ONE DERBYSHIRE
TWO COUNCILS

Delivering for Derbyshire,
meeting local needs

November 2025

Foreword

We want Derbyshire to be a place where we proudly Work, Live, Belong, and Thrive. Our ambition is to inspire hearts and minds by reimagining services in a way that is inclusive, agile, and future-focused. As we reshape local government, we are embracing new technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), to significantly transform how we deliver services and meet the diverse needs of our county. Our vision is "One Derbyshire, Two Councils," ensuring that we remain big enough to deliver at scale, yet close enough to understand and respond to local aspirations.

Our approach is rooted in reimagining public services; focusing on early intervention, prevention, and integrated commissioning so people receive the right help at the right time. By leveraging cutting-edge technology and AI, we will deliver truly modern solutions that can adapt to changing needs and unlock fresh economic opportunities. We are determined to bring together the best of all sectors; public, private, voluntary, and community, to create a thriving ecosystem of jobs, local enterprise, and social support that resonates with the lives people lead **today.**

This reorganisation is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to remove artificial barriers, foster stronger local leadership, and improve coordination for the greatest impact. Aligned with our regional partners, including the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), we will attract significant investment in housing, transport, and infrastructure to strengthen Derbyshire's economy and enhance people's lives.

This case for change is underpinned by a strong focus on driving economic growth and ensuring its benefits reach every resident across Derbyshire by streamlining governance, fostering strategic partnerships, and investing in infrastructure and skills to create new opportunities and enhance community well-being.

By balancing county-wide scale with genuine local accountability, we can build **financial resilience without ever losing touch with the people we serve.** we will foster a dynamic ecosystem of employment opportunities, innovation, and social support—anchored in Derbyshire's rich heritage and poised to tackle the challenges of the future.

Foreword (cont.)

Above all, **we want every Derbyshire resident to share a sense of belonging and opportunity in a vibrant, prosperous county.** In this case for change, we set out how two new Unitary Councils will preserve Derbyshire's proud history, while leveraging modern, transformative approaches so that everyone, now and into the future, can flourish.

This vision has been forged through extensive collaboration, with councils working together to create a place where people are proud to belong and to be from. Our aim is to build two Unitary Councils where people are proud to work, delivering services that meet the standard of 'is this good enough for my family,' and fostering the conditions that support growth and thriving communities. This commitment was reinforced through a dedicated workshop involving representatives, leaders, and executives from these councils, who co-created a shared vision and design principles for the two new Unitary Councils. This collaborative effort leverages collective skills, knowledge, and expertise to shape a compelling case for change, and to give local government back its pride, creating an exciting and ambitious workplace that attracts the best talent.

Leader: Councillor Chris Emmas-Williams	Amber Valley Borough Council
Leader: Councillor Jane Yates	Bolsover District Council
Leader: Councillor Tricia Gilby	Chesterfield Borough Council
Leader: Councillor Nadine Peatfield	Derby City Council
Leader: Councillor James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Leader: Councillor Anthony McKeown	High Peak Borough Council
Leader: Councillor Nigel Barker	North East Derbyshire District Council
Leader: Councillor Robert Pearson	South Derbyshire District Council

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Executive Summary

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) provides opportunity to create a brighter, more responsive future for all who live, work, and invest in Derbyshire; a future where services are simpler, communities feel supported, and every part of our county thrives. As Council Leaders across Derbyshire, we recognise LGR will allow us to change the structure of Local Government to improve outcomes for our communities, businesses and partners. We also see LGR as a powerful catalyst to collaborate more, embrace innovation, and amplify the pride we all feel for Derbyshire's distinctive character and heritage.

We present this case for change for LGR with a clear purpose: to build on and strengthen services, ensure long-term financial resilience, and reinforce the deep local pride that makes Derbyshire unique. We firmly believe this transformation will unlock Derbyshire's untapped potential, ensuring a more prosperous tomorrow for our residents and businesses.

Emerging from extensive collaboration between Derby City Council and Derbyshire's District and Borough Councils, with data supplied by the County Council, we recommend unanimously to moving to two Unitary Councils: a Northern Unitary Council and a Southern Unitary Council, tailored to our county's distinctive blend of rural landscapes, industrial heritage, areas of outstanding natural beauty, modern manufacturing, market towns and city life.

Why Derbyshire Needs Change

From the rolling hills of the Peak District to the thriving global manufacturers in Derby and South Derbyshire, our communities are diverse, proud, and rich in potential. The strength of Derby and Derbyshire lies in its vibrant communities and commitment to diversity, fostering an environment where innovation and collaboration flourish. Yet, our current structure of multiple District/Borough Councils, a County Council and a Unitary City Council, has grown increasingly complex for our residents and businesses to navigate and for us, as Councils, to sustain. As local government financial pressures intensify, it is clear we need a more cost effective and sustainable structure. LGR offers us the chance to create simpler governance, reduce duplication, and deliver services that are more attuned to the communities we serve.

Executive Summary (cont.)

What we seek to achieve in reorganising Derbyshire

Big enough to deliver but close enough to listen and respond to local needs

At the heart of the transformation is a unifying aspiration, **Derbyshire is a place where we feel proud to Work, Live, Belong and Thrive.**

Our vision aims to make Derbyshire more vibrant, inclusive, and responsive by replacing the current Unitary Council and two-tier system with two similarly sized Unitary Councils. This change balances county-wide strengths; — advanced manufacturing in the south and flourishing tourism in the north, with local decision-making shaped by each area's distinct needs. In doing so, we can retain the identity and heritage that our residents and visitors demand in our towns and villages, while simplifying "who does what" for partners, businesses, residents and visitors. Above all, this reorganisation embraces the sense of pride already thriving in Derbyshire, both urban and rural, and channels it toward stronger communities, and a shared commitment to ensure everyone can work, live, belong, and thrive in our county.

Why two unitary councils

Criteria 1: Establishing a single tier of local government for the whole of Derbyshire

The two new authorities will:

- Mirror established commuter flows and natural business clusters, enabling each new Council to design targeted strategies for investment, skills, growth and tourism, aligned to regional and national priorities

- Enable balanced taxation with a relatively even split of revenue opportunities and service pressures

- Share their strengths, while celebrating their differences, ensuring distinct local identities, history and culture are retained and supported through strong neighbourhood arrangements

- Enable more effective and efficient public services with less duplication, consistent service standards, joined up policy and faster decision making.

Our case for change for two Unitary Councils allows each area to leverage its key sectors. By delineating the county area along these natural economic geographies, we avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach in favour of locally attuned strategies, ensuring neither Unitary Council is disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged.

Two similar sized Unitary Councils working in partnership also enable us to shape distinct, yet complementary housing strategies, building on established housing market areas.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Criteria 2: Unitary Council authorities that are the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

Our financial analysis projects cumulative savings up to year 6 of £167m, and an annual saving of £44m after 6 years, equivalent to 3% of the budget of the Derbyshire Councils. In summary, the payback for all proposals is within the range of 3.5 – 3.6 years.

Across all metrics, based on available data for 2024/25, the proposed new Unitary Councils have comparatively strong financial health outcomes, relative to relevant benchmarks.

Criteria 3: Unitary Council authorities that prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens

Creating two new Unitary Councils allows us to develop more streamlined, people focused services, while taking advantage of local expertise and relationships.

By bringing together the best of the city's, districts and boroughs, and county's expertise, we can reduce duplication, align our leadership, and foster innovative practice under one umbrella.

We envision two new Unitary Councils collaborating to deliver consistently high standards, promote inclusive cultures, and raise aspirations, aligning education with local communities and employment to foster a generation ready for Derbyshire's future economic ambitions.

We will unify Derbyshire's current patchwork of policy, planning, and funding, enabling more coherent decision-making and localised support. We can streamline decision-making and better serve local needs.

By adopting a joined-up approach, we will avoid fragmentation, optimise whole-system benefits and costs, achieve economies of scale, and enhance service quality.

The consolidation of back-office services represents a significant opportunity to remove duplication, improve efficiency, and reduce costs.

Criteria 4: Working together to develop a case for change that meets local needs and is informed by local views

Over 27 engagement sessions took place throughout the county, with over 500 conversations taking place to help inform the case for change, and over 7,300 people responding to our resident engagement survey.

From our local engagement many respondents recognised the need to modernise local government, improve efficiency, reduce duplication and streamline Councils. Being able to navigate Councils more easily to access services and improving the quality and consistency of services were significant factors for those in favour of reorganisation.

As we move through to implementation, further targeted engagement will be developed around specific service design options.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Criteria 5: A structure that supports devolution arrangements

We are confident that our case for change fully meets the Mayor of the East Midlands' stated priorities for LGR. Our case for change presents a simpler and more unified structure, enabling clearer delineation of where responsibility sits for functioning and streamlined decision-making for EMCCA and the Mayor. Replacing 10 local authorities in Derbyshire with two partner authorities that can work effectively with EMCCA, and the Mayor of the East Midlands, will drive sustainable growth and progress for the region. The new structures embody the respective roles set out for strategic authorities and principal authorities within the Devolution White Paper, providing the framework for delivery within the current and future devolution arrangements. This approach will ensure that Derbyshire's voice is heard on a regional and national scale.

Growth

The establishment of two sustainable Unitary Councils in the north and south of Derbyshire will transform the ability of local government in the area to remove barriers that are presently stifling growth. The new Unitary Councils will be of the right size and scale to collaborate with EMCCA, other key regional partners and national bodies.

Forming two sustainable and resilient Unitary Councils will underpin and complement the strategic role of EMCCA, creating an infrastructure to drive economic growth and the foundations for further devolution.

In the South of Derbyshire, the new Unitary Council will provide the scale and strategic relationships needed to support all components of the system to grow in the key industrial strategy sectors of clean energy, defence and advanced manufacturing.

In the North of Derbyshire, the new Unitary Council will seek to maximise the opportunities of its connectivity, supporting the development of key sectors such as aggregates and tourism, and ensuring that local communities benefit from growth in line with EMCCA's new Inclusive Growth Framework.

Criteria 6: Enabling stronger community engagement and delivers genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

Neighbourhood Area Committees will act as a catalyst for partnership working at a local level, providing greater opportunities for community insight, and the early identification of local needs.

Progressing in time to bespoke neighbourhood plans, developed by a partnership of the public sector, community and voluntary sector and the private sector, will help to identify the core strengths of each area.

Our two new Unitary Councils will be at the forefront of working with public sector organisations, the community and voluntary sector and business community to deliver strong community partnerships that improve outcomes for local communities and neighbourhoods.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Proposals for two unitary councils

Our case for change demonstrates that Derbyshire is best served by two sustainable Unitary Councils, one in the north of the County and one in the south. We, the Councils submitting this case for change, have worked collaboratively together and all agree that the two unitary council format is the best, and we each favour one of the four potential configurations shown below:

Proposal A

Built on existing district and borough boundaries with Amber Valley in the northern authority;

Proposal B

Built on existing district and borough boundaries with Amber Valley in the southern authority;

Proposal A1

A modification request with proposal A as the base proposal and the modification being to split Amber Valley at parish level. This proposal was consulted on in the public consultation (Formerly Option C); or

Proposal B1

A modification request with proposal B as the base proposal and the modification being to split Amber Valley along a different set of parish boundaries. This proposal was formulated after the consultation in response to evidence gathered and further analysis.

DERBYSHIRE

Key	
North	
South	

1 = High Peak	6 = North East Derbyshire
2 = Derbyshire Dales	7 = Chesterfield
3 = South Derbyshire	8 = Bolsover
4 = Erewash	9 = Derby
5 = Amber Valley	
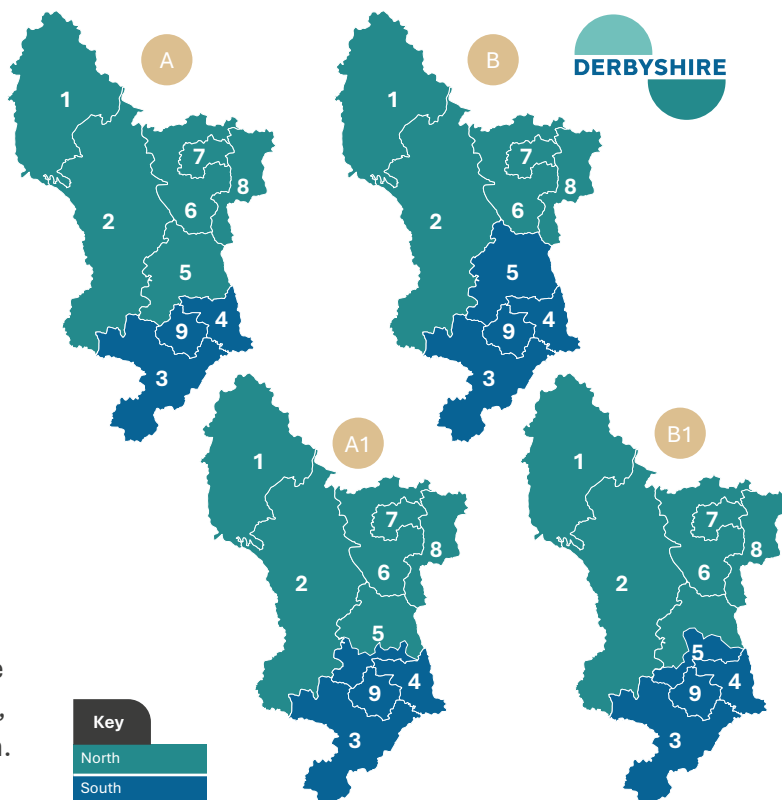
These four proposals have been appraised against the criteria laid out by Government, including their financial, geographical, and community impacts. Full details on the benefits of each proposal and how each proposal meets key standards and supports residents, businesses, and partners are provided in Appendix 3 together with confirmation of which Council supports each proposal.

Our approach and engagement

This case for change has been refined through extensive desktop research, data sharing, financial analysis, stakeholder dialogue, and public consultation. In our engagement activities we ran a survey, in which over 7,300 residents participated. We facilitated 27 in-person sessions that included hundreds of conversations, and interviewed all our key partners including the NHS, police and local businesses, which has provided valuable insights and information.

Executive Summary (cont.)

The consistent message was that Derbyshire's diverse communities desire simpler governance structures that:

- remain close to residents,
- improve services, and
- make prudent use of public resources.

