. By far the biggest increase will be observed in our 'oldest old' – the 80+ age group. The gap between disability-free and total life expectancy is increasing. The average total life expectancy for a man in Buckinghamshire is 81.4, with the average disability-free life expectancy for a man being 68.6 – meaning 12.8 years of limited life; a woman in Buckinghamshire can expect 16.7 years of limited life.

Buckinghamshire is becoming even more multi-cultural and diverse. By 2031, 20% of the population will be from black and minority ethnic groups, with some areas such as High Wycombe and Aylesbury, having significantly higher BME populations than others.

These changes, along with shifting behaviours are resulting in increasing demand for some services – including children's and adults' social care, supported transport, school places, specialised and supported housing, and health services.

A new model of public services will need to engage effectively with diverse local communities to respond to their differing needs and help them to shape the future of their surroundings. Innovative new models of delivery will be needed to meet the growing

### A different Buckinghamshire



demands on services within reducing financial resources and to encourage and support communities to do more for themselves.

### Resident Priorities

Road maintenance is consistently identified by residents as the public service most in need of improvement, followed by maintenance of pavements and bus services. There are 3,199km of highways across Buckinghamshire, 44% of which are classified. Current estimates indicate that an investment of £108m over a four year period would be required in order to bring the classified roads up to a reasonable standard and then maintain them in that condition. A further £28.3m would be required to fully restore the 2,461km of footpaths. A new model of public services must listen and respond to resident's priorities and deliver improvements to key services such as roads and pavements.

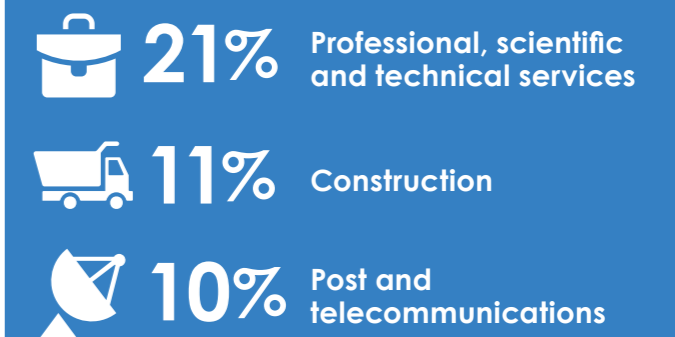
### Economic Growth

Buckinghamshire is widely recognised as the 'Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain', with more new businesses starting up and succeeding than anywhere else in the UK. Buckinghamshire is a small firm economy with the highest proportion of firms employing fewer than five people, at 75.8% of all firms. The most prominent local business sector is professional, scientific and technical services (21% of local businesses),

followed by construction (11%), then post and telecommunications (10%).

40% of our small firms (with less than 5 employees) are located in rural parts of Buckinghamshire – and these businesses experience more barriers to growth than many, including a lack of affordable housing; poor business infrastructure; a shortage of key services; a more restrictive labour market (characterised by a lower skilled, ageing workforce); a shortage of business networks; planning constraints; and a lack of access to business support and suitable finance.

### Prominent local business sectors



The Buckinghamshire LEP evidence base identifies a number of challenges including a lack of high-growth business start-ups, lack of early-stage business accommodation, and weak specialist business networks. The impact of Brexit on inward investment and business start-ups is yet to become clear, but seizing the opportunities and minimizing any transitional risks will clearly be a priority going forward.

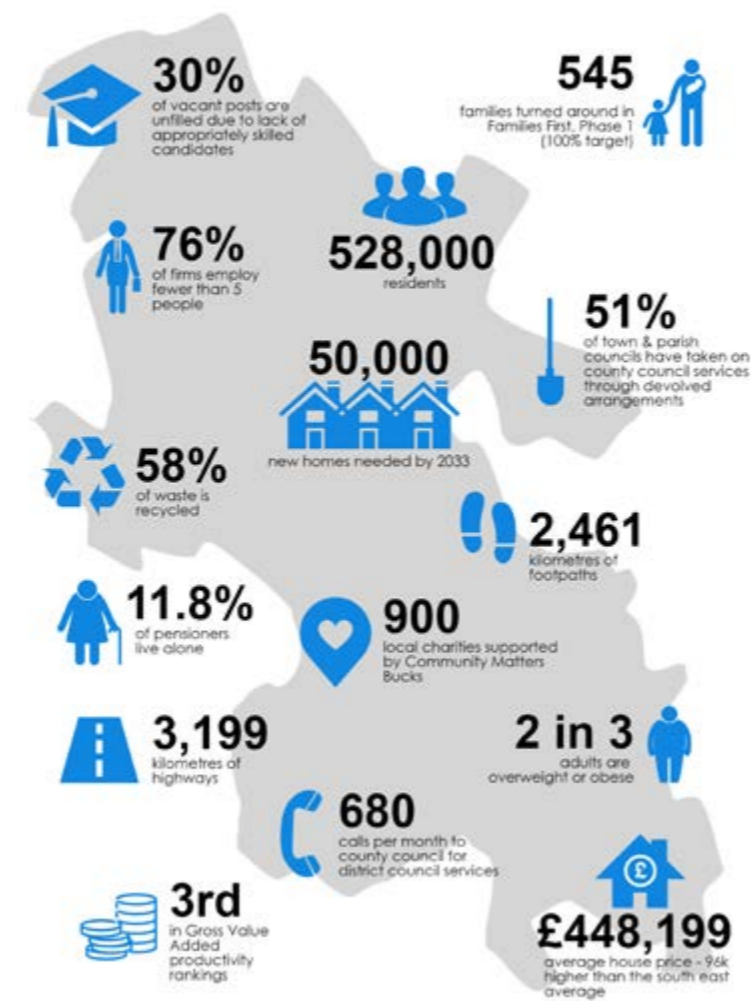
The National Infrastructure Commission has been tasked with bringing forward proposals and options for the long-term infrastructure priorities to unlock growth, jobs and housing within the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor over the next 30 years. The remit for this work includes a review of the governance needed to enable integrated planning and infrastructure decision making across the wider area in a timely manner.

The councils themselves are on a journey to becoming much more commercial, and developing their own business activities such as ValeCommerce, a company established by Aylesbury Vale District Council, and Buckinghamshire County Council's commercial investment property portfolio, both designed to create income streams for the respective councils. As well as generating income, such initiatives help instill a better understanding of business disciplines within the council, which helps council staff better understand the challenges faced by business

Business growth will be critical to the future success of the county. We have listened to business, and they have told us clearly what they need from their council. A new model of public services must make Buckinghamshire a better place for business to succeed – including building alliances to invest in

infrastructure such as broadband, road and rail, business accommodation, and skills. Joined up decision making and accountability is needed for those issues that are fundamental to promoting economic growth – strategic planning, employment sites, housing, transport and infrastructure - to provide a whole place approach. A unified 'Team Bucks' approach – working across the BTVLEP, Bucks Business First, Skills Hub and Bucks Advantage supported by the Business Community and the public sector – is critical to deliver economic and housing outputs for Buckinghamshire

### Buckinghamshire in numbers



### Skills

Buckinghamshire faces both skill shortages and skill gaps. We experience a substantial daily loss of skilled people who commute to higher paid jobs in London – around 37% more people commute out of Buckinghamshire as commute in – meaning that local businesses struggle to secure the skills that they need. A further challenge is the 'brain drain' of educated young adults leaving the area – Buckinghamshire has a comparatively small proportion of people aged 24-30.

30% of vacant posts across public and private sectors are unfilled due to a lack of appropriately skilled applicants (compared to national average of 23%), and employers have particular shortages in the technician, higher level, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) skills required for local 'plan for growth' sectors (including engineering, digital/ IT, life sciences and medical technology, high performance technologies, creative industries, construction, and built environment). A critical issue for the future will be ensuring the availability of an appropriately skilled workforce, which keeps pace with the unfolding growth agenda in Buckinghamshire.

A new model of public services must work closely with the LEP. The new Buckinghamshire FE college and schools to respond to a significant gap in skills for local employers and play its part in ensuring that young people develop the skills that business need.



### Housing

Average rents and house prices in Buckinghamshire are higher than national and regional averages. The average price of a house in Buckinghamshire is £448,199 – compared to £352,120 across the South East. The affordability ratio in Buckinghamshire (average house price to average earnings) is 13:1, considerable higher than the England average (8:1).

The demand for social housing significantly exceeds availability and although homeless acceptances in Buckinghamshire (1.75 per 1000 households) are lower than the national average (2.5 per 1000 households), there are increasing pressures on homelessness services – over the last three years homeless acceptances in Buckinghamshire have increased at almost three times the rate of those in England as a whole. Given the disproportionate growth in the population of elderly residents over the next twenty years, there is also an increasing need for additional 'extra care' accommodation which is not currently being met by the housing market, with a shortfall of some 6700 places predicted by 2035.

Finding solutions to affordable housing will be critical to tackling the skills shortages, as well as the shortage of key workers in public services such as social work and education. A step change in housing supply will require a step change in the local planning and development management process.

A new model of public services must get more of the right sort of houses built, lining up housing and planning strategies to make sure housing is provided to meet the needs of specific groups, including for social housing, for service users with support needs and solutions for older people, and to maximise use of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding.





## Environment

Buckinghamshire's beautiful natural and historic environment is valued by residents, businesses and visitors alike. A period of unprecedented growth will inevitably place pressure on the local environment, and the benefits it provides. It is essential that growth is managed sensitively and intelligently, providing much needed infrastructure, homes and jobs whilst still protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environment and the positive benefits it brings to the wellbeing of our communities.

A new model of public services must encourage sustainable growth to protect the environmental and historic assets of the county, and mitigate the impact of development, including through rural design, sustainable transport options, green infrastructure, energy, water and flood management. Challenges will include developing the county's resilience to environmental change, including extreme weather and flooding, and maximising the use of greenspaces and countryside to promote health and wellbeing. Continuing to drive the programme to mitigate the impact of High Speed 2 will be a top priority.



## Children and Young People

Resilient and successful children and families lead to resilient and successful communities which in turn drive county-wide social and economic growth and prosperity. The education system in Buckinghamshire is highly regarded and children generally enjoy good standards of health and wellbeing. There are however variations in educational and health outcomes across different groups of young people. Demand for services for children with special educational needs and disabilities and for children in need is increasing faster than population growth and is expected to increase still further as a result of housing growth.

Following an 'inadequate' OFSTED rating for children's safeguarding services in 2014, the multi-agency Children's Improvement Board has overseen a focused improvement journey, resulting in improvements to services for children and their families. Strong partnership working is now in place across public, private and voluntary sectors around a shared ambition to make Buckinghamshire a great place for all children and young people to live, be safe, to learn and achieve successful and fulfilled lives.

A new model of public services must continue to put children and young people at the heart of what everything it does. In the context of a changing education landscape, this will include building on existing good relationships with all education providers to champion educational excellence and aspiration for all children and young people, together with ensuring that sufficient investment is leveraged to build new schools, including through S106 contributions. A key priority will be to build upon the strong foundation of partnership working to lead whole systems approaches that sustain the improvement momentum, invest in resilient families and protect children and young people from harm.



## Health and Wellbeing

Buckinghamshire is generally affluent and this is reflected in health outcomes that are better than the national average. However, there are still concerning levels of unhealthy lifestyles which are driving an increase in long term conditions. For example, 2 in 3 adults are overweight or obese. The prevalence of long term conditions, many of which are preventable, are expected to increase over the next five years, with the greatest increase expected in diabetes and cancer.

There are significant health inequalities in Buckinghamshire, with the most disadvantaged 20% of people experiencing poorer health outcomes, including infant mortality, premature mortality, hospital admission for a range of conditions (including coronary heart disease, circulatory disease, heart failure, stroke and diabetes).

Significant progress is being made towards integration of services between the county council and the Health Trusts on a Buckinghamshire platform. In 2014, approximately £104.3m of services commissioned by the county council and the CCGs were reviewed and a funding gap of £11.9m was forecast by 2018/19. The Integrated Care Commissioning Strategy defines a partnership between health and social care that will address the funding gap and provide person centred care to support people to live independently for longer, through the development of joint plans and pooling of budgets e.g. Better Care Fund (BCF). Work with partners to integrate prevention into care pathways and front-line activity is already a key priority, with initiatives such as Prevention Matters and Making Every Contact Count training programme becoming an important enabler.

A new model of public services must ensure that growing communities are designed in a way that will improve health outcomes. This will include mobilising all those services which impact upon the wider determinants of health to maximise the collective impact, including public health, leisure and environment provision. A key

priority will be to lead an ambitious and innovative programme of whole system integration of outcomes across services for vulnerable adults and children to invest in prevention and early intervention and reduce long term demand.

### Best Practice Case Study – My Care Record

*Through effective partnership working between health and social care services, My Care Record has launched in Buckinghamshire - an electronic view of a client's GP record that can be accessed locally.*

*My Care Record allows medical and social care professionals to access up-to-date GP records so they can make the right choices about the care and medical attention needed. The information in My Care Record will save time and could also be life-saving in some circumstances. Before My Care Record, people would have to wait for information to be sent from GPs during surgery hours, which could cause delay in providing treatment, care or medication.*

*Sharing this crucial information will help health and social care staff to work more closely together, creating a much smoother experience for people who need both health and social care services.*





## Community Safety

After a number of years of decreasing crime levels, crime increased by 12% across the county between 2014/15 and 2015/16, reflecting a wider trend across the Thames Valley. The hidden nature of some emerging areas of crime such as modern slavery, exploitation of vulnerable individuals and groups, and cyber (internet) crime means that the understanding of who is at risk is becoming more complex.

A new model of public services must work with partners at both strategic and local levels to tackle community safety priorities, including domestic violence, safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism and radicalisation and combatting child sexual exploitation.

## Options Appraisal

### Introduction

A strategic options appraisal for future models of unitary local government within Buckinghamshire has been undertaken. The report (published separately) was developed by the county council and validated by an independent third party. It provides an estimate of financial costs and savings and considers the non-financial benefits and limitations of each option. This section includes a summary of the findings.

### Types of Reorganisation

#### Unitary Authorities

A Unitary Local Authority has responsibility for all council services delivered within a defined geographical area. The financial and non-financial benefits of the unitary model of local government are well established, and recent years have seen a number of areas transition from two-tier structures to various forms of unitary local government.

The last new unitary authorities were created in 2009:

- Bedfordshire County Council was abolished and two new unitary authorities were created
- Cheshire County was replaced by two new unitary authorities (East Cheshire and West Cheshire)
- Five other counties (Northumberland, Shropshire, Wiltshire, Cornwall and Durham) were replaced by single unitary authorities covering the previous county council areas

Further unitary moves were halted by the coalition government when it was formed in 2010, but have recently been reinvigorated by the Cities and Devolution Act 2016. Public debates about unitary structures of local government are currently taking place in many two tier areas across England.

#### Combined Authorities

Combined authorities are a relatively new form of local government structure, introduced by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and strengthened by the Cities and Devolution Act. To date there have been seven Combined Authorities formed in England.

Combined authorities are created voluntarily and allow a group of authorities to take decisions on strategic issues they feel are better considered collectively. One of the key drivers for combined authorities is to collaborate across larger geographies to deliver services at greater scale.

Existing combined authorities are primarily focused on economic growth, transport and regeneration – although changes to legislation in the Cities and Devolution Act 2016 enabled them to perform any statutory function of the member local authorities. Combined authorities, as in Manchester, are generally built on a history of strong collaboration at a strategic level, which must be considered as part of a reorganisation in Buckinghamshire. It is important to note that there are currently no examples of combined authorities delivering social care and people related services successfully.





In January 2015 the Communities and Local Government Select Committee commissioned an investigation entitled 'Devolution: the next five years and beyond' which focused in particular on whether the Manchester model of devolution is suitable for other areas. The report suggested caution regarding the applicability of the Manchester model to other

areas, given that it could “not be easily lifted and dropped on to other city regions, where the physical and economic geography may differ” and that the Government could not “simply roll out the same model everywhere”.




It is important to recognise that all existing combined authorities have been implemented to aggregate and coordinate functions across metropolitan unitary authorities, rather than to manage the disaggregation of services from a predecessor county council.

### Options Under Assessment

The options selected for consideration are based on:

	The economic geography of the areas that make up Buckinghamshire		Travel to work patterns
	The urban and rural nature of the county		Population size

The options under consideration are as follows:

		
<b>One Unitary</b>	<b>Two/Three Unitary</b>	<b>Three Unitary with Combined Authority</b>
<i>A county wide unitary responsible for delivering the full array of local authority services across Buckinghamshire</i>	<i>Would either see the county divided into North and South, or would follow a similar division to the current district boundaries</i>	<i>Three unitary authorities with strategic services pooled into a combined authority that would deliver these services county wide – for example health and social care, strategic planning and transport</i>

For the purposes of this evaluation, the creation of either two or three new unitary authorities without a combined authority is being considered as a single option (option 2), as the non-financial implications are broadly similar in both cases. Our financial analysis differentiates between the likely costs and savings available under the variants of this option.

Option three describes the creation of three new unitary authorities and a Combined Authority. For the purposes of this analysis we have assumed that the combined authority would take responsibility for delivery of social care and safeguarding services, including

public health, as well as strategic planning and transport. These services have been selected over other choices due to the geography of Buckinghamshire and a clear separation of services and responsibilities based on current skills and expertise.

### Key Findings

#### Population Size

Throughout this year, guidance has been supplied by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to individual authorities that the optimum population size for reorganisation is in the range of 300,000 and 700,000 people and that “although this ‘range was not absolute, Ministers would ‘ask searching questions’ of proposals outside of this band’.” The table below sets out the population sizes by geography in Buckinghamshire, the options and whether they broadly align with recommended criteria.

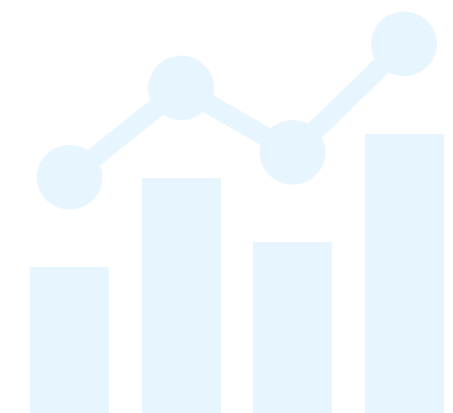
Option	Boundary	Population 2015	Population 2031	Within recommended limits?
1	County-wide Buckinghamshire Unitary	528,300	594,925	Yes
2.1	North Bucks unitary	188,700	222,888	No
	South Bucks unitary	339,600	372,03	Yes
2.2	North Bucks unitary	188,700	222,888	No
	Wycombe unitary	176,000	192,388	No
	Chiltern & South Bucks unitary	163,600	179,649	No

\*Table shows population figures from 2015 ONS Mid Year Population Estimate

#### Financial Analysis

The financial analysis has considered the likely costs, savings, financial standing and risk which are estimated to arise under each of the three options and have been scored on the basis of:

- **Return on Investment:** based on the cost of transition, potential to generate savings and the pay-back period;
- **Financial standing:** based on risk, ongoing value for money (VFM) and financial sustainability for each option



<sup>1</sup> M. Smulian, 'DCLG to Unitary Bidders: Aim for Minimum Population of 300,000', Local Government Chronicle (16 March 2016).



The table below ranks the options from 1–3, with 1 representing the highest level of savings and 3 being the lowest:

Options	Score	Reasons
<b>Option 1:</b> Single Unitary Authority	<b>1</b>	<p>Greatest level of annual revenue savings (£18.2m) for a similar total investment cost. Return on investment (ROI) is estimated at around 99% (of initial costs) with an estimated overall £45.4m net saving (equivalent to ROI of 282%) over the five year period that is significantly higher than for the other options. Pay-back is estimated at 2.2 years following go-live.</p> <p>The level of savings potential would help to contribute significantly to the financial health and stability of the local government structure in the county. The scale of (net) savings that is estimated would be significantly larger than the current funding gap in 2019-20, although achievable towards the end of period.</p>
<b>Option 2.1:</b> Two Unitary Authorities	<b>2</b>	<p>2nd highest level of annual revenue savings (£10.3m) for an investment of £16.1m; with ROI of 54% and a net saving of £17.3m over the five year period. However savings and the impact of council tax harmonisation are not expected to accrue evenly. As a result return on investment and pay-back is expected to be quicker in a North Unitary than in the South. In addition the level of savings within the five year period is not significant in the context of existing funding pressures within the local government structure.</p>
<b>Option 2.2:</b> Three Unitary Authorities	<b>3</b>	<p>This option scores the lowest with savings of £5.5m (from an investment £15.5m) resulting in 33% ROI. Pay-back for the smallest Unitary is anticipated to exceed the five year period with an overall net saving of £5.6m over the five year period across all three unitaries. This would not be sufficient to contribute significantly towards the existing funding pressures within the current structures. In addition risks around financial resilience are estimated to be greater including, for example the ability to manage high risk Social Care budgets.</p>
<b>Option 3:</b> Three Unitary Authorities + Combined Authority	<b>4</b>	<p>Although the lowest level of savings (£5.4m) for reasonable high investment cost £10.9m, the model suggests that a combined authority offers a higher potential return on investment (46%) and net cumulative savings of £11.1m than in the Three Unitary option. However as above, the level of savings is not significant in the current financial climate and pay-back for the smallest Unitary is anticipated to exceed the five year period. The Combined Authority would have a more significant budget in relation to the management of high risk services such as Social Care; however this would be subject to agreement between the contributing authorities. Excluding the Combined Authority elements of their budgets, the model suggests that the size of the Unitary Authorities would be significantly smaller than any existing comparable Unitary.</p>

In conclusion, option one presents the greatest potential level of ongoing savings. These savings are a conservative estimate of what could be achievable through the consolidation of existing organisations. Once all services are brought together there will be additional savings opportunities that can be gained from economies of scale, adoption of best and optimum practices in service delivery, innovation and transformational investment.

A single unitary authority would also be able to take a strategic approach to service delivery and investment across the whole of Buckinghamshire and in doing so, be better placed to manage any financial risks, as well as take full advantage of financial opportunities that may arise.

Options two and three would offer less scope for consolidation and lower economies of scale. Cost and savings are anticipated to accrue differently across the unitary councils within these models with a stronger case being apparent for a North Unitary than for the comparable South or South East /South West

options. Under a three unitary model (both with and without the Combined Authority) it is estimated that the South East Unitary would not be able to achieve payback of transition costs and council tax harmonisation within the five year period.

The demand-led services of Adult and Children's Social Care represent by far the greatest service risk amongst any of the services currently undertaken by the districts and the county council. Disaggregation of these services would represent a significant financial risk. Under option three the ability of a combined authority to mitigate this potential risk is untested; furthermore the limited level of organisational consolidation within this option limits the level of savings potentially available.

The modelling suggests that only the Single Unitary option would provide sufficiently significant net savings over the five year period to contribute to the significant financial risks within the current financial climate within local government.

### Non- Financial Analysis

For our non-financial analysis, we have considered a wide range of criteria based on the evidential requirements of the Department for Communities and Local Government, and sought to learn from similar studies that have been undertaken elsewhere within the country. The table below sets out the relative rankings that our appraisal has determined for these criteria, from 1–3 (1 being the highest). The sustainability section represents one rank overall and all criteria have been equally weighted:

Option	Service Performance	Democratic Leadership & Accountability	Local Engagement & Decision Making	Sustainability				Average sustainability score	Total score	Non-Financial Rank
				Economic Growth	Skills & Capacity	Engagement of supply chain (business and supply chain)	Coterminosity with partners (partnership working)			
Option One: Single Unitary	● 1	● 1	● 3	● 1	● 1	● 2	● 1	1.25	6.25	● 1
Option Two: Multiple Unitary	● 3	● 3	● 1	● 3	● 3	● 2	● 3	2.75	9.75	● 3
Option Three: Combined Authority Option	● 2	● 2	● 2	● 2	● 2	● 1	● 2	1.75	7.75	● 2

1 - high scoring, 2 - medium scoring, 3 - low scoring

On the balance of available evidence, our finding is that option one offers the greatest likelihood of better meeting the needs of Buckinghamshire in the future. A single unitary authority for Buckinghamshire would provide a single point of accountability and responsibility for the quality of all local authority services within the area, supported by a single executive function. This would greatly simplify arrangements from the perspectives of the public, partners and business, enabling quicker decisions taken with full democratic accountability and scrutiny.

A single unitary would also improve the conditions for economic growth by bringing together related services such as spatial planning, housing, transport and infrastructure and allowing strategic decisions over the widest possible scale, working to a single plan. Sharing the same boundaries with partners would minimise the complexity of public sector working compared with the other options.

This model would offer an enhancement of existing county-wide social care and safeguarding services through closer connection with related services such as housing, leisure and benefits and a greater ability to match resources with need than would be achievable under the other options. It also provides the most robust platform for further health and social care integration.

The greater financial scale of a single unitary would also maximise the ability of the organisation to invest over the longer term in preventative services.

The key challenge with this option would be to provide confidence to residents that a large single unitary council would be able to respond to distinctive local needs, respect local identity and put decision-making in the hands of local communities.

Option Three was the second-highest ranking. A combined authority would offer the potential for effective joint decision-making on a county-wide basis by multiple new unitary authorities and could also allow some services, such as social care, to continue to be provided across Buckinghamshire without being disaggregated. However, the success of a combined authority would turn on its ability to make decisions quickly and effectively and to balance potentially conflicting interests to mutual

benefit. The constitution and governance arrangements of a combined authority would be critical in order to achieve this. These issues would be particularly testing if, as proposed, the combined authority was required to make decisions on resource allocation for social care services as it is likely that the patterns of need and funding would not be equal across member authorities. At this point there are no precedents for a combined authority achieving this effectively; the model is untested.

Finally, there would be important considerations around the democratic accountability of decisions taken by a combined authority, especially if it is decided that a directly-elected mayor is not an appropriate option for Buckinghamshire.

Option two was consistently the lowest-ranked option. The main disadvantage of this option is the significant risk, complexity and cost likely to be associated with the disaggregation of social care and safeguarding services. It is well documented that existing smaller unitary authorities can struggle to bear the financial burden of these services especially when met with spikes in demand for high-cost placements.

A key further drawback is the likely weakness in joint decision-making and leadership in the absence of a formal vehicle for achieving this. Inevitably, decisions on issues affecting all new unitary authorities would continue to be required, especially relating to the economy, infrastructure and transport. Without a well-governed combined authority, multiple unitary authorities in Buckinghamshire could struggle to avoid deadlock on big decisions that involved competing interests and might not be able to move at a pace expected by regional and national partners and stakeholders.

## Conclusion

The preferred option reached by this appraisal is for a new single unitary authority for Buckinghamshire which delivers the greatest possible level of financial savings, reduces complexity and provides a single point of accountability to the public and partners. The one unitary model allows the new authority to be an active participant in wider public service reform within and beyond the county and provides the opportunity to design and implement at scale a comprehensive offer to communities and local councils.

It is important to note that all unitary options under consideration would entail the dissolution of all existing councils, and the creation of new unitary authorities for which fresh electoral arrangements would be required. No existing organisation can therefore determine what new organisations could or should do. A new unitary authority or authorities, once established, would own and determine their own priorities.

Buckinghamshire's future includes significant population growth and a change in its demographics; whilst maximising the benefits this offers, the local economy must continue to thrive and prosper through a period of uncertainty and opportunity, contributing to a positive and sustainable environment. Public service reform must be developed in a way which supports local needs in the wider national context, and at a time of exciting new possibilities through technology.

Taking into consideration the financial and non-financial benefits, challenges and mitigating actions for each model, the finding of this options appraisal is that a new unitary council for Buckinghamshire offers the best solution to current and future challenges.

**Buckinghamshire now has a choice.**



# B

## Part B

### Blueprint for a New Council

#### Blueprint for a new council

Our proposition is to abolish the county council and the four district councils and establish a brand new, county-wide single unitary council at the forefront of modern local government, committed to improving

the quality of life and wellbeing for all local residents, designed to engage effectively with each of the multiple communities county-wide and to develop a prosperous and sustainable future for Buckinghamshire.