Opportunities and challenges

While the benefits are clear, we recognise that the transition must be carefully managed. Streamlining leadership and back-office functions are expected to produce significant annual savings, whilst acknowledging that the one-off investment in transitioning to the new authorities, will be approximately £65m.

These changes will need to be made without compromising our day-to-day operations, and ensuring staff morale is maintained throughout the transition. We will proactively engage with staff, unions, and professional bodies, creating robust retention strategies to preserve the local skills, knowledge, expertise and experience, which are vital to the delivery of quality public services.

Establishing two Unitary Councils also positions us for future devolution opportunities. Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council are constituent members of the EMCCA, working alongside Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. Having balanced, coherent governance arrangements across the north and south of the county will improve our influence, open doors to new funding streams, and allow us to pursue joined-up solutions for key public services thereby boosting economic growth and prosperity.

Sustainable unitary councils to meet differing needs

Our plan prioritises clarity and simplicity by replacing multiple Councils with two new Unitary Councils, each serving populations of around 500,000. This arrangement provides the flexibility to respond to local priorities and deliver desired public service outcomes, whilst being of sufficient size to provide for financial stability. Both Unitary Councils will be able to drive inclusive growth and connectivity, supporting their main economic centres of Chesterfield in the north and Derby in the south. The new Unitary Councils are based on logical boundaries that align with economic corridors, housing markets, and existing partnerships; this design will deliver a single tier of local government, firmly rooted in practicality, local identity, and balanced opportunities for economic development.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Shaping Derbyshire's financial future

The financial case is not merely about viability; it represents a transformative opportunity to invest in Derbyshire's future, delivering tangible benefits to our residents and significantly improving the services they rely on. The proposed structure ensures the new Councils will be robust enough to navigate economic challenges, meet growing demands, and strategically reinvest in the services that matter to our communities. This includes fostering a culture of innovation, leveraging cutting-edge technology and AI to drive financial efficiencies, optimise resource allocation, and enhance the value delivered by public services.

The financial case for reorganising local government confirms the proposed structure is financially viable and delivers long-term value. The new Councils will be large enough to withstand economic shocks, manage rising demand, and reinvest in services that matter most to residents. Crucially, this financial strategy is underpinned by a commitment to social value, ensuring that our procurement and investment decisions create a positive impact on our communities, improving wellbeing and fostering interconnectedness. Investment in our communities underpins our ambition in this submission, with growth and housing aspirations targeting areas of greatest need and transformed service delivery leading to better connected communities.

We project recurring annual savings of £44 million by Year 6, equivalent to 3% of the combined budget. These savings will be achieved through streamlined leadership, consolidated support services, smarter procurement, and digital transformation.

The one-off investment in implementation of circa £65 million, which will be phased over five years, is considered proportionate and a capitalisation direction is sought to support flexibility in funding.

The financial case confirms a payback period of 3.5 to 3.6 years, with cumulative savings exceeding costs within four years. With £90 million in reserves forecast by 2028, the Councils will be well-positioned to support transition, manage risks and invest in transformation. This includes strategic investments that stimulate our local economies through expanding access to education, training, and employment, particularly for underrepresented groups, and developing new supply chains to create skilled jobs.

Financial health metrics show the new Councils will be able to manage debt locally, without reliance on exceptional Government support. This reinforces the strength and sustainability of the proposed model.

This case for change sets out a financially sound path for Derbyshire - modernising services, strengthening resilience, and supporting inclusive growth.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Improving key services

Our case for change is grounded in the principle that high-quality public services should reach every resident, whether they live in a bustling urban neighbourhood or a remote rural parish. Forming two Unitary Councils, each responsible for adult social care, children's services, housing, public health, highways, waste collection and disposal, etc., creates a single point of accountability for each area. This approach not only eliminates confusion over who provides what service, but it also streamlines decision-making and enables more cohesive "whole system" thinking.

Adult social care

Derbyshire's population is ageing, with pronounced rural challenges in the north and denser urban pockets in the south. The current adult social care services (run separately by Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council) are already grounded in a strong partnership with the Integrated Care System (ICS). Forming two Unitary Councils allows us to merge best practices and create more integrated commissioning approaches. We can unify and coordinate social care approaches. This move to a single-tier system eliminates the complexities and inefficiencies inherent in the current two-tier structure, streamlining decision-making and resource allocation, ensuring people receive the right help at the right time, wherever they live. In the north, existing expertise from the County

Council will be refocused to meet local needs more directly, while in the south, Derby's commissioning strengths will expand to cover a broader geography. Each new Council can embed technology-enabled care, ramp up prevention efforts to reduce hospital admissions, explore further opportunities for the integration of social care and health delivery, and develop closer ties with community organisations. This shift not only helps staff feel confident and valued, but it will also help stabilise finances. Ultimately, Derbyshire's older adults, and those with additional needs, will experience more personalised support, allowing them to lead safer, healthier, and more independent lives in the communities they call home.

Children's social care & family help

Derby City Council's Ofsted "Outstanding" and Derbyshire County Council's "Good" ratings offer a strong foundation to reach every child in the county. By reorganising into two Unitary Councils, we bring children's services closer to local communities, whether they are in the heart of Derby or in more rural areas. This enables quicker interventions and a stable front door for families seeking early help, more consistent foster care provision, and stronger collaboration with schools, GPs, and police through the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP). Ultimately, the reorganisation reinforces Derbyshire's pledge to keep children safe in their home settings wherever possible and ensure those who cannot stay at home receive the right, high-quality support and care at the right time, closer to their communities.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Education, SEND, and adult learning

Derbyshire's mix of rural and urban contexts has shaped two distinct approaches to education delivery. By merging these strengths under two new Councils, we can unify school improvement, SEND provision, and adult learning, in ways that match local needs. For schools and families, this translates to consistent approaches to admissions, transport, and meals, plus a clearer system of safeguarding support and special needs interventions. Derby City's outstanding partnership approach (evident in initiatives like the Derby Promise) will be expanded county-wide, with the County's Council broad geographical expertise ensuring every town, village, district and borough benefits. Meanwhile, adult learning and skills programmes (currently embedded in both local authorities) will gain fresh impetus by aligning with EMCCA's inclusive growth agenda. From bridging skills gaps to supporting people with long-term conditions into employment, our ambition is a vibrant, opportunity-rich county, where each community helps shape the next generation of workforce talent.

Housing

Derbyshire's diverse geography, ranging from the Peak District's rural landscapes to Derby's vibrant urban centre, has created distinct housing needs across the county.

By moving to two new Unitary Councils, we can unify strategies, ensuring that both the northern and southern areas receive equitable investment in housing developments and infrastructure, and respond to housing market need. This reorganisation strengthens the region's ability to build genuinely affordable homes, tackle homelessness, and coordinate with major partners such as the EMCCA and Homes England. A significant opportunity arises from this single-tier structure, as it places Adult Social Care, Occupational Therapists, Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), and Housing within one organisation, fostering a cohesive strategy that directly improves upon the disjointedness of the two-tier system.

Each Unitary Council will tailor solutions for its local challenges, whether upgrading older rural properties or supporting major urban regeneration, while sharing best practice and pooling resources. From establishing a single housing allocations framework to driving large-scale regeneration projects, the new model prioritises transparency, fairness, and strategic planning. There is also an opportunity to join up district, borough and city housing services to deliver new social housing and safe and decent homes across Derbyshire, through consistent application of repairs and maintenance, tenancy management and housing services. By working at scale, the new Councils can provide a more effective response to tackling empty homes and the enforcement of the private rented sector. Fundamentally, we are ensuring every resident, in both rural and urban Derbyshire, can access safe, warm, and affordable housing, supporting local pride, well-being, and long-term community resilience.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Public health

With Derby and Derbyshire currently operating separate public health teams, transitioning to two new Unitary Councils lets us sharpen our focus on local wellbeing and prevention, from the former industrial heartlands of Northeastern Derbyshire to the deprived communities. This reorganisation ensures public health funding is managed transparently, so that crucial services like lifestyle programmes and clinical support can be scaled to fit each community's needs. By unifying and reimagining these functions, we can better tackle health inequalities and build on the County's and City's strong partnerships with the NHS and voluntary sector. Critically, staff and residents alike will see continuity in frontline services on day one, while we lay the groundwork for longer-term transformation, using innovative technology, robust data, and empowered local teams to deliver a healthier, fairer Derbyshire for every resident.

Waste services

Within the new two-Unitary Council framework, we will unify waste collection and disposal, delivering consistent, high-quality services that reflect Derbyshire's urban and rural diversity. By working as both collector and disposer in each area and building on the strengths of the Derbyshire Waste Partnership, we can coordinate routes, harmonise recycling rules, and ensure contracts are aligned for maximum efficiency.

This approach also paves the way for simpler, clearer bin services (uniform food and green waste collections) saving money and reducing confusion. Whether in Bolsover or Bakewell, residents will continue to see local employment and familiar faces providing dependable bin collections. At the same time, our joint purchasing power will let both Councils explore new technologies and environmentally friendly practices. The areas now served by in-house teams, outsourced arrangements, or Teckal companies will be streamlined under one overarching system, creating a greener Derbyshire with stronger community pride, safer streets, and a healthier environment for everyone.

Transport & Highways

From the winding lanes of the Peak District to the major roads feeding Derbyshire's industrial centres, transport links are critical to Derbyshire's prosperity. Reorganising highways and transport services into two Unitary Councils will provide clearer, more coordinated planning, which is aligned to wider integration with the EMCCA. The northern Unitary Council can focus on tackling rural isolation and connecting market towns, while the southern Unitary Council can drive urban infrastructure projects, reduce congestion, and partner with EMCCA to secure strategic investment and unlock housing and commercial development to support sustainable inclusive growth. Better linkages between villages, towns, and the city will boost tourism, improve access to jobs, and promote sustainable travel for all.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Street scene

Core services such as grounds maintenance, fly-tipping removal, graffiti clean-up, and litter management are currently run by individual districts, boroughs and the City Council, creating fragmented oversight. Under two Unitary Councils, day-to-day responsibilities become clearer for residents, and operational teams can maintain consistent standards while retaining local responsiveness (from Chesterfield's market squares to Swadlincote's parks). On day one, each Council will safeguard existing staff and depots to keep neighbourhoods clean, safe, and well-presented.

Community safety

Strong partnerships with Derbyshire Police, Fire and Rescue, and health bodies already exist, but responsibilities are spread across ten Councils. With reorganisation, each new Unitary Council will have a single point of accountability for multi-agency work, sharing intelligence and resources to keep every part of Derbyshire safe, whether tackling anti-social behaviour in town centres or supporting rural communities vulnerable to crime. This streamlined approach preserves what works, avoids disruption for partners, and enables faster and more decisive action.

Leisure, Culture & Libraries

Derbyshire boasts thriving leisure centres, sports programmes, heritage sites, cultural facilities and valued library services. The County's diverse geography is a true asset, offering a stunning array of experiences for both residents and visitors alike. From the breathtaking rugged beauty of the Peak District in the north, to the vibrant urban centres and charming market towns scattered throughout, and proudly incorporating the National Forest in the south.

Two Unitary Councils can coordinate provision of facilities, from Chesterfield's cultural venues and the historic market towns, to Derby's velodrome and new performance venue, leading to consistent quality and a clearer vision for investments, ensuring that all areas, whether rural, urban, or within the National Forest, benefit from enhanced cultural and recreational offerings. LGR provides the opportunity to better connect these diverse places, fostering a sense of shared identity and accessibility. Promoting culture, leisure and tourism will also be a key priority for the new authorities, working alongside EMCCA, to further promote Derbyshire and Derby as destinations on a national and international stage, and improve the lives of residents.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Back-office services

While frontline changes often receive the spotlight, efficient back-office operations, finance, HR, democratic support, ICT, procurement, and more, will form the "engine room" of the new Councils. By merging these functions, we can remove duplication, accelerate digital transformation, and offer more reliable support right where it's needed. Two larger Unitary Councils also create opportunities to retain and attract the specialists our services depend on, such as Derby's AI tools that have already saved millions, or the wide-scale IT solutions North East Derbyshire hosts for multiple partners. Our consolidation plan will ensure we hit the ground running on day one and beyond: essential systems will remain stable, staff terms and conditions will be handled fairly, and residents will see seamless services, such as integrated revenues and benefits or a single online portal to pay bills and seek help. From day one, we'll scale up AI, unify procurement, and optimise corporate functions, delivering better value for every pound spent, so each community can reap the benefits of more streamlined, future-focused Unitary Councils.
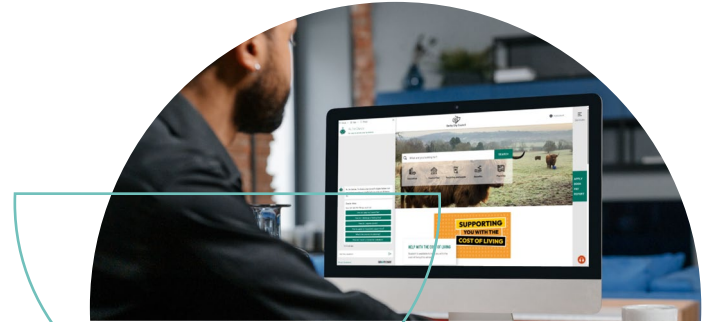
Our collaborative engagement approach

Over the past six months, Derbyshire's eight district and borough Councils and Derby City Council have worked together through a structured governance model, involving leaders, chief executives and statutory officers. This sustained collaborative effort has been central to shaping this case for change.

Feedback from the public engagement has emphasised the importance of protecting Derbyshire's varied cultural heritage. The two Unitary model is designed to honour these identities while delivering modern, efficient services.

Throughout the development of the case for change there has been ongoing dialogue with local MPs, including the opportunity for briefings with relevant Leaders and Chief Executives for their constituency. Our staff and trade union representatives have also been engaged in the case for change development throughout this period. Additionally, there has also been significant dialogue with the East Midlands Mayor to ensure that our case for change aligns to, and strengthens, regional priorities.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Supporting devolution and regional growth

Our case for change is for sustainable Unitary authorities, and we understand our partners in Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City have shortlisted several options, these options are also based on a two Unitary authority model. Our case for change will, therefore, align more effectively with EMCCA and the Mayor, providing a simpler, stronger partner voice at the regional level. It would replace 10 local authorities in Derbyshire with two new principal authorities (and potentially from 19 Councils to 4, across the EMCCA footprint), to work with EMCCA, as it transitions to a Strategic Authority. These changes would yield significant reductions in duplication and clarify responsibilities, allowing EMCCA and the Mayor to engage more directly on strategic issues such as transport, housing, and the skills agenda. Each new Unitary Council, will be better optimised to align with EMCCA's timelines and funding cycles, speeding up project delivery and ensuring both rural and urban needs are met.

In this model, Councillor ratios will be recalibrated to strike a balance between effective representation and efficiency, ensuring local voices, particularly from Neighbourhood Area Committees, are heard. The goal is to preserve Derbyshire's strong community identity while building the scale and capacity needed for successful devolution. By collaborating with EMCCA on transport and infrastructure, adult education, business support, etc. the two Councils will foster inclusive, region-wide growth, with streamlined governance that emphasises local accountability. This balanced approach positions Derbyshire to fully unlock the benefits of devolution, driving equitable and sustainable development for all its communities.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Empowering neighbourhoods and communities

In our two Unitary Council model, we will strengthen local democracy by creating meaningful Neighbourhood Area Committees and collaborating closely with parish and town Councils. Underpinning this approach is the belief that local insight, shaped by residents, community groups, voluntary organisations, and elected members, best informs how services should be delivered. By working with Government to refine how committees are structured, we aim to build on Derby City's successful Local Area Coordination programme and other local innovations, fostering prevention-focused policies that reduce reliance on higher-cost services. In tandem, a new parish charter will be co-designed to clarify roles and responsibilities, ensuring parishes' deep community knowledge guides decision-making. We also plan to establish Charter Trustee status for Chesterfield in the North and Derby in the South, to preserve important civic and ceremonial traditions. Collectively, these measures will give residents a stronger voice in shaping day-to-day services, promoting safe and thriving communities across both rural and urban parts of Derbyshire.

Managing the transition

Our driving priority is a smooth, well-organised transition that guarantees "day one" readiness for every critical service. Continuity of key service areas such as adult and children's social care, reliable bin collections, established housing registers, residents must see no break or reduction in service. Regular communication, fair treatment of staff, and robust governance structures will help retain our workforce's expertise, unify collective efforts, and maintain trust among the public.

Our transition will follow a clear six-phase plan:

1. Plan & Define
2. Building the Foundations
3. Shadow Authorities
4. Leadership
5. Day One/Go Live, and
6. Extended Transformation.

Drawing on both Derby City's almost 30-year experience as a unitary authority, along with examples of service consolidation, such as High Peak's successful strategic alliance with Staffordshire Moorlands, we have designed a robust programme to ensure both safe and legal operations on day one and a focused roadmap for long-term transformation and service delivery.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Critical to our approach is strong governance, featuring a single overarching programme that unites all ten existing Councils, a dedicated Programme Management Office, and active collaboration with partners such as EMCCA. From senior leadership appointments to comprehensive workforce engagement and clear service continuity plans, we will balance stability and innovation, ensuring minimal disruption to essential services, harmonising pay and conditions over time, and prioritising transparency through open communications. A rigorous risk-management strategy will underpin every aspect of implementation, helping us protect public trust and maintain quality of service provision for residents during the transition. Post vesting day, a multi-year transformation agenda will pursue deeper integration of services, promote shared technology solutions, and foster a culture of continuous improvement, delivering sustainable benefits well into the future.

Looking ahead

Our two new Unitary Councils will enable us to serve every part of Derbyshire with renewed clarity and purpose. The northern Unitary will safeguard and enhance the cultural and environmental assets of the Peak District, its thriving market towns and former industrial heartlands, while the southern Unitary will leverage the city's manufacturing pedigree, champion innovation, and build upon the success of the National Forest in South Derbyshire, whilst also addressing the more urban challenges of housing and infrastructure. Uniting under this case for change, we commit to:

Maintaining Local Authenticity. We will reflect the distinctive identities and traditions of rural parishes, market towns, and urban centres, ensuring each area's culture and heritage remains at the forefront of decision making.

Collaborative Partnerships. From schools and community groups to the NHS, police, and major employers, our new Councils will continue building on Derbyshire's tradition of strong collaboration and partnership working. By aligning with EMCCA, we can attract investment and deliver strategic projects (whether in transport infrastructure, public health, or skills development) faster and more effectively.

Inclusive Governance. Neighbourhood area committees, parish Councils, and new local area committees will be "hardwired" into day-to-day decision-making, preserving local voices and leading to more responsive and equitable services throughout Derbyshire.

Financial Prudence. We will maintain responsible oversight of transition costs, delivering annual savings through a leaner governance structure, while reinvesting in core services that matter most to residents. Our emphasis on shared services, digital innovation, and unified procurement will further ensure good value for money.

Moving forward, we are committed to early and open dialogue with the Government, local stakeholders, communities and our dedicated staff to achieve this vision. By reorganising into two Unitary Councils, we will honour that pride and unlock fresh opportunities, so that every resident, business, and visitor can share in Derbyshire's bright future. We trust this case for change meets your expectations for a forward-thinking, community-focused solution. Through collaboration, strong leadership, and unwavering commitment, we can realise the next great chapter of Derbyshire's story, ensuring we remain a county where everyone truly belongs and thrives.

DERBYSHIRE

Introduction To Derbyshire

Delivering for Derbyshire, *meeting local needs*

Introduction To Derbyshire

Place: A Landscape Of Beauty And Contrast

Few counties can rival Derbyshire's scenery and heritage. The Peak District is one of the most popular national parks in the UK, with over 13.25 million visitors each year who come to explore its dramatic limestone valleys, heather-strewn moors, and ancient caverns. Alongside this quintessential countryside sits the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, internationally recognised as the cradle of the modern factory system—making Derbyshire pivotal in Britain's Industrial Revolution. Whether one visits Buxton's Georgian architecture and spa heritage, or Belper's pioneering textile mills, these places illustrate Derbyshire's blend of natural splendour and industrial innovation.

Derbyshire occupies a uniquely central position within the UK, bridging the northern and southern regions of England and enjoying ready connections to major urban centres such as Nottingham, Leicester, Manchester, and Sheffield. As well as this central location and ease of access, the county's character is best understood by looking at communities shaped by innovation and manufacturing excellence, cherished rural market towns, flourishing independent businesses, and an evolving population.

Area	Population	Pop'n density per hectare	Households	GVA (£m)	Classification
Amber Valley	127,709	4.9	58,560	3,456	Intermediate urban
Bolsover	82,829	5.2	37,166	2,481	Intermediate rural
Chesterfield	104,883	16.1	49,154	3,074	Urban
Derby	266,460	35.1	106,197	9,226	Urban
Derbyshire Dales	71,530	0.9	33,404	1,953	Majority rural
Erewash	113,844	10.4	52,412	2,084	Urban
High Peak	91,569	1.7	42,714	1,796	Intermediate urban
Northeast Derbyshire	105,035	3.9	46,585	1,820	Intermediate rural
South Derbyshire	114,050	3.5	49,111	3,112	Intermediate rural

Introduction to Derbyshire (cont.)

People: A county of evolving demographics

Derbyshire has a population of over 1.1 million which is expected to increase by 13% by 2043, but growth patterns vary between districts, ranging from a 5% rise in Erewash to an impressive 37% in South Derbyshire. As the county grows, it also ages. Already, around 21% of residents are aged 65 and over, higher than England's average of 19%, and the proportion of people aged 85-plus is on course to double by 2043.

Though often characterised as a rural county, Derbyshire presents a patchwork of environments. Blending dramatic landscapes, rich heritage, and vibrant communities, High Peak and Derbyshire Dales stand as distinctive rural heartlands within Derbyshire, harnessing tourism, agriculture, and the creative industries to drive local, in marked contrast to more urban areas such as Chesterfield, and the city of Derby. Our market towns, ranging from the former mining strongholds of Bolsover, Swadlincote and Shirebrook, to bustling Matlock, Bakewell and Ashbourne, retain a crucial place in the local economy and civic life, evolving to meet modern-day needs while preserving their distinct identities.

Economy: Strong foundations and future prospects

Derbyshire's economy, collectively worth around £30 billion, reflects the county's mix of rural enterprise and industrial prowess. Approximately 37,000 businesses are registered in Derbyshire, 88% of which are micro-enterprises employing fewer than ten people: highlighting the depth of local entrepreneurship and small-business dynamism. Overall, more than 430,000 people work in Derbyshire-based firms, with manufacturing continuing to be the largest sector, followed by the health sector. This manufacturing strength includes a significant presence of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), where parts of the county have capitalised on highly skilled supply chains in aerospace, automotive, and rail, while others harness tourism, agriculture, and the creative industries to drive local prosperity. Notably, Long Eaton (Erewash) stands out as the UK's centre for quality upholstery and soft furnishings manufacturing, home to over 50 companies and a rich heritage of craftsmanship, contributing significantly to the local economy and employment.

Looking Forward: Our ambition for Derbyshire

Derbyshire thrives on its blend of breathtaking landscapes, industrial heritage, market towns, and strong entrepreneurial spirit; yet it also faces pressing pressures from demographic change, the cost of delivering services across diverse geographies, and economic competition beyond the East Midlands. It is on this foundation that we, as Council Leaders, propose reorganising local government in a way that is both simpler for our residents and makes it more sustainable. By embracing a future vision that recognises Derbyshire's exceptional natural beauty, longstanding manufacturing prowess, and emerging opportunities for innovation, we can direct investment and resources where they are most needed.
In doing so, we will shape a county that is fit for the evolving needs of its people, as well as for the countless visitors, businesses, and global connections that continue to place Derbyshire firmly on the map.

1

Our approach to developing this case for change and assessing the options

Our approach to developing this case for change and assessing the options

Case for change aims

Our vision for local government offers huge potential to transform how we deliver services and meet the diverse needs of our county. With a backdrop of rising demand for public services, economic pressures and financial constraints, we believe there are significant opportunities to provide greater value for money with less bureaucracy and duplication. While we are aiming for simpler, more accessible local government, we won't compromise on service delivery, meeting and responding to local needs and aspirations, democratic accountability and the need for enhanced local leadership. Our case for change aims to:

- Communicate our vision for local government in Derbyshire: One Derbyshire, Two Councils, which are big enough to deliver but close enough to listen and respond to local needs.

- Describe the collaborative process undertaken to assess the options and key considerations used to develop our case for change.

- Demonstrate how we meet the criteria established by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and present the strategic and operational benefits of the One Derbyshire, Two Councils approach, maximising our current strengths for the future.

- Demonstrate how (LGR) acts as a launchpad for the two Unitary Councils to invest in and deliver better services, drive economic growth, and improve outcomes for residents.

- Recognise the value of the district/borough councils and their needs when evaluating options and developing our case for change.

- Set out high level considerations for implementation including transitional arrangements, governance and community engagement.

Collaboration

The case for change has been jointly developed through collaboration between the Derbyshire district and borough Councils and Derby City Council, with strong stakeholder engagement including key public service providers, community and voluntary sector organisations, businesses, residents, staff and all tiers of local government. Derbyshire County Council have developed their own case for change; however, all the Councils have worked together effectively to ensure that data and information is shared, and the evidence base is accurate, robust and consistent between the two case for changes. From the start this has been a data-led process, grounded through research, constructive dialogue, and strong local engagement.

Two stage process

The final case for change has been developed through a two-stage process, beginning with an outline that set the foundational vision and then moving on to a more detailed case for change refined through data analysis and stakeholder engagement.

Our approach to developing this case for change and assessing the options (cont.)

Stage one – Interim outline

Our core objectives were defined having due regard to Derbyshire's local context, needs and aspirations and then aligned to MHCLG criteria. This enabled the development and assessment of a long list of options for potential LGR in Derbyshire. An initial longlist of 15 options was considered and evaluated against the following criteria:

- Establishing a single tier of local government for the whole of Derbyshire including Derby City
- Unitary Council authorities that are the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks
- Unitary Council authorities that prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens
- Working together to develop a case for change that meets local needs and is informed by local views
- A structure that supports devolution arrangements
- Enabling stronger community engagement and delivering genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment
- New Unitary Councils align with the Government's ambition to use existing district, borough, and city boundaries as "building blocks."
- Highlight the critical role of technology in enabling efficient service delivery, fostering collaboration, and enhancing citizen engagement throughout the transition and beyond.

At this stage, we also carried out baseline data reviews of Councils' finances and service performance alongside key population and demographic data. This assessment led to an initial shortlist of two options, both of which had two Unitary Council authorities, one with Amber Valley in the North and one with Amber Valley in the South. This formed the basis for the interim proposal submitted to Government in March 2025.

Stage two – Research, analysis, engagement and evaluation

Building upon the interim proposal, we have combined independent expert analysis and extensive stakeholder engagement to enable a broad evidence-based evaluation of options. The development of the case for change was guided by a clear understanding of both the MHCLG criteria and Derbyshire's unique opportunities and challenges.

Our approach to developing this case for change and assessing the options (cont.)

Research and baseline analysis

Comprehensive research and analysis of national and local datasets have been key to the development and evaluation of options. Key data sources have included local authority financial and service delivery metrics, demographic, deprivation, health and economic profiles. These have helped us to understand local needs and fully assess the potential impact of different options. We have also drawn upon sector led improvement mechanisms, worked closely with sector support organisations such as the Local Government Association and District Councils Network and sought lessons from other areas that have progressed LGR.

Stakeholder and public engagement

Residents and a range of stakeholders have been key to shaping our case for change and ensuring they are informed by local views and experience. We developed a comprehensive communication and engagement strategy which included a robust independently led consultation reaching over 7,300 residents, businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations and a range of other stakeholders.

In-depth independent interviews took place with key partner agencies, including Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue, NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board, NHS Community Health, University of Derby, East Midlands Chamber, Chesterfield Royal Hospital Foundation Trust and Royal Derby Hospital. It is critical for the future success of Derbyshire that we continue to engage the wealth of knowledge and experience of these organisations throughout the LGR process, to maximise shared opportunities for our communities.

Throughout the development of the case for change there has been ongoing dialogue with local MPs including the opportunity for briefings with relevant Leaders and Chief Executives for their constituency. There has also been significant dialogue with the East Midlands Mayor to ensure that our case for change aligns to and strengthens regional priorities.