## A New Vision

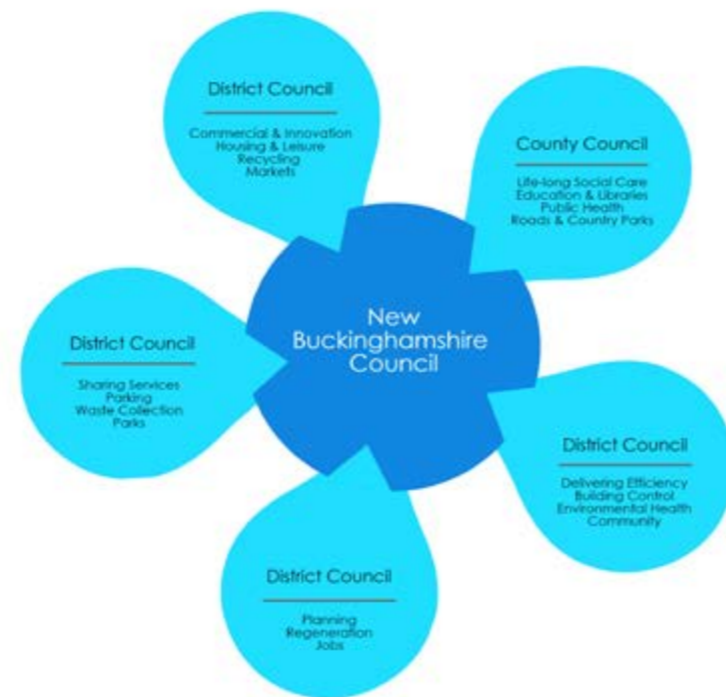
Our vision for the future of Buckinghamshire is to provide a new form of civic leadership fit for purpose in 2020 and beyond, one that gives local people a stronger say in the choices that affect them and enables each local community – from Buckingham to Burnham – to realise its own shared vision for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

Our vision is to redefine the role of the public sector from one of control and top down dialogue to one of enabling and facilitating initiative, innovation and ambition, whilst at the same time strengthening the safety net for the most vulnerable and removing the gaps that people can slip through.

Our proposal is for a brand new form of local government which builds upon the strong track record of the four district councils and the county council, whilst seizing the opportunity to design and establish new structures that ensure interests are represented at the right level, so that decisions can be taken to deliver the best outcomes.

The rest of this document sets out what we see as an exciting vision for the aims and ambitions of a new council. However this is for illustrative purposes; it would be a brand new council, with newly elected members, and it would be for that council to decide its own vision, priorities and operating model.

A brand new council - built on best practice from existing five councils



## Ambition for Buckinghamshire

A new, county-wide single unitary council will be able to leverage its scale, resources and leadership capacity to use the substantial growth agenda as the catalyst for positive change. Working collaboratively with public, private and voluntary sector, these opportunities could include:

Buckinghamshire is a place where residents are generally positive about the local area. Most residents agree their area is one where people from different backgrounds get on well together (79%) and that people treat one another with respect and consideration (69%). The ambition could be to maintain that sense of harmonious communities in the context of major growth.

### Place Shaping

A new, county-wide single unitary council could use its strategic leadership to engage all stakeholders in defining a long term, strategic vision for the future shape of Buckinghamshire and achieve a truly integrated and co-ordinated programme of investment in infrastructure, skills, services and environment to create the conditions for people to flourish and achieve; designing communities reflect the wider determinants of health and promote wellbeing for all.

### Children at the Heart of Buckinghamshire

Partners in Buckinghamshire have a shared ambition to keep children and young people in Buckinghamshire safe, healthy and happy to that they fulfil their potential. A new, county-wide single unitary council could provide the strategic leadership to ensure that the interests of children and young people are at the forefront of all of our minds in the way that we plan for the future. This could include running a "Future Bucks" Children's Conversation to involve children and young people, and their advocates, in the conversation about planning for the future, and the roll out of a Child Friendly community scheme, building on the [Leeds model](#). All Members of the new council could receive a comprehensive induction programme to enable them to act as Champions of Children.

### Harmonious Communities

Drawing on the skills and experiences of the legacy councils – for example through the Chesham project – a new, county-wide single unitary council could promote a new definition of social inclusion within a rural county facing significant demographic changes.

### Best Practice Case Study – Regeneration

Wycombe District Council has a strong track record in planning and delivering regeneration schemes for the district. The current Town Centre Masterplan project is designed to improve access for individuals with mobility impairments, as well as strengthening the role of the town centre as a focus for employment, shopping and leisure activities. Through the regeneration of the town, changes to the road network will be made to make the area more "pedestrian-friendly", including changing the traffic flow around the town centre and improving the streets and pedestrian spaces in the town centre.



## Aims

**Single Voice** – strong, visible and accountable strategic leadership, speaking up with a single voice for Buckinghamshire on behalf of residents, business and partners

**More Local** – local communities empowered to shape their own future, with improved involvement of local people in the choices that affect them

**Better Quality** – services that are simple to access, efficiently delivered, and meet the needs of residents, communities and businesses, with faster, leaner decision making

**More Efficient** – significant cost savings delivered and invested in priority outcomes, adding value for both Council and Business Rate Tax payers; appropriate commercial activities developed to reduce the need for grant and taxpayer funding

## Economic Prosperity

Working in partnership with the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, a new, county-wide single unitary council could use its resources and its scale as leverage for economic prosperity – for example:

- Delivering on infrastructure provision for communities and businesses
- Intervening in the market so that developments achieve community outcomes
- Developing Buckinghamshire as a centre of expertise in Assistive Technology
- Developing a brand new technical pathway into employment, in alliance with schools, local employers and universities, including a rapid expansion of local apprenticeship provision
- Maximising the value of open data to drive growth in the digital economy
- Public sector investments that complement that of the private sector and are delivered in a timely and cost effective manner

### Best Practice Case Study – Aylesbury Woodlands Development

*Situated next to Arla Dairy factory, Woodlands is a 220 acre site which has been granted Enterprise Zone status by the Government.*

*Buckinghamshire Advantage, the infrastructure delivery arm of Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, is promoting the mixed use development which will provide, housing, commercial premises and extensive community, social and transport infrastructure.*

*The scheme provides a model for the way in which public services can be proactive in stimulating balanced sustainable development to promote employment growth, respond to local housing pressures and deliver community infrastructure.*



## Governance and Local Democracy

Local members will provide a pivotal link between a new, county-wide single unitary council and the residents and businesses of Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire Council would need to support councillors to ensure that they have the capacity and capability to carry out an expanded community leadership role. Local Members will:

- work together on Community Boards to listen to local residents and businesses, influence the decisions of Buckinghamshire Council so that they respond to the needs and ambitions of local communities, and carry out scrutiny of local public service delivery

- work together with their empowered local town and parish councils to integrate locally delivered services with those delivered by Buckinghamshire Council and other public organisations
- play a formal role with all other Buckinghamshire Council Members in approving the budget and other strategic policies, as well as debating the big issues affecting Buckinghamshire
- carry out formal duties linked to the other core business of the new Buckinghamshire Council which could include:-
  - Cabinet: A Cabinet of 10 members is envisaged for the first term of the new council. This is larger than would be required for 'steady state' but would provide the capacity required for the successful implementation of a major change programme. The new council could consider reducing this number in its second term
  - Scrutinising the work of the executive and partners at a strategic level - a single unitary council would enable more robust scrutiny on behalf of local residents rather than the current artificial constraints of looking at council services of 5 separate bodies in isolation. Scrutiny would be carried out at two levels - strategically and locally – by non-executive councillors on a cross-party basis. Locally scrutiny would take place through the proposed Community Boards which will be explored in more depth in the following section
  - Statutory decision making committees, such as Strategic Planning Committee, Licencing, Rights of Way etc.
- play a civil, community and ambassadorial role for Buckinghamshire, including representing Buckinghamshire Council on partnerships
- A dedicated single team offering a 'one stop shop' for Local Members, including local support for case work and Community Boards
- Member training & development (building on the existing Charter Mark status achieved by Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council)
- Digital & ICT support to enable Members to work remotely and communicate with their electorate utilising technology
- Dedicated policy support for the council's statutory scrutiny function

To make it as easy as possible for those with full-time day-time commitments to serve as an elected councillor, a new Buckinghamshire Council could hold all full council and committee meetings in evenings.

### Electoral Wards

In order to effect a smooth and speedy transition from county and district Member representation, it is proposed that a new Buckinghamshire Council would have 98 councillors. This is higher than the range of 65 - 80 elected members recommended in the Buckinghamshire Business First /EY report, which was based on a review of average councillor per elector rates across unitary authorities. However, it would provide a straight forward approach in terms of a boundary review, and would also ensure sufficient capacity to lead the council during a period of transformation.

Implementation of this proposal would involve a Boundary Commission Review, with each of the 49 existing county council divisions broadly divided into two in order to create 98 single member wards. This is based on the approach taken with the creation of the new Wiltshire Council. It would represent a reduction of some 138 councilors across Buckinghamshire, and a saving of £1.2m compared with the current county and district councils. In the longer term, a more significant boundary review may be appropriate in order to reflect the changing nature of communities during a period of significant growth.

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

### Supporting Local Members

A new, county-wide single unitary council could support all councillors to fulfil their roles effectively through providing high quality training and development, policy and administrative support:

# Operating Model

The creation of a new, county-wide single unitary council would provide a unique opportunity to introduce a modern business model, at the heart of a broader integrated system of public service delivery in Buckinghamshire. This would replace the management arrangements of the five existing councils, overcoming silos and promoting collaboration and integration.

Striking the right balance between joined up, strategic planning for the county, empowered communities, saving public money and offering choice will be vital. This balance could be achieved considering the **strategic or operational nature of services** alongside their **potential for economies of scale** (see model).

Nature of Service	More strategic	<b>Flexible framework</b> Planning and co-ordination at a strategic level to ensure over-arching aims are met Services delivered or commissioned by communities with room for local variation <i>Examples: planning, prevention</i>	<b>Strategic</b> Accountability at strategic level with the strategic authority ensuring effective partnership working The views of residents and businesses are heard through Members <i>Examples: highways, waste</i>
	More operational	<b>Community provision</b> Services that are ideal for self-organised community delivery Strategic authority provides professional input into service design, if required <i>Examples: assisted digital, libraries</i>	<b>High volume</b> Services delivered or commissioned by communities Strategic authority provides infrastructure, capacity and skills or acts as a broker to the market to achieve economies of scale <i>Examples: soft FM, revs and bens</i>
		Low	High
Scalability of Service			

The role of a new Buckinghamshire Council would be to commission, co-ordinate, support and enable, as well as some direct delivery of services. Strategic commissioning would be underpinned by evidence of what works and an understanding of the priorities in each community, informed by active engagement. The authority could deliver and commission some services, particularly where there is a statutory responsibility. However, the new model would make it easier for many services to be designed and delivered at local level by more empowered town and parish councils.

A diverse range of service delivery models could be used, according to the needs of different services:

- Town/Parish Councils
- Direct delivery by the new Buckinghamshire Council - where services are strategic in nature or achieve best value for money through economies of scale
- With partners – through integration, pooled budgets, joint delivery vehicles
- Shared with other similar councils – through individual partnerships as well as regional alliances

- Creation of new trusts, social enterprises or joint ventures
- Contracting with voluntary and private sector providers
- Personal budgets

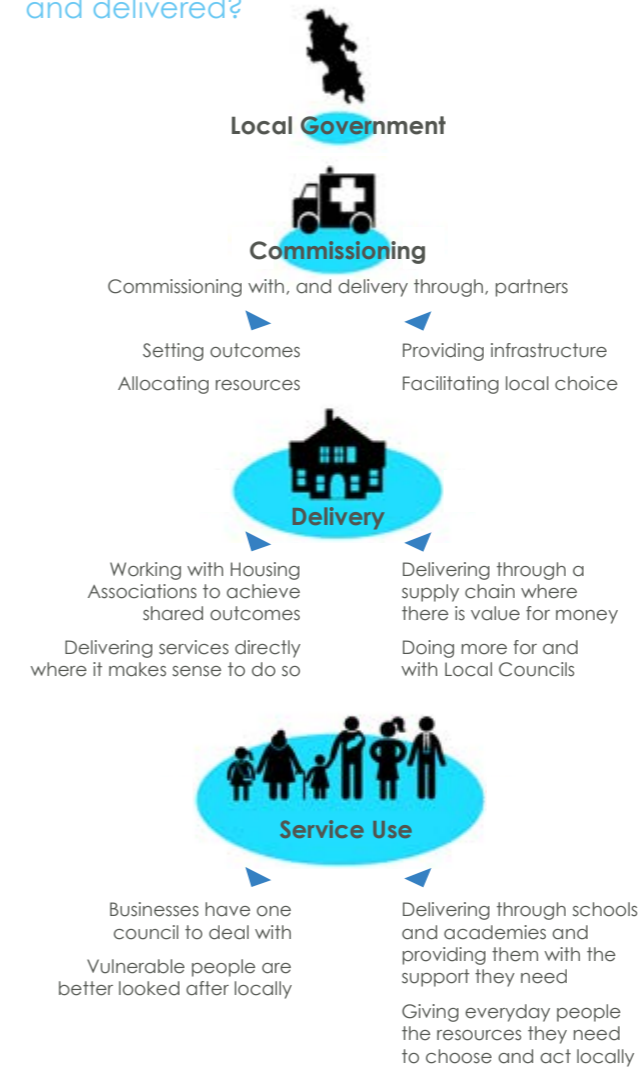
An immediate challenge for a new organisation would be to establish an agreed framework for the values and behaviours which it wishes to establish, in order to promote collaboration, innovation and accountability. Cultural values could for example include:

- Caring
- Trusting
- Working together
- Valuing diversity

Key operational traits of a new organisation might include:

- **Digital by design** – co-designing processes and services with customers to ensure that they meet needs and deploying new technologies where relevant

## How might services be commissioned and delivered?



- **Entrepreneurial and prepared to take a risk** – with a strong external focus to seize opportunities for innovation and commercialisation
- **Strong financial planning** – to keep track of more diverse and complex funding
- **Devolving local decision making to lowest possible level** – enabling and supporting town and parish councils to choose and act locally
- **Pragmatic Commissioning** – with a strong commissioning and contract management framework to manage external provision and robust performance management for internally provided services
- **Strong and flexible infrastructure** – that facilitates partnership working and provides the resources for partners to work with the unitary council and with others, e.g. technology infrastructure that keeps data secure but allows it to be shared across many partners.

## Best Practice Case Study – Excellence in Cross Regional Commissioning

Buckinghamshire County Council has played a leading role in building a commissioning consortium across six authorities to provide therapeutic residential care and education for 11-to 18-year-olds with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. The project resulted in a seven-year contract between residential child care provider Keys Group and the six authorities – Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, Bracknell Forest, Reading and Milton Keynes – and has already delivered savings as well as improved outcomes for the young people through specialist provision which allows them to stay near to home. The consortium has been widely recognised as best practice, including by Sir Martin Narey in his *independent report on Children's Residential Care for the Secretary of State for Education (June 2016)*

The six authorities are now in discussion with neighbouring authorities over a commissioning strategy for the next ten years. This case study illustrates a model for the future development of commissioning complex specialist services, together with a strong track record in partnership working with neighbouring authorities, which Buckinghamshire Council will be able to build upon in exploring opportunities for scaling up services in the future.



## Commercial Model

A commercial outlook will be important for a new council, and it would be able to draw on considerable expertise from its constituent councils. The benefits of a commercial outlook are:

- the identification and exploitation of opportunities which can reduce the need for taxpayer or grant money
- a cultural shift that embraces balanced risk-taking within appropriate governance mechanisms
- a stronger empathy with the realities of life for businesses, and therefore a better understanding of how to help local businesses succeed.

Service delivery solutions could be considered on a case by case basis, taking account of:

- Value for money
- Impact on the market
- Quality
- Benefits to residents
- Statutory requirements

The table below illustrates a way of categorising commercial opportunities and offers some examples which Buckinghamshire Council could choose to build upon.

Activity Type	Considerations	Illustration
Taking existing service capabilities and finding new customers for them	The services need to have demonstrable competitive advantage in order to win business, and the council must be able to invest in marketing and continuing product improvement.	Taking excellent corporate or other services and selling them, or developing joint activities, with other councils – for example Buckinghamshire County Council's model of delivering HR and Organisational Development services to the London Borough of Harrow
Developing new capabilities for existing customers	The council needs the skills to identify and develop new product opportunities and must be willing to invest in this.	For example AVDC recently launched two new brands for its trading company: <i>LimeCart</i> , which provides garden services to residents, and <i>IncGen</i> , which provides services to business customers such as office space and a virtual reception service
Enhancing return from existing products for existing customers	Where councils have monopoly positions e.g. in fees and charges, there are regulatory limits to how much profit can be made. However, fees and charges can be used to drive beneficial behaviours.	Premium car parking charges in the most popular car parks to fund subsidised or free parking in high streets where parking charges impact badly on local business profits.
Maximising the return on assets	Councils may need to access specialist capabilities either through recruitment or external support	For example, Wycombe District Council's Handy Cross Hub redevelopment scheme which has led to new jobs as well as investment in new state of the art leisure facilities

## Functional Model

It is envisaged that a new Buckinghamshire Council could be developed around five building blocks of services. In the longer term, a unitary council could potentially operate with four departments but it is envisaged that a new Buckinghamshire Council would wish to have additional capacity at the outset, particularly in the context of the transformation programme. The financial analysis has been carried out on this basis.

A new, county-wide single unitary council would deliver greater resilience to services, both through its own resources and through strong relationships with partners, thereby ensuring greater sustainability in public sector services for the future.

### Organisational Resilience

Across the five councils there is a significant level of duplication in role and responsibility at a senior and executive level. In addition, the councils all struggle to recruit key staff to undertaken critical roles within crucial services such as planning and social care. A new,

county-wide single unitary council would be in a position to select the very best staff from across all five councils and beyond. The new council's members and executive would be able to build a new organisation which is fit for the 21st century and develop a customer and business focused culture that supports innovation across the county.

Redesigning the functions of five separate councils into a new fit-for-purpose structure would deliver not only savings but also the opportunity to design in resilience and strategic capacity to manage the service expectations of Buckinghamshire. The scale of a new, county-wide single unitary council would enable it to adopt approaches that have been proven within the current councils in the county and beyond. This would include the creation of specialist technical teams and the opportunity to professionalise support functions. These approaches would not only provide better services, but also create new career pathways to attract and retain key talent, something that has not previously been the case.



## Aim 1: Single Voice

This blueprint is not just about a new modern system of local government but of broader public service reform within Buckinghamshire, enabled and facilitated by a new Buckinghamshire Council, designed to meet the challenges and opportunities of 2020 and beyond.

Strategic leadership for Buckinghamshire is about strong and stable governance, the strategic capacity to understand and tackle complex problems, and the powers, local discretion and willingness to take bold and farsighted decisions on behalf of residents, communities and businesses of Buckinghamshire.

## Benefits of a Single Strategic Voice for Buckinghamshire

This section highlights some of the opportunities that a new single county-wide unitary council would bring for Buckinghamshire:

- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire, with a single strategic voice, would be able to be a powerful advocate for ensuring the opportunities and needs of Buckinghamshire shape the emerging sub-national agenda and the commitment (through the National Infrastructure Commission) to address barriers to growth. It would be able to build upon the initiative that has created England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance – an emerging Sub-national Transport Board – using the ability of its civic leaders to develop momentum and deliver a change agenda. It would have the professional skills required to deliver an ambition for Buckinghamshire in a way that has not previously been possible.
- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would provide the scale and governance arrangements fit for a future which will be connected to growth in the region and the UK as a whole, with the potential for developing a devolution deal with government in the future. It would be able to gain economies of scale and integrate services across a larger geography where that makes sense
- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire, aligned with key partnership structures already in place such as the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Federation, would have the strategic accountability to deliver a place shaping agenda, seizing the opportunities of growth as the catalyst for change.
- A single executive could provide the agile leadership to make faster strategic decisions. Stronger representation by fewer, more empowered councillors would provide clearer accountability over decision-making to residents and businesses. The council would provide robust assurance and regulation of the use of public funding and assets held on behalf of Buckinghamshire, and effective scrutiny of services delivered on behalf of the council and other public service providers.
- A new county-wide unitary council would be in a position to provide a single vision for Buckinghamshire, supported by investment plans for transport infrastructure, regeneration and housing delivery, skills and jobs.
- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be better for businesses, working in partnership to set the long-term direction and create the conditions that allows businesses to thrive, with a focus on investing in skills, transport infrastructure, encouraging business growth and playing to the strengths of the county's economy, particularly those sectors that will shape the lives of our residents in the future.
- A new county-wide unitary council for Buckinghamshire would be able to maintain the excellent quality of education across Buckinghamshire, sustain the momentum in transforming health and social care, and improving children's services, and lead whole system integration to meet the growing demands of a changing population.

## Strategic Partnership Working

Strong collaboration across public, private and voluntary sectors – at both strategic and local levels – will continue to be essential for meeting the future needs of Buckinghamshire.

A new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to use its democratic mandate to work with the public, private and voluntary sectors in Buckinghamshire at a strategic level, in shaping the future for the county, and at a local level in delivering improved and, where appropriate, integrated local services.

The key public service providers in the county all operate across a Buckinghamshire geography and strong strategic partnership arrangements are firmly embedded on a Buckinghamshire platform. A new Buckinghamshire Council would play a key role in these arrangements, providing a coherent, single voice for local government services.

The development of a new county-wide unitary council would provide an opportunity to review the way in which key stakeholder groups are able to engage with and influence local government. Consideration could be given to establishing forums for key groups

such as the businesses and voluntary sector organisations to encourage regular liaison with executive members of the new council at a county-wide level. There would also be opportunities to rationalise partnerships – for example, replacing two tiers of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships with a single partnership – as well as to reduce the duplication arising from separate county and district representation that currently exists. At a local level, partners would be critical to realising the ambition for Community Hubs and Community Boards set out in this business case and these models would be developed as a joint endeavour.

A new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to build on successes to date to work with local public sector partners in order to combine relevant back office services and create even greater efficiencies, in order to alleviate some of the financial pressures being experienced by other public service providers. For example, Buckinghamshire County Council now provides the communication and engagement function for the Buckinghamshire CCG Federation.

## The Role Of A New County-wide Single Unitary Council

The role of a new county-wide unitary council would be to:

- Listen to the people and businesses of Buckinghamshire and set a clear vision
- Use its evidence, data and information sources to develop key strategic plans
- Make sure resources are lined up together to deliver the vision and policies
- Forge alliances locally, regionally and nationally to coordinate strategy, investment and delivery of services in a way that delivers better outcomes for Buckinghamshire
- Be visibly accountable for all decisions of the council and be open to independent and rigorous public challenge and scrutiny, both strategically and locally
- Establish county-wide policy and service standards and devolve/share decision making with local communities
- Act on behalf of the local community in holding all public service providers to account
- Maximise opportunities for devolution and investment from Central Government that will give greater local control and influence to achieve the best for Buckinghamshire



## Aim 2: More Local Voice

Strong mechanisms for listening to local communities and responding to the differences in need across the county geography would be critical for the success of a new, county-wide single unitary council. Residents want to know

that a new council will give them a real say about services and act on their concerns, and deliver greater transparency and accountability.

The development of a brand new county-wide unitary council provides an exciting opportunity to design a new localism model which builds on the experience of the five councils to date but goes much further in responding to the appetite amongst county and district councillors, town and parish councils and residents for a real say on local issues.

It is proposed that a new Buckinghamshire Council would deliver these ambitions through the following approach:

- **A new devolution offer to Parish/Town Councils** – offering flexible opportunities to enable them to run services and assets currently run by the county and district councils where it is cost effective to do so, with packages tailored to local ambition and priorities
- **Five Local Area Planning Committees** – ensuring that local councillors take decisions on local planning issues
- **Nineteen new local 'Community Boards'** – giving local councillors the authority and resources to take local decisions, enabling local people to hold a new Buckinghamshire Council to account and ensure that its services reflect local differences

Each of these three key elements are critical to successfully delivering a localism approach. Each has a different role to play. Taken together, these three elements will offer far greater opportunities for local service delivery and local accountability than those currently offered by the county council and district councils under the two tier system.



### Best Practice Case Study – Local Area Forum

*In 2008, Buckinghamshire County Council introduced 19 local area forums (LAFs) as a place for County, District and Parish Councillors, together with local representatives from key public sector organisations to come together to discuss and take action on local issues. The County Council allocates a budget to each LAF which is available to fund projects that tackle local priorities.*

*These have ranged between parking projects, match funded by town and parish councils, mobile speed awareness devices, intergenerational youth volunteering schemes, community cafes, and supporting youth enterprises. Some LAFs have held participatory budgeting schemes over recent years, each scheme engaging up to 3000 residents in voting on local projects.*

**Community Boards** would provide the mechanism by which a new Buckinghamshire Council would listen to the views of local people on those services that remain the council's responsibility. They would not deliver local services themselves but could encourage **town and parish councils** and community organisations to take on responsibility for running services and assets, and facilitate agreements. Planning decisions need to be taken by a formal committee in accordance with the law, comprising of the elected councillors for Buckinghamshire Council. **Area Planning Committees** would therefore enable local councillors to take planning decisions.

The table illustrates the key differences between the current 'local area forum' arrangements and the locality arrangements underpinning a single unitary model.

Feature	Future		
	Local Area Forums	Community Boards	Town/Parish Councils
Delegated Decision-making powers on behalf of Unitary Council	✗	✓	✗
Devolved council budget for local projects	✓ Informal arrangement	✓ Formal accountability	✗
Delivery of local services	✗	✗	✓
Scrutiny of local service delivery	✗	✓	✗
Consultee on all significant council service changes impacting on area	✗ Sometimes	✓ Always	✗
Statutory consultee on planning	✗	✗	✓
Raise taxation to invest in local issues	✗	✗	✓
Dedicated Officer Support	✗	✓	n/a

## Parish & Town Council Devolution Offer

Parish and town councils have a critical role to play in supporting local communities to thrive and these will be key partners to a new Buckinghamshire Council on all aspects of its work, particularly in working together on Community Boards to tackle and solve local problems.

It is envisaged that a new Buckinghamshire Council would develop a new devolution offer for individual town and parish councils. This agreement would offer both choice and resources.

The success of this model will depend on communities taking on the role they want in the services that matter to them, not being given accountabilities they don't want and assets they don't need. This will require a confident Strategic Authority that is as comfortable delegating decision making and resources as it is accountability.

Benefits will include:

### For Communities

- Improved quality of service: parish and town councils take pride in delivering services locally and will likely 'go the extra mile' to deliver a high quality of service
- A more responsive agile service: parish and town councils are able to respond quickly to need for changes in service delivery
- Opportunities to generate local employment
- Greater local choice and decision making – for example whether to prioritise grass cutting in the centre of a village over the edges, or by raising precept locally to add value to services

### For Parish and Town Councils

- Enhanced role and ability to respond to local issues
- Greater control over local service delivery if they wish
- The opportunity to take ownership for the local environment

- More substantial roles to attract candidates to join Town & Parish council

### For Buckinghamshire Council

- Ability to secure the economies of scale from large contracts on universal service delivery models, balanced with a localised approach which is flexible to meet different needs of communities

A menu of assets and services could be provided, enabling each parish and town council to express an interest in individual assets and services. This menu would be supported by a transparent formula for the transfer of resources from a new Buckinghamshire Council to the local councils, a tailored package of capacity building and support and clear county-wide policies and standards.

By including a spectrum of options, flexible to meet the needs and ambitions of different localities, this model may lead to different solutions in different places. This could involve a parish council being commissioned to take on a service provider role on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council, on a case by case basis. At the other end of the spectrum, this could involve statutory based devolution with full legal responsibility for service provision transferred to eligible councils, together with associated resources. It could also involve the full transfer of local assets to the ownership of the local council.

Buckinghamshire Council would have a dialogue with each interested council on the respective business case for a deal. Key considerations could include:

- Evidence of the benefits to the local community
- Cost neutral overall for Buckinghamshire Council
- Enable more local decision making and budget setting

### Examples of Services to be Included in the Devolution Offer

Assets which could be transferred to parish and town councils could include:

- Play areas
- Sports grounds
- Local Parks and open spaces
- Public toilets
- Allotments
- Community Centres
- Cemeteries and churchyards

The service devolution menu could include

- Minor road and footpath repairs
- Grasscutting and open space maintenance

- Flytipping
- Street cleaning
- Abandoned vehicles
- Environmental health
- Recycling management
- Home care and meals on wheels
- Health and wellbeing services
- Off street car parks
- Community library premises
- Community transport
- Community safety/ neighbourhood watch
- Footpath lighting

### Best Practice Case Study – Town and Parish Council Devolution

To date, 86 of the 168 town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire have taken on services from Buckinghamshire County Council through devolved arrangements. Many now have an appetite to build on this with even further devolution.



In 2013, the Stewkley Enterprise Agency was set up as a not-for-profit social enterprise, which enabled the parish council to provide both local employment and an enhanced quality of service for the villages. The social enterprise now provides services such as grass cutting, minor hedge cutting, weed spraying and road sign cleaning for Stewkley together with six other parish councils. A similar agreement has been made with Amersham Town Council, which carries out grass cutting, vegetation clearance, tree maintenance and graffiti removal services on behalf of five parish councils.

## The Devolution Offer

### Best Practice Case Study – Town and Parish Council Devolution

Stone with Bishopstone and Hartwell Parish Council is an example of a parish council taking on service devolution without clustering. The 2016 annual report of the Parish Council noted:

“Overall, the Parish Council are very happy that the decision was taken to undertake the devolved services without clustering. Positive feedback from residents has meant that we have been able to provide a far better service and a much improved environment. We had inherited a rather neglected area of general maintenance work and our residents have praised the significant improvements. The Parish Council are confident that the decision to raise the precept to cover the additional funding of £5,000 (£4.50 approx. per household) was the correct way to proceed in order to achieve the improved environment and better standard of work.”