Throughout the process, collaboration amongst local leaders has been key. A range of facilitated sessions have ensured that all voices are heard, and local challenges and opportunities have been fully explored to inform the final case for change.

Our approach to developing this case for change and assessing the options (cont.)

Evaluation criteria and selection process

Each option has been assessed against the MHCLG criteria and local context:

The table below summarises the criteria laid out in the letter and attachment from the Minister of State and MHCLG.

Data based evaluation

Establishing a single tier of local government

- Sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base
- Sensible geography to increase housing supply and meet local needs
- Supported by robust evidence and analysis and the outcomes it is expected to achieve
- Describe the single tier structures

Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks

- Population of c500k
- Efficiencies to improve councils' finances and best value for taxpayers
- Set out how transition costs will be managed, including future service transformation
- No proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally

High quality and sustainable public services

- Show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery and avoid unnecessary fragmentation
- Opportunities to deliver public service reform
- The impacts for social care, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety

Working together to understand and meet local needs

- Engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way evidenced in your proposal
- Consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance
- Evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed

Supporting devolution arrangements

- Set out how EMCCA and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively
- Whether this proposal is supported by EMCCA's Mayor
- Ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and EMCCA, with timelines that work for both priorities

Stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment

- Explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged
- Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement

Our approach to developing this case for change and assessing the options (cont.)

A range of sub-criteria and metrics were used to enhance the Evaluation model and scored against the sub-criteria:

Government criteria	Criteria Weights	Sub-Criteria
Establishing a single tier of Local Government	100%	Geographic area (sq. km)
		GVA (£ million)
		GVA per capita (£)
		Council Tax base
		Minimum housing need - standard method (2025)
		Housing need - current Local Plan
		Ratio of new minimum housing need to current Local Plan
		Population density (per sqm)
		Existing boundaries used as building blocks
Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks	100%	Population
		Population Growth (2033)
		Business Rates (£) per unit population
		Council tax income (£) per unit population
		General Reserves
		Financing Costs as % NRE (Including County allocations)
High quality and sustainable services	100%	Deprivation score
		65+ Population
		Homelessness Rate (per 1,000 Households) Apr-Jun 2024
		Rough Sleeper Counts
		Female Life Expectancy
		Total Crime Rate per 1,000 Population
		Percentage of Children (under 16) in Relative low-income families
		Unemployment rates (%)
Working together to understand and meet local needs	100%	Sense of identity
		Views expressed through engagement
		Alignment with NHS and Fire, Police boundaries
		Housing Market Area
		Alignment with Travel to Work Areas
Supporting devolution arrangements	100%	Population within a strategic authority
		Effective governance within future strategic authority
Stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment	100%	Ability to deliver strong community engagement
		Ability to address unparished areas

This structured approach to evaluation based on research and sector learning, data and insights, independent analysis, engagement and collaboration has helped us to develop a vision and case for change for LGR in Derbyshire: One Derbyshire, two Councils.

2

Our vision and principles for local government reorganisation

Our vision and principles for local government reorganisation

Big enough to deliver but close enough to listen and respond to local needs

At the heart of the transformation is a unifying aspiration, we want Derbyshire to be a place where we feel proud to – Work, Live, Belong and Thrive.

We will create a county that is vibrant, inclusive, and responsive to local needs. By organising into two new Unitary Councils, we aim to establish a governance model that improves service delivery, strengthens community bonds, and drives sustainable multi-dimensional growth. Our case for change outlines how we will deliver on that promise by building on accountability, innovation, partnership, and a strong sense of local identity.

Forming two Unitary Councils reflects our commitment to balancing county-wide strengths with true local representation. Derbyshire's diverse communities, ranging from lively urban centres to peaceful rural landscapes, deserve governance that matches their distinct character and needs. While both councils share core values and goals, each will have flexibility to partner with local organisations, tailor services, and harness emerging technologies such as AI. This will not only streamline processes and bolster decision-making but also free up valuable time for building deeper connections with the residents we serve.

Above all, we believe in doing this work with Derbyshire's citizens, not for them. Our vision embraces collaboration at every level, from seeking out fresh ideas to championing community-led initiatives. Through genuine engagement, we will listen to residents' concerns, celebrate their successes, and unleash the rich community spirit that has long been our county's greatest asset. By reshaping local government—with both human insight and technological innovation at our disposal—we will create a new future where local pride, opportunity, and partnership flourish, delivering enduring benefits for all.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – sharing our strengths while celebrating our differences

Our case for change is designed to meet the needs of local communities; we are proud to be one Derbyshire but with northern and southern areas that have distinct features, challenges and opportunities. By establishing two partner Unitary Councils we will combine the scale needed to deliver effective and efficient public services and reducing complexity while avoiding a 'one size fits all' model of local government.

The northern and southern Unitary Council model is organised on sensible geographies that enable housing markets to address local housing needs and enable place and community-based solutions for critical issues such as homelessness, social care and education. Functional economic geographics are reflected to drive inclusive economic growth with huge opportunities around tourism, minerals and extraction, railways, advanced manufacturing, aerospace and clean energy. Engagement during case for change development highlighted real opportunities to build deeper connections with local businesses and support their ambitions for growth on a regional, national and international stage.

Other key public service providers including Police, Fire and Health alongside key education providers and community and voluntary organisations have highlighted the need for more effective co-ordination of services and they want to work with us to enable more responsive service delivery.

Engagement with all levels of elected representatives including the East Midlands Mayor, MPs, Councillors and parish Councillors have ensured that local needs and aspirations have been heard and understood and that all communities are valued.

Our vision and principles for local government reorganisation (cont.)

Our design principles for implementation

Between our nine authorities and strategic advisors we have extensive experience of delivering this scale of change, but we have also worked closely with sector support organisations and taken advantage of the knowledge gained from other areas that have already progressed LGR. This learning and reflection helped us to develop a set of guiding principles to develop our target operating model which will in turn support implementation:

- **Customer focused:** We will design services from the perspective of residents and businesses rather than organisational structures and simplify processes and communication, so customers are directed to the right support at the right time.

- **Locally accountable:** We will design services that reflect local needs while achieving efficiencies at scale. Local decision-making will be transparent, visible, and accessible to residents.

- **Insight led:** We will use robust data, analytics and citizen feedback to inform priorities, understand demands, monitor impact and improve outcomes.

- **Sustainable:** We will drive financial sustainability with a clear emphasis on outcomes, focusing on longer-term consequences. This includes investment in prevention and early intervention, optimising use of assets, and minimising our environmental impact.

- **Digital first, inclusive by design:** We will leverage digital and AI technology to design services that are intuitive, integrated and accessible, ensuring appropriate support for digitally excluded or disadvantaged groups.

- **Empowered:** We will foster a one-team, delivery-focused culture that encourages learning, innovation, trust and respect across the new organisations. Citizens and colleagues will be engaged and empowered to shape the development of the new Councils and their services.

Our vision and principles for local government reorganisation (cont.)

Conclusion: Building a bright future for Derbyshire

Our vision for reorganisation rests on a core principle: local democracy should be both an engine for meaningful social change and a source of shared community pride. By establishing two Unitary Councils, we entrust local leaders to govern and guide their communities in ways most relevant to local conditions, while upholding county-wide principles of transparency, efficiency, and innovation. This model will yield decisive benefits, including strengthened finances, enhanced resilience, more streamlined service delivery for residents, and a workforce culture defined by collaboration and proactive problem-solving. With this as our foundation, our proposed two Unitary Councils will stand ready to meet evolving challenges with agility, creativity, and heart. We are committed to continued growth that benefits both current and future generations. Working hand in hand with local partners, from schools and voluntary groups to major employers and health providers, we aim to foster stronger, safer communities and a thriving, inclusive economy. In the next sections, we demonstrate how reorganising local government under two Unitary Councils will enable us to accomplish these goals, meet the needs of residents and businesses, and preserve Derbyshire's identity as a place of heritage, opportunity, and exceptional community spirit.

3

Local government reorganisation challenges and opportunities

Local government reorganisation challenges and opportunities

LGR Challenges and opportunities

Change of this scale brings a range of challenges that need to be navigated to ensure successful implementation and the maximisation of opportunities for short, medium and long-term benefits for our communities. This section explores the challenges and opportunities that LGR can bring and how we will respond.

Transition investment and funding reform

A detailed assessment of investment requirements has been undertaken, including costs associated with disaggregation, service and system harmonisation and enhancement and staff restructuring. This draws upon sector expertise, learning from previous LGRs and local knowledge.

One-off investment costs need to be put into context of the overall £3.8 billion gross budget for the 10 Derbyshire Councils. Positioned alongside the potential for wider public sector reform across the Derbyshire footprint, there is considerable scope for investing strategically (working hand in hand with EMCCA) to deliver improved outcomes for local people in critical areas such as health, skills, employment and housing.

Financial modelling, analysis and forecasting has considered the potential impact of the Fair Funding Review, alongside other key areas of funding reform such as special educational needs and disability funding.

As part of this case for change, we are seeking a capitalisation direction to enable the flexibility to use capital receipts to fund the transition to two single tier Unitary Councils, to ensure the financial sustainability of the new authorities from day one and the ability of current authorities to maintain services is not jeopardised by the estimated £65m in one-off transition costs.

Financial savings and efficiencies

Our financial analysis has identified significant opportunities to maximise longer term benefits through strategic investment and greater efficiency through harnessing new technologies and processes. Beyond these immediate gains, our unifying aspiration for Derbyshire, a place where we feel proud to Work, Live, Belong, and Thrive, unlocks even greater potential. By fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and responsive county, we anticipate further opportunities for value creation and sustained financial health. This means that while there's an initial investment, it's designed to reduce waste and duplication in the long run, leading to more efficient use of public funds. More effective procurement of goods and services with greater buying power and economies of scale will yield significant financial savings. Rightsizing the organisation through leaner management structures, harmonisation and modernisation of back-office functions and a focus on 'digital first, inclusive by design' principles will deliver significant efficiency gains. We are also developing strategies to harmonise Council tax and manage debt effectively to strengthen the financial resilience needed to withstand broader economic shocks and uncertainty.

Our financial analysis indicates cumulative savings of up to £167m by year 6 and an annual saving of £44m after 6 years, equivalent to 3% of the budget of the Derbyshire Councils. In summary, the payback for one-off investment costs for all proposals is within the range of 3.5 – 3.6 years (thereby halving the Government's target of 7 years). A full assessment of financial risks is detailed in section 5.

Local government reorganisation challenges and opportunities (cont.)

Asset rationalisation

Between the 10 principal local authorities in Derbyshire, we hold a large portfolio of operational and commercial assets. By developing a shared approach to strategic asset management, underpinned by technology including asset rationalisation we can reinvest in frontline services and support the wider growth and housing agenda by enabling the repurposing of buildings and land for development opportunities.

Our workforce

Our vision for local government is underpinned by creating new organisations which people want to work for, developing their skills and ultimately providing quality services they can be proud of. We are committed to making local government a desirable career choice, a place where individuals can build fulfilling and impactful professional lives.

Internal communication and engagement with staff and trade union representatives has been essential to developing our case for change and remains a key commitment throughout its implementation. All partner Councils have coordinated internal communication activity to ensure timely and consistent communication throughout this journey.

A key concern during this period of change is being able to retain and recruit the staff needed to provide high quality services and support the transition to the new Unitary Council authorities. Recruitment, retention and mutual aid strategies are being explored to ensure we have the leadership and critical skills, knowledge and experience to effectively implement the two new Unitary Council authorities, while maintaining continuity and quality of current public service provision. Expanding strategies to 'grow our own' through apprentice first or innovative approaches with Derbyshire colleges and university are providing ways to recruit and retain talent. This proactive approach to talent development is central to our promise of creating a dynamic and supportive work environment.

In the medium and long term there are significant opportunities for workforce development underpinned by technology and AI. Like many Councils across the country, we are experiencing recruitment challenges across a range of teams including environmental health, planning, legal services and social care, with local Councils often competing to recruit and retain staff.

Moving from 10 to 2 councils could also facilitate more opportunities for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across our collective workforce. At present, many district and borough councils are too small to sustain colleague support networks for protected characteristics such as disability, race or age. Derby City has several thriving networks in place which could be used as a basis for wider engagement, development and support, thereby maximising talent and meeting the diverse needs of our communities. By fostering an inclusive and supportive culture, we aim to create an environment where everyone feels valued, can thrive, and sees local government as a place where they belong.

Local government reorganisation challenges and opportunities (cont.)

The Local Government Association and the District Councils' Network have both considered the importance of structural clarity as a magnet for attracting and retaining staff in local government; and reorganisation has the potential to re-establish the sector as a viable and rewarding career, all of which are key to our case for change and implementation plans. Our reorganisation is designed to fundamentally transform perceptions of local government employment, positioning it as a modern, forward-thinking, and highly rewarding career path that attracts and retains the best talent.

Redefining and aligning services

A clear point that has come through in the stakeholder engagement activity is the need to avoid reorganisation becoming a distraction from current service delivery. We have sought to mitigate this by using a small team of senior officers to develop the case for change, supplemented by targeted specialist input. As we move towards implementation, this balanced approach will continue, supported by specialist consultancy services where appropriate to minimise impact on frontline services.

Another area for focus will be the alignment of policy, guidance, and terms and conditions underpinned by technology and AI. Learning from other areas that have progressed through the LGR journey, suggests that the time required for harmonisation of hundreds of policies, associated guidance and terms and conditions can be lengthy. Early engagement between Councils and key stakeholders, including trade unions, has helped us to develop a clear picture of the size and scale of transition required and a staged approach to implementation developed over the short and medium term. The availability of reliable, real-time data has been crucial to this planning phase. A memorandum of understanding between Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and the Derbyshire districts and borough Councils was developed in the early stages of case for change development with joint working to ensure high quality and consistent data was available to inform all case for changes.

By removing the confusion, duplication and inconsistencies which are inherent within a two-tier system, we will radically simplify the navigation of key public services for our communities and strengthen resilience, while retaining the ability to tailor services to the needs of local areas. From the urban centres of Derby and Chesterfield to the market towns and rural villages, local delivery can match local needs with neighbourhood governance arrangements ensuring that local voices continue to shape local service delivery and community engagement.

High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council have formally worked together as part of a Strategic Alliance since 2008. As part of the Strategic Alliance, which spans 2 different counties and regions, the Councils employ a shared workforce which delivers all services to residents across each Council area. The Councils have also established 3 Council controlled companies to deliver frontline services to their residents, in partnership with Cheshire East Council (in respect of Alliance Environmental Services Ltd for waste management, grounds maintenance and street scene services) and Norse Consulting Ltd (in respect of Alliance Norse Ltd for capital works and building and tenancy repairs/maintenance). The third Council controlled company, Alliance Leisure Ltd, acts as Agent for the Councils in the management of their leisure centres. The process of disaggregating the employment status of the shared workforce will be a significant complexity in implementing any LGR case for change across Derbyshire (and Staffordshire), as will the transfer of the Councils' existing shareholdings in each Council controlled company to the newly created Unitary Councils.   Close coordination of timelines in reorganisation between Derbyshire and Staffordshire will be required to avoid service disruption for the communities currently served by these Councils.

Local government reorganisation challenges and opportunities (cont.)

Strengthened strategic partnerships and a voice for Derbyshire

During key stakeholder interviews in the independent consultation on the case for change, promoting strategic planning and partnership working was highlighted as a key benefit. There was a real commitment to continue the dialogue and support effective implementation.

Partner agencies from a range of sectors identified the need to focus on positive outcomes and impacts, and co-developing a vision, strategies and policies for the new Councils to help create the conditions for residents and businesses to thrive. This case for change aims to set that vision and confirm that our two partner Unitary Council authorities will have a pan-Derbyshire outlook and work closely together in the interests of benefitting the whole county at local, regional, national and international level. They will also have the scale, ambition and financial resilience to 'punch their weight' in these spaces. Furthermore, this larger scale and increased financial resilience will create a significant opportunity for strategic partnership with Homes England, enabling the pooling of resources and access to larger Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funds. This collective approach will effectively turbocharge the delivery of new social housing and facilitate more ambitious housing development projects across the region.

Our relationship with the East Midlands Mayor and EMCCA will be at the forefront of our future partnership working arrangements. LGR is currently taking place within both counties that make up EMCCA and we are suggesting Government consider aligning the respective case for changes to preserve equal influence for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire within the strategic authority. There are real opportunities for the new Unitary Councils in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire to work closely with EMCCA to focus on regional priorities, secure resources and shape policy which will strengthen devolution. The creation of Unitary Councils on a scale comparable to major metropolitan areas like Greater Manchester presents a significant strength. This enhanced scale will enable more effective engagement with the East Midlands Mayor and EMCCA, fostering stronger collaboration and driving the devolved agenda forward. It will also allow us to better leverage regional opportunities, secure vital resources, and shape policies that strengthen devolution for the benefit of our communities.

Local government reorganisation challenges and opportunities (cont.)

Representation and accountability

Reducing the number of Councils and therefore reducing the number of Councillors in principal authorities naturally raises concerns about local representation and the potential for a democratic deficit. In developing this case for change, we followed the advice from the Local Government Boundary Commission, considered the learning from other areas that have been through the local government reorganisation journey and considered locally relevant factors.

In developing the Council size proposals, strategic capacity, the ability to effectively manage Council business, providing a good level of representation for communities and having the capacity to effectively engage in partnerships were key considerations. In addition, local authorities in Derbyshire have been progressive in supporting political parties to attract a more diverse range of people to consider public office. We therefore want to ensure that the Council size, warding patterns and governance arrangements also provide adequate cover for member support issues including ill health, parental leave, compassionate leave and flexibility due to working patterns.

We also welcome the Government's consultative approach to developing neighbourhood-based approaches to local decision making and service delivery. This will help to ensure that local needs are understood and acted upon. We want to work with Government to design Neighbourhood Area Committees that see local people, communities and partners, working alongside local area Councillors to identify and deliver on local priorities and provide local accountability.

There are 204 parish and town Councils within Derbyshire, and they have an excellent understanding of local needs and aspirations. This local knowledge is essential to ensure that services respond to the needs of local people and help to improve the lives for everybody in Derbyshire. We recognise the importance of ensuring there is effective communication, collaboration and co-ordination between the different layers of government, and through neighbourhood arrangements work with the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils and the Derbyshire Parish and Town Councils to co-design a parish charter and liaison group, which will firmly establish the importance of the parish sector and define the relationship with the new Unitary Council authorities.

4

Case for Change: Developing and appraising the options

Case for Change: Developing and appraising the options

MHCLG criteria and feedback

In evaluating the optimal structure for Derbyshire's LGR, we have carefully considered all viable configurations against MHCLG's published criteria, along with feedback provided relating to interim plan submissions by Derbyshire authorities. This has involved exploring 15 different variations that can be summarised as four broad options:

1. A Single Unitary Council for all of Derbyshire Including Derby City

2. A County Unitary Council co-existing with the existing city Unitary Council.

3. Three Unitary Councils.

4. Two Unitary Councils (our preferred option).

A Single Unitary Council authority for all of Derbyshire including Derby City

While this option was not formally proposed by any Council at the interim submission stage, it was considered as part of the initial longlist. It would involve creating one Council covering the entire Derbyshire geography, including Derby City. This case for change was not taken forward for the following reasons:

- **Excessive scale:** The population of a single Unitary Council for the whole of Derbyshire would reach over 1 million people, making it the second largest Council in the country and by far exceeding MHCLG's guide of around 500,000 population per Unitary Council.

- **Devolution misalignment:** The population of a single Unitary Council for the whole of Derbyshire would reach over 1 million people, making it the second largest Council in the country and by far exceeding MHCLG's guide of around 500,000 population per Unitary Council.

- **Democratic deficit:** The Local Government Boundary Commission have indicated that they would not support the creation of authorities with a Council size of over 100 members. With an electorate of approximately 870,000 the minimum elector per Councillor ratio would be 8,700 whereas other options enable far lower ratios of between 5,000 and 5,300.

- **Loss of local identity:** This model risks eroding historic and cultural identities due to the size of the new Unitary Council

- **Neighbourhood empowerment:** The government expects neighbourhood-level engagement to be "hardwired" into new structures. A single authority of this scale may significantly limit opportunities for democratic engagement and local voice.

- **Service delivery challenges:** A single authority of this size may face significant challenges in delivering high-quality, sustainable services across such a large and diverse area e.g. range of urban, rural, and semi-rural areas. Cumbersome bureaucracy and slower decision-making processes also risk overburdening those responsible for the delivery of services.

Case for Change: Developing and appraising the options (cont.)

A County Unitary Council co-existing with the existing City Unitary Council

This option would involve creating a single Unitary Council authority on Derbyshire County Council's existing footprint, with Derby City remaining a separate Unitary Council authority. This case for change was not taken forward for the following reasons:

- **Population imbalance:** The County Unitary Council would serve over 820,000 residents, while Derby City would remain at around 267,000, which does not meet the 500,000-population guide and creates a significant disparity, breaching the principle of balanced population sizes.

- **MHCLG feedback:** Government stated in their feedback that any proposal that covers the Derbyshire County footprint should also have regard to the implications for Derby City (which this option does not).

- **Unequal representation:** The model risks creating unequal partners within strategic governance structures such as EMCCA, where Derbyshire County would dominate representation and influence. This needs to be considered alongside LGR in Nottinghamshire.

- **Perceived imbalance:** The case for change fosters a 'big authority, little authority' dynamic, undermining the principle of equal partnership and strategic coherence.

- **Reduced collaboration:** This interim proposal was submitted independently by Derbyshire County Council, contrary to the Government's expectation for joint working and shared proposals and we understand their final proposal is recommending a single unitary to cover the whole of Derby and Derbyshire.

- **Local identity and representation:** The model risks marginalising district-level identities and does not sufficiently address neighbourhood governance or community engagement.

A Three Unitary Council

This option would involve creating three distinct, self-governing local authorities for the Derbyshire County area. This option was not taken forward for the following reasons:

- **Small scale:** Three Unitary Councils would not achieve the guide of 500,000 population.

- **Fragmented services:** It would complicate local governance by splitting key people and services across multiple organisations. For example, the two existing Adult Social Care services would become three.

- **Increased costs:** Each Unitary Council authority will require its own leadership and management structure, reducing the opportunity for financial efficiencies.

- **Weakens economies of scale:** Essential for efficient public administration, economies of scale would be reduced.

- **Limited financial resilience:** Smaller authorities would be less resilient with funding pressures and exposure to large-scale investments.

- **Undermines reorganisation benefits:** Whilst reorganising local government in Derbyshire, it would counteract some of the goals of reorganisation, particularly with regards to creating resilient and sustainable organisations to be the building blocks for future devolution.

Case for Change: Developing and appraising the options (cont.)

Two Unitary Councils (our preferred option)

As described in the interim plan submitted to Government in March 2025, this model proposes two distinct, self-governing local authorities. The reasons for inclusion as our preferred model include:

- **Right size:** These two Unitary Council authorities will be closer to the MHCLG population guidance of 500,000 and more equal than the single county Unitary Council (option 1) or county and existing city Unitary Council options (option 2)

- **Local identity:** Derbyshire's historic boundaries would be preserved in terms of the area the two new Councils will cover, with a balanced distribution of cultural heritage and environmental assets.

- **Responsive to local needs:** This approach ensures that local governance and accountabilities are more responsive to specific needs, fostering strong community ties and promoting sustainable growth.

- **Building financial resilience:** Having two focused Unitary Council authorities will lead to smoother administration, greater agility in addressing challenges, and more specialised attention to local priorities, significantly enhancing operational efficiency.

- **Alignment with devolution:** This structure also aligns well with the vision and operational framework of the EMCCA, creating valuable synergy and strengthening regional strategies, ultimately providing a more balanced and integrated approach to service delivery.

- **Collaboration:** This model has the support of all ten existing local authorities in Derbyshire, although different variations of the two Unitary Councils are being explored.

The two Unitary Council model is therefore our preferred option because it allows for the creation of a local government structure that is both effective and connected to the communities it serves.

The other three options fail to meet multiple criteria set out by MHCLG, including those relating to scale, strategic alignment, service sustainability, and community empowerment. As such, they have been ruled out.

Case for Change: Developing and appraising the options (cont.)

Further development of options as part of Case for Change

Building on our preferred option, our case for change would see Derbyshire's 10 existing Councils be replaced by two new Unitary Council authorities which would deliver all local authority services:

- A Council for northern Derbyshire

- A Council for southern Derbyshire

Four possible options have been identified to shape the two new councils which are in accordance with Government criteria. The two options identified within the interim plan submitted to Government in March 2025 were based on whole district building blocks. Option A included Amber Valley in the northern Unitary Council and option B included Amber Valley in the southern Unitary Council.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out four types of proposal that may be submitted in response to an invitation under the Act:

- A Type A proposal is that there should be a single tier of local government 'for the area which is the county concerned'.

- A Type B proposal is that there should be a single tier of local government 'for an area which - is currently a district, or two or more districts.

- A Type C proposal is 'for an area specified in the proposal which currently consists of – (a) the county concerned or one or more districts in the county concerned; and (b) one or more relevant adjoining areas. A relevant adjoining area is defined as 'currently a county in England, a district in England, or two or more such counties or districts.

- A combined proposal is one made up of two or more Type B or Type C proposals (or a combination of both) and so must, for the reasons given above, be comprised of existing district (or county) areas.

For each proposal, the Act specifies that proposals are on the basis of existing district (or county) areas. This approach is confirmed in the Guidance attached to the invitation to Councils from the Minister of State dated 5th February 2025, which further confirms that, where there is a strong justification, more complex boundary changes will be considered by the Secretary of State under the Act. There are two options in relation to such boundary changes – a proposal using districts as building blocks followed by the Principal Area Boundary Review (PABR) process, or a final proposal that includes a base proposal using districts as building blocks and, in parallel as part of the submission, asks the Secretary of State to amend boundaries in a particular way using their powers of modification under the Act, to achieve an even better outcome – and making a strong justification for this, as set out in the invitation. The Secretary of State also has the option of seeking advice from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which may provide an alternative proposal.
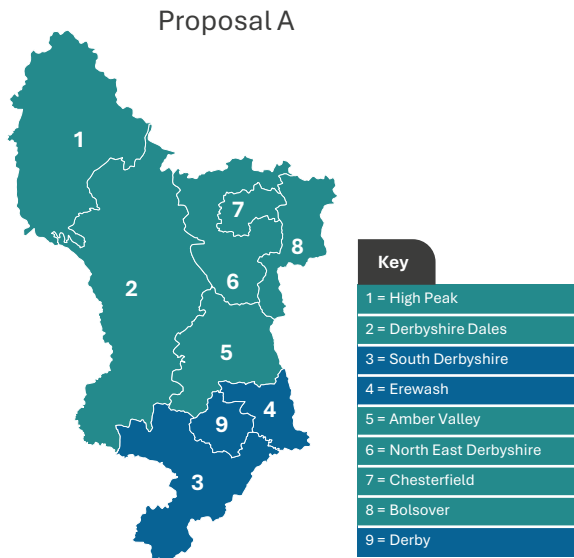
Case for Change: Developing and appraising the options (cont.)

Subsequently, during evidence review for the Case for Change, two further variations have emerged, one of which would require a modification from Option A (the base whole district option) and the other of which would require a modification from Option B (the base whole district option) as they involve a division of parishes within Amber Valley between the northern and southern Councils. Option A Modification 1 (consultation option C) was consulted on as part of the public consultation alongside Option A and B. Option B Modification 1 has been developed following a further review of the evidence strands including housing and growth opportunities, alongside information gathered via the consultation around which parts of Derbyshire residents visit regularly for their day-to-day activities such as work, shopping, medical, education etc.

All four options are described below as separate proposals and have been appraised comprehensively as part of this case for change. The strengths, financial analysis and wider evidence that show how each proposal addresses the relevant Government criteria are shown in Appendix 3.

Case for Change: Developing and appraising the proposals (cont.)