### Best Practice Case Study – NALC Buckingham

NALC's new Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils, and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential. Buckingham Town Council is one of a small number of councils nationally that have achieved the Quality Gold award which recognises those councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector.

Buckinghamshire Council would want to encourage and help resource local councils to use these sorts of tools and frameworks to share best practice, to make use of all the training and funding available, and support each other so that local towns and parish councils reach their full potential.



## Capacity Building Offer

This devolution offer could represent an ambitious programme for a local council, or group of local councils. A devolution offer could therefore be accompanied by investment in a capacity building programme tailored to the individual circumstances - including training and development, officer capacity and governance advice. In agreeing a deal, a new Buckinghamshire Council could support parishes by:

- **A single contact point and an online account** for the parish and town council with the unitary council to ensure that tailored support and advice is readily available, according to the circumstances of the individual council
- **Access to back office support services** which would allow local councils to access services such as customer service system, payroll, ICT, HR, legal advice, training and development, drawing on the purchasing power of a new Buckinghamshire Council
- **A project team to agree details of the offers**, set standards, and liaise closely with those parishes and town councils who are interested in taking up the offer
- **A capacity building scheme** for town and parish councils based on the County Council's New Futures programme for voluntary and community sector groups. The Town and Parish Futures scheme could offer business planning advice and specialist support to help councils address identified needs, improve what they already do, or to take on new assets and services
- **Transparency** with parish/town councils in the information on the respective service performance and contracts and budgets, being clear which services will require some specific standards/qualifications (e.g. pot hole filling)
- **Support to town and parish councils to cluster** where there are opportunities for service delivery improvements, whilst respecting the wishes of individual parish/town councils

Parish and town councils would be free to:

- Decide their delivery model (e.g. via contractors, volunteers, employed staff or a mixture of these)
- Decide how to allocate the total overall budget against specific activities
- Use the precept to enhance services if desired (although noting that any devolution of services will provide the resources to provide the minimum service standards specified by Buckinghamshire Council).

It is envisaged that the offer and transfer process would take between 2–3 years (depending on the size and scale of the service/asset).

There are of course a wide range of Town and Parish councils and some will not want to extend their role and responsibilities at this time. Where local councils did not choose to take up the partnership offer, Buckinghamshire Council would retain responsibility for service delivery in the area. Over time, however, it is anticipated that parishes will increasingly cluster together to take advantage of this deal.

## Area Planning Committees

The majority of planning application decisions would be made by Area Planning Committees, with members of Buckinghamshire Council from within the area. It is envisaged that five Area Planning Committees would be appropriate.

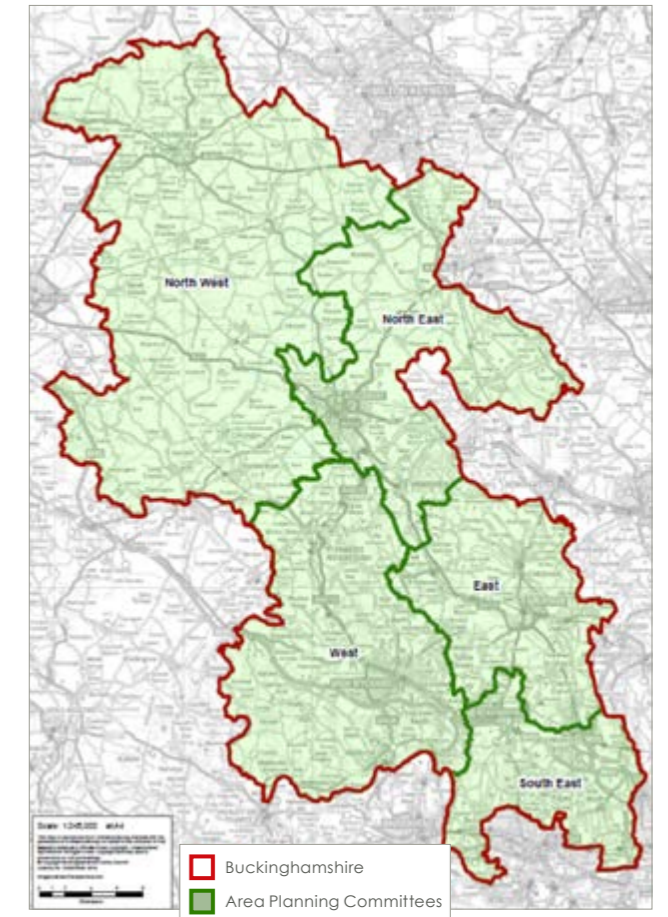
The Area Planning Committees would carry out many of the functions currently carried out by district council planning committees, as well as determining planning decisions which the county council currently takes on issues such as the approval of school building extensions.

The types of issues that the Area Planning Committees would determine include:

- Planning Development Control
- Designation and amendment of conservation areas
- Village Design Statements
- Parish Plans in the planning context
- Registration of town and village greens,
- Powers relating to the protection of important hedgerows
- Powers relating to the preservation of trees
- Powers relating to complaints about high hedges

A limited number of decisions would be reserved to a strategic planning committee. These would be decisions with wider strategic implications or a significant impact beyond a specific local area – such as planning applications for a large-scale major development (defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government as those of 200 houses or more). The thresholds for decision-making on planning would be set out in the council's constitution.

For the purposes of this business case an illustrative map is included below with proposed boundaries for five Area Planning Committees. This has been based on best fit with natural communities and best size for the effective functioning of the committees. The current district council boundaries have been used to ensure continuity with current development committees, although Aylesbury Vale has been divided into two to reflect the differences within the area. These boundaries would be subject to local consultation.



## Community Boards

A network of Community Boards could enable local councillors and the community to have a say about issues that affect them and take action to resolve issues.

The Community Boards could be set up as formal committees of a new Buckinghamshire Council so that councillors in that area could take decisions on issues such as the funding for local community groups. The Community Board could be a formal consultee for all major changes of Buckinghamshire Council services in the area so that local people have a stronger voice on service planning.

The role of the Community Board is proposed to build on the experience of the Local Area Forums, which are resourced by the county council and work in partnership with the district councils, but would be different in some key respects (see p49).

The proposed role of the community board would be:

- **To enable local Members and residents to influence Buckinghamshire Council & partner service planning** e.g. budget consultation or Cabinet Member decisions with local impact, such as service change/transport/transfer or disposal of assets
- **To lead and encourage community action** to resolve local issues – road repairs, traffic problems and speeding, litter, facilities for young people, affordable housing, reducing loneliness and social isolation. To help communities to help themselves.
- **To have particular regard to the health, social care needs and well-being of residents in the area** using their local knowledge and networks to both identify local needs/issues as well as solutions; and their influence to help resolve these needs
- **To have an oversight and scrutiny role in relation to local public sector performance and delivery in the area** identifying & communicating any issues to the relevant bodies e.g. Buckinghamshire Council and partners; including oversight of the devolution service offers to parishes/town councils in area
- **To take decisions on delegated Council**

**budgets.** It is envisaged that £2m could be allocated between the 19 Community Boards, providing enhanced opportunities for participatory budgeting and generating match funding.

- **To provide a local point of access to Members and council services** e.g. by providing regular well publicised formal meetings and forums

To reinforce the role of the Community Board, the communities could provide a building block for use by a new Buckinghamshire Council in its commissioning of services. For example, a local health and wellbeing needs assessment will be carried out for each community area, enabling the Community Board to tailor public health initiatives according to the differing health priorities of each area. A new Buckinghamshire Council could also encourage and support its partners to use the Boards as a mechanism for local consultation and engagement.

### Membership and Public Participation

The formal voting membership of the Community Board would be all Members of Buckinghamshire Council in the geographical area covered. Standing invitations would be made to key partners - health, police, the business community, voluntary and community sector and parish/town councils - to attend the meetings. Whilst the voting rights would rest with the unitary councillors it is expected that the Boards would work by consensus wherever possible.

For the Boards to work effectively they would need to facilitate high levels of public participation in their work. Our ambition is that Community Boards would be innovative in finding a wide variety ways of talking to the public about the issues that they care about. This would include reaching out to different types of people as well as within all localities e.g. older people, faith groups, disabled and young people. As an example, Community Boards could encourage youth participation by holding forum events with young people working with existing town and parish youth councils.

### Location of Community Boards

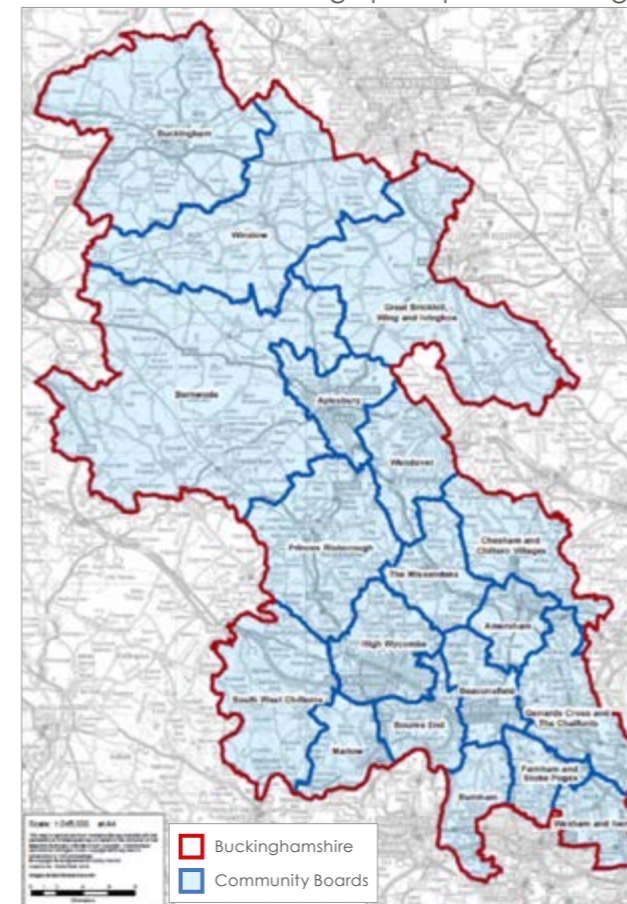
The number of Community Boards, and the geographical boundaries, would need

to be subject to full consultation with local communities and key stakeholders, such as the Buckinghamshire CCG Federation, to ensure that they reflect local identity and are fit for purpose.

To illustrate the concept, a map has been drawn up for the purposes of this business case (as below). This is purely for illustrative purposes and will change through consultation. The key principles underpinning this model are:

- **Best fit with natural communities:** school planning areas have been used as a starting point for developing these proposals as they are designed to reflect the natural flows of children to local primary schools which are often at the heart of local communities
- **Co-terminous with town and parish council boundaries:** so that any town or parish council would only have to work with one Community Board
- **Best size for the effective functioning of the committees:** small enough areas where the public feel a strong connection with, as well as of a sufficient size for partners to engage with.

Ensuring that the Community Boards are coterminous with the unitary electoral wards is desirable but has not been used as a design principle at this stage



### Example Agenda for a Community Board

Decision on:

- The allocation of devolved Revenue and Capital Funding
- Disposal of non-strategic assets
- Speeding reviews, dropped kerbs, traffic calming measures
- Oversight of detailed works negotiated through S106

Consultation on:

- Proposals to change hospital services (CCG)
- Priorities for Allocations of Community Infrastructure Levy Funding (CIL)
- Developing a multi-use community hub (partners involved)
- Allocation of new school places

Scrutiny on:

- How agencies are planning to prevent flooding
- Effectiveness of local community transport
- Performance of highways provider on pothole filling

Work planning:

- Setting up a group to plan community workshops for people to have their say on forthcoming changes in children's centres.

as these would be subject to a Boundary Review.

Whilst this model has identified 19 areas, these do not fully reflect the boundaries of the existing 19 local area forums.

### Learning from Best Practice

The design work in relation to the role and number of Community Boards is drawn upon best practice elsewhere - in particular successes of Wiltshire Council who set up their equivalent of the proposed Community Boards as a key element of their new unitary council.

In determining the appropriate number of Community Boards practice elsewhere indicated that it was important to have a sufficient number so that local communities could have their say. For example, Wiltshire Council has 18; Durham 14; Shropshire 33 and Cornwall 19.

## Aim 3: Better Public Services

At a time of austerity, a new, county-wide single unitary council must achieve significant service improvement opportunities as well as sustainable savings. Our ambition is a high-quality customer experience that recognises and adapts to the changing lives and expectations of residents, working with them to personalise and join up services around their current and future needs.

Residents have told us that a new model of local government must be designed to ensure that the quality of services is retained and enhanced, and that services should be easier to access. (Ipsos Mori research – Appendix 5)

Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils have already demonstrated some of the opportunities through their joint services model. A new Buckinghamshire Council would be able to build on this and exploit further opportunities

for the benefit of all residents and businesses county-wide. Experience from other county-wide unitary reorganisations demonstrates opportunities for service improvement across all areas of the council without incurring additional ongoing costs.

This section highlights some of the opportunities that evolving into a new single unitary council could bring to the following service areas:

- Customer experience
- Health and Care
- Children and young people
- Communities, culture and leisure
- Housing, Transport, Planning, Economy and Environment
- Corporate and support services

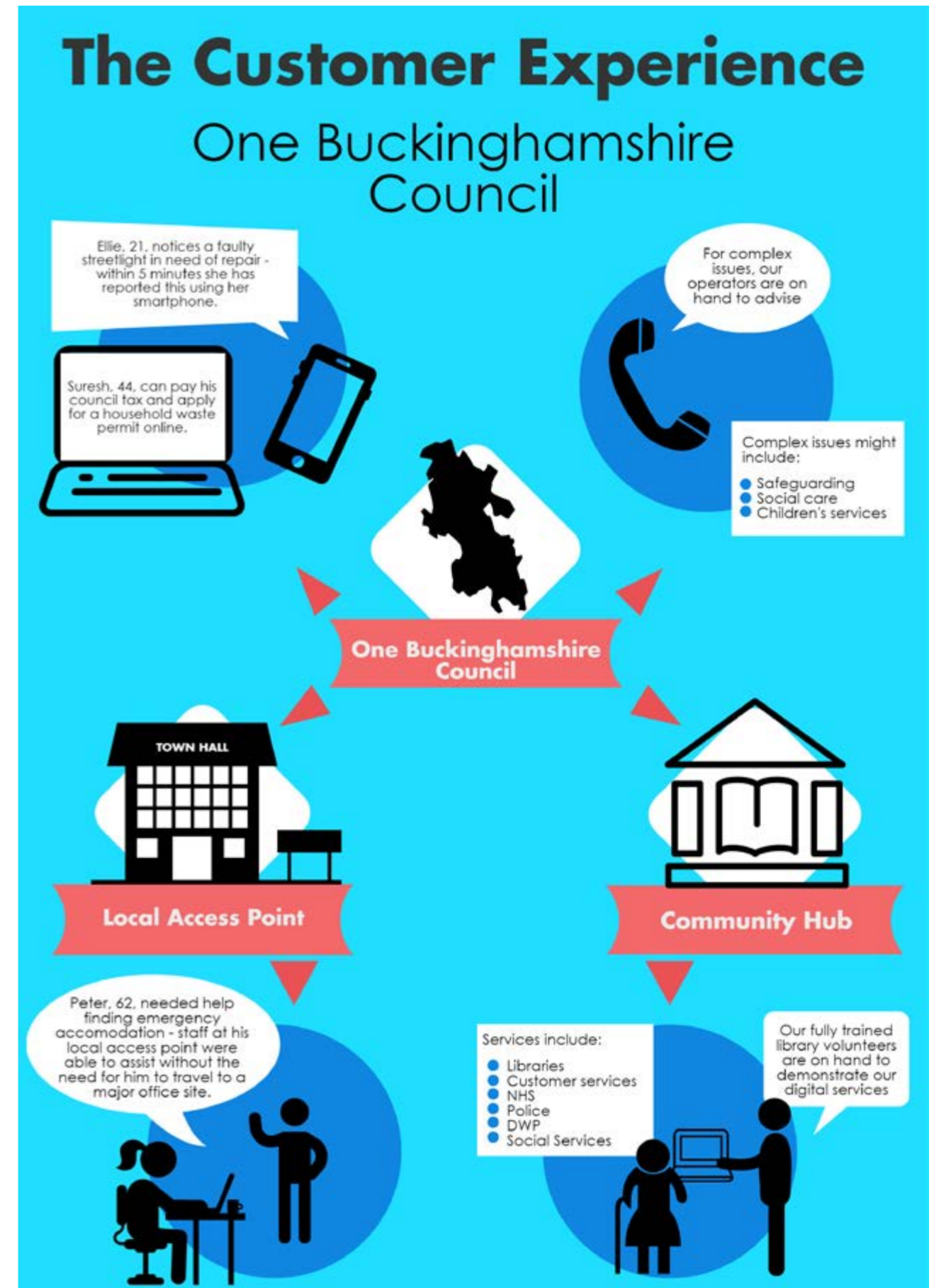
## Customer Experience

The changing population profile in Buckinghamshire means changing demands for customer service. Buckinghamshire sees one of the highest usages of online services in the UK with 91.9% of residents having access to the internet. Demand for online services will continue to grow with increasing developments in technology and generational shifts.

The current two tier model is no longer the most effective for delivering public services that meet the needs of our diverse customers. The county council receives between 35-40,000 web-hits annually for district related services and an average of 680 calls per month, at a cost of £34k pa, creating a dis-jointed and confusing customer journey. Residents tell us

that they are 'passed from pillar to post'. Not only does this create a fragmented customer experience, it runs the risk of vulnerable individuals "falling between the cracks" that currently exists between Buckinghamshire's councils. It also has a significant impact on the operating costs of multiple authorities. Services are not joined up for residents and councils do not have reliable data to plan and commission services effectively.

A new, county-wide single unitary council could improve outcomes for residents through the development of a fully integrated customer service approach. This could involve a single point of access for all residents underpinned by one common source of data.



### A Single Point of Access

A new Buckinghamshire Council would be able to replace existing multiple websites and customer service with one point of access through a channel of their choice, one website where they can source all relevant information with opportunity to self-serve and track progress if desired.

### A Single Secure Customer Account

Residents would be able to securely log in and access their full council service account, with details of all the services that they use and those that may be relevant to them with the ability to track progress of service requests. All their information and personal data would be held in one place within a secure environment, meaning they would only have to provide and verify their personal circumstances once and, with their consent, this would then be used to ensure accurate access to all their entitlements. Within a two-tier system this would be cost prohibitive and, would require agreement from five councils who operate different IT platforms with the inherent data security risk this brings.

### Best Practice Case Study – Revenues and Benefits Data

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



### A Single Business Account

Businesses would be able to securely log in and manage their day-to-day interactions with the council. The electronic system would provide bespoke information, advice and support based on the specific nature of the business and desired transaction. This would then allow a new Buckinghamshire Council to deploy appropriate professional support in the form of online chat, telephone or face-to-face support and appropriately deploy the wide range of services that may be needed such as planning, environmental health, building control, grants.

### A Single Parish And Town Council Account

This would recognise the role of local councils as a major partner in a new modern public service model and provide tailored support and advice according to the circumstances of the individual council.

### Predictive Service Delivery

Information collated by the council and its partners could be used to proactively identify patterns of behaviour that can be used to predict a likely service need before it arises. For example, ensuring that a request for an assisted bin collection service due to mobility issues will trigger an assessment of the health and social care needs of the individual to support them in remaining independent for longer. Predictive service delivery will be a critical element of a future operating model for social care.

### Local Service Variation

By adopting a single account based approach to access and information collation, a new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to ensure its local area structures have the information they need to support decisions and target spending. This move to an evidence based approach to policy and decision making would enhance local democracy and focus scarce resources where they are needed the most.

### Supporting Integration Across Health and Social Care

Research consistently shows individuals most at risk are most likely to have interactions with multiple agencies increasing cost, complexity and risk. The delivery of an account based customer access approach would enable full data integration across the new council and local health providers. Recent statutory changes to the NHS and Social Care mean that Buckinghamshire Council can best exploit data to prevent ill health and promote independence. The single authenticated customer account will be controlled by the customer, allowing them to grant various 'layers' of permitted access to the loved ones and professionals who support them.

### Digital Delivery

Through service integration and transformation there is an opportunity to design digital processes to achieve 24/7 access. Rapid increases in technology and the changing expectations of residents provide the opportunity to change the way services are delivered. A new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to design digital services in the way Government Digital Service has delivered at a scale in central government

### Digital Inclusion

No individual, group or community can be disadvantaged through a lack of digital access to council services. A new Buckinghamshire Council would design services around the needs of users, providing other access channels to support customer outcomes, including a telephony system for complex queries and support in community hubs.

### Community Hubs

There will always be times when residents need to talk to someone face to face, and a new, county-wide single unitary council would need to ensure that this can happen close to home. A network of multi-agency community hubs could enable communities to access services from a place local to them, ensuring vulnerable residents are safeguarded.

By working across organisational silos within a community, partners would be able to reach

### Best Practice Case Study – Unlocking Data Potential

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

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



at-risk and vulnerable individuals and connect them to services that enhances customer and community outcomes.

It is envisaged that a community hub could be provided in each of the local community areas (currently proposed as 19 areas) with the service offer tailored to the needs of each area. A new Buckinghamshire Council would need to work closely with public sector providers, including the parish and town councils, to understand local need, identify and provide community hubs that meet this need. Initial discussions with partners indicate support for this model which builds on existing examples of co-location of services and helps release surplus property in the public sector estate.

### Best Practice Case Study – Digital Development

Best practice across the authorities is already impressive with increasing effort and success being put towards maximising digital processes and aligning customer expectations.

Aylesbury Vale District Council has with its digital development partner Arcus Global built an online account that customers can access. It includes a range of features such as managing council tax, benefits, bins and discounts at their convenience. It's available 24/7, on any device, with no need for a phone call.

In April 2016 the "My Account" already had 16000 users with an average 100 users signing up every day. The account has won a European IT and Software Excellence Award for the launch and ongoing development of the online account. Arcus and AVDC picked up the award for Customer Experience/Management Solution of the Year. Particular praise was given to how My Account matches user expectations and allows AVDC to monitor usage to continually develop and improve the service.



### Best Practice Case Study – Community Hub in Practice



The Families Plus project at Chess Medical Centre, Chesham, is a unique colocation of services built around the needs of Lone Parents dependent on welfare benefits. The project aims to increase the number of socially stable, financially robust households by better assisting specific communities of high need through effective partnership working.

In addition to the existing pharmacy, NHS dentist and 2 GP practices, further services provided by DWP, the NHS, county council social care and voluntary and community sector are now located in the same centre and deliver local services where there is the demand.

This fundamentally changes the delivery method and level of support to Lone Parents in receipt of welfare benefits and their children. This approach aims to move these residents into education, training or employment; improving financial and social outcomes for parent and child.

An excellent colocation of services has been achieved that provides a strong case for developing similar community hub models across the County, as seen with the more recent roll-out to Wycombe.

## Health and Care

Demographic change, increasing demand and reducing budgets are placing adult social care services under significant pressure. The integration of health and social care services has been a major focus for the county council and the Health Trusts, in order to tackle health challenges, support people to live independently for longer and reduce cost pressures. Greater alignment of health and social care services with community services such as housing, recreation and leisure would fundamentally change the way services are designed, commissioned and delivered:

- Public services could be commissioned with family and health outcomes in mind utilising the full range of public and community services available to assist prevention, keeping more adults more independent for longer
- Health outcomes could be supported by a clear vision for leisure, outdoor and recreational spaces and quality housing in the county, with clearer accountabilities for delivering on county-wide strategy such as the Sustainability Transformation Plan
- Single strategic leadership across planning, housing and social care could allow fit-for-

the-future accommodation to be provided that supports the changing needs of an ageing population and young people transitioning to adult services as well as vulnerable care leavers. This would enhance accessibility and the capacity for assistive technology and telecare included by design. Full consideration could be given to the impact of the built and natural environment on the health and wellbeing of local communities and residents

- A single local authority working with a single federated CCG to a shared agenda would simplify partnership working particularly with Health and the County Sports partnership 'LEAP'
- Consolidation of resources across the existing councils, particularly in property assets and ICT, would allow a new Buckinghamshire Council to provide the infrastructure and capacity to communities and local councils to deliver more services at a local level, encouraging community capacity and resilience
- Consolidated revenue collection and benefits functions would deliver consistent performance, aligned with specialist services



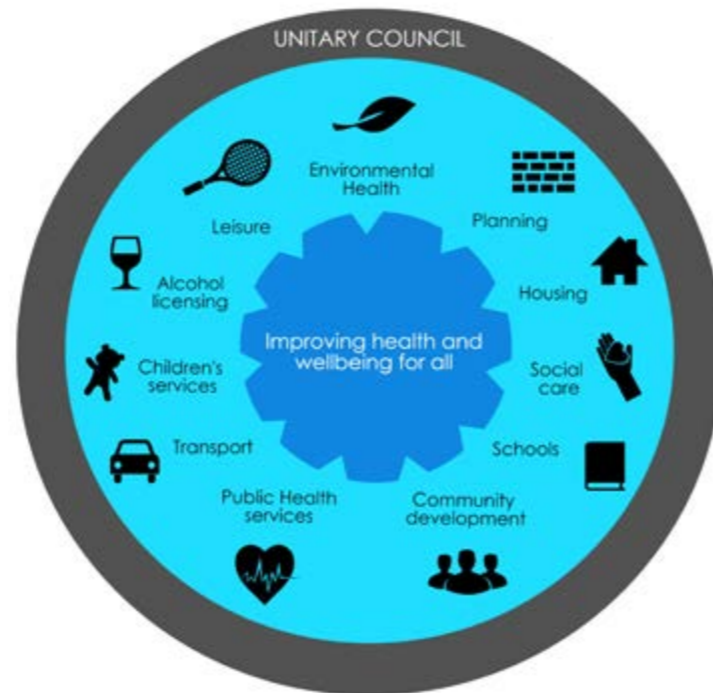
### Public Health Outcome

This model illustrates the synergies between county council and district council responsibilities

Source: District Councils' Network 2013

like debt collection and advice, social care financial assessments and income collection.

- Whole system approaches to tackling the wider determinants of health could be developed through the integration of preventive services - for example services currently provided by the county council such as substance misuse services, physical activity programmes and health protection, together with services currently provided by the district council such as alcohol licensing, housing, leisure and environmental health
- More effective and consistent large scale campaigns could be delivered to promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthier lifestyles
- Better insight could be available to support and improve preventative services through trend analysis, creating a single customer record and a basis for designing and delivering services based on individual need and community capacity
- Seamless support could be provided for clients with multiple needs (such as early



intervention, housing, community support), or at times of crisis

- Customer journeys could be improved by joining up assessments, grants, benefits, housing and planning applications, whilst efficiencies could be delivered in commissioning and back office processes.

## Children and Young People

Children's Services in Buckinghamshire have been on a significant improvement journey and OFSTED inspectors are starting to recognise progress in key areas. Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility of local government and all its partners. Faced with rising demand and declining budgets, it is critical that partners work together to improve the outcomes for children in need, whilst also promoting resilient families across Buckinghamshire.

The integration of local government services county-wide would provide clear responsibility, greater commissioning power, opportunities to achieve closer working between partners and deliver significant benefits for children and young people:

- Single strategic leadership across all aspects of local government service delivery which impacts on the wellbeing of children and young people. Housing, leisure and play are critically important to improving outcomes for children and young people. Lack of appropriate accommodation is often a significant issue in supporting families and young people to achieve stable lives. A single county-wide unitary council would bring these functions together with statutory responsibilities for the wellbeing of children and young people to deliver stronger organisational links and encourage improved outcomes
- Consistent approach to safeguarding across all local government functions, for example transport, leisure, community safety, by providing common standards, training and communications to all employees and delivery partners
- Consistent model for involving children and young people and encouraging the voice of the child in all appropriate aspects of service delivery
- Simplification of partnerships and elimination of current duplication of meetings both for local government and its partners, including Thames Valley Police and health partners
- Development of 'whole system support' for youth offenders covering housing, financial planning and benefits, education and training designed to reduce reoffending

### Best Practice Case Study – Whole System Working

*"Families First" is Buckinghamshire's response to the national Troubled Families Agenda, which seeks to "turn around" the lives of families facing multiple problems, including mental health difficulties, domestic violence and debt.*

*Phase 1 of the programme (2012–2015) successfully "turned around" 545 families (100% of target) and Buckinghamshire was awarded "early starter" status for Phase 2 in recognition of its strong performance and ambition.*

*Partnership working has been a major factor in the success of Families First. The programme has led to significant changes in how all agencies work together in Buckinghamshire to improve outcomes for children and their families and reduce the burden on the public purse. Rather than employ new teams, the Buckinghamshire delivery model was based on the commitment by all relevant agencies to play their part from the outset, moving outside their traditional remits to provide lead family workers to coordinate all the work with the family. The approach has been underpinned by strong multi agency governance and oversight, coordination of work, shared training, tools and processes.*

*A new Council and its partners will be able to draw on this whole system approach as a model for working together to transform services to deliver longer-term goals into the future.*



### Best Practice Case Study – Multi-Agency Groups

*Buckinghamshire has invested in the development of MAGs (Multi-Agency Groups) that currently operate at 44 GP practices in the county. The model involves key members of relevant teams coming together to identify and discuss the most vulnerable people on their caseloads that they believe would benefit from a more holistic approach to enable them to maintain their independence.*

*Since launching in 2013, 2354 patients have been referred and the model continues to be rolled out through strong partnership working, despite the initial funding ceasing.*

*Each MAG has a core team of health and social care but also benefits from engaging other teams from the county and district councils – including the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), Trading Standards and Environmental Health.*

*Benefits from this approach include reduced hospital admissions, a decline in A&E attendances, emergency and elective*

*inpatient spells with a secondary care cost saving of over £256,003.*

*Investment in MAGs has resulted in an established best practice model of service delivery and effective partnership working. A new Buckinghamshire Council could build upon this approach through the development of a Community Hub model which co-locates partners in a locality and promotes models of information exchange and joined up service delivery.*





- Reduction in the 'touch points' for vulnerable children, young people and families through joined up, consistent services in relation to assessments, grants, benefits, housing and planning applications, particularly for children with disabilities.
- Effective sharing and availability of data across services which could lead to improvements in

early intervention and prevention, for example sharing data about families experiencing difficulties with issues such as housing and debt, delivering coordinated assessments and service responses, increase the speed of verification for school applications, fraud deterrent and detection.