Proposal A – a north/south split of the county, with Amber Valley Council being part of the northern Council

Proposal A

Key

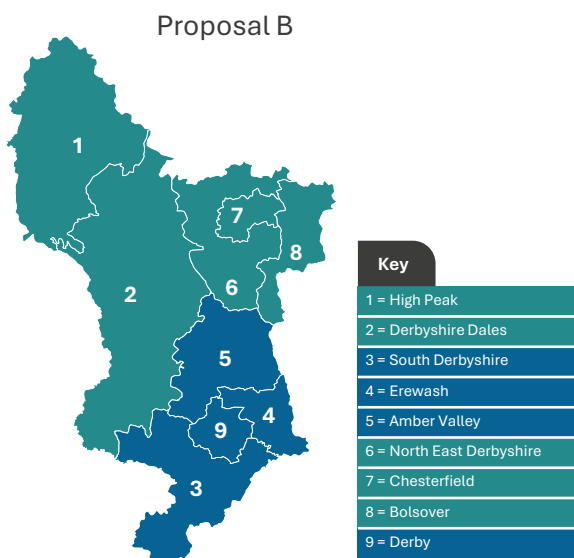|	
1 = High Peak	
2 = Derbyshire Dales	
3 = South Derbyshire	
4 = Erewash	
5 = Amber Valley	
6 = North East Derbyshire	
7 = Chesterfield	
8 = Bolsover	
9 = Derby	

Key statistics

Unitary Council 1: Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Bolsover, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire

- **Population: 583,555**
- **Area (sq. km): 2,103**
- **Council Tax Base: 194,804**

Unitary Council 2: Derby City, South Derbyshire, Erewash

- **Population:494,354**
- **Area (sq. km): 526**
- **Council Tax Base: 147, 434**

Proposal B – a north/south split of the county, with Amber Valley Council being part of the southern Council

Proposal B

Key

1 = High Peak	
2 = Derbyshire Dales	
3 = South Derbyshire	
4 = Erewash	
5 = Amber Valley	
6 = North East Derbyshire	
7 = Chesterfield	
8 = Bolsover	
9 = Derby	

Key statistics

Unitary Council 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover
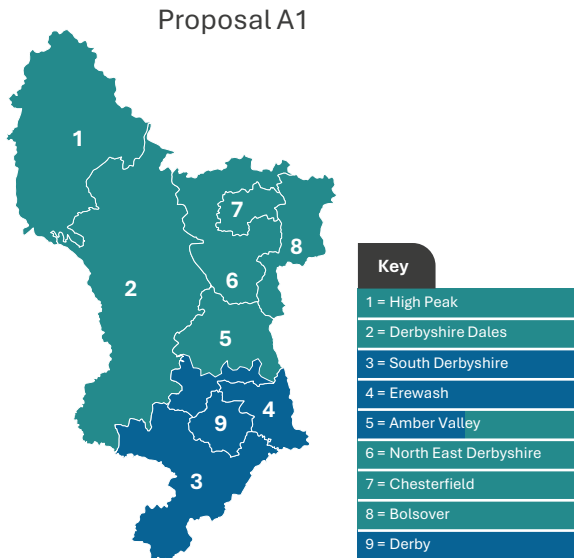
- **Population: 455,846**
- **Area (sq. km): 1,838**
- **Council Tax Base: 152,247**

Unitary Council 2: South Derbyshire, Erewash, Amber Valley, Derby City

- **Population: 622,063**
- **Area (sq. km): 791**
- **Council Tax Base: 189,991**

Case for Change: Developing and appraising the proposals (cont.)

Proposal A1: A north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being split between the northern and southern Unitary Councils (Modification request from Proposal A)

Proposal A1

Key
1 = High Peak
2 = Derbyshire Dales
3 = South Derbyshire
4 = Erewash
5 = Amber Valley
6 = North East Derbyshire
7 = Chesterfield
8 = Bolsover
9 = Derby

Key statistics

Unitary Council 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, Chesterfield, part of Amber Valley

- **Population: 566,934**

- **Area (sq. km): 2,068**

- **Council Tax Base: 187,572**

Unitary Council 2: Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire, part of Amber Valley

- **Population: 510,975**

- **Area (sq. km): 560**

- **Council Tax Base: 154,666**

Parishes in the North

Aldercar and Langley Mill, Alderwasley, Alfreton, Ashleyhay, Belper, Codnor, Crich, Denby, Dethick, Lea and Holloway, Hazelwood, Heanor and Loscoe, Idridgehay and Alton, Ironville, Kilburn, Pentrich, Ripley, Shipley, Shottle and Postern, Somercotes, South Wingfield, Swanwick.

Parishes in the South

Duffield, Holbrook, Horsley, Horsley Woodhouse, Kedleston, Kirk Langley, Mackworth, Mapperley, Quarndon, Ravensdale Park, Smalley, Turnditch, Weston Underwood, Windley.

Case for Change: Developing and appraising the proposals (cont.)

Proposal B1: A north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being split between the northern and southern Unitary Councils (Modification request from Proposal B)

Proposal B1

Key
1 = High Peak
2 = Derbyshire Dales
3 = South Derbyshire
4 = Erewash
5 = Amber Valley
6 = North East Derbyshire
7 = Chesterfield
8 = Bolsover
9 = Derby

Key statistics

Unitary Council 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, Chesterfield, part of Amber Valley*

- **Population: 538,763**

- **Area (sq. km): 2,012**

- **Council Tax Base: 180,133**

Unitary Council 2: Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire, part of Amber Valley*

- **Population: 538,381**

- **Area (sq. km): 617**

- **Council Tax Base: 162,105**

Parishes in the North:
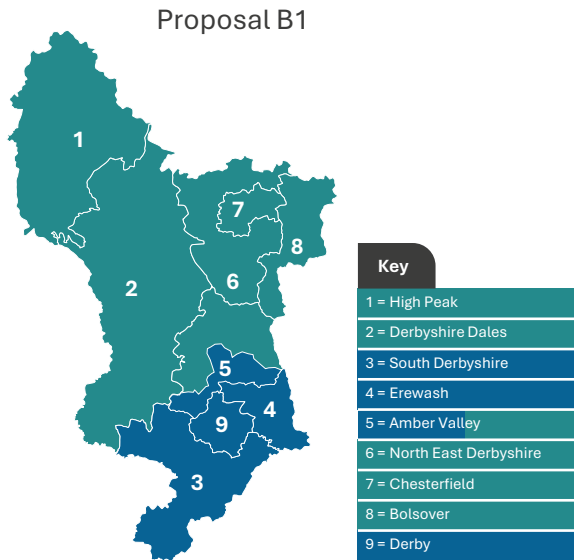
Aldercar and Langley Mill, Alderwasley, Alfreton, Ashleyhay, Codnor, Crich, Dethick, Lea and Holloway, Hazelwood, Heanor and Loscoe, Idridgehay and Alton, Ironville, Pentrich, Ravensdale Park, Ripley, Shottle and Postern, Somercotes, South Wingfield, Swanwick, Turnditch, Weston Underwood, Windley.

Parishes in the South:

Belper, Denby, Duffield, Holbrook, Horsley, Horsley Woodhouse, Kedleston, Kilburn, Kirk Langley, Mackworth, Mapperley, Quarndon, Shipley, Smalley.

Meeting Government Criteria and Service Design\Transformation

The following sections of this Case for Change provide compelling evidence as to how the two new authorities for northern and southern Derbyshire would meet all relevant Government criteria, as well as demonstrating our plans for service design and transformation as we look towards implementing LGR by 2028.

The specific benefits of these Proposals (Proposals A, B, A1 or B1) have been addressed in Appendix 3.

DERBYSHIRE

5

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change

Criteria 1: Establishing a single tier of local government for the whole of Derbyshire

Introduction and local context

Located in the heart of England, Derbyshire comprises of many distinct communities, encompassing historic market towns, large urban centres including Chesterfield and Derby, and rural settlements throughout the Peak District and beyond. LGR is more than administrative change; it is an opportunity to create financially sustainable Councils that enable the delivery of efficient and effective services while celebrating our history and culture.

A clear description of the single tier local government structures

Our case for change creates two Unitary Councils, one for the north of the county and one for the south, which will deliver the full range of services currently provided by the 10 principal authorities within Derbyshire. The new authorities aim to:

- Mirror established commuter flows, housing market areas and natural business clusters, enabling each new Council to design targeted strategies for investment, to support sustainable inclusive growth aligned to regional and national priorities identified in the Local Growth Plan, Strategic Skills Plan and National Industrial Strategy

- Enable balanced taxation with a relatively even split of revenue opportunities and service pressures

- Share their strengths, while celebrating their differences, ensuring distinct local identities, history and culture are retained and supported through strong neighbourhood arrangements

- Enable more effective and efficient public services with less duplication, consistent service standards, joined up policy and faster decision making

Currently, Derbyshire is served by a total of 447 Councillors across the ten principal authorities. The electorate to Councillor ratio varies significantly between Councils. On average the district and borough Councils have approximately 1,900 electors per Councillor, Derbyshire County Council has around 10,000 electors per Councillor and Derby City Council is closer to 3,500 electors per Councillor.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Our case for change for interim Council size represents a significant step forward, offering a pragmatic and well considered framework for future governance. Developed using estimated elector data for 2029 across both Derbyshire and Derby, it prioritises minimising electoral inequality to ensure fair representation, with each Councillor representing a similar number of electors. The case for change also carefully considers community identity, aiming to create coherent wards with meaningful names that resonate with local people, while also ensuring effective and convenient governance. Our approach, which is built upon existing county divisions, Derby City wards, parish wards and polling districts provides a robust and practical foundation for the transition to new Unitary Council structures. It is designed to give local areas a strong voice in county-wide and regional decision-making, ensuring strategic planning and policymaking is informed by neighbourhood-level insight. We are proposing 162 Councillors between the two Unitary Councils, representing around 5,200 electors per Councillor in the Northern Unitary Council and 5,500 electors in the
Southern Unitary Council.

The interim Council size have been developed in line with Local Government Boundary Commission guidance and locally important governance issues.
These include:

- Ensuring that sufficient strategic capacity exists to drive forward the new Unitary Councils respective vision and priorities and effectively work with EMCCA

- Ensuring effective political oversight of the Council's business; considering the number of committee places needed, delegated authority, level of scrutiny etc., to provide robust, transparent and effective governance

- Ensuring that opportunities for collaborative working are maximised through effective partnership working and representation on key internal and external partnerships, boards and outside bodies

- Ensuring good representation for our communities providing a strong local voice, advocacy and prioritising local needs

- Ensuring that we have strong member support and development policies that make provision for ill health, parental leave, compassionate leave and flexibility due to working patterns.

We also considered local demographic information, Councillor workloads and learning from existing similar sized Unitary Councils. Overall, the interim Council size and interim ward proposals are designed to balance efficiency with community responsiveness. By tailoring representation to Derbyshire's unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural areas, the new governance arrangements will help Councillors remain accessible and accountable, thereby strengthening local democracy across the county.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Sensible economic areas with an appropriate tax base

Derbyshire's economy is multifaceted. The economic centres of Chesterfield in the north and Derby City in the south are surrounded by market towns and rural villages. The north is anchored by Chesterfield's role as a sub-regional centre and the M1 corridor, underpinned by advanced manufacturing, engineering, quarrying and logistics and a diverse rural economy in the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales. It has significant areas of growth, such as the Markham Vale Enterprise Zone, alongside critical regeneration and tourism projects, for example Peak Resort in Chesterfield. The South is driven by advanced manufacturing clusters around Derby, including the Infinity Park Investment Zone and Smartparc; major research, innovation and production facilities and the rapidly evolving industrial corridor along the A50/A38/M1.These areas are identified for urban regeneration, housing expansion, to support growth, inward investment, and high-value supply-chain opportunities stemming from major brands such as Alstom, Rolls Royce and Toyota.

Our case for change for two Unitary Councils allows each area to leverage its key sectors. By delineating the county area along these natural economic geographies, we avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach in favour of locally attuned strategies, ensuring neither Unitary Council is disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged.

Forming two similarly sized Unitary Councils is central to establishing financially sound authorities that share resources fairly across Derbyshire. Current analysis confirms that splitting the county into a north-south structure balances populations and preserves Council tax bases and business rate revenues, thereby avoiding the pitfall of one large urban area standing apart from widespread rural areas. Equally sized Councils can better customise services and infrastructure to local economic structures, from championing rural broadband, to fostering major investment projects such as Infinity Park in Derby. A well-balanced tax base is essential for long-term resilience, particularly in supporting critical services such as social care, planning, and environmental management. Each Unitary Council will have a combination of urban and more rural areas and multiple economic sectors with the potential for growing commercial hubs and housing development.

Notably, no part of Derbyshire is left isolated, meaning each Unitary Council can align policy, resources, and decision-making to its specific mix of rural, industrial, and service-based economies.

Travel to work patterns vividly illustrate Derbyshire's functional geographies. Data from the Derbyshire Economic Partnership and local authority surveys demonstrate how Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester shape workforce distribution across the county. By aligning two new Councils with their natural travel to work areas, we strengthen local economic resilience. Commuter data, for instance, shows Chesterfield and surrounding areas closely linked to Sheffield City region and the western area of High Peak to Greater Manchester, while the engineering and aerospace industries are a major employer in the southern areas of Derbyshire, enabling employment from Amber Valley and Erewash.

Evidence also suggests joint interests in the visitor economy, the Peak District in the north and the National Forest in the South, and in advanced manufacturing and green technology, the north's mineral extraction belt and the south's nuclear and rail skills programmes. By grounding each new Unitary Council in the distinct economic networks whilst also recognising synergies, both Councils will be optimised to attract investment and foster sustainable growth.

Sensible geography to help increase housing supply and meet local needs

Two similar sized Unitary Councils working in partnership also enable us to shape distinct, yet complementary housing strategies, building on established housing market areas. This includes responding sensitively to the pressures of housing growth and distribution needed in and around the Peak District ensuring that NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) targets for affordable housing are met through sustainable development practices that respect environmental constraints. Concurrently, regeneration opportunities in Northern Derbyshire will be pursued, with a focus on achieving NPPF targets for brownfield land utilisation and creating diverse housing options. Meanwhile the Southern Derbyshire Unitary will focus on urban regeneration and larger-scale housing expansions carefully coordinated around the needs of major employers, public transport networks and housing need, with a clear objective to exceed NPPF targets for new housing delivery in strategic growth areas and enhance house affordability across all income brackets.

This change simplifies planning by reducing the number of local plans from nine to two. The two new local plans complementing the EMCCA Spatial Vision supporting projects from Derby Riverside in the South to improved transport infrastructure in the North. This single-tier model simplifies planning, expedites housing delivery to meet market needs in line with national planning policy, enables the planning and delivery of essential local health and community services as well as preserving Derbyshire's heritage and identity.

Robust evidence, analysis and expected outcomes

Comprehensive local demographic, economic, and financial data have been used to develop our case for change and proposals - as set out in section 1 "Our Approach to Developing this Case for Change".

Throughout this Case for Change we aim to demonstrate through evidence, data and analysis the following outcomes:

- Sustainable Councils: able to meet differing local needs.
- Provide financial sustainability and resilience.
- Improve key services.
- Support devolution and regional growth.
- Empower neighbourhoods and communities.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Criteria 2: Unitary Council authorities that are the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

The case for local government reorganisation in Derbyshire is underpinned by growing The case for local government reorganisation in Derbyshire is underpinned by growing financial pressures, service demand increases, and limitations in the current two-tier system's capacity to respond. Across Derbyshire, Councils are managing substantial budget gaps, rising demand for social care and housing services and constrained funding growth.

There are opportunities to streamline governance, consolidate services, unlock transformation opportunities, increase efficiency and enhance service delivery. Our financial case balances the investment of implementing the new structures with ongoing savings potential, therefore enabling us to assess whether the new Unitary Councils will be more resilient and sustainable than the existing two-tier model. It aims to:

- Quantify the financial impact of the case for change

- Compare Proposals on a like-for-like basis, considering savings, costs, and payback

- Demonstrate the financial viability and strength of the proposals

- Provide confidence in our assumptions, modelling approach, and scenario testing

The analysis provides a structured, evidence-based appraisal of potential savings, required investment and net benefit.

Approach

The analysis followed a structured methodology benchmarked against other LGR processes and aligned to the Government's criteria. It covers the following stages for each proposal:

1. Scoping and Agreement of Method

2. Data Collection and Validation

3. Baseline Construction

4. Implementation and Disaggregation Cost Estimation

5. Savings Estimation

6. Scenario Modelling

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Full details on the approach and assumptions can be found at Appendix 2.

The engagement of and collaboration between Section 151 Officers from across Derbyshire throughout this process has provided assurance on data accuracy and robustness of analysis.

The modelling is based on a mid-case scenario recognising the uncertainty surrounding implementation investments and savings forecasts. The modelling outputs for all proposals are:

- Phased annual savings

- Cumulative implementation costs, including disaggregation

- Payback periods (breakeven)

- Total net benefit

Proposals Summary

This section details the financial impact of each of the proposals being considered in the Derbyshire submission. It provides details on estimated annual savings, ongoing disaggregation costs and one-off implementation investment, resulting in breakeven (payback period) and net benefit analyses. It also provides a view on the resilience and future sustainability of the new Councils.

The annual savings and implementation investment modelled are shown below. These are presented globally as they are largely constant across all proposals.

Annual Savings Estimates

Our financial analysis projects cumulative savings up to year 6 of £167m and an annual saving of £44m after 6 years, equivalent to 3% of the budget of the Derbyshire Councils. In summary, the payback for all proposals is within the range 3.5 – 3.6 years. While the quantum of savings delivered will depend on the level of ambition and decisions made by each new Unitary in the future, these estimates are built from both top-down modelling and validated against local data inputs.

The modelled savings are primarily achieved through workforce and efficiency savings such as consolidation of leadership and corporate services and right sizing the organisation as shown in the table below.

Mid Scenario	£'000 Base Year	£'000 Year -1	£'000 Shadow Year	£'000 Year 1	£'000 Year 2	£'000 Year 3	£'000 Year 4	£'000 Year 5	£'000 Year 6
Saving Name	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34
Leaner Leadership Structures	-	-	-	-	737	2,946	5,893	7,366	7,366
Achieving the Right Team Size	-	-	-	-	2,308	5,770	8,078	10,386	11,540
Streamlining Support Services	-	-	-	-	982	2,455	3,438	4,420	4,911
Smarter Buying and Outsourcing	-	-	-	982	2,946	4,420	4,911	4,911	4,911
Combining Service Contracts	-	-	-	491	1,964	3,929	4,911	4,911	4,911
Right Sized Governance	-	-	-	2,590	3,238	3,238	3,238	3,238	3,238
Use of Technology	-	-	-	147	491	982	982	982	982
Making the Best Use of Assets	-	-	-	-	884	1,768	2,652	3,536	4,420
Improving Customer Services	-	-	-	110	368	737	737	737	737
Smarter Use of Fleet	-	-	-	98	393	688	884	982	982
Further Service Transformation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	4,419	14,311	26,932	35,722	41,468	43,997

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

The gradual build-up of the realisation of savings, beginning with **£4.4m** in **year 1** before peaking at **£44m** in **year 6**, with cumulative savings up to year 6 of £167m, that supports the model's financial viability over the payback period.

The following chart shows the savings areas pictorially:

Savings Breakdown – Mid Case

- Leaner Leadership Structures
- Achieving the right size team
- Streamlining support services
- Smarter Buying & Outsourcing
- Combining Service Contracts
- Right Sized Governance
- Use of Technology
- Making the best use of assets
- Improved Customer Services
- Smarter use of Fleet

Implementation Investment Estimates

One-off investment required to implement the reorganisation, including programme delivery, systems integration, estates changes, and redundancies, is estimated at **£65.4m**, starting in **year -1 (2026/27),** peaking at year 1 of the new Councils (2028/29) and ending in **year 3 (2030/31)**. This also includes one-off investment where services or systems must be realigned due to the transition of upper-tier services from Derbyshire County and Derby City to the two new authorities. These costs are necessary enablers of the longer-term benefits and have been profiled over the implementation period.
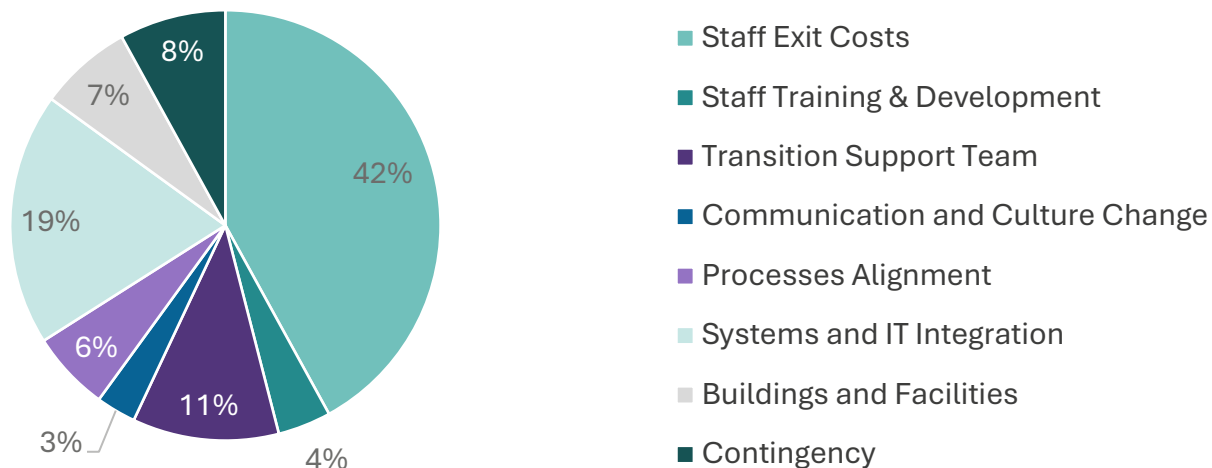
The table below shows the modelled implementation investment by year and category:

	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Mid Costs - Implementation	Base Year	Year -1	Shadow Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Category	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	
Staff Exit Costs	-	-	2,613	7,840	10,453	5,226	**26,132**
Staff Training and Development	-	-	1,291	1,291	-	-	**2,582**
Transition Support Team	-	-	2,582	1,291	1,291	1,291	**6,456**
Communication and Culture Change	-	-	1,033	1,033	-	-	**2,066**
Process Alignment	-	1,356	775	1,356	387	-	**3,873**
Systems and IT Integration	-	-	4,800	3,600	3,600	-	**12,000**
Building and Facilities Changes	-	-	-	620	1,446	2,066	**4,132**
Contingency	-	516	516	1,291	1,033	1,808	**5,165**
Disaggregation Cost (one-off)	-	-	1,500	1,500	-	-	**3,000**
Total	-	1,872	15,111	19,821	18,210	10,391	**65,406**

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

The chart below shows the cost composition, identifying the largest expenditure areas being workforce exit and consolidation of systems

Implementation Costs Breakdown – Mid Case

- ■ Staff Exit Costs
- ■ Staff Training & Development
- ■ Transition Support Team
- ■ Communication and Culture Change
- ■ Processes Alignment
- ■ Systems and IT Integration
- ■ Buildings and Facilities
- ■ Contingency

These costs are essential to unlock recurring efficiencies. We believe the level of investment is proportionate and supports a positive return on investment over a realistic planning period.

Payback

A breakeven analysis and payback period assessing when cumulative savings from reorganisation outweigh the one-off implementation investment has been calculated for each proposal and is contained within the relevant appendices. In summary the payback for all proposals is within the range 3.5 – 3.6 years.

This net benefit helps to position the new Councils to begin to close future budget gaps and reinvest in public services supporting stronger long-term resilience. We do however recognise that we are all currently experiencing budget, service demand and delivery challenges and these will continue to put pressure on the new Unitary Councils' budgets.

Financial Sustainability

To demonstrate that the two new Unitary Councils are of the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and able to withstand financial shocks, their future financial sustainability has been modelled. The metrics used to test this are:

1. A Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) modelled for the new Councils (before Council tax harmonisation and the impact of the Fair Funding Review)

2. Reserves availability

3. Future Funding, including a high-level indicative analysis of the assumed impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0

4. Balance Sheet Health

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Medium-Term Financial Planning

The existing consolidated forecast budget gap across Derbyshire highlights significant financial pressures. In 2025/26, the combined budget gap exceeds £41 million, indicating the scale of the challenge.

Consolidated Medium Term Financial Plan Outlook

	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual	Base Year	Year -1	Shadow Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Mid Scenario	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Gross Budget gaps						
Districts and City	-3,915	-21,087	-35,546	-35,899	-36,857	-36,857
County	-37,499	-8,676	-16,505	-22,005	-22,005	-22,005
Costs						
Disaggregation Costs	0	0	-1,500	-1,500	0	0
Implementation Costs	0	-1,872	-13,611	-18,321	-18,210	-10,391
District Disaggregation	0	-313	-729	0	0	0
Savings						
Reorganisation & Transformation Savings	0	0	0	4,419	14,311	26,932
Projected Budget Challenge	**-41,414**	**-31,948**	**-67,891**	**-73,306**	**-62,761**	**-42,321**
Funding Opportunities						
Council Tax Harmonisation	0	0	0	36,047	35,781	42,514
Adjusted Budget Challenge	**-41,414**	**-31,948**	**-67,891**	**-37,259**	**-26,980**	**193**

This table presents the worst-case scenario, by including the district council disaggregation costs included in Proposal A1 and Proposal B1

The modelling outcomes in the table above show that LGR payback trajectory is healthy, with a balanced position forecast from year three for all proposals. The early years are marked by substantial deficits before savings from reorganisation and transformation are fully realised. This places pressure on financial planning and necessitates careful management of reserves and cost controls. The financial outlook shows a steady improvement over time, reflecting the long-term benefits of reorganisation, harmonisation efforts and funding reforms.

Importantly, this financial trajectory is broadly consistent across all four proposals – acknowledging that there will be minor variations driven by differences in population levels which affect funding allocations and Council tax revenues.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Funding Opportunities

There are substantial funding opportunities from LGR to close the budget gap. Council tax harmonisation presents an opportunity to generate additional revenue as Council tax is lifted to create parity at the earliest point across each proposed area. The importance of this additional revenue stream on future financial sustainability is demonstrated in the tables above. This is modelled assuming harmonisation to the highest rate as quickly as possible, within referendum limits. This will be a decision for the new Councils but opting for harmonisation that generates a lower income yield will create more risk to the future financial sustainability of the new Councils, putting additional pressure on service delivery.

There are other harmonisation opportunities from LGR that will potentially generate additional income, such as aligning fees and charges and Council tax support schemes. Again, these will be a local decision for the new Councils. It is recognised that these will present opportunities to generate further revenue, but they have not been modelled at this stage of the process.

Estimated total resources are balanced across both Unitary Councils. The Unitary Council in the south is forecast to consistently have more growth than the north. However, the Unitary Council in the north will generate a higher Council tax per head, due to a higher aggregate Band D.

Fair Funding Review 2.0

The estimated impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 is also expected to contribute to improved financial sustainability over time, although the precise scale of this benefit remains too uncertain to quantify at the time of writing this case for change. Indicative modelling suggests that the Southern Unitary Council may experience a quicker improvement in their budget position compared to the Northern Unitary Council, due to differences in funding allocations.

The high-level analysis of the impact of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 shows that across all proposals, the new Unitary Councils will have aggregated "needs" in the upper quartile when compared to existing Unitary Councils. While this indicates a relatively strong case for funding, variations in the mix of funding (comprising differences in Council tax, retained business rates, and grant allocations), reflect the underlying structure of the funding system. These differences mean that the pace and profile of budget improvement will evolve differently across each proposal.

The Fair Funding Review 2.0 estimates are assumption-based due to the lack of exemplification in the consultation process and should be interpreted with caution, but since this review is likely to impact on the future financial sustainability of the new Unitary Councils, we felt that some analysis was required in this submission.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Reserves

Using current MTFP's, it is estimated that on 31st March 2028, there will be £90m of available reserves across Derbyshire which can be used to fund the implementation investment and help the new Councils to withstand future financial shocks. However, unanticipated funding and/or expenditure pressures could adversely affect this position before the new Councils are created in 2028. Reserves allocated for specific purposes and/or risks identified have been treated as unavailable since these underlying commitments or risks will ultimately transfer to the new Councils.

Balance Sheet Health

A suite of metrics measuring both capital and revenue financial health have been modelled across all proposals for the new Unitary Councils including:

- Net assets as percentage of core spending power

- Usable reserves as percentage of core spending power

- Debt Gearing

- Capital Financing

Across all the metrics, based on available data for 2024/25, the proposed new Unitary Councils have comparatively strong financial health outcomes, relative to the benchmarked Unitary Council.

It should be noted that many of the younger existing Unitary Councils are not in a strong financial position, many needing exceptional financial support from the Government in their early years, so we have treated these outcomes with caution.