## Communities, Culture and Leisure

Improving the cultural offer is vital to building community cohesion, strengthening sense of place and community empowerment. Community, Culture and Leisure services could be more joined up in the county than ever before, with closer alignment both to each other and to the desired outcomes for residents, businesses and communities. Opportunities could include:

- The creation of a coherent culture, leisure and tourism strategy for the county - one that broadens and improves service provision to build community cohesion, strengthens sense of place and builds community empowerment
- Services designed with strategic outcomes in mind, maximising use of assets such as quality housing and leisure facilities to improve health and cultural outcomes, reduce crime, foster more confident and resilient communities and support prevention
- A more strategic approach to delivering the Government's strategy for sport – *A New Strategy for an Active Nation* – promoting health, social and economic outcomes through existing assets, for example country parks and managed green spaces, and working with the County Sports Partnership 'LEAP' to improve active lifestyles and participation in sport
- Coordinated and user-focused service delivery that builds on the Paralympic heritage to establish Buckinghamshire as the most accessible County
- A one stop shop for individuals and businesses to access consumer protection services such as trading standards, environmental health, licencing, building control and private sector housing regulation. A uniform and consistent approach would contribute to improving public reassurance and also enable specialist expertise to be developed to support effective enforcement
- A single county-wide team for emergency planning, resilience and business continuity with better links to the Fire and Rescue Service through one stronger partnership
- A single strategic local authority for Thames Valley Police to liaise with for community safety issues
- A simplified route through which communities and the voluntary and community sector can interact with the local authority, become more self-reliant and bid for contracts where services are being tendered
- Expansion of the range of services delivered through libraries so that libraries continue to develop their important contributions to health and wellbeing, digital inclusion and welfare reform
- The development of a broader but more consistent leisure offer, based on stronger needs assessments. Local residents would have more say in the type of programmes (including outreach) available in their local area and health professionals would be able to refer patients to physical activity programmes that deliver evidence-based interventions.

## Housing, Transport, Economy, Planning and Environment

A new, county-wide single unitary council could manage these services in a way that achieves a fundamental shift from disparate processes and disconnected customer journeys to an integrated set of services that support the economic and physical growth strategy for the county, whilst appreciating individual community needs. Some of the most visible benefits for the new authority and for customers would be realised through bringing together this portfolio of services that supports the three pillars of sustainability – economy, society and environment.:

- Joining up strategic and local planning to create a single vision for Buckinghamshire which integrates economic growth and demographic change with the planning, roads, transport, housing, green infrastructure and other services to support it – with improved leverage to enable, influence and benefit investors and developers. A new single county-wide unitary council could make rapid progress in this area
- A single housing and homelessness strategy, building on the collaboration that has already developed across the four district councils, that would address differences across the county and ensure that sufficient housing stock is made available to cater for needs of the most vulnerable, including those facing homelessness and domestic violence or needing supported housing
- Improved strategic relationships with the key housing associations (Paradigm, RedKite Housing Trust and Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust) to secure the development of purpose built accommodation for service users with higher needs which could reduce social care costs, together with the effective delivery of appropriate affordable homes
- Elimination of complex existing arrangements for Section 106 funding and Community Infrastructure Levies, with one organisation negotiating with developers and making use of that funding in a way consistent with a single, strategic vision for Buckinghamshire
- A single strategic approach to the use of publicly owned land and surplus assets
- Integrated planning function with strong and effective links to housing, transport and regeneration services, providing a speedy and effective one stop shop for developers and the community
- A model of 5 area planning committees would ensure local development decisions are taken in in the local area, whilst a strategic planning committee would determine major applications with strategic implications
- A consistent and integrated waste collection and disposal service, creating an end to end waste service with a single, consistent strategy supported by joined up delivery, enhancing performance and customer satisfaction, would be a major benefit from a single unitary council
- Joining up similar services such as winter maintenance and street cleaning services to ensure that they are aligned and not negatively impacting each other
- Consolidation into single teams to drive efficiencies – for example, housing advice and homelessness teams, leisure, green spaces and country parks teams
- Delivery of locally-focused services by town and parish councils, such as local highway maintenance and management, parks, green spaces and town centre management. savings from collective energy purchasing for the local government asset base in Buckinghamshire – estimated cost reductions of around £180,000 per year
- A new single energy contract to achieve a lower unit price. Energy efficiency improvements could be implemented across the local government estate in a cost efficient manner
- A single strategic organisation would be better able to draw in and take advantage of investment and external funding opportunities, resulting in real service delivery improvements

## Corporate and Support Services

- Opportunities to eliminate confusion, clarify accountability and improve the journey for customers. For example one central location for planning applications would allow more consistent comments from the public as there is regular confusion over which council completes which service currently
- Customer insight would be significantly improved by a single account for residents which could provide the opportunity to draw together knowledge of vulnerable service users which is currently spread across suppliers, the districts councils, county council, service providers, Bucks Home Choice (the choice based lettings system) etc.

### Local Plans

The three local plans will be newly adopted at the launch of a new council and will therefore continue to provide the policy framework for Buckinghamshire for the immediate future (Appendix 4). Once the plans come up for review in 2022/2023, Buckinghamshire Council could consider the benefits of moving towards a single local development and infrastructure plan for Buckinghamshire.

### Benefits of a Single Plan

- **Stronger focus** on place shaping, mapping out a vision for what we want our places to be
- **Integrated approach** to growth, linking together the planning and delivery of jobs, housing and infrastructure to build sustainable communities
- Improved integration with sub national policy, with a single voice
- **Single** evidence base and plan making process – both offer efficiency savings
- **Simplified**, streamlined consultation processes, enabling more meaningful consultation which will improve the quality of the policy and control processes
- **Enhanced** spatial planning, with coordination of social, environmental and economic interests for the county as a whole and improved integration with regional level policy
- A **strategic** view of the connectivity across the County between the two urban centres of Aylesbury and High Wycombe

Consolidation of corporate resources and support services would maximise savings for the new authority through economies of scale, process efficiencies and rationalisation of management and systems. Consolidating resources would also allow savings to be made in the back office that in turn protects frontline services. Opportunities could include;

- Reduced expenditure on support services such as ICT, Human Resources, Finance, Legal, Procurement and Property functions estimated at around £7m a year, through a combination of staffing efficiencies and greater purchasing power. Pooling of resources and expertise would reduce dependency on agency staff, high cost interim staff and consultancy expenditure
- Investment in specialisms that no single council can afford alone. This could also lead to centres of expertise that could support frontline services more effectively and also offer opportunities to other local public sector providers - for example building on the model whereby the county council now delivers a communications and engagement function for the Buckinghamshire CCG Federation
- Consistent delivery of low cost, high quality processes, building on best practice processes from the existing councils. This would place the new authority in a strong position to lead in shared services partnerships, such as the county council's shared HR and Organisational Development service with London Borough of Harrow
- A single corporate and support services team which would eliminate competition between the existing councils for traded services, such as payroll and meeting space hire
- A single online portal to access details about the council's formal governance, with a single webcasting provider providing online access to committee meetings
- A more strategic approach to procurement and a single relationship with the market which could deliver significant savings through greater economies of scale. The new authority would have a combined annual third party spend of more than £350m
- More effective customer relationship management through data sharing, with opportunities to identify local demands for service and tailor services appropriately - for example through joining up council tax register with disabled blue badge and concessionary fares data
- Greater clarity to local service users: one place to go, consistent advice, wider combined promotion channels and increased capacity to respond to local requests
- Increased resilience and ability to respond to peaks and troughs in workload to deliver a better service for residents. It would offer improved business continuity and the ability to respond flexibly and responsively to change
- More career opportunities that would make the new authority a larger, more attractive and more dynamic employer, attracting quality candidates in a tough professional services market, eliminating competition for top candidates between the existing councils and providing opportunities for career progression which help retention.



## Aim 4: Better Value for Money

The system of local government funding will change over the next 4 years. Arrangements for the retention of business rates are currently under review and are uncertain beyond 2020. New responsibilities will be devolved to local authorities but as yet there is no agreement around what they will be. The relative needs formula is also likely to be reset. The New Homes Bonus system is also under review nationally.

Whilst the impact of some of these changes is not known at this stage, it is probable that the Buckinghamshire authorities will see reductions in both New Homes Bonus and the level of income from business rates. These changes will occur during a period when districts' financial resources are already assumed to decline in the core spending power. Under a single county-wide unitary authority the fall in core spending power would only be approximately 2.0%, which would significantly mitigate the potential risk to frontline services.

A new Buckinghamshire Council would be well placed to manage both known and unknown financial risks:

- Ability to direct resources to areas of highest need
- Funding changes including business rates (e.g. larger employer leaving)
- Volatility in levels of income generation
- Demand pressures on social care budgets
- Pressure on services through housing growth

## Financial Model: Overview

LG Futures was commissioned to provide some independent support in producing a financial model for Buckinghamshire Council. The model confirms that a new, county-wide single unitary council would be financially viable, based on current spending and funding patterns. The four-year forecasts indicate that the financial position of a new Buckinghamshire Council would deteriorate between now and 2019-20 as a consequence of the known funding changes for local government. However, the change for a single county-wide unitary council would be less severe than for the district councils under the current arrangements.

## Savings

Based on the assumptions made, CIPFA statistics and benchmark comparison with other local authorities, the model estimates that a new Buckinghamshire Council could achieve annual cost savings of £18.2m a year, compared with the current two-tier arrangements.

These savings would primarily be achieved through:

- Operation of existing services within Buckinghamshire at the most efficient level
- Streamlined senior management structure
- Reviewing functions/reducing management overheads
- Changes to democratic structures
- Reductions in corporate overheads

Overall savings are estimated as £18.2m per annum (from year 3 following transition). This equates to a saving of £35.27 per head of population and £84.03 per household.

These savings make very prudent assumptions about the cost savings which could be achieved through streamlining services and functions once they are brought together under a single county-wide unitary council. It is anticipated that they in fact will be significantly higher than those identified above. Moreover, they do not include the wider cost savings to the public purse which unified local government could achieve for key partners.

	Value	Description
Democratic processes	£1,625,000	Reduced number of members, overall committees and support
Senior staffing	£2,990,000	Streamline senior management structure
Back office	£3,975,000	Support Service efficiencies for new council – 10% prudent reduction
Consolidated Systems	£1,700,000	Reduced costs of single system platforms in new Council
Contract Efficiencies	£2,760,000	Larger contracts, efficiencies and economies of scale
Service opportunities	£3,650,000	Consolidating existing services and operating to the most efficient level in Buckinghamshire, including refuse collection and recycling, revenues and benefits and the consolidation of other district services.
Property Rationalisation	£1,500,000	Revenue cost savings from the rationalisation of property holdings across the district and county council estates.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£18,200,000</b>	

## Transition Costs

In order to establish a new Buckinghamshire Council and deliver the savings, one-off transitional costs of £16.2m would be incurred. These would cover the costs of the transition programme team, redundancy and/or retirement costs, and interim shadow arrangements. Taking into account the estimated level of savings, it is estimated that these transitional costs could be repaid within a period of three years.

A sensitivity analysis has been carried out on the assumptions around savings and transition costs. This is included in Appendix 2. It confirms that transitional costs do not impact significantly on the financial case and, even under extreme circumstances, payback would still be within five years.

	Value	Description
Transition Programme Team	£1,500,000	Assumes a team of five posts over three years
Recruitment and Interim capacity	£1,500,000	Assumption is that current staffing across the five organisations will be deployed to manage the transition as far as possible
Property	£500,000	Property rationalisation revenue costs
External communications	£500,000	Communications costs, signage and branding
Cultural Change Programme	£500,000	Including change management, skills development, enhanced communication
Corporate Systems Transition	£4,000,000	Transfer to a single ERP System (£1.5m) Consolidation of Revenues and Benefits and Planning Systems (£1.5m) Other Systems Integration Costs (£1m)
Harmonisation of Terms and Conditions	£500,000	Due to small differentials between the national pay and conditions at districts and local pay at the county.
Early Retirement/Redundancy	£4,670,000	Assumes that the proposed cap of £95k on exit packages will come into effect
Closedown Costs	£500,000	Cost of closing down legacy councils
Legal and New Constitution Costs	£500,000	Includes Legal costs, contract novation, development of new constitution
Contingency	£1,500,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£16,170,000</b>	

## Council Tax Equalisation

Variations in the district council element of council tax are relatively small in Buckinghamshire. The lowest is Wycombe (£131.99 at Band D) and the current cost of equalising council tax bands in all districts, within the existing referendum limits is £2.221m compared to existing council tax assumptions in the first 3 years. These proposals assume that council tax is equalised after the first year.

The budgets set by the county and the majority of the district councils have assumed the

maximum increase in council tax over the next four years. Whilst a new Buckinghamshire Council may have an ambition to be able to freeze or even lower council tax in the longer term, it would be critical to get the new council onto a sustainable footing before being able to consider this. The financial model therefore assumes an increase of 2% for the social care precept up to 2021 and an increase of 1.99% within the council tax referendum limit in each of the current districts.

	Band D as at 1 April 2016 (excluding parishes, police, fire)	Assumed Band D as at 1 April 2018	Lowest Band D at 1 April 2019 (Including Care precept)	Reduction in Band D (from 1 April 2018)	% change in Band D (from 1 April 2018)	Est. Council Tax Base at 1 April 2019	Reduction in district council tax Income (compared to budget for 2019/20)
<b>Aylesbury Vale</b>	£139.06	£144.65	£142.77	-£1.88	-1.3%	7,513	-340,147
<b>Chiltern</b>	£168.77	£175.55	£142.77	-£32.78	-18.7%	44,060	-1,598,340
<b>South Bucks</b>	£148.00	£153.95	£142.77	-£11.18	-7.3%	32,994	-469,382
<b>Wycombe</b>	£131.99	£137.30	£142.77	£5.48	3.99%	68,026	186,793
<b>Total</b>						<b>216,592</b>	<b>-2,221,076</b>

## Investment of Savings

Taking into account the savings and the payback period for the transitional costs, a new Buckinghamshire Council would be able to afford investment of £45m (282% over the 5 year period) of cumulative net savings to enhance delivery against residents' priorities over the first 5 years or the investment of annual revenue of £18m after year 3.

## Reserves

This table sets out the existing level of general fund reserves held across the county council and district councils plus any balances held in earmarked reserves for Transformation or contingency purposes. For general fund balances, the lowest level is at Chiltern District Council where balances are equivalent to 8.1% of net revenue expenditure. There are some plans to use balances across the district councils to support the budget but these appear to be limited. These are shown as the 'planned increases' line below and reflect the information presented within the 2016/17 Medium Term Financial plans.

The table below shows the impact on the general reserves balance for Buckinghamshire Council, if the reserves were used to meet the net transition cost as presented in the financial model below. A new Buckinghamshire Council could reinstate the reserves to the pre-unitary level by choosing to put less than one year's savings into reserves after 2021. In practice some of this investment could be met from capital reserves and usable capital receipts.

Impact on Reserves	Base Year 2016/17 £000	Lead in -Y1 2017/18 £000	Lead in Y0 2018/19 £000	Year 1 2019/20 £000	Year 2 2020/21 £000	Year 3 2021/22 £000	Year 4 2022/23 £000	Year 5 2023/24 £000
Aylesbury Vale	7,299	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chiltern	4,496	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Bucks	4,603	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wycombe	10,370	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bucks CC	17,400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total General Reserves</b>	17,400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Planned Increases</b>	456	111	455	-772	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Transition Costs</b>	0	-23,000	-5,350	-6,476	0	0	0	0
<b>Reserve Balance</b>	44,624	42,435	37,540	30,292	30,292	30,292	30,292	30,292
<b>% of NBR</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>

In addition to the general fund reserves, collectively the county council and district councils held over £203m of earmarked reserves as at 1st April 2016. Although some of these will be used in the near future for the purposes for which they are held, in the context of a new unitary council, a new Buckinghamshire Council would want to review the purpose for which these funds are held to meet the priorities of the new council.

## Capital Programme

Over 500 property assets are held across the county and four district councils (excluding schools, agricultural estates and country parks) with a net book value of just under £1bn. Physical space would have an important role to play in realising the benefits of a brand new unitary council. The strategic management of a combined property portfolio would provide enhanced opportunities for:

- transfers to parish and town councils
- development of community hubs and promote co-location and integration of public sector services
- rationalisation and disposals to remove duplication and realise the value for reinvestment
- commercial investments to create revenue streams or enhanced post-development capital receipts
- use of assets to stimulate growth.

The county council recently commissioned Carter Jonas to carry out a property review in order to identify opportunities for delivering both financial benefits and service improvements. The scope included potential

*"A Unitary model may generate substantial savings whilst offering an improved service"*

Carter Jonas, 2016,

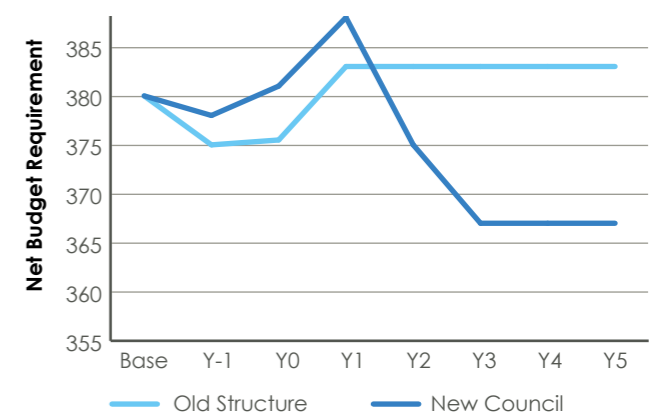
property sharing opportunities with public sector partners, including co-location into multi-agency community hubs. The report identified potential net capital receipts of up to £48m, including co-location of county and district functions. The ability to deliver the top end of this estimate would be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

No assumptions have been made about additional capital expenditure as a result of the establishment of a new Buckinghamshire Council, beyond the transitional spend on ICT systems. Any change in property requirements would be managed through the existing portfolios or financed in the main through the disposal of existing assets.

## Summary of Financial Model

The adjacent financial model shows that a new Buckinghamshire Council would be able to balance its budget, funding the cost of transition from reserves with payback within 2.5 years from set up. Even where all transition costs are funded from reserves, the model indicates that reserve balances overall would not fall below 5% of net budget requirement.

Impact of Proposals on Net Budget Requirement



The table below summarises the impact of the changes described above on the total spend of the existing and then the new authorities. The payback period calculated by this model is 2.2 years from 1 April 2019.

2.2 years from 1 April 2019

	Base Year 2016/17 £000	Lead in -Y1 2017/18 £000	Lead in Y0 2018/19 £000	Year 1 2019/20 £000	Year 2 2020/21 £000	Year 3 2021/22 £000	Year 4 2022/23 £000	Year 5 2023/24 £000	Total 2016/24 £000
<b>Old structure</b>									
County	332,070	328,832	329,310	336,722	336,722	336,722	336,722	336,722	2,673,821
Districts	48,196	46,537	46,285	46,585	46,585	46,585	46,585	46,585	373,942
<b>TOTAL under Existing Structure</b>	<b>380,266</b>	<b>375,369</b>	<b>375,595</b>	<b>383,307</b>	<b>383,307</b>	<b>383,307</b>	<b>383,307</b>	<b>383,307</b>	<b>3,047,763</b>
<b>New Structure</b>									
County	332,070	328,832	329,310	0	0	0	0	0	990,212
Districts	48,196	46,537	46,285	0	0	0	0	0	141,018
Transition costs	0	2,300	5,150	7,670	1,000	0	0	0	16,120
CT equalisation	0	0	0	2,221	1,652	1,691	1,730	1,771	9,066
<b>TOTAL under New Structure</b>	<b>380,266</b>	<b>377,669</b>	<b>380,745</b>	<b>388,225</b>	<b>374,927</b>	<b>366,797</b>	<b>366,837</b>	<b>366,877</b>	<b>3,002,343</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>4,918</b>	<b>-8,379</b>	<b>-16,509</b>	<b>-16,470</b>	<b>-16,430</b>	<b>-45,420</b>
<b>Difference made up of</b>									
Transition Costs	0	2,300	5,150	7,670	1,000	0	0	0	16,120
Efficiency Savings	0	0	0	-4,793	-11,032	-18,200	-18,200	-18,200	-70,606
Re-investment	0	0	0	2,221	1,652	1,691	1,730	1,771	9,066
<b>Net of costs and savings</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>4,918</b>	<b>-8,379</b>	<b>-16,609</b>	<b>-16,470</b>	<b>-16,430</b>	<b>-45,420</b>

#### Assumptions

**Business rates** – for the purpose of this business case no change has been assumed to the relative needs allocation to a unitary authority from the total awarded to upper and lower tier at present.

**New Homes Bonus** – Although the current 80:20 split may also be reconsidered, for the purpose of this business case it is assumed that there will be no impact on the overall total resource available to a unitary authority.



# C

## Chapter C Achieving the Change

### Managing the Risks of Change and Achieving the Benefits

An effective change management programme would be fundamental to ensuring that a new Buckinghamshire Council is launched successfully and is able to achieve the benefits articulated in this business case. Bringing five separate organisations together would present a significant challenge in terms of developing a brand new organisational culture. We do not underestimate the need to plan and properly resource this programme, and to sustain a focus on this for the first 2-3 years of the life of the new council whilst continuing to deliver good business as usual services.

The five legacy councils have a strong track record in delivering transformational change and possess the skills and experience to lead this change programme, drawing on external capacity as required.

Learning from the experience of other new unitary authorities, the approach to implementation would be characterised by the following principles:

**Continuity of service delivery** to residents, communities, businesses and service users is the top priority. Members and officers from all five existing authorities must be able to play a full role in the transition to a brand new council

**Valuing Employees** - key to the success of the new council would be its ability to retain skilled, specialist staff from the five organisations and actively engage them in shaping a new culture for a new organisation

**Valuing the legacy of the five councils** - the approach to implementation would need to be built on a fundamental respect for the history and legacy of each of the five existing councils

**Valuing Partners** - a wide range of stakeholders have contributed to the design criteria for a new unitary authority, and must continue to have a voice during the implementation phase.

### From Transition to Transformation

The programme is envisaged in three phases over a five year period (assuming 2019 go live):

- **Preparation: DCLG decision – April 2018**
- **Transition: May 2018 – May 2020 – with go live in April 2019**
- **Transformation: May 2020 – May 2022**

From the approval of the Business Case through the first year of the new council, the emphasis would be firmly on service continuity rather

than change. In this period, priority would be given to retaining existing staff, and to the ongoing effective operation of existing systems, processes and contracts, with a strong focus on performance management to ensure that performance of front line services and resident satisfaction remains sound. Whilst there may be some opportunities to integrate services from Vesting Day (or earlier), the realisation of benefits through harmonising teams, systems, policies and contracts, would be phased gradually over time as and when it makes sense. Whilst this defers the benefits until later in the plan period, it would ensure that a new Buckinghamshire Council can lay strong foundations for future success. The financial modelling in the business case reflects this cautious approach to the phasing of service redesign.

## Key Milestones

Assuming that a decision is made in January 2017, key milestones are envisaged as follows:

Unitary Transition Milestones	
<b>January 2017</b>	Secretary of State Decision Shadow Implementation Executive & Transition Board established
<b>March 2017</b>	Appointment of Programme Director
<b>May 2017</b>	County Council elections
<b>Summer 2017</b>	Parliamentary Structural Change Order
<b>Summer 2017</b>	Appointment of Chief Executive Transition Reviews commissioned: Property Digital & IT HR Terms and conditions Supply Chain Business Continuity Plans
<b>Summer 2017</b>	Boundary Review Proposals submitted
<b>Autumn 2017</b>	Chief Executive of new Council in post Agree organisational structure
<b>Spring 2018</b>	Boundary Commission Report published Top team of new council appointed
<b>Autumn 2018</b>	Set budget
<b>April 2019</b>	Vesting Day for new Council
<b>May 2019</b>	Elections for new Unitary Council
<b>May 2019</b>	County and District Councils dissolved
<b>May 2019</b>	Integration of services on phased basis Monitoring the delivery of benefits

A detailed programme plan is at Appendix 6.

## Governance

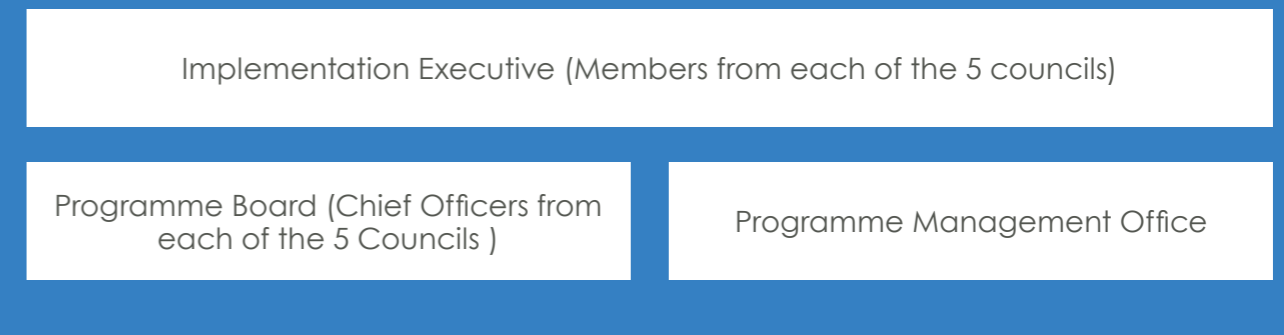
Once the Secretary of State makes a decision, an Implementation Executive and an officer Transition Programme Board would be established to lead the preparations for the new council, prior to Vesting Day. Post Vesting Day, these would be replaced with the Cabinet and Management Team of Buckinghamshire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

The Implementation Executive would lead the delivery of the Transition Plan and also oversee

key 'business as usual' milestones for each of the five councils to ensure that any risks to service continuity are mitigated.

Strong collaboration with key stakeholders would be critical throughout the programme, and the detail of these arrangements would be developed with key partners.

### Governance Arrangements



### Transition Programme Management Office (PMO)

At the outset, a new programme management team would be established in order to manage the substantial transition programme, drawing on the talent across the five organisations blended with external advice and challenge. A Programme Director (external) would be appointed to lead the transition programme, with accountability to the Implementation Executive.

A robust approach to risk management would be taken by the PMO in order to identify specific risks associated with the transition, and to actively manage these.

The Programme Director would report monthly on the delivery of the transition programme to all five councils, through the implementation executive, and also to DCLG.

### Transition Programme – Workstrands

The 'Transition Phase' of the Programme would cover the period from laying parliamentary orders through to the end of the first year of the

new council (Summer 2017- April 2020). At this stage, it is envisaged that the Programme would move into a 'Transformation Phase'.

The Transition Programme workstreams could include:

- Governance – including constitution and policy and planning framework
- Democratic Leadership – including planning for the elections, inductions of new councillors, defining the roles of Members, and development of Community Boards
- HR – including staff retention, transfer and appointments
- Systems – including ICT transitions
- Supply chain – novation of contracts
- Financial management – including design of the budget structure
- Culture Change – internal comms & organisational development
- External Communications & Stakeholder engagement



- Customer Experience & Service Delivery
- Property strategy – including due diligence on asset transfer, opportunities for co-location and development of community hubs
- Service Transformation programme – including planning the phasing of service redesign opportunities

### Democracy Commission

A “Democracy Commission” could be established to maximise public participation in the design of the new council, including the geography of the local areas and the terms of reference of the community boards and the community hub models.

Building on the [Kirklees model](#), this could be established with an independent chairman, with a remit to gather views and ideas from existing county and district councillors, residents, parish & town councils, businesses and other partners, as well as drawing on best practice elsewhere. It is envisaged that this could start in Summer 2017.