The results indicate that the new Derbyshire Unitary Councils will be able to manage debt locally, however, there is emerging pressure in the current Councils in relation to the ability of Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs) to service debt that will present a financial challenge.

Rationalising assets will also present opportunities to create economic growth, releasing land and property to be used to stimulate the economy, for regeneration, new housing and job creation. Disposals will generate capital receipts which will allow for the repayment of debt or re-investment. In addition, accommodation reviews, including co-location, will reduce running costs and a review of income generating assets will facilitate achievement of greater returns or disposal or re-use of 'loss making' assets.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs)

HRAs within Derbyshire represent a significant opportunity for the proposed Unitary Councils, with six of the Councils having HRA account. While these accounts are currently ringfenced, and therefore unaffected, it is important to contextualise the impact that reorganisation and impending regulatory changes will have on their delivery capabilities. The consolidation of these HRAs under a larger Unitary structure presents a unique chance to unlock substantial financial savings through economies of scale, optimise resource allocation, and significantly enhance our capacity to build new social housing stock. Compliance with evolving housing regulations will undoubtably remain a challenge for the new Councils but their scale will allow them to withstand financial shocks and allow for more efficient and effective management of our housing assets.

The table below shows the **Derbyshire HRA's mapped to the proposed Unitary Council structures**:

FY28/29	Unitary 1	Unitary 2	Total
Number of Properties	24,790	15,262	**40,052**
Revenue (£'000)	-137,604	-96,441	**-234,045**
Expenditure (£'000)	123,337	94,215	**217,552**
Appropriations (£'000)	11,251	0	**11,251**
Surplus (£'000)	-3,016	-2,226	**-5,242**
Use of Reserve (£'000)	-2,555	-389	**-2,944**
HRA Reserves Balance (£'000)	-18,878	-48,232	**-67,110**

Financial Risk Assessment

The Unitary Councils are the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks and have the potential to remain viable, stable and able to withstand pressures in the future.

However, it is important to note that this is a snapshot at a moment in time and there are considerations and strategic financial risks within and/or outside of our control that could change this. The table below summarises the systemic financial challenges faced and our intended strategic response with areas requiring additional Government support also identified.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

| Systemic Financial Challenge	Strategic Response and Government Support Required
MTFP Variances All current Medium-Term Financial Plans have pressures that could require further contributions from reserves. Unanticipated funding and/or expenditure pressures - especially in adult social care, children's services, and homelessness currently show adverse ongoing trends. Councils may also make decisions before vesting day that impact on the future financial position such as not increasing Council tax to the maximum or using reserves.	Councils to actively manage financial pressures through locally controlled measures such as prudent Council tax setting, disciplined reserve stewardship, prioritised investment decisions, forward-looking financial planning, and allocating resources to support LGR Agreement of guiding principles prior to a Structural Changes Order being issued. *Government support requested:* *Request additional flexibility and targeted funding support for high-pressure service areas, particularly adult social care and homelessness.*
Fair Funding Review 2.0 Estimates are assumption-based due to lack of exemplification in the consultation process. Delays would increase budget pressure.	Timely and transparent exemplifications to support accurate financial planning, and transitional funding to mitigate uncertainty.
Waste Reforms Cost pressures in meeting regulatory reforms, with lack of clarity around Government funding.	*Government support requested:* *Clear guidance and full funding support for mandated waste reforms to avoid unfunded cost burdens.*
Outcome of the Review of the Dedicated Schools Grant The statutory override protects reserves from the impact of deficits; any change could create unsustainable budget pressures for new Unitary Councils.	*Government support requested:* *Assurance that the statutory override will remain in place or that alternative protections will be introduced to safeguard financial sustainability.*

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Systemic Financial Challenge	Strategic Response and Government Support Required
Deliverability and Timing of Realising Modelled Savings Large-scale transformation projects may slip or deliver lower savings than modelled.	Councils to actively manage financial pressures through locally controlled measures such as prudent Council tax setting, disciplined reserve stewardship, prioritised investment decisions, forward-looking financial planning, and allocating resources to support LGR. Capacity-building support and flexibility in delivery timelines, alongside contingency funding to manage slippage.
Council Tax Harmonisation Options implemented are lower than modelled, reducing revenue and increasing budget gaps.	Councils to actively manage financial pressures through locally controlled measures such as prudent Council tax setting, disciplined reserve stewardship, prioritised investment decisions, forward-looking financial planning, and allocating resources to support LGR.
HRA Budget Pressures Additional financial pressure on HRA's, from changes to regulation challenging ability to meet specified standards and service debt	Councils to actively manage pressures through locally controlled measure, but the main source of income generation (rents) is defined by national policy. The Self-Financing Settlement in 2012 predated the regulatory changes Government support requested: A national review of HRA debt and the impact on HRA's would benefit the sector

Criteria 3: Unitary Council authorities that prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens

Unitary Councils provide over 200 different services to citizens, businesses and wider communities. As part of the Case for Change for Derbyshire, we have explored current service delivery models and potential opportunities that LGR could bring for the main service areas.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)
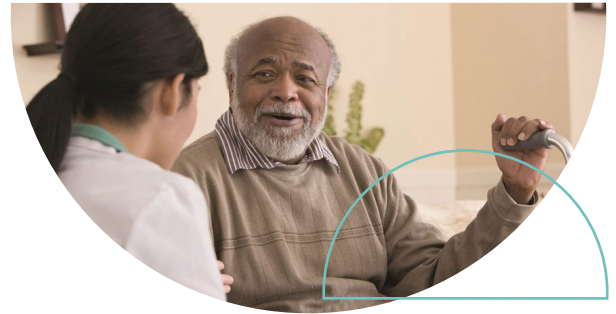
ONE DERBYSHIRE TWO COUNCILS

Adult social care

What does it mean for Communities:

We will provide a streamlined, reliable, and easily accessible adult social care service. It will be tailored to individuals, focusing on prevention and the use of modern technology to help you stay independent at home, all while working closely with health and community services.

Our strengths now...

We empower adults to live their best lives with dignity. Our strength lies in integrated health and social care, driven by strong partnerships, efficient hospital discharges, collaborative safeguarding, and a shared commitment to person-centred care through initiatives like 'Your Life, Your Choice' and the growing use of proactive, technology-enabled solutions.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

The move to two Unitary Councils is a unique opportunity to transform Adult Social Care. We'll streamline services, adopt best practices, and leverage technology for greater prevention and capacity. This consolidation will unify our workforce, integrate digital systems, and strengthen partnerships, leading to more efficient, person-centred, and sustainable care across Derbyshire.

Context

Adult Social Care is a key statutory service delivered by the existing upper tier authorities, Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council, both supporting adults with various needs to live as independently as possible. A key difference is that Derbyshire County Council directly provides a proportion of its care, while Derby City Council primarily commissions services.

Both Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council have strong partnerships within the Integrated Care System (ICS). Derby City Council has a successful formal partnership with Derbyshire Community Services NHS Foundation Trust (DCHS), for integrated health and social care reablement and hospital discharge, while Derbyshire County Council is developing a similar model. Each Council has its own Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), which collaborate closely on safeguarding strategies. Derbyshire County Council received a 'Good' rating by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), reflecting robust in-house provision and a strong emphasis on prevention, whilst Derby City Council's Adult Social Care services are rated 'Requires Improvement', but have a clear plan to address the identified issues and are actively implementing their improvement plan.

We recognise the uniquely challenging context of Adult Social Care across our county, particularly given the growing number of older residents. Recent projections indicate that the proportion of those aged 65 and over in Derbyshire will rise from 21% in 2023 to 25.2% by 2047, an increase of 4.2%, aligning with England's overall trend but slightly outpacing the EMCCA average of 3.9%. District-by-district variations reveal the complexity of local demand. Notably, Derbyshire Dales's older population is expected to jump from 29.3% to 34.7% (a 5.4% increase), while the areas like North East Derbyshire show a smaller percentage shift (2.2%), the absolute number of older people needing support will still grow significantly. Our case for change for 2 Unitary Councils (north and south) provides the best balance between the areas to manage this increasing population.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Area	2023	2047	Change
Amber Valley	23	27.1	4.1
Bolsover	20.6	24.6	4
Chesterfield	22.3	26.6	4.3
Derby	16.2	20.7	4.5
Derbyshire Dales	29.3	34.7	5.4
Erewash	21.2	24.7	3.5
High Peak	23.2	27.8	4.6
Northeast Derbyshire	24.8	27	2.2
South Derbyshire	18.8	23.2	4.4
All Derbyshire	21	25.2	4.2
EMCCA	19.9	23.8	3.9
England	18.7	22.9	4.2

Population estimate by age band 65 plus (%) – April 2023

Key

	23.3 – 29.3
	22.4 – 23.2
	20.7 – 22.3
	16.3 – 20.6
	0.0 – 16.2
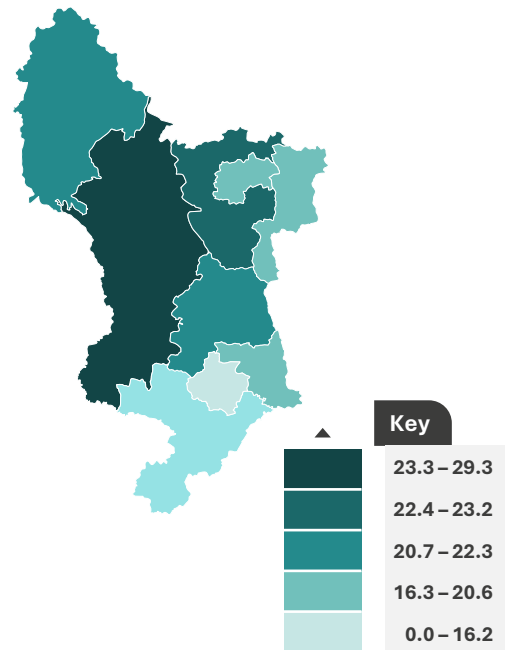
Adult Social Care services also face severe financial challenges due to rising demand, increasing complexity of needs, staff shortages, and escalating costs. In particular, the rising cost of care packages driven by inflation, the National Living Wage, and a growing elderly population has placed significant strain on resources. These pressures are compounded by increased reliance on expensive services from the private and independent sector. In 2024/25, Derby City Council's Adult Social Care services had a £9.384m overspend, which was partly offset by underspends in children's services (£5.1m) and Derbyshire County Council faced a £21m overspend.

Building On Our Strengths

This reorganisation is about harnessing what already works well and elevating it. Across our current city and county boundaries, we already share strong, integrated relationships with health services through the Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care System (ICS) which has allowed us to achieve hospital discharges faster, more cohesive safeguarding practices, and some examples of proactive technology-enabled support.

Both Councils share a commitment to promoting independence and personalised care, whether that's Derbyshire's 'Best Life Derbyshire' programme or Derby City's 'Stronger Together' approach. These strategies place emphasis on strength-based, community-led support, to build resilience and help people to stay independent for as long as possible.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Derby and Derbyshire are developing a Neighbourhood Health Model to integrate health, social care, and community services, focusing on proactive, community-based care and reducing health inequalities. This approach supports improved outcomes at a local level through established partnerships and programmes. It also provides a strong platform for LGR by demonstrating the value of integrated, place-based working and trusted partnerships.

A Shared Vision for the Future

Our vision is to create Adult Social Care services that keep people safe, respect personal choice, and promote inclusion and wellbeing. We believe in preventive action, so that help arrives before a person's situation becomes critical. We know that technology has the power to transform outcomes, from virtual wards to practical gadgets in the home, and plan to embed it throughout our new arrangements. Above all, we aim to place people at the heart of all decisions. We will co-design services with them, ensuring that our solutions reflect real lives and real challenges.

Why Two Unitary Councils Will Deliver Further Value

Creating two new Unitary Councils allows us to develop more streamlined, person-centred services while taking full advantage of local expertise and relationships. We can maximise our workforce, systems, and commissioning practices, making it easier to adopt new technologies and preventative approaches that keep people independent in their own homes for longer.

For Derbyshire South, locality teams from Derbyshire County Council will integrate with those from Derby City to deliver a locally focused, efficient, and person-centred model of care across the new geography. The new authority will benefit from Derby's evolving strength in commissioning, offering the potential for more efficient procurement, better value for money, and improved service quality through strategic oversight, integrated planning and collaboration with providers. Coupled with the opportunity to embed and scale best practice across the new system, this will enable the development of a stronger, more resilient workforce better equipped to deliver high-quality care and respond to local needs.

For Derbyshire North, Derbyshire County Council's locality teams will continue to manage care services and drive performance improvements. The reduced geographical coverage will enable management to focus on leveraging the Council's established infrastructure and expertise and deliver high quality, personalised social work and social care support and assessment and reablement to local people, and their communities, which maximises people's independence and wellbeing.

Ultimately, we want to shift from crisis-focused interventions to earlier, more empowering forms of support. Derbyshire's well-established ICS is an asset we will build upon, and programmes like 'Team Up Derbyshire' and the Neighbourhood Health Model show how strong partnerships can reduce hospital admissions and keep people well at home. By championing preventative services, technology-enabled care, and strong ties with community organisations, our new Unitary Councils will help adults live safely, meaningfully, and independently for longer. Harnessing new innovations, whether that's using AI to predict care needs or digital tools that better connect health and care data, will be at the heart of our long-term transformation.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

We will also leverage the long-standing Housing and Health Systems Group, bringing together housing, public health, and social care to create safer, more supported living environments. Careful planning between our new Unitary Councils and national partners will pave the way for enhanced joined up working and better outcomes for people who may have multiple challenges, from homelessness to complex health conditions.

Case study

Commissioned care packages for looked after children and adults

Derby City has conducted detailed analysis of complex care packages for children to identify needs and improve outcomes, developing a hybrid model in partnership with strategic partners by re-evaluating and re-commissioning Adult Social Care packages, both residential, supported living, and home care services. This also included a hybrid model for smaller children's homes with services wrapped around the child, integrating Health, Social Care, Commissioning, and Education. These initiatives have delivered significant outcomes to improve care quality, achieve cost efficiencies, and prevent service breakdowns through strategic partnerships and integrated care models.

Riber hillside from Hall Leys Park (landscape)

Day One Readiness and Beyond

On day one, our priority will be continuity of care and staff confidence. We will have a single point of contact in each Unitary Council for referrals