One of the issues raised during the research on the business case is the way in which residents of the unparished area of High Wycombe could potentially benefit from the local devolution offer. This will be an issue for the new Buckinghamshire council to consider, and potentially could be included within the scope of the proposed ‘Democracy Commission’.

### Boundary Commission

It is proposed that the Buckinghamshire Council would be established with 98 single member wards, broadly based on dividing the existing county council division boundaries into two. This would involve submitting proposals to the Boundary Commission in summer 2017 to consider. The Boundary Commission anticipate that they would be able to reach a decision on the proposals by January 2018.



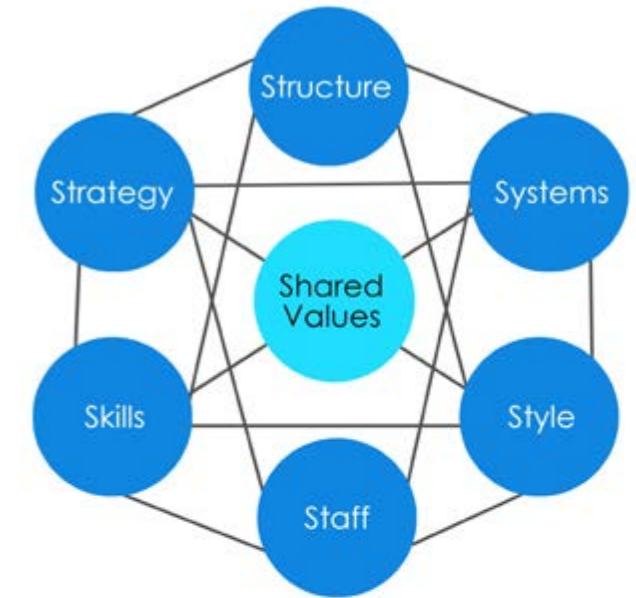
## Creating a New Culture

A new, county-wide single unitary council would need visionary leadership, organisational flexibility and people capacity, with the right people working in the right way. To achieve this, it would be critical to invest in the transition of the workforce in a way that wins hearts and minds, builds trust, and develops the new council into a coherent and cohesive organisation, with its own distinct culture.

Underpinning the transition programme would be a major workstrand focused on developing and embedding a new culture for a new Buckinghamshire Council. This could include:

- Vision, values and behaviours
- Organisational development & design
- HR systems and policies
- Skills development
- Working practices
- Performance management
- Pay and reward, relocation and retention
- Assessment and selection
- Employee relations

A key element of this culture could be a business-like and entrepreneurial approach which would be found not only in the council’s own commercial activity but more generally in the attitude towards problem solving, and in an empathy with the needs of businesses in Buckinghamshire



Credit: McKinsey

# Appendix 1

## Buckinghamshire Profile

### Geography

Buckinghamshire is an attractive county with rich heritage and landscape; over a quarter of the county is included within the Chiltern area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a further third covered by the Metropolitan Green

Belt. The county enjoys good transport links, particularly to London. Contrasting with the rural areas in the county, Buckinghamshire has an urban environment found within its key towns such as Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chesham.

### History & Heritage

Buckinghamshire has been a strategic and administrative unit for over 1000 years. Its boundaries were laid down in 914 by King Edward the Elder who developed the new county of Buckinghamshire as a military unit and a judicial and taxation area, administered by a sheriff.

The Local Government Act of 1888 established the new Buckinghamshire County Council, with democratically elected members from both their urban and rural areas. 1894 saw the creation of elected Urban and Rural District Councils, based on the Poor Law Union boundaries, to look after sanitation and local roads and in due course play a major role in building regulation and the construction of council houses. In 1974, these were replaced by 5 larger district councils, with Slough moving out of Buckinghamshire and into Berkshire. In 1997, the new city of Milton Keynes gained unitary status and separated from the rest of Buckinghamshire.



Historic map of Buckinghamshire 1934

### Demographic and socio-economic change

Buckinghamshire has a population of 528,000 residents, made up of approximately 212,000 households. The population profile is not static, and important changes are occurring. The gap is widening between the lowest and highest socio-economic groups; both of which are growing. The population over the age of 65 is increasing, as are levels of disability. Buckinghamshire is becoming even more multi-

cultural and diverse. We experience a net loss of young educated adults, but net gains of families with children and mid-life adults. These changes, along with shifting behaviours are resulting in increasing demand for some services – including children's' and adults' social care, supported transport, school places, specialised and supported housing, and health services.

## Migration

Migration into Buckinghamshire is a key driver of population change. Migrant characteristics are typically: aged 20-45, families with young children, BME, lower to mid-range socio-economic group, arriving from South Oxfordshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Milton Keynes, Slough, Hillingdon Ealing, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and India.

Since 2001 the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) population in Buckinghamshire has increased by 6%, and we expect to see a further 6% increase by 2031 (to 20% of the total population). The largest increase will be seen in the Asian/ Asian British group (from 9% to 12% total population). Greater Aylesbury and High Wycombe had the

largest BME populations aged 60-79 in 2011 (766 and 1747 respectively), and this will still be the case in 2031, although they will have seen a 255% and 191% increase respectively (to 2725 and 5088 residents).

Future population change will be informed by future changes in housing supply, which ioy

## Business Profile

Buckinghamshire, from a labour market perspective, is advantageously located, within easy commuting distance from the London, the M4 Corridor, Oxford and Milton Keynes labour markets. Key features for which Buckinghamshire is world famous include Silverstone Race Circuit, Pinewood Film Studios and Stoke Mandeville 'The Birthplace of the Paralympics'.

Buckinghamshire is widely recognised as the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain, with more new businesses starting up and succeeding than anywhere else in the UK. Buckinghamshire is a small firm economy with the highest proportion of firms employing fewer than five people, at 75.8% of all firms. 40% of our small firms (with less than 5 employees) are located in rural parts of Buckinghamshire – and these businesses experience more barriers to growth than many, including a lack of affordable housing; poor business infrastructure (particularly a lack of suitable premises, slower broadband speeds and weaker training and development provision); a shortage of key services; a more restrictive labour market (characterised by a lower skilled, ageing workforce); a shortage of business networks; planning constraints; and a lack of access to business support and suitable finance.

The most prominent local business sector is 'professional, scientific and technical services' (21% of local businesses), followed by construction (11%), then 'post and telecommunications' (10%). As the construction

sector has often been the first to demonstrate the impacts of a downturn in the economy, this could be an emerging issue for our business community as the impacts of Brexit become clearer over the next 2 years.

Film and TV is also a recognised dimension of Buckinghamshire's business profile - Pinewood Studios is a key hub for creative industries and the UK film and television industry, with around 112 full-time equivalent employees sitting alongside over 175 Pinewood tenant companies employing approximately 750 people. Recent research estimates suggest that Pinewood generates £101m GVA per annum. The National Film and Television School produces a host of award winning students and graduates, and many of the UK's most noted contemporary auteurs as well as commercial filmmakers. The county's strong natural landscape, great houses and National Trust properties have attracted many high profile film-makers in search of locations – from James Bond to Bridget Jones' Diary, and TV series such as the Midsummer Murders.

A survey of local businesses in 2013 found that overall around three quarters of businesses are satisfied with Buckinghamshire as a place to do business, leaving less than one in ten dissatisfied (these figures vary by district; businesses in Wycombe are more likely than average to be satisfied, whilst those in South Bucks are less likely). Advantages of being Buckinghamshire based are reported as:



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



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



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



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



Less than an hours drive to London and Oxford



Key Stations for East-West Rail (Oxford to Cambridge) to be located within Buckinghamshire. Due for completion 2019

The main challenges to locating in Buckinghamshire were found to be utility and energy prices, transport connectivity (particularly for high-growth businesses), constraints around access to finance, broadband speed, and cost of premises.

The Buckinghamshire LEP evidence base identifies a number of challenges including a lack of high-growth business start-ups, lack of early-stage business accommodation, and weak specialist business networks. The impact of Brexit on inward investment and business start-ups is yet to become clear, but could also be an emerging issue for our local growth agenda.

## Environment

A period of unprecedented growth will inevitably place pressure on the Buckinghamshire environment, and the benefits it provides. Whilst overall domestic energy consumption is reducing in line with national trends, residents in Chiltern and South Bucks consume more gas per household than any other District in England. Only 11% of electricity consumed in Buckinghamshire is from renewable sources, significantly below the Government's national target of 30% by 2020. CO2 emissions per capita in Buckinghamshire (6.8t) are also higher than the regional and English average.

Recycling rates in Buckinghamshire (58%) are better than the national average (45%).

However, Buckinghamshire has more municipal waste going to landfill than is the case nationally (currently 42% compared to the national average of 25%). This is set to improve as a result of the recent opening of a new Energy from Waste facility in the north of the County. This facility represents the single biggest investment ever made by the County Council, and stands to save the county's taxpayers £150 million over 30 years through avoiding landfill charges, as well as earning an income from the electricity generated from waste that cannot be recycled. As the county grows, avoiding and reducing waste and improving resource management will continue to be important to achieving a sustainable future.



Buckinghamshire is the 3rd most productive place in England

48%

of residents educated to degree level and above



Some of the best performing schools in the country

6th

highest proportion of employment in the knowledge economy

## Health & Wellbeing

Buckinghamshire scores well on the national measures of wellbeing with the highest GDP per capita outside Inner London, one of the highest life expectancies and some of the best educational results in the country. Compared to the national average a higher proportion of Buckinghamshire residents view their health as very good or good, and are less likely to report having a long term limiting illness.

**2 in 3** adults are overweight or obese

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

**1 in 5** adults are physically inactive

**1 in 5** adults drink harmful levels of alcohol

**1 in 3** adults are at risk of developing diabetes

The prevalence of long term conditions, many of which are preventable, are expected to increase over the next five years, with the greatest increase expected in diabetes and cancer. The prevalence of cancer is predicted to increase by 31% from 2.5% to 3.2%, driven by unhealthy lifestyles, early detection and improved survival, while diabetes is predicted to increase by 17% from 5.9% to 6.9% driven by an ageing population and unhealthy lifestyles, particularly overweight and obesity. Although hypertension is expected to increase by 5% due to unhealthy lifestyles and better identification of hypertension. However, better management of hypertension and other causative factors such as diabetes, combined with improved identification means the prevalence of coronary heart disease is likely to remain fairly constant.

Mortality rates in Buckinghamshire are significantly lower than national rates for all deaths, for all circulatory diseases and for all cancers. However, the mortality rate due to hypertensive disease (conditions associated with high blood pressure) in Buckinghamshire is statistically significantly higher than the national rate.

There are also significant health inequalities in Buckinghamshire, with the most disadvantaged 20% of people experiencing poorer health outcomes, including infant mortality, premature mortality, hospital admissions rates for a range of conditions (including coronary heart disease, circulatory disease, heart failure, stroke and diabetes).

## Community Safety

After a number of years of decreasing crime levels, crime increased by 12% across the county between 14/15 and 15/16 (reflecting a wider trend across the Thames Valley).

The hidden nature of some emerging areas of crime such as modern slavery, exploitation of vulnerable individuals and groups, and cyber (internet) crime means that the understanding of who is at risk is becoming more complex.

Repeat offending accounts for 67% of all detected crime, and a small proportion of offenders (5%) are responsible for more than 25% of all detected crime. Despite this the Ministry of Justice identifies Buckinghamshire as having the lowest repeat offending rate in the South East. The primary age of offending is between 16 and 26, with the higher rate of offending in this age group being linked to a higher rate of substance misuse.



# Appendix 2

## Sensitivity Analysis

### Council Tax Equalisation

The current model assumes 1.99% council tax equalisation for districts and county councils over the period; plus the 2% Social Care precept for the county and unitary council until 2021. Sensitivity analysis has been performed

of a change in assumption around council tax increases by the lowest precepting authority.

The analysis shows that the impact of changes in council tax increases is not significant in terms of the overall business case.

		Cost of CT equalisation in year 1	Impact on payback	Impact on GF reserve	Impact on GF as % of
		£000	Years	£000	%
<b>Current assumption</b>	<b>1.99%</b>	<b>2,221</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>30,292</b>	<b>7.8%</b>
Lowest DC increase by	1.00%	2,544	2.50	29,969	7.7%
Lowest DC increase by	0.00%	2,869	2.54	29,644	7.6%
Lowest DC increase by	-1.00%	3,194	2.59	29,319	7.5%

### Savings Assumptions

The current model has a number of assumptions around potential savings. Sensitivity looks at the impact of an overall over-estimation or over-delivery of potential savings:

The analysis shows that savings would need to fall to around 50% of what has been assumed before it would become significant in terms of the overall business case.

		Total savings over 5 year period	Ongoing Annual saving	Net (surplus) / deficit over 5 years	Impact on payback period	Impact on GF reserve	Impact on GF as % of NBR
		£000	£000	£000	Years	£000	%
<b>Current assumption</b>		<b>70,606</b>	<b>18,200</b>	<b>(45,420)</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>27,440</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
Reduction of	5%	67,075	17,290	(41,890)	2.31	27,191	7.4%
Reduction of	10%	63,545	16,380	(38,359)	2.38	26,943	7.3%
Reduction of	25%	52,954	13,650	(27,769)	2.67	26,197	7.1%
Reduction of	50%	35,303	9,100	(10,117)	3.62	24,954	6.8%
Increase of	5%	74,136	19,110	(48,950)	2.18	27,689	7.5%
Increase of	10%	77,666	20,020	(52,480)	2.13	27,937	7.6%
Increase of	25%	88,257	22,751	(63,071)	2.00	28,683	7.8%

## Cost Assumptions

The model has a number of assumptions around the cost of transition. Sensitivity looks at the impact of an overall under-estimation of potential costs. The model has assumed that the £95k cap on public sector exit packages comes into effect. The impact of this not taking place is also modelled.

The analysis shows that the £1.5m contingency assumed within the business case is not quite sufficient to cover a 10% increase in costs.

It would not cover the estimated cost of removing the £95k exit cap (\*note this has been estimated at the top-end of potential packages assuming all senior officers are over 55 years and without taking account of potential vacancies).

In terms of the business case overall, however, a 50% increase in costs can be accommodated within general fund reserves without reducing reserves below 5% of net budget requirement.

		Total transition costs £000	Net (Surplus) / deficit over 5 years	Impact on payback period	Impact on GF reserve	Impact on GF as % of NBR
		£000	£000	Years	%	%
<b>Current assumption</b>		<b>16,120</b>	<b>(45,420)</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>27,440</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
No £95k exit cap		18,503	(43,037)	2.39	25,057	6.8%
Increase of	5%	16,926	(44,614)	2.29	26,684	7.3%
Increase of	10%	17,732	(43,808)	2.34	25,928	7.1%
Increase of	25%	20,150	(41,390)	2.49	23,660	6.4%
Increase of	50%	24,180	(37,360)	2.73	19,880	5.4%
Reduction of	5%	15,314	(46,226)	2.19	28,196	7.7%
Reduction of	10%	14,508	(47,032)	2.14	28,952	7.9%
Reduction of	25%	12,090	(49,450)	2.00	31,220	8.5%



# Appendix 3

## New Council Governance Arrangements

### New Council Governance Arrangements

The political governance arrangements of a new Buckinghamshire Council could be designed to provide:

- representation of all Buckinghamshire's communities
- transparent and open decision-making
- responsiveness to the needs and ambitions of local communities
- accountability to local residents, communities and businesses
- robust assurance and regulation of the use of public funding and assets held on behalf of Buckinghamshire

- scrutiny of services delivered on behalf of the council and other public service providers
- strong partnership working with the public, private and voluntary sectors in the interests of local people
- civic leadership and pride in Buckinghamshire which respects the values of local communities and the heritage of the county.

Subject to proportionality rules, all councillors would be eligible for appointment to these positions, as well as serving on local Community Boards and external bodies on behalf of the council.

### Strengthening Local Democracy – Council decision-making

A new council would need to ensure that there is robust public accountability for decision-making and that decisions are taken locally on issues that only affect one locality. Where decisions impact on more than one area or have a significant impact across Buckinghamshire, these decisions would be taken by the council as a whole through the councils' committees and Cabinet Members.

To ensure robust accountability and a localism approach, a new Buckinghamshire council could take the following measures:

- Ensure that all committee/cabinet/cabinet Member decisions which have a local impact demonstrate how the local councillors and the Community Board have been consulted

- Require public consultation on all major service changes through different ways – online; face-to-face engagement events; Community Board & Forum meeting.
- All planning decisions to ensure local consultation; the Strategic Planning Committee and the Area Planning Committees would ensure that the public and affected parish councils have the opportunity to make representations.
- Hold committee meetings in evenings to ensure that residents who work are able to attend



## Council Committees

To fulfil the purpose of Buckinghamshire Council it is proposed that a Leader and Cabinet model be adopted for the new council, with four yearly elections. The other key committees of the council proposed are:

- Strategic Planning Committee
- Area Planning Committees (5)
- Licencing Committee
- Area Licensing Sub-Committees (5)
- Regulatory & Audit Committee
- Senior Awards & Appointments Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Board

- Pensions Fund Committee
- Rights of Way Committee
- Commercial Committee (to oversee the council's commercial activities)
- Community Boards (19)
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Schools Forum

The exact details of the roles of all committees would be set out in a new council constitution.

In order to make it as easy as possible for those of working age to serve as an elected councillor, all full council and committee meetings could take place in evenings.

## Key Councillor Positions

In order to carry out the functions of the new council effectively the following roles would be needed:

- Chairman of the Council- ceremonial head of the council & chairman of full council meetings
- Leader & Portfolio Holders — political portfolios should be designed to deliver the benefits of integrating the former county and district council services to customers.
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee Chairmen (5) — The remit for scrutiny committees should be structured to reflect the political portfolios and strategic themes of Buckinghamshire Council. The committees will fulfill statutory responsibilities in relation to health, education, community safety.

- Strategic Planning Committee Chairman
- Area Planning Committee Chairmen (5)
- Rights of Way Committee Chairman
- Licencing Committee Chairman
- Regulatory & Audit Committee Chairman
- Pensions Fund Committee Chairman
- Senior Appointments and Standards Committee Chairman
- Community Board Chairmen (19)

Subject to proportionality rules, all councillors would be eligible for appointment to these positions, as well as serving on local Community Boards and external bodies on behalf of the council.

## Cabinet

A Cabinet of ten members is envisaged for the first term of the new council. This is larger than would be required for 'steady state' but would provide the additional capacity required for the successful implementation of a major change programme. The new council could consider reducing this number in its second term.

Political portfolios should be designed to provide a focus on the key challenges and opportunities faced by the new council, and to deliver the benefits of integrated services. It will be for the new council to design these portfolios, but they will need to include combinations of the following areas of responsibility:

- Adults Services
- Health
- Housing Services
- Children & Young People's services
- Highways & Transportation

- Economic Development, Skills
- Growth Strategy — Planning, Housing and Transport
- Planning
- Property
- Waste
- Communities & Local Partnerships
- Leisure
- Culture
- Environment & Flooding
- Resources
- Customer Service
- Commercialisation
- Business Transformation

## Scrutiny

A new Buckinghamshire Council's scrutiny system would be set up according to the four national overarching principles for good scrutiny:

- Provides critical friend challenge to executive policy and decision makers
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public
- Carried out by independent minded councillors
- Drives improvement

A new, county-wide single unitary council would be able to carry out more robust scrutiny on behalf of local residents of issues rather than the artificial current constraints of looking at council services of five separate bodies in isolation.

Scrutiny could be carried out at two levels - strategically and locally – by non-executive councillors on a cross-party basis. Strategically

the following committees are envisaged:

- Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee – This Committee would have a key role in helping to join-up the work of each committee through an oversight role, including scrutinising the council's draft budget, its commercial activities, and considering call-ins.
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee
- Transport, Economy, Environment & Housing Committee
- Communities, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Committee

Locally scrutiny could take place through the proposed Community Boards.

## Civic and Ceremonial Role

The civic and ceremonial heritage of Buckinghamshire dates back to 914 and the offices of the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff have long been valued county-wide. Whilst Milton Keynes is now a separate administrative area, Milton Keynes Council has

continued to support the ceremonial structures of Buckinghamshire. The Clerk to the Lord Lieutenancy has traditionally been hosted by the county council and it is proposed that a new Buckinghamshire Council would provide that office in the future.

## Role Profiles

Full details of Member roles for all committee positions will be set out in the council's new constitution. Role profiles are included here for:

- All Councillors
- Council Leader
- Cabinet Members (Executive)
- Scrutiny Members

## All Councillors

All councillors will have the following roles to play:

### Community Leadership

- Championing their division
- Dealing with casework
- Representing the community within the council and other agencies
- Campaigning on local issues
- Keep in touch with constituents
- Engaging with all groups within their respective electoral area

### Decision maker and influencer

- Making well informed decisions at council meetings and other committees
- Working with partners and outside bodies as a representative of the council
- Act as a Corporate Parent for children and young people in the care of the local authority
- Liaising with town and parish councils
- Being an active member of the Community Board, including attending all meetings. This role may involve leading an action group to solve a local issue, leading community meetings with residents and facilitating engagement with the council and partners. The exact responsibilities of the role will be locally determined and agreed by each Community Board.

## Leader

### Leadership

- Provide an overall cohesive, corporate and strategic leadership and direction for the council
- Lead and chair the Cabinet and ensure its overall effectiveness
- Lead in developing the council's partnerships with other organisations
- Work with portfolio holders to ensure effective delivery of services within their portfolios against the agreed policies of the council, and to ensure the delivery of the Cabinet's responsibilities
- Ensure effective communication and explanation of all Cabinet's decisions and recommendations to council and the public
- Ensure that the Cabinet manages the business of the council within the financial limits set by the council

- Ensure Cabinet members abide by the council's code of conduct

### Overall responsibility

- Ensure that cabinet exercises responsibility for the prudent management of the council's budget
- Have overall responsibility for the political management of the authority and the delivery of agreed council priorities, strategies and policies

### Working with partners

- Be the main representative of the council, with others as appropriate, in dealing with the community, business, voluntary sector and other local and national organisations
- Ensure effective liaison with other political groups within the council

## Cabinet Member (Executive)

The Cabinet is responsible for all local authority functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the council, provided the decisions made are within the council's agreed policy and budget framework.

- Participate effectively as a Cabinet Member taking joint responsibility for all actions and be collectively accountable.
- Build good relationships, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, with appropriate officers and work with them in developing policy
- Ensure that appropriate, viable, commercial opportunities within the portfolio area are identified and nurtured, in liaison with the Cabinet Member with overview responsibility for commercialisation

- To take a proactive approach to the early engagement of overview and scrutiny committees to help in policy development

- Ensure that a balanced approach is taken to risk - seek to ensure that risks are well balanced and are managed rather than always minimised, especially in relation to entrepreneurial activities of the council.

- Give political direction to officers working within the portfolio

- Ensure up to date knowledge of related developments and policies at national, regional and local level

- Enhance the council's reputation through taking the national stage where possible and participating in regional and national networks

- Have an overview of performance management, efficiency and effectiveness of the portfolio
- Represent Cabinet by attending scrutiny committees as requested in connection with any issues associated with the portfolio and consider scrutiny reports as required.
- Make executive decisions within the portfolio

- Act as a strong, competent and persuasive figure to represent the portfolio and a figurehead in meetings with stakeholders
- Be prepared to take part in learning and development opportunities to ensure that the role is undertaken as effectively as possible
- Represent the council as a spokesperson with the Media and feedback to Cabinet any issues of relevance and importance.

## Scrutiny Member

The Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees carry out the statutory scrutiny role of the council in holding decision-makers to account (Cabinet and partners) and making recommendations to improve outcomes for residents through undertaking Scrutiny Inquiries.

All councillors on a Select Committee have the following roles:

- Reviewing and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken by the Cabinet. They may also be involved in policy development prior to decisions being taken by the Cabinet. The committees may make reports and recommendations to full Council and Cabinet and any relevant partner in connection with council functions.
- Assist with the development of an effective work programme
- Engage with all stages of the scrutiny process
- Develop a constructive relationship with Cabinet, officers, and partners in relation to the remit of the respective committee to assist the effective improvement process
- Be responsible for the outputs and outcomes of scrutiny, including monitoring the implementation of scrutiny recommendations
- Seek to engage with the public to enable the public voice to be heard of public concern
- Seek to gather, receive and analysis evidence from a wide-range of sources so that the committee can make evidence-based impartial recommendations.
- Analyse information presented to the committee
- Make recommendations based on the committee's deliberations



# Appendix 4

## Planning Framework

### Planning Framework

District councils are responsible for delivering Local Plans which set out the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change, including an annual trajectory of the number of new homes planned in the period. In 2015, the Government announced that councils must create and deliver local plans by 2017 to help reach the

government's ambition of delivering 1 million homes by 2020 – or that Ministers would intervene to ensure that plans are produced for them. The expectation is that plans will be reviewed every five years. The timetable for adoption of local plans in Buckinghamshire is currently as follows:

	Adoption due	Plan period
AVDC	Summer 2017	2013-2033
Wycombe	End 2017	2013-2033
Chiltern & South Bucks	June 2018	2014-2036

It is anticipated that Buckinghamshire Council will, in due course, wish to consider the benefits of moving towards a single local development and infrastructure plan for Buckinghamshire, succeeding the three local plans. A single plan would need to contain sufficient detail to enable decisions at the local level be taken in a way that avoids challenge, with standard advice provided to deal with the detail of individual (smaller scale) planning applications.

The first review of the local plans (2022/2023) could be an appropriate point for the new council to begin those discussions. Until that point, the new council should continue to operate with the current local plans.

It is envisaged that a new council would continue to encourage the development of **Neighbourhood Plans**, in accordance with the local plans. Currently, 29 communities in Buckinghamshire are at various stages of developing neighbourhood plans and three are awaiting designation as a neighbourhood plan area. In addition to this, ten have been approved and adopted, with one further plan being held by a referendum awaiting final decision. These plans, totalling 43 across the county, provide a powerful way of enabling communities to shape a shared vision for their neighbourhood and direct the right types of development for their community, consistent with the strategic needs of the wider area.

# Appendix 5

## Engagement



The engagement of residents, communities and stakeholder groups has been critical to understanding how best to shape the future of local government in Buckinghamshire. An extensive programme of insight and engagement has therefore been carried out to inform the development of this business case.

### Programme of Engagement

Throughout June, July and August 2016, Buckinghamshire County Council, in partnership with Buckinghamshire Business First, Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils, (MKBALC), Community Impact Bucks and Ipsos MORI held a series of engagement sessions, conducted 1,000 telephone interviews and ran an online survey.

The engagement sessions each followed a similar format, recruited by open invite and posed questions to understand priorities and needs, explore perceptions and represent the voice of different stakeholder group, in town and parish councillors and clerks, service users, businesses, suppliers, and voluntary and community sector organisations. The sessions were facilitated by external organisations, rather than the county council, in order to provide an independent voice:

Audience	Host	Date
Town/Parish Councillors	MKBALC	07/06/16 10/06/16
Town and Parish Clerks	MKBALC	08/06/16 09/06/16
Local Businesses	Buckinghamshire Business First	20/07/16
Voluntary Community Sector	Community Impact Bucks	25/07/16 27/07/16
Residents	Ipsos Mori	02/08/16 04/08/16 09/08/16

The telephone interviews undertaken by MORI, involved a randomized sample of 1,000 Buckinghamshire residents.

## Findings

A summary of findings can be found below. A separate report is available with the detailed record of the research.

Sessions identified that participant's prior knowledge of the, so called, 'Unitary debate' was relatively low, but, by the end of each session, participant understanding was recorded to have increased, on average, by 20%.

Knowledge of where responsibilities lie for the delivery of each service provided, across the three tier council structure was varied. Overall, participants assigned 73% of responsibilities correctly. This was made up of 26% correct assignments to town and parishes, 61% to districts and 89% to county. This suggests that there could be better clarity of accountability at all levels.

To understand more about the perceptions held by participants about their identity to Buckinghamshire, as it currently stands, questions were posed around the effect that modernising local government might have on its history, geography and brand. This topic was met with an almost unanimous response from

all stakeholder groups; that Buckinghamshire would remain Buckinghamshire regardless of the future shape that local government takes and that there is little significance placed on or owned towards identity and so little consequence of it changing.

Despite the general acknowledgment of the positive activity carried out by councils for the delivery of public services, there was an agreement that more could be done to improve them. For example, customer experience, efficiency of delivery, collaboration and shared learning between councils, streamlining of decision making and delivering value for money. There was also a strong focus from participants on the importance for the future model of local government to be responsive to local needs and where appropriate, deliver services locally.

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

Ipsos Mori Local government re-organisation: research report for Buckinghamshire County Council - September 2016

### Resident Criteria

**Retaining the quality of services.** According to the survey, in thinking about future service delivery two in five residents stress the importance of 'providing high quality services' (40%) and 'improving the overall quality of service' (37%). In fact, group participants reflected further that potential re-organisation offers an opportunity to not just make savings and improve efficiency, but also improve service quality.

**Making sure services are easy to access.** The survey demonstrates how similar proportions (44%) also think 'ensuring that public services are easy to use and simple to access' is also key. This links to improving customer service as well as ensuring that any move to unitary status does not compromise residents' ability to be able to physically access services locally in person if they need to; a recurring theme coming out of the groups.

**Giving residents a say about services and acting on their concerns.** Over two in five residents (44%) to the survey think that 'giving people a say in the decisions that affect local services' is the most important thing for local councils to consider in thinking about a unitary model - the top priority of those asked about. 'Acting on the concern of local residents' was also mentioned by 43% as being important for future service delivery. These issues came through strongly from the group discussions too. Group participants were concerned about the potential risk to local responsiveness and the ability of any new council model to address local need as a result of future re-organisation at a larger-scale.

**Ensuring transparency and accountability.** Two in five residents (42%) to the survey also felt that 'being accountable to local people' was important. Group participants emphasised that residents should know how money is being spent and how decisions about future services and structures are made (including greater visibility of councillors here).

"Let's go back to the work that BBF carried out some years ago. The case has in fact become much stronger for a whole of Bucks unitary authority...let's do it!" Local Business

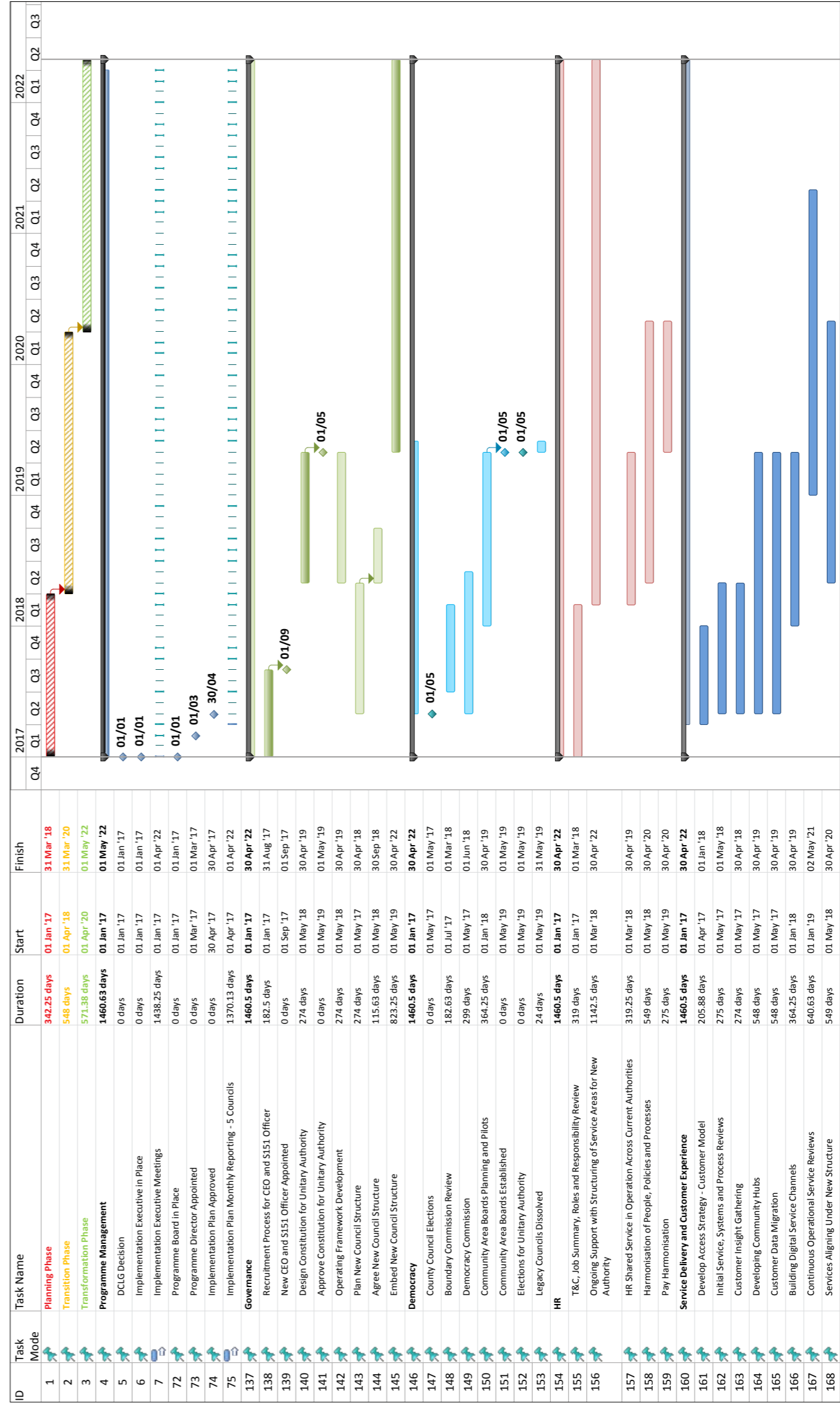
"There are mixed views about the unitary proposal...It is hard to make the archaeological voice heard at district level, it could be harder in a unitary authority. Whilst economies in delivery of civic services are important, this must not be at the expense of functions that play a small but supporting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

"Aylesbury workshop participants wanted to come to a collective agreement of their suggested model for streamlining: All Aylesbury VCS participants opted for a single county-wide unitary authority with varying degrees of devolved budgets to a more local level." Community Impact Bucks

Regardless of its shape, the proposal to modernise local government was seen as an opportunity by all. Of course, each model would come with its challenges but it was globally seen as fundamental to ensuring the best for the local community, its economy and the future of local government.

# Appendix 6

## Implementation Plan



Project: Unitary Implementation P  
Date: 15 Sep '16

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

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

Milestone: [White Bar]

Summary: [White Bar]

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

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

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

Project: Unitary Implementation p  
Date: 15 Sep '16

Task Split Milestone Summary

Manual Summary Rollup Manual Summary Start-only Finish-only

Inactive Milestone Inactive Summary Manual Task Duration-only

Deadline Progress





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**NOW VERSUS OPTIONS**

	<b>Now</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>
Total no of councillors	197	90	120	140
No of Cabinet - Executive = Full time councillors	17	10	10	10
No of Deputies to Cabinet = Full time Councillors	0		5	9
No of 'Regular' councillors post May 2021 election	180	80	105	121

**Time spent on casework/issues/queries**

Average No per current councillor of contacts/queries per week (from the survey)	35	77	57	49
Total no of contacts/queries per week for all Cllrs	6,895			

**Average hr per week time spent on case work per Cllr (from the survey)**

	<b>15.0</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>21.1</b>
--	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

*Increase in hours spent on case work*

119%      64%      41%

**If case work remains unchanged**

**Time spent in attending meetings**

Total no meeting attendences in a year (includes Council meetings, Community Board, Outside bodies. Excludes Parish/Town Councils)	5,006	3,101	3,701	4,101
Average No of meeting attendences per councillor per year	25.4	34.5	30.8	29.3

No of attendences remain same for most committees (as fixed no of members) but reduces for Full Council and Community Boards

**Average time spent on meetings (from survey)**

	<b>6.0</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>6.9</b>
--	------------	------------	------------	------------

*Increase in hours spent on meetings*

36%      21%      15%

**Total average hours per Councillor per week**

	<b>21.0</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>28.0</b>
--	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

*Increase in hours per Councillor per week*

95%      52%      33%

**If committee membership and meeting nos remain unchanged**

**Time commitment of Councillors per week from the survey**

	Hours	
Time spent on regular Council committee meetings (including reading papers etc)	3.5	From data supplied by council
Time spent on case work	15.0	From survey
Time spent on Town/Parish councils, outside bodies and community boards	2.5 ?	Needs to be updated from survey
	<b>21.0</b>	

**Rough and ready example to make sense of figures above**

	Meetings pa	
Full Council	5	
Community Board	5	
Community Board working group x 2	10	
Other committees - on average one committee per person with 5 meetings per year	5	
	<b>25</b>	Now
Other committees - on average one committee with 5 meetings per year	5	
	<b>30</b>	Option 2 equates to one additional committee
Other committees - on average one committee with 5 meetings per year	5	
	<b>35</b>	Option 1 equates to two additional committee

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## Report to Standards and General Purposes Committee

**Date:** 25 February 2021

**Reference number:** TBC

**Title:** Model of Code of Conduct

**Author and/or contact officer:** Maria Damigos, Principal Solicitor, Legal and Democratic Services [maria.damigos@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:maria.damigos@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) affected:** none specific

**Recommendations:** The committee is asked to resolve that:-

- 1. The Model Code of Conduct with agreed amendments be recommended to Full Council for adoption**
- 2. The Code of Conduct is reviewed in a year's time**
- 3. That Full Council is recommended to give delegated power to the Monitoring Officer to make any updates to the Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints Against Councillors as are necessary in view of the Code of Conduct which is adopted.**
- 4. That the Monitoring Officer has delegated powers to update the Guidance on Dealing with Complaints Against Councillors as are necessary in view of the Code of Conduct which is adopted by Full Council.**

**Reason for decision:** To update the Code of Conduct in line with best practice recommendations and to help with consistency across all levels of local government within the Buckinghamshire Council area.

### Background

- 1.1** When Councillors are elected to office they undertake to abide by the highest standards of ethical conduct. In addition to abiding by a Code of Conduct, Councillors should familiarise themselves with the Member / Officer Protocol set out in the Buckinghamshire Council Constitution and The Role of Elected Members in

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults. These provide specific guidance on how Councillors should conduct themselves.

- 1.2 On 23 December 2020, the Local Government Association (LGA) published a model Councillor Code of Conduct (the Model Code) with an updated version 2 on 19 January 2021. A copy of version 2 of the Model Code is attached as Appendix A. The LGA described the Model Code as 'designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government'.
- 1.3 The development of the Model Code was undertaken by the LGA 'in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector'. The Council's response to consultation is attached as Appendix B.
- 1.4 The Localism Act 2011 requires all Councils to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct and the Model Code has been developed for use by councils as a template to adopt in whole or with local amendments should they wish to. This Committee has oversight of the Council's ethical framework including the Councillor Code of Conduct and it is your role to determine whether to recommend the Model Code, amended or otherwise, to Full Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.
- 1.5 While the Council administers code of conduct complaints on behalf of parish and town councils in the area, the adoption of a Code is a matter for each council although it is understood that the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils will be recommending the adoption of the Model Code with only minor amendments to reflect local issues where appropriate.
- 1.6 Buckinghamshire Council's current Code of Conduct was adopted in February 2020 with a review to take place after a year. The Constitution includes arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct and the Guidance associated with the arrangements incorporates the recommendations of the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL) as set out in its January 2019 Report on Local Government Ethical Standards. The CSPL report also recommended the adoption of a Code of Conduct in the form of a Model Code to be published.
- 1.7 The publication of the Model Code has co-incided with the timings of the review into the Council's Code of Conduct and this report presents the Model Code (Appendix A), compares it to the Council's current Code of Conduct (at Appendices C and D) and raises specific issues to consider in relation to suggested amendments and asks for any further matters to consider.

## Content of report

- 1.8 When researching the local Codes of Conduct, the CPSL found there was considerable variation in the length, quality and clarity of codes of conduct. They believed that this created confusion among members of the public, and among councillors who represent more than one tier of local government. This is an issue for Ward councillors of Buckinghamshire Council as many are also parish councillors and sit on combined authorities such as Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority.
- 1.9 The LGA's Model Code is based on the CSPL best practice recommendations and the expectation is that all councils should adopt it as a minimum, but with provision of additional local variations.
- 1.10 Discussions with Monitoring Officers from neighbouring authorities indicate a collective leaning towards adoption of the Model Code albeit with local variations. All intend to take the Model Code to their Standards Committees.
- 1.11 Appendix C of the Model Code lists the 15 Best practice recommendations and notes that the Government is yet to respond to the recommendations made by CPSL, some of which require legislative changes. It should be noted that the Government's response, when it comes, may require a change to the Council's adopted Code.
- 1.12 One of the CPSL's best practice recommendations is that principal authorities should review their Code of Conduct annually and regularly seek, where possible the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities. The Committee has previously supported this recommendation in relation to the general review of the Council's Code on the basis that the date of publication of the Model Code was not then known. However as the LGA has recently conducted wide-reaching consultation in respect of the Model Code, it is not recommended that consultation is required should the decision be to the recommendation to Full Council to adopt the Model Code.
- 1.13 It is suggested that the Council contacts all Town and Parish Councils alerting them to the consideration of this report by the Standards and General Purposes Committee. It is recommended that future annual reviews should seek views as per the Best Practice Recommendation.
- 1.14 The Service Director Legal and Democratic Services has already been in contact with the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils who are in contact with their members regarding the Model Code. They will be recommending the Model Code is adopted by Town and Parish Councils and whilst they may still make their own amendments, as the obligations are likely to be very similar this will still promote an understanding of the expectations for conduct amongst all councillors.

Alerting all Town and Parish Council's to the consideration of this report will allow them to consider whether and how far to align any amendments they may wish to make with those to be recommended to full Council (if any).

## The Model Code in summary and comparison with the Council's Code

1.15 A comparison of the main terms of the Council's Code and the Model Code are detailed in Appendix D.

1.16 In summary the Model Code:

- Continues to require upholding the seven principles of public life (the Nolan Principles) and translates these to general principles of conduct
- Contains 10 general obligations (broken down into 21 specific obligations) with guidance and explanation
- Sets out legal requirements
- Defines a councillor as a member or co-opted member of a local authority
- Sets out when the Code applies and in addition to 'acting in capacity as a councillor or representative of the Council', includes when actions 'would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor'
- Introduces:
  - Concept of acting with civility
  - The word 'harassment' and a definition of bullying and harassment
  - Under the Obligation to comply with the Code of Conduct: to undertake Code of Conduct training, co-operate with any investigation or determination, not to intimidate persons administering or investigating a complaint and to comply with any sanctions
- Includes reference to social media
- Requires employees of the Council, partners and volunteers for the local authority to be treated with respect
- Requires registration of gifts and hospitality with a value of £50 and over
- Maintains the concept of 'bringing the council into disrepute'



- Codifies the position on declaration and participation in relation to personal interests

### Specific issues for consideration

- 1.17 There are several points to bring to the attention of the Committee for its consideration of whether local variations to the Model Code are appropriate.

### Scope and Social Media

- 1.18 The Model Code applies whenever a member is acting in their capacity as a councillor or the actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public, with knowledge of all the facts that this is the case. The application of the Model Code to all forms of communication and interaction is set out and this includes social media.
- 1.19 It is considered that the Model Code would apply in the same circumstances and situations as the Council's Code and provides a clear, objective and reasonable test of applicability on a case by case basis.
- 1.20 The Model Code does not, however, cover the situation when acting as a representative of the Council on another authority or body and there is another Code of Conduct applicable (this is in paragraph 2.4 of the Council's Code). The Committee may wish to amend the Model Code to make this clear.

### Obligations

- 1.21 Although set out differently the general principles and general obligations are comparable with those in the Council's Code. Whilst it does not contain the detail in paragraph 2.7 h of the Council's Code relating to exercising independent judgement and taking decisions for good and substantial reasons it does have a general obligation to impartially exercise responsibilities in the interests of the local community.

### Gifts and Hospitality Threshold

- 1.22 The monetary threshold of £50 and over for registration of gifts and hospitality in the Model Code is more than the £25 threshold in the Council's current Code. To assist the Committee in determining the threshold:
- The LGA reports that over 7 in 10 respondents (72%) supported £25 as the threshold for registering gifts and hospitality. 9% of respondents thought that the threshold should be lower than £25 while 16% felt that it should be higher.
  - Neighbouring authorities limits (currently) range between £25 (Central Bedfordshire Council) and £100 (Milton Keynes Council).

## Co-opted members

- 1.23 Both Codes apply to elected members and co-opted members of the Council. The definition of a co-opted member is a statutory one found in s27(4) Localism Act 2011 and is set out in the Model Code. The statutory definition includes only those members entitled to vote at Council Committees and therefore does not include members of Council Committees that are not entitled to vote.
- 1.24 The Committee may want to consider whether the Code should extend to co-opted members who do not have voting rights. It is expected this would mainly apply to representatives of other organisations on Committee's who may however be subject to their own Codes of Conduct or conduct requirements which are likely to be comparable. If any amendments are considered as suggested in paragraph 1.16 above the inclusion of these can clarify the position.

## Dealing with disrespect

- 1.25 Under the obligation of respect, the Model Code advises councillors to 'report' members of the public who are abusive, intimidatory or threatening to the local authority. Given the jurisdiction of the local authority and the police for example, consideration can be given to whether the word 'report' is amended to 'seek guidance from'

## Personal Interests and Participation

- 1.26 The Model Code includes the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) as set out in Regulations and which are the same as detailed in the Council's Code. Members with a DPI are required to leave the room during the whole of the consideration of the item in which they have such an interest except where a dispensation has been granted.
- 1.27 In relation to other interests a comparison of the requirements is set out in Appendix D which show that the provisions are broadly comparable, however the Council's Code includes definitions and is slightly more detailed, the advantage of which is clarity but the disadvantage is it is prescriptive.
- 1.28 It is considered that the provisions in the Model Code relating to interests may be confusing in practice: as well as DPI's it refers to other interests and non-registerable interests but does not give much detail.
- 1.29 The Committee may wish to extend the provisions of the Model Code in this respect.
- 1.30 In addition, the Model Code also sets out that members are not to participate or vote on any business in which they have a personal interest except where a dispensation

has been granted. This is a departure from the Council's Code and that of many other authorities which usually allow both participation and voting for a personal interest which is not prejudicial.

- 1.31 The advantage of not allowing any participation with an interest is that it takes away any confusion over the type of interest for the member and a dispensation can be requested where a member still wishes to take part with greater transparency.
- 1.32 The other side of this is that dispensations for DPI's can only be granted in defined circumstances which may need to be extended in respect of personal interests. If this was done it would result in differing rules in any event (so a determination on the type of interest is still required), an increased number of requests for dispensations and move the onus of deciding the appropriate participation in the case of personal as well as pecuniary interests to the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.33 The Committee may therefore also wish to consider whether participation needs to be amended or extended.

## Guidance

- 1.34 The current Arrangements for dealing with complaints and the associated Guidance may require updating if the Model Code is adopted (with or without amendments). It is suggested that this can be most easily done under a specific delegated power once the final Code is determined.

## Summary

- 1.35 The following are areas which the Committee may wish to consider further and/or amend within the Model Code:
  - Clarifying applicability where a representative may be subject to two different Codes of Conduct
  - Application of the Code to non-voting co-opted members
  - Inclusion of an obligation to exercise independent judgment and taking decisions for good and substantial reason
  - Considering the threshold for registration of gifts and hospitality
  - Changing 'reporting' abusive members of the public to 'seeking guidance'
  - The level of detail required for the definition of personal interests
  - The level of participation allowed with a personal interest

## Other options considered

1.36 There are a number of choices open to the Committee:

(a) Recommend no change to the current Code of Conduct, resolve to continue with the existing Code of Conduct and ask for a report to come to a later meeting of the Committee

(b) Recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Model Code with or without potential amendments;

(c) Identify issues and ask for a report to come to a later meeting of the Committee that addresses those issues

(d) Resolve to await the outcome of the Government consideration of the Committee for Standards in Public Life recommendations, and in the meantime invite parish and town councils, community organisations, neighbouring authorities and other interested parties, individuals and stakeholders for comments on both the Council's existing Code of Conduct and the Model Code

## Legal and financial implications

1.37 None except as set out in the body of the report. It should however be noted that until such time as the Council agree to adopt a new or revised Code of Conduct the existing version together with the Guidance will continue to meet the Council's statutory requirements and best practice recommendations.

## Corporate implications

1.38 The effectiveness of the Councils standards arrangements is necessary for good governance and contributes to the effectiveness of the Members, the Council and helps ensure proper and legal decision-making.

## Consultation and communication

1.39 As detailed in the body of the report.

## Next steps and review

If adopted, the Arrangements and Guidance may need updating and further guidance and communication with members is to be undertaken.

## *Appendices*

<b>Annex A</b>	LGA Model Code of Conduct
<b>Annex B</b>	Buckinghamshire Council Response to LGA consultation on the Model Code of Conduct
<b>Annex C</b>	Buckinghamshire Council Code of Conduct
<b>Annex D</b>	Comparison of main terms of the Council's Code and the Model Code

## Background papers

LGA Model Member Code of Conduct: Consultation response analysis, November 2020

<https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-model-member-code-conduct-consultation-response-analysis-november-2020#methodology->

## Your questions and views (for key decisions)

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix A

### LGA Model Code of Conduct

## Appendix B

### Buckinghamshire Council Response to LGA consultation on the Model Code of Conduct

## Appendix C

### Buckinghamshire Council Code of Conduct for Councillors



## **2. Code of Conduct for Councillors**

### **Part 1 – General Provisions**

#### **Introduction**

- 2.1. The Council has adopted this Code of Conduct pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its councillors by its members and co-opted members whenever they conduct the business of the Council including the office to which they were elected or appointed or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council.
- 2.2. This Code of Conduct complies with Section 28 of the Act and is consistent with the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

#### **Scope**

- 2.3. This Code of Conduct applies to you whenever you are acting in your capacity as a councillor of Buckinghamshire Council, including: –
  - a. at formal meetings of the Council, its Committees and Sub-Committees, its Cabinet and Panels;
  - b. when acting as a representative of the Council;
  - c. in taking any decision as a Cabinet Member or a Ward Councillor;
  - d. in discharging your functions as a Ward Councillor;
  - e. at briefing meetings with officers;
  - f. at site visits; and
  - g. when corresponding with the authority other than in a private capacity.
- 2.4. Where you act as a representative of the Council:-
  - a. on another authority, you must when acting for that authority, comply with that other authority's code of conduct; or
  - b. on any other body, you must, when acting for that other body, comply with this Code of Conduct, except and insofar as it conflicts with any other lawful obligations to which that other body may be subject.
- 2.5. Where you are acting as a co-opted member of a Council Committee or Sub-Committee or Board or Panel of the Council.

- 2.6. When using social media or the internet and/or in relation to your online presence if you refer in any way to your role as a councillor or co-opted member or could reasonably be perceived as acting in any of the above capacities when doing so.

## **General Obligations**

2.7. You must:

- a. provide leadership to the Council and communities within its area, by personal example;
- b. respect others and not bully any person;
- c. recognise that officers (other than political assistants) are employed by and serve the whole Council;
- d. respect the confidentiality of information which you receive as a councillor or co-opted member and –
  - i not disclose confidential information to third parties unless required by law to do so or where there is a clear and over-riding public interest in doing so; and
  - ii not obstruct third parties' legal rights of access to information;
- e. not conduct yourself in a manner which is likely to bring the Council into disrepute;
- f. use your position as a councillor or co-opted member in the public interest and not for personal advantage;
- g. act in accordance with the Council's reasonable rules on the use of the resources of the Council for private or political purposes;
- h. exercise your own independent judgement, taking decisions for good and substantial reasons –
  - i attaching appropriate weight to all relevant considerations including, where appropriate, public opinion and the views of political groups;
  - ii paying due regard to the advice of officers, and in particular to the advice of the statutory officers, namely the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer; and
  - iii stating the reasons for your decisions where those reasons are not otherwise apparent;
- i. account for your actions, particularly by supporting the Council's scrutiny function;
- j. ensure that the Council acts within the law.

## **Part 2 – Interests**

### **Personal Interests**

2.8. In addition to the statutory requirements under the Act in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interest's (DPI's) and as set out in Paragraph 2.22 and Appendix A below and save for the subject interest already having been declared as a DPI and the statutory provisions complied with, the following Paragraphs 2.9 to 2.21 shall also apply.

2.9. You have a personal interest in any business of the Council where either-

- a. it relates to or is likely to affect –
  - i Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council;
  - ii Any body –
    - Exercising functions of a public nature
    - Directed to charitable purposes; or
    - One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

Of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
  - iii Any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
  - iv The interests of any person or body from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25;
- b. A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision.

2.10. In sub-paragraph 2.9 b. above, a relevant person is –

- a. A member of your family or any person with whom you have a close personal association; or
- b. Any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors; or
- c. Any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or

- d. Any person or body of a type described in sub-paragraph 2.9 a.

### **Disclosure of Personal Interests**

- 2.11. Subject to Paragraphs 2.12 to 2.15, where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council and you attend a meeting of the Council at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- 2.12. Where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council which solely relates to a body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council, you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest if that interest is prejudicial (see Paragraphs 2.17 to 2.19).
- 2.13. Where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council of the type mentioned in Paragraph 2.9 a.iv, you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
- 2.14. Paragraph 2.11 only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.
- 2.15. Subject to Paragraph 2.20, where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must ensure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that personal interest.
- 2.16. Having declared a personal interest you may continue to speak and vote on the item of business concerned.

### **Prejudicial Interest Generally**

- 2.17. Subject to Paragraph 2.18, where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.
- 2.18. You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the Council where that business—
  - a. does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in Paragraph 2.9;
  - b. does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in Paragraph 2.9; or

- c. relates to the functions of the Council in respect of—
  - i an allowance, payment or indemnity given to councillors;
  - ii any ceremonial honour given to councillors; and
  - iii setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

### **Prejudicial Interests Arising in Relation to Select Committees**

2.19. You also have a prejudicial interest in any business before a Select Committee of the Council (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where—

- a. that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by the Cabinet or another of the Council's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and
- b. at the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the Cabinet, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph (a) and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken.

### **Effect of Prejudicial Interests on Participation**

2.20. Subject to Paragraph 2.21, where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of the Council—

- a. you must declare the existence and nature of your interest and withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting considering the business is being held—
  - i in a case where Paragraph 2.21 applies, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence;
  - ii in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at that meeting;
- b. you must not exercise executive functions in relation to that business; and
- c. you must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.

2.21. Where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of the Council you may attend a meeting (including a meeting of the relevant Select Committee of the Council or of a sub-committee of such a committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

## **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

- 2.22. A Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) is as defined in ‘The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012’ (The Regulations) and the categories of interest are set out in Appendix A.
- 2.23. Councillors or co-opted members who have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any item of business being considered at a meeting of the Council, its Committees, Sub-Committees, Joint Committees, Cabinet and/or Policy Advisory Groups, must leave the room or chamber including the public gallery during the whole of the consideration of that item except where a councillor or co-opted member is permitted to remain as a result of the grant of a dispensation.

## **Part 3 – Registration of Interests**

### **Registration and Disclosure of Interests**

- 2.24. Subject to Paragraph 2.28, you must, within 28 days of this Code of Conduct becoming applicable or your election or appointment to office register in the council’s register of members’ interests, maintained under Section 29 of the Act, details of any DPI which you or your spouse or civil partner (or person with whom you are living as spouse or civil partner) may have, together with your personal interests where they fall within a category mentioned in Paragraph 2.9 a., by providing written notification to the Council’s Monitoring Officer.
- 2.25. Failure to register or disclose any DPI in accordance with section 30(1) or 31(2), (3) or (7) of the Act, or participating in any discussion or vote in contravention of section 31(4) of the Act, or taking any steps in contravention of section 31(8) of the Act, is a criminal offence and risks a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (currently £5,000) or disqualification as a councillor for a period not exceeding 5 years.
- 2.26. Subject to Paragraph 2.28, you must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new DPI and/or personal interest or change to any DPI and/or personal interest registered under Paragraph 2.24, register details of that new DPI and/or personal interest or change by providing written notification to the Council’s Monitoring Officer.
- 2.27. Subject to Paragraph 2.28, you are required to disclose the existence and nature of any DPI when it arises at a meeting even where already registered in the register or pending registration so the minutes can be duly noted.

### **Sensitive Interest**

- 2.28. Where you consider that you have a sensitive interest (whether or not a DPI), and the Council’s Monitoring Officer agrees, if the interest is entered in the Council’s register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register, must not include details of the interest (but may state that the councillor or co-opted member has an interest the details of which are

withheld under section 32 (2) of the Act) and any public declaration required need only state the fact an interest arises without further detail.

- 2.29. You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances which means that information excluded under Paragraph 2.28 is no longer a sensitive interest, notify the Council's Monitoring Officer asking that the interest be included in the Council's register of members' interests.
- 2.30. In this Code, "sensitive interest" means an interest, the nature of which is such that you and the Council's Monitoring Officer consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation.

### **Dispensations**

- 2.31. On a written request made to the Council's Monitoring Officer, the Council may grant a dispensation for you to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if you have a DPI or a prejudicial interest and that you be relieved of the obligation to otherwise withdraw from the room in which the matter is being considered if the Council considers that the number of councillors or co-opted members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business that it would impede the transaction of the business; or the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote on the business; or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow you to take part or that without the dispensation the Councils Cabinet would be prohibited from participating in the matter or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

## **Appendix A**

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a councillor or co-opted member has a DPI are set out in Chapter 7 of the Act.

DPI's are defined in the Regulations 2012 as follows –

<b><i>Interest</i></b>	<b><i>Prescribed description</i></b>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992).
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either—  (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or



- (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

For this purpose –

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“M” means a member of a relevant authority;

“member” includes a co-opted member;

“relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) or 31(7), as the case may be, of the Act;

“relevant person” means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Act;

“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## **Gifts and Hospitality**

2.32. In addition to the registration of interests, the Council requires councillors and co-opted members to register any gifts and hospitality worth £25 or more they have received with the Monitoring Officer.

2.33. Councillors and co-opted members must:

- a. register any gifts and hospitality with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of being elected or appointed to office;
- b. register any gifts and hospitality within 28 days of the Council's Code of Conduct becoming applicable;
- c. register any gifts and hospitality with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of receiving them;
- d. declare any gifts and hospitality at any meeting of the Council at which they are present, where a relevant matter is being considered;
- e. register any gifts and hospitality declared at a meeting, within 28 days of disclosing it.

Details on how councillors and co-opted members should register interests and gifts and hospitality can be obtained from [Democratic Services](#).

## Appendix D

### Comparison of Obligations between the Buckinghamshire Council Code and the Model Code

## Comparison of Obligations

Buckinghamshire Council Code	Model Code
<b>Basis</b>	
Nolan Principles	Nolan Principles and set out in Appendix A
<b>Scope/Application</b>	
<p>Whenever acting in your capacity as a councillor of BC including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At formal meetings</li> <li>• Acting as a representative of the Council</li> <li>• When taking decisions</li> <li>• At briefing meetings</li> <li>• At site visits</li> <li>• When corresponding with the authority otherwise than in private capacity</li> <li>• When using social media, the internet or in relation to on-line presence if you refer in any way to your role as cllr or co-opted member or could reasonably be perceived as acting in any of the above capacities when doing so</li> </ul>	<p>When acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you misuse your position as a councillor</li> <li>• Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor</li> </ul> <p>The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at face-to-face meetings</li> <li>• at online or telephone meetings</li> <li>• in written communication</li> <li>• in verbal communication</li> <li>• in non-verbal communication</li> <li>• in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments</li> </ul> <p>Also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor</p>
<p>Code applies to co-opted members.</p> <p>No definition given although extends to whenever they conduct the business of the Council including the office to which they were elected or appointed.</p>	<p>Code applies to co-opted members.</p> <p>Specifies statutory definition: someone “who is not a member of the authority but who</p> <p>(a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or</p> <p>(b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint</p>

	<p>sub-committee of the authority; and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee</p>
<p><b>Obligations</b></p>	
	<p>General principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act with integrity and honesty</li> <li>• Act lawfully</li> <li>• Treat all persons fairly and with respect</li> <li>• Lead by example</li> <li>• Impartially exercise responsibilities in the interests of the local community</li> <li>• Do not improperly seek to confer and advantage or disadvantage on any person</li> <li>• Avoid conflicts of interest</li> <li>• Exercise reasonable care and diligence</li> <li>• Ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with requirements and in the public interest</li> </ul> <p>Particulars of conduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Bullying, harassment and discrimination</li> <li>• Impartiality of officers of the council</li> <li>• Confidentiality and access to information</li> <li>• Disrepute</li> <li>• Use of position</li> <li>• Use of local authority resources and facilities</li> <li>• Complying with the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Interests</li> <li>• Gifts and Hospitality</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Interests</b></p>	
<p>Defined as:</p>	<p>Defined as: A matter which affects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your own financial interest or well-being</li> </ul>

Business which

a) relates to or is likely to affect –

i. Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council;

ii. Any body –

- Exercising functions of a public nature
- Directed to charitable purposes; or
- One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

Of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;

iii. Any person or body who employs or has appointed you;

iv. The interests of any person or body from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25

b) A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person\* to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision.

\* a relevant person is –

- f. A member of your family or any person with whom you have a close personal association; or
- g. Any person or body who employs or has appointed such

- a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate or

- where the business relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority

- b) any body

- (i) exercising functions of a public nature

- (ii) directed to charitable purposes or

- (iii) whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

<p>persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors; or</p> <p>h. Any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or</p> <p>i. Any person or body of a type described in paras i. to iv. above</p>	
<p><b>Prejudicial Interests</b></p>	
<p>Subject to below, where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.</p> <p>You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the Council where that business—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in a) or b) of box above;</li> <li>• does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in a) or b) above; or</li> <li>• relates to the functions of the Council in respect of— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i an allowance, payment or indemnity given to councillors;</li> <li>ii any ceremonial honour given to councillors; and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>No details</p>

iii setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.	
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## **Local Government Association**

### **Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020**

#### **Joint statement**

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area; taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

## **Introduction**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

## **Purpose of the Code of Conduct**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

## **General principles of councillor conduct**

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

## **Application of the Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

## **Standards of councillor conduct**

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

### **General Conduct**

#### **1. Respect**

##### **As a councillor:**

**1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.**

**1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.**

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

## **2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination**

### **As a councillor:**

**2.1 I do not bully any person.**

**2.2 I do not harass any person.**

**2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.**

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

### **3. Impartiality of officers of the council**

**As a councillor:**

#### **3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.**

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

### **4. Confidentiality and access to information**

**As a councillor:**

#### **4.1 I do not disclose information:**

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
  - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
  - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
  - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
  - iv. the disclosure is:**
    - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
    - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
    - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

#### **4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.**

#### **4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.**

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

## **5. Disrepute**

**As a councillor:**

### **5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.**

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

## **6. Use of position**

**As a councillor:**

### **6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.**

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

## **7. Use of local authority resources and facilities**

**As a councillor:**

### **7.1 I do not misuse council resources.**

### **7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local or authorising their use by others:**

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

## **8. Complying with the Code of Conduct**

### **As a Councillor:**

**8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.**

**8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.**

**8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**

**8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.**

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

## **Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority**

### **9. Interests**

#### **As a councillor:**

**9.1 I register and disclose my interests.**

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

**Appendix B sets** out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.



## **10. Gifts and hospitality**

**As a councillor:**

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life**

The principles are:

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

#### **Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in “The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012”. You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

“**Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**” means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner’s interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

“**Partner**” means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A ‘sensitive interest’ is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a ‘sensitive interest’ you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

## Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
  - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
  - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate; or
  - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter **affects** your financial interest or well-being:
  - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
  - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

**Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
<b>Land and Property</b>	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
<b>Licenses</b>	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
<b>Securities</b>	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

**Table 2: Other Registrable Interests**

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

## Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

**Best practice 1:** Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

**Best practice 2:** Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

**Best practice 3:** Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

**Best practice 4:** An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

**Best practice 5:** Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

**Best practice 6:** Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

**Best practice 7:** Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

**Best practice 8:** An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to



review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

**Best practice 9:** Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

**Best practice 10:** A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

**Best practice 11:** Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

**Best practice 12:** Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

**Best practice 13:** A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

**Best practice 14:** Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

**Best practice 15:** Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

***The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.***

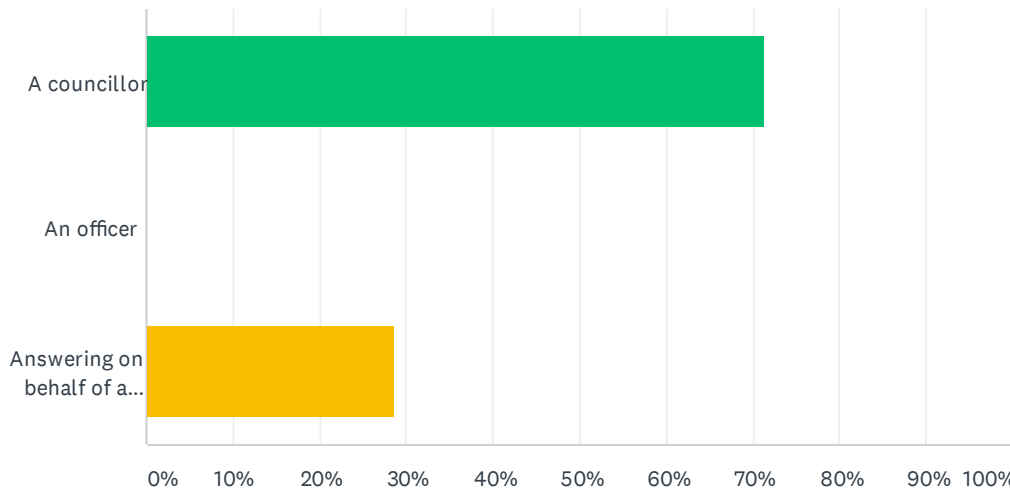
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## Q1 Your name

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## Q2 Are you...?

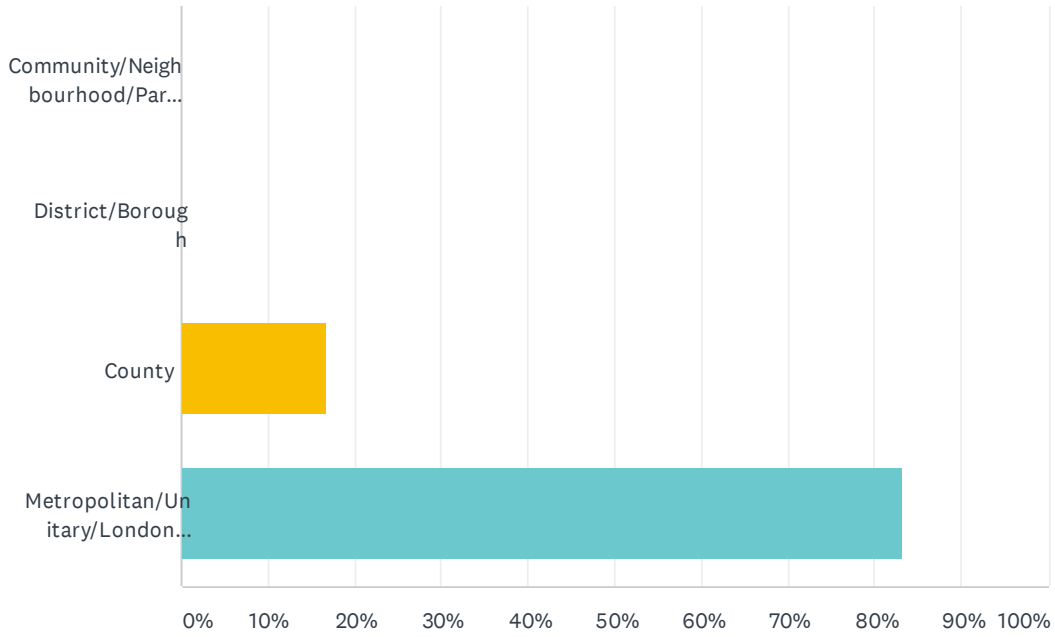
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A councillor	71.43%	5
An officer	0.00%	0
Answering on behalf of a whole council or Other (please specify below)	28.57%	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7</b>

### Q3 Please indicate your council type

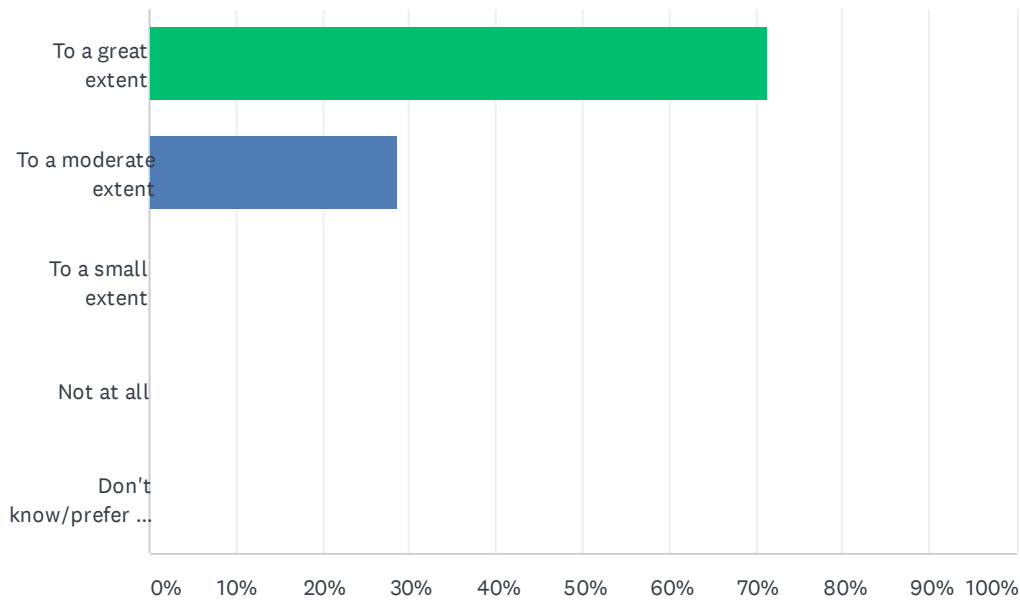
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community/Neighbourhood/Parish/Town	0.00%	0
District/Borough	0.00%	0
County	16.67%	1
Metropolitan/Unitary/London Borough	83.33%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

**Q4 To what extent do you support the proposal that councillors demonstrate the behaviours set out in the Code when they are publicly acting as, identifying as, and/or giving the impression that they are acting as a councillor, including when representing their council on official business and when using social media?**

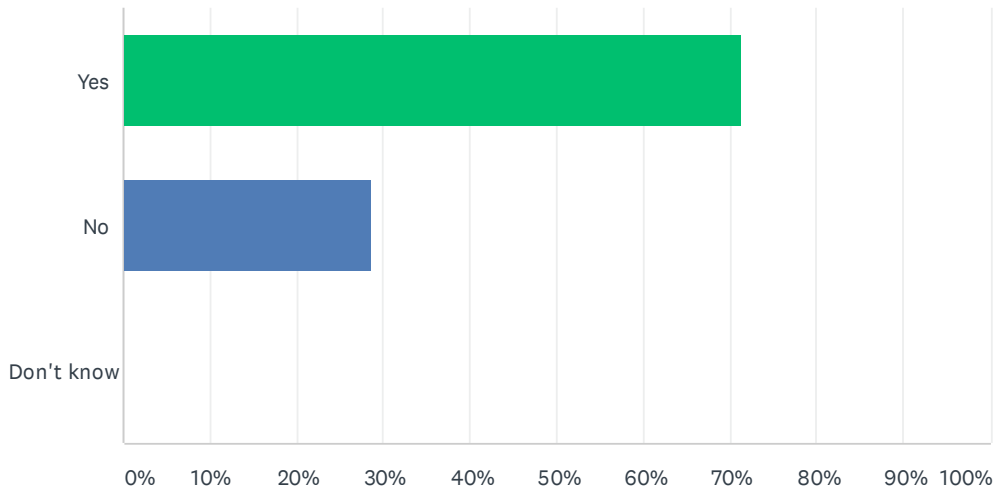
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To a great extent	71.43%	5
To a moderate extent	28.57%	2
To a small extent	0.00%	0
Not at all	0.00%	0
Don't know/prefer not to say	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7</b>

### Q5 Is it sufficiently clear which parts of the Model Code are legal requirements, which are obligations, and which are guidance?

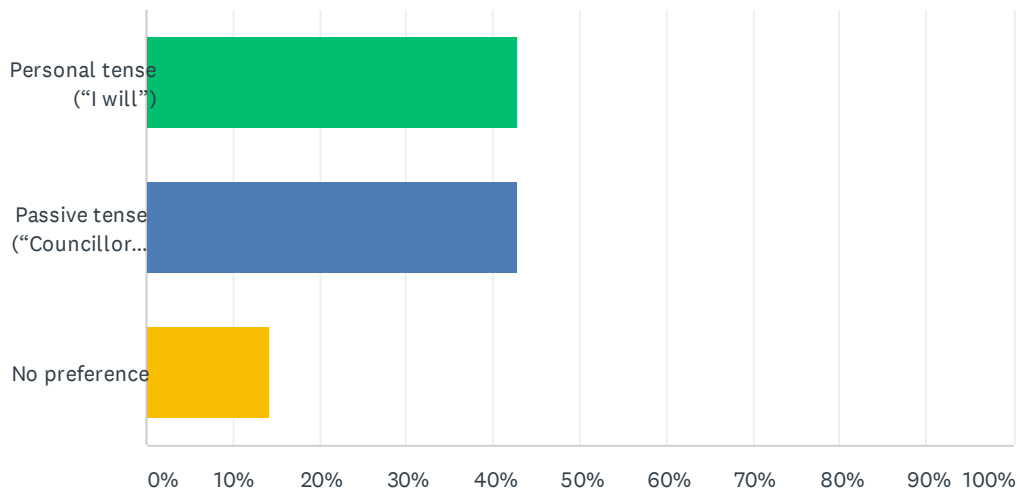
Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	71.43%	5
No	28.57%	2
Don't know	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7</b>

## Q6 Do you prefer the use of the personal tense, as used in the Code, or would you prefer the passive tense?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

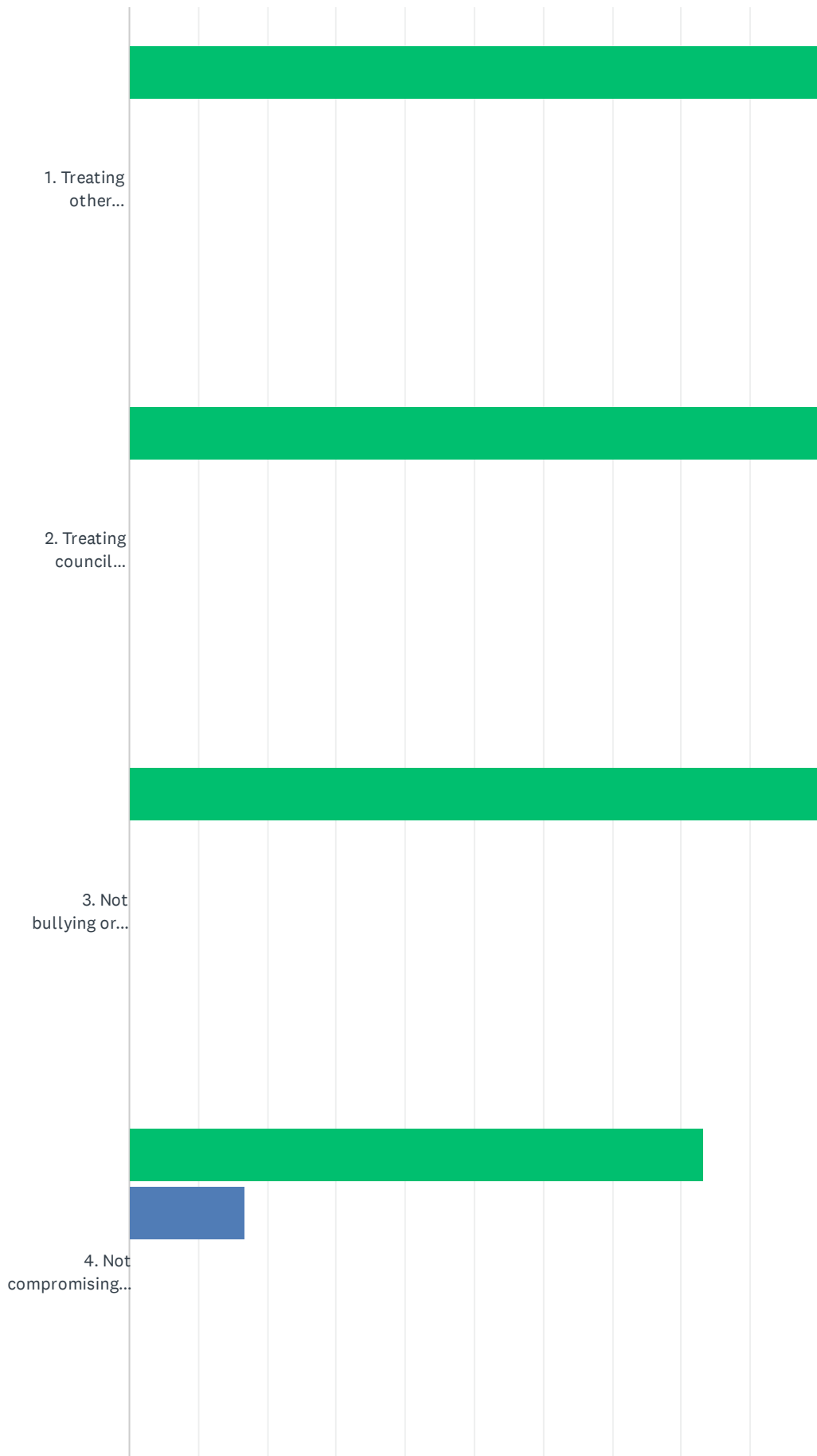


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal tense ("I will")	42.86%	3
Passive tense ("Councillors should")	42.86%	3
No preference	14.29%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7</b>

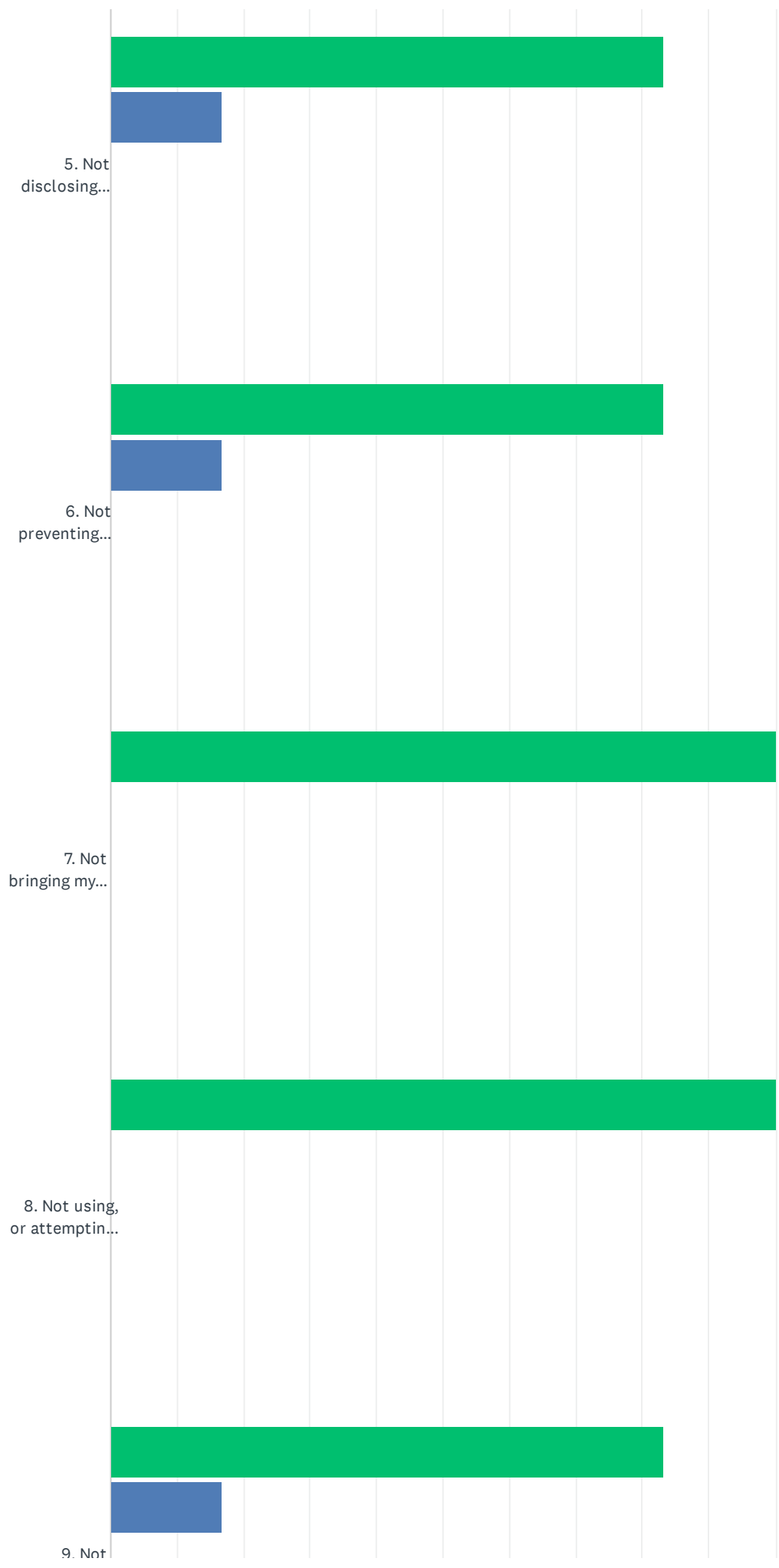


# Q7 To what extent to you support the 12 specific obligations?

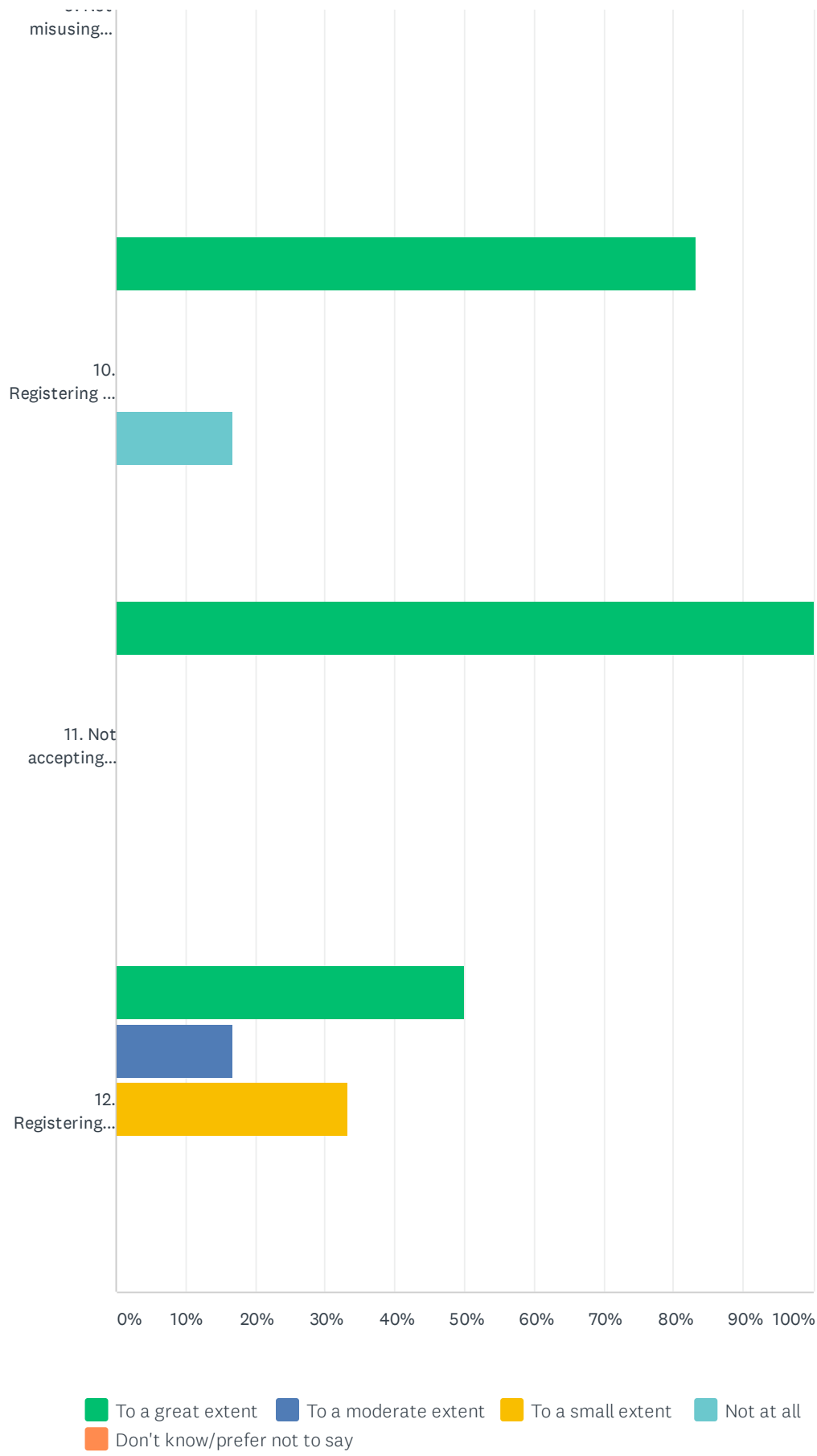
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



LGA Consultation on Draft Model Member Code of Conduct



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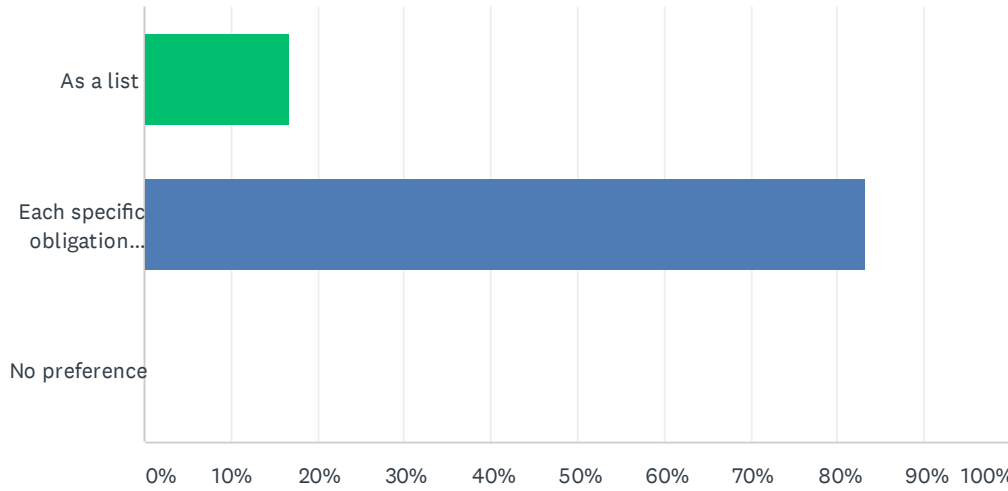


LGA Consultation on Draft Model Member Code of Conduct

	TO A GREAT EXTENT	TO A MODERATE EXTENT	TO A SMALL EXTENT	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW/PREFER NOT TO SAY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
1. Treating other councillors and members of the public with civility.	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.00
2. Treating council employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the councils with civility and respecting the role that they play.	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.00
3. Not bullying or harassing any person	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.00
4. Not compromising, or attempting to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the council.	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.17
5. Not disclosing information given to me in confidence or disclosing information acquired by me which I believe is of a confidential nature, unless I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it or I am required by law to do so.	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.17
6. Not preventing anyone getting information that they are entitled to by law.	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.17
7. Not bringing my role or council into disrepute.	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.00
8. Not using, or attempting to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.00
9. Not misusing council resources.	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.17
10. Registering and declaring my interests.	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6	1.50
11. Not accepting significant gifts or hospitality from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the council or from persons who may apply to the council for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.00
12. Registering with the monitoring officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.83

### Q8 Would you prefer to see the obligations as a long list followed by the guidance, or as it is set out in the current draft, with the guidance after each obligation?

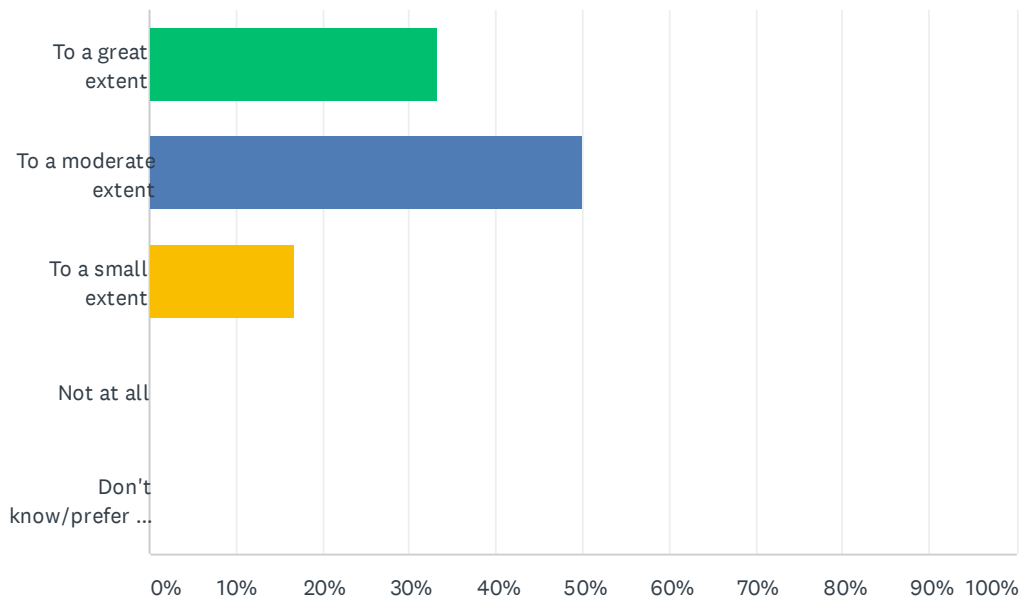
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
As a list	16.67%	1
Each specific obligation followed by its relevant guidance	83.33%	5
No preference	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

### Q9 To what extent to you think the concept of 'acting with civility' is sufficiently clear?

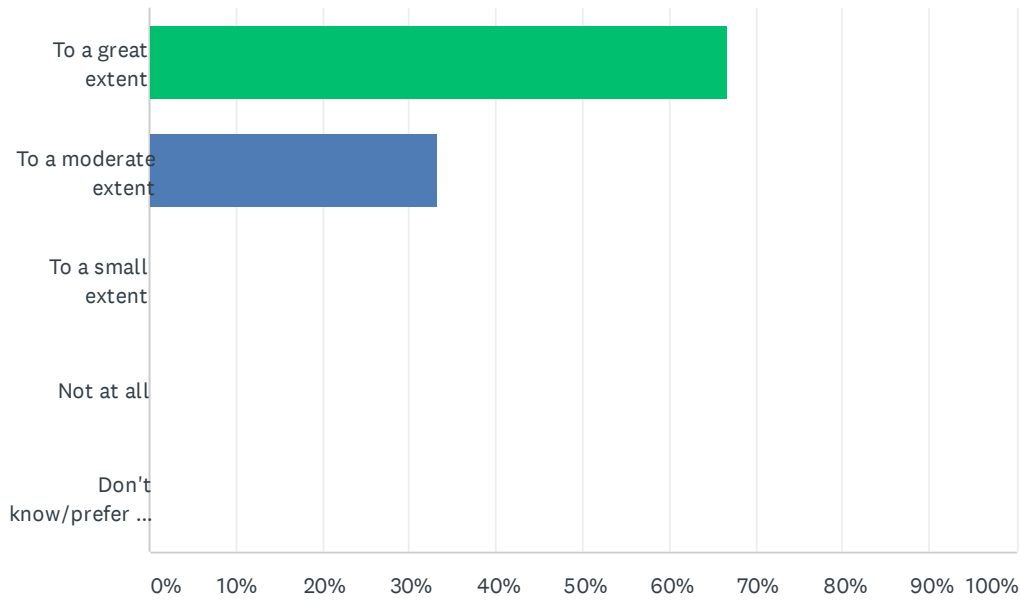
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To a great extent	33.33%	2
To a moderate extent	50.00%	3
To a small extent	16.67%	1
Not at all	0.00%	0
Don't know/prefer not to say	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

### Q10 To what extent do you think the concept of 'bringing the council into disrepute' is sufficiently clear?

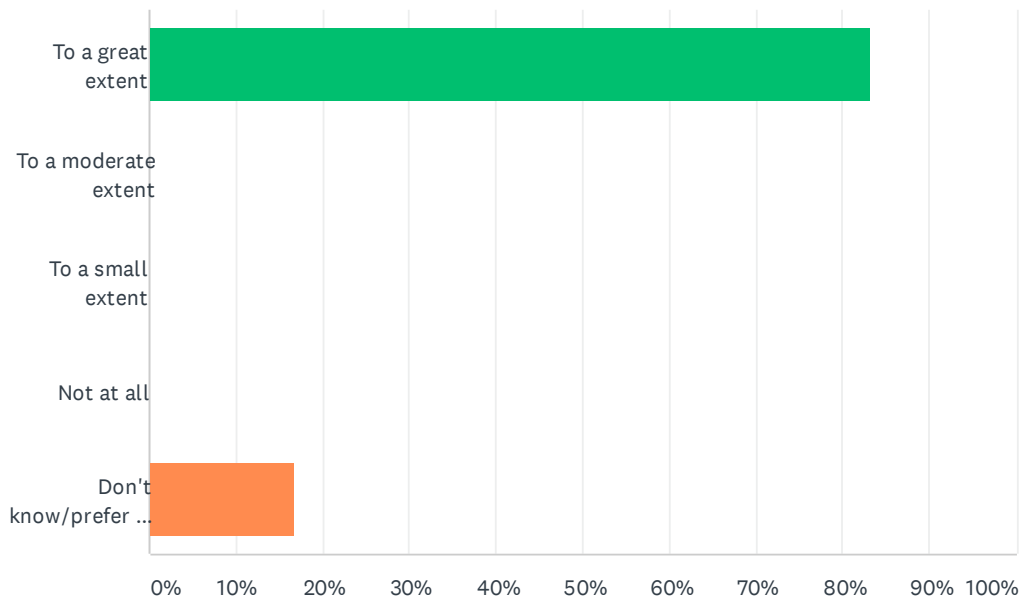
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To a great extent	66.67%	4
To a moderate extent	33.33%	2
To a small extent	0.00%	0
Not at all	0.00%	0
Don't know/prefer not to say	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

## Q11 To what extent do you support the definition of bullying and harassment used in the code in a local government context?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1

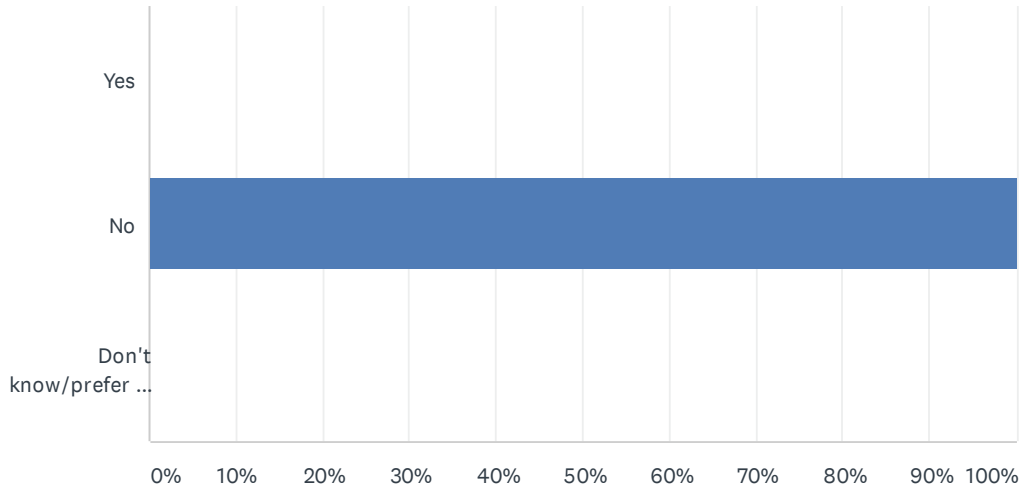


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To a great extent	83.33%	5
To a moderate extent	0.00%	0
To a small extent	0.00%	0
Not at all	0.00%	0
Don't know/prefer not to say	16.67%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>



## Q12 Is there sufficient reference to the use of social media?

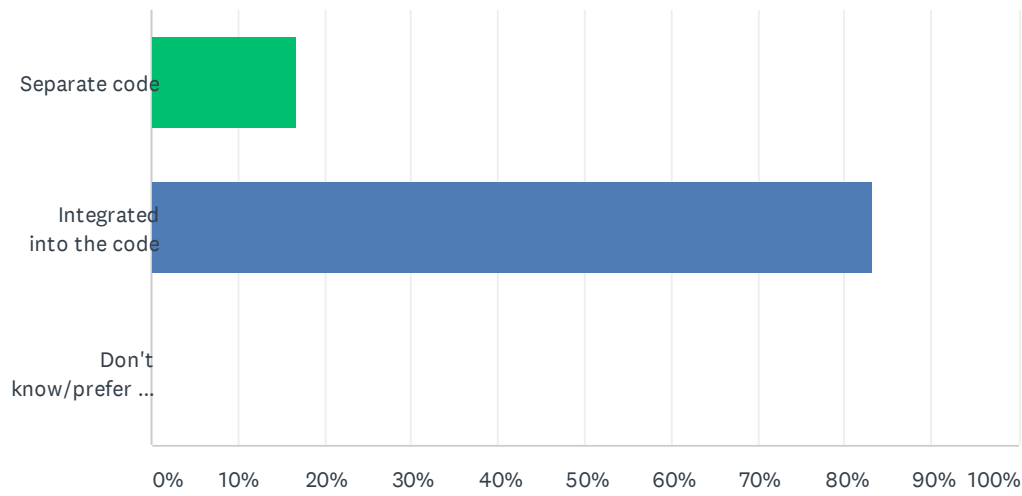
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.00%	0
No	100.00%	6
Don't know/prefer not to say	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

### Q13 Should social media be covered in a separate code or integrated into the overall code of conduct?

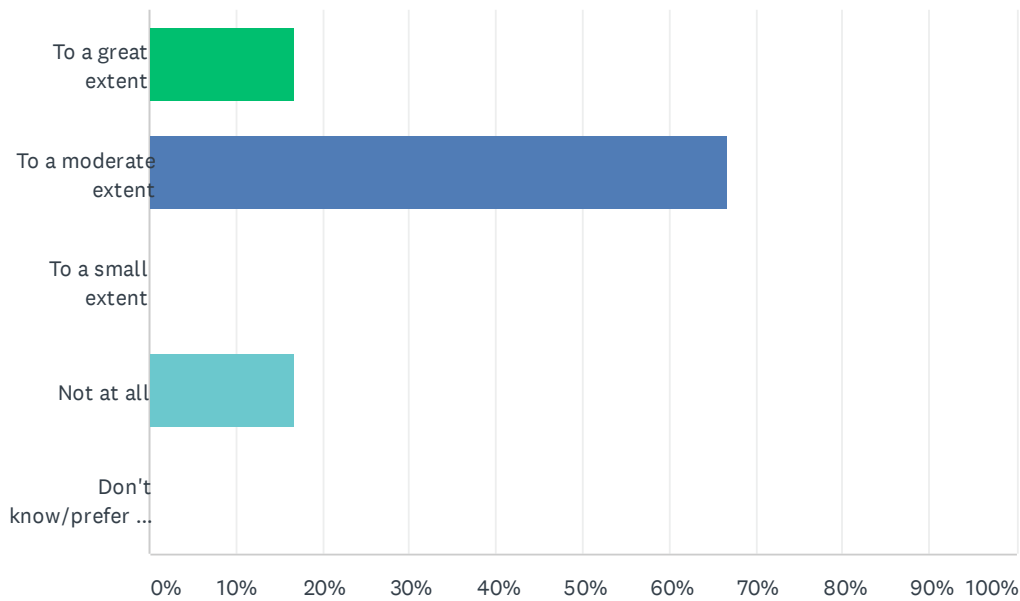
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Separate code	16.67%	1
Integrated into the code	83.33%	5
Don't know/prefer not to say	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

### Q14 To what extent to you support the code going beyond the current requirement to declare interests of the councillor and their partner?

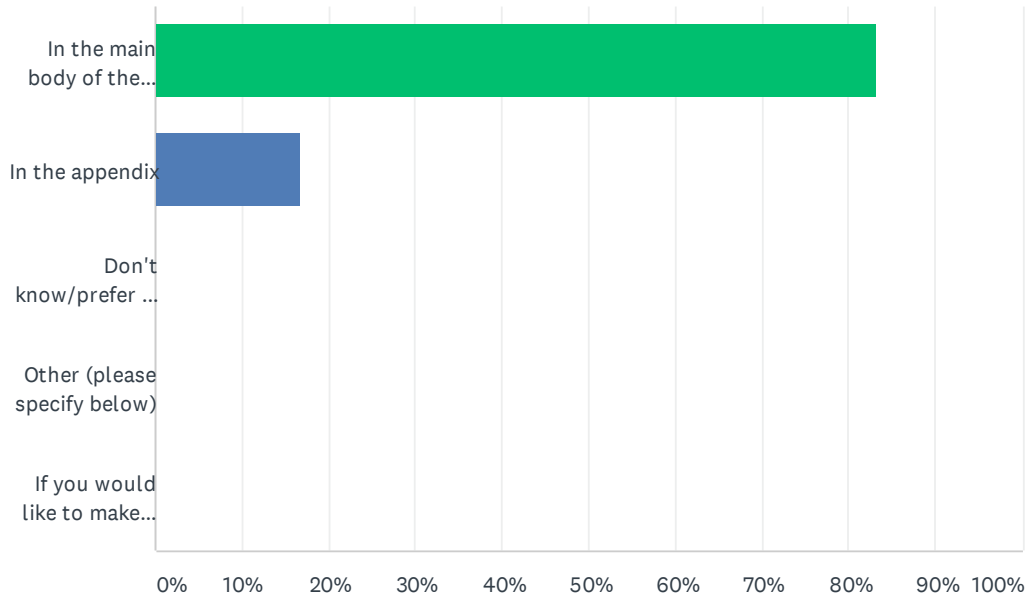
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To a great extent	16.67%	1
To a moderate extent	66.67%	4
To a small extent	0.00%	0
Not at all	16.67%	1
Don't know/prefer not to say	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

## Q15 Should the requirement to declare interests be in the main body of the code or in the appendix where the draft model code currently references it?

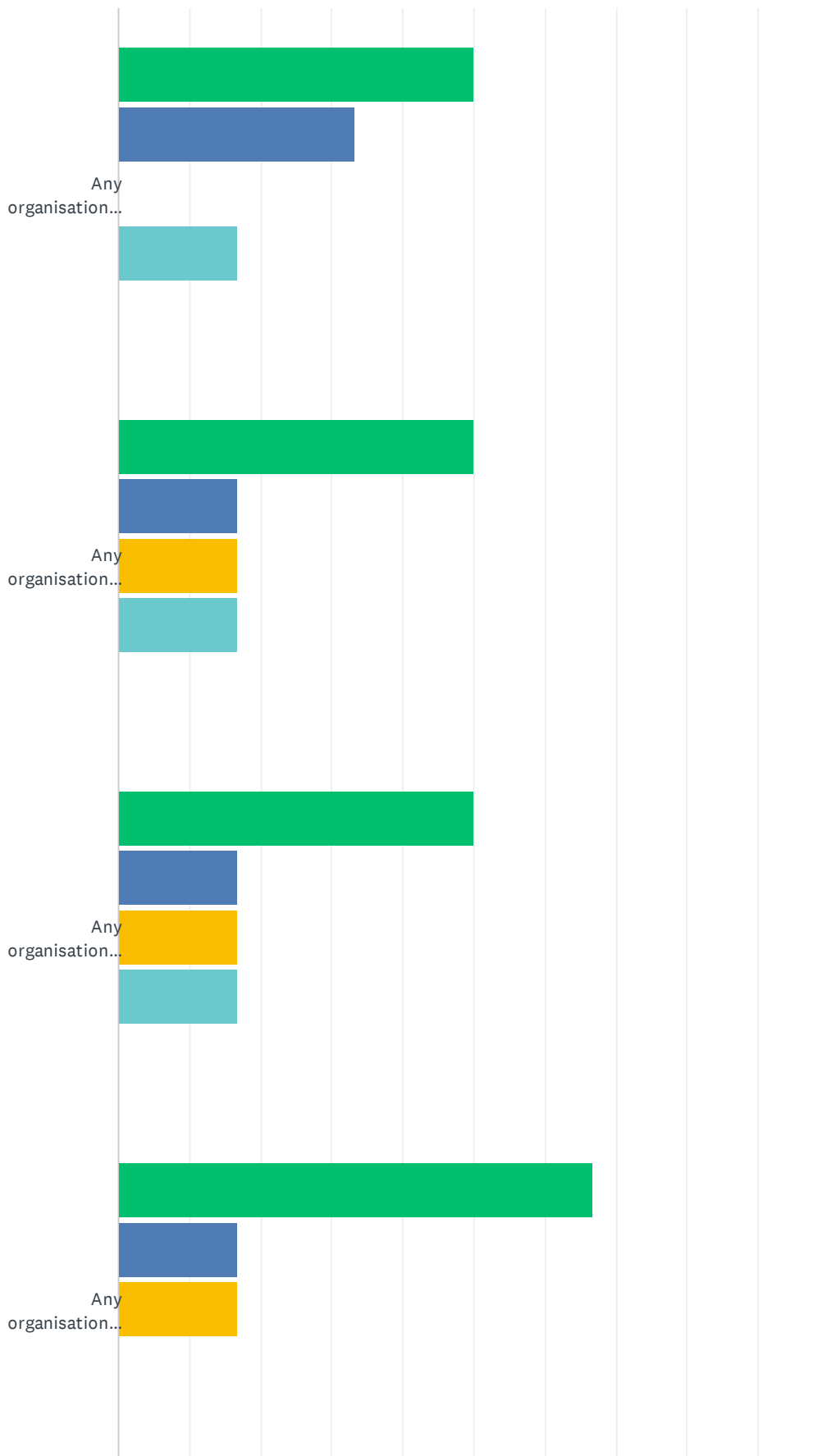
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



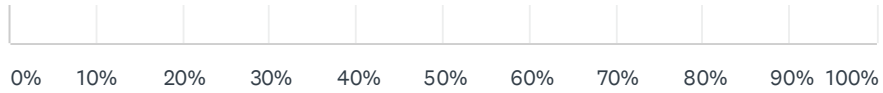
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
In the main body of the code	83.33%	5
In the appendix	16.67%	1
Don't know/prefer not to say	0.00%	0
Other (please specify below)	0.00%	0
If you would like to make any comments or suggestions in relation to how the requirement to declare interests is covered in the code please do so here:	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

# Q16 To what extent do you support the inclusion of these additional categories for registration?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



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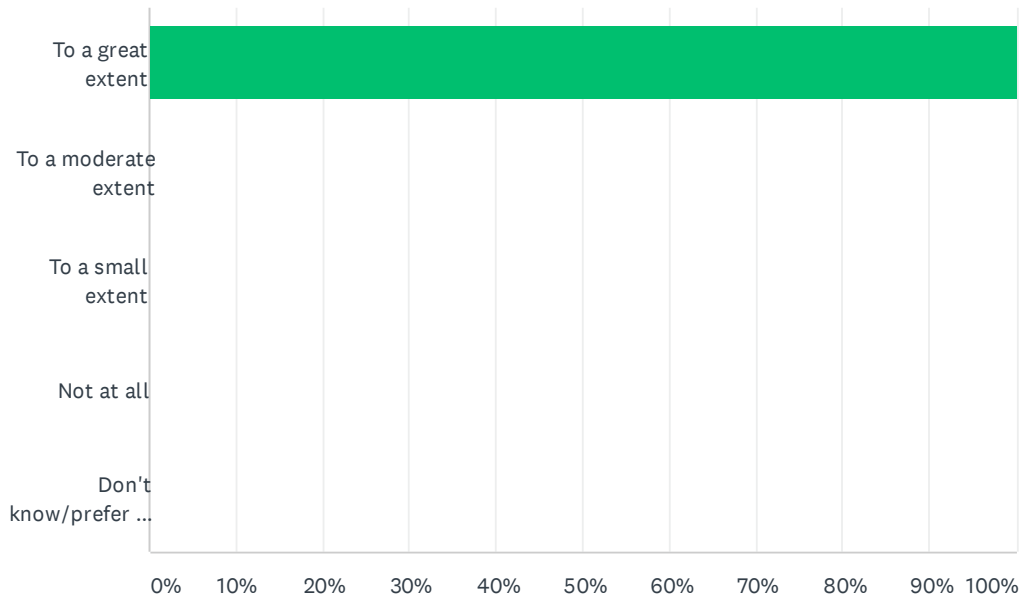


■ To a great extent   
 ■ To a moderate extent   
 ■ To a small extent   
 ■ Not at all  
■ Don't know/prefer not to say

	TO A GREAT EXTENT	TO A MODERATE EXTENT	TO A SMALL EXTENT	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW/PREFER NOT TO SAY	TOTAL
Any organisation, association, society or party of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6
Any organisation, association, society or party that exercises functions of a public nature of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6
Any organisation, association, society or party directed to charitable purposes	50.00% 3	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6
Any organisation, association, society or party of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)	66.67% 4	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6

## Q17 To what extent to you support the proposed requirement that councillors do not accept significant gifts as set out in Obligation 11?

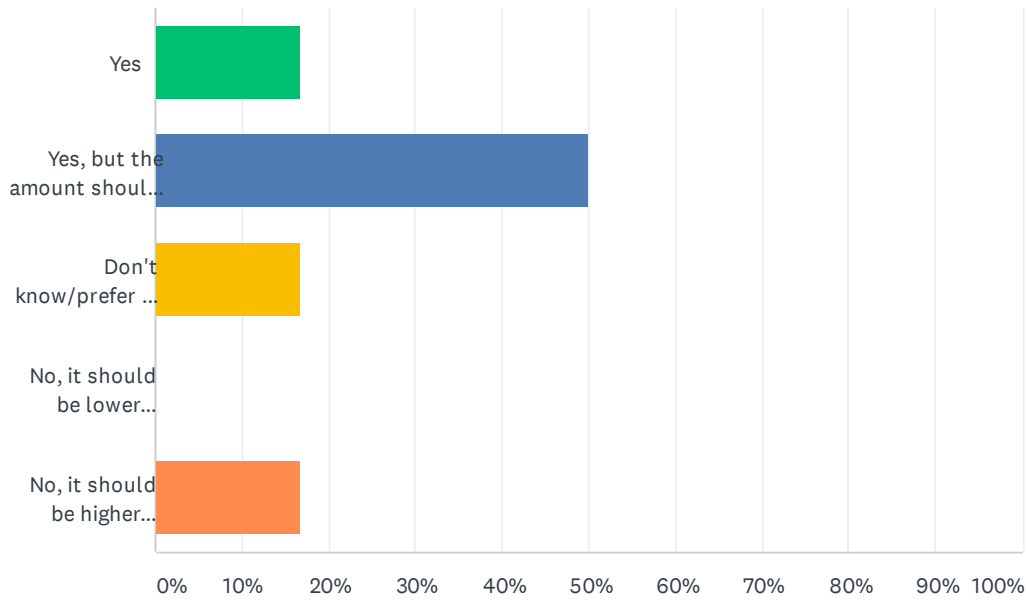
Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To a great extent	100.00%	6
To a moderate extent	0.00%	0
To a small extent	0.00%	0
Not at all	0.00%	0
Don't know/prefer not to say	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

### Q18 The draft code proposes £25 as the threshold for registering gifts and hospitality. Is this an appropriate threshold?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1

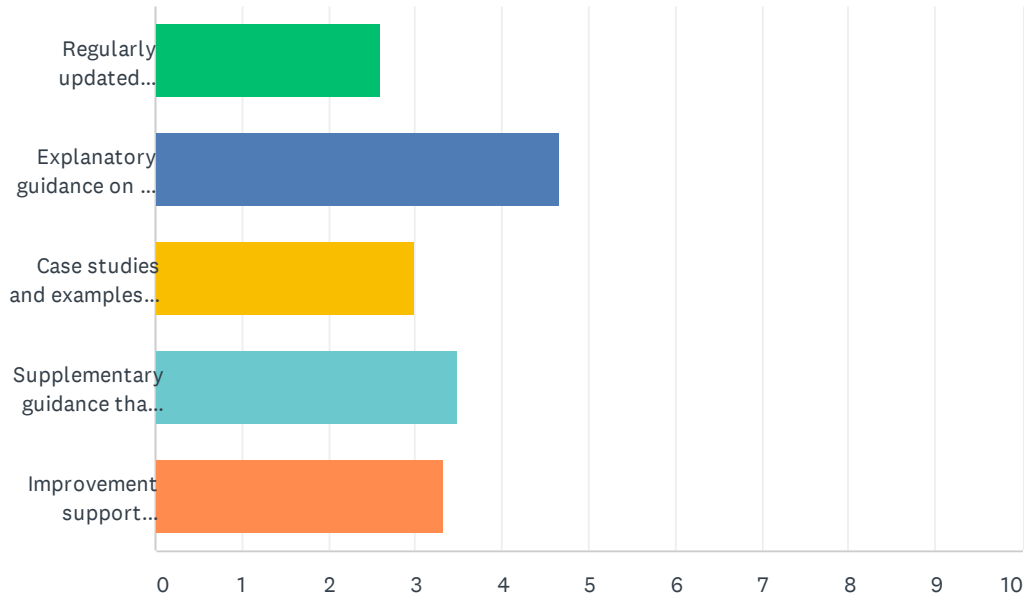


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	16.67%	1
Yes, but the amount should be reviewed annually with the code's review	50.00%	3
Don't know/prefer not to say	16.67%	1
No, it should be lower (please specify amount below)	0.00%	0
No, it should be higher (please specify amount below)	16.67%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>



**Q19 The LGA will be producing accompanying guidance to the code. Which of the following types of guidance would you find most useful? Please rank 1-5, with 1 being the most useful.**

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Regularly updated examples of case law	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	40.00% 2	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	5	2.60
Explanatory guidance on the code	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3	4.67
Case studies and examples of good practice	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	33.33% 1	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	3	3.00
Supplementary guidance that focuses on specific areas, e.g., social media	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	4	3.50
Improvement support materials, such as training and e-learning packages	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	6	3.33

**Q20 If you would like to suggest any other accompanying guidance please do so here:**

Answered: 0 Skipped: 7

Q21 If you would like to make any further comments about the code please so here:

Answered: 0 Skipped: 7

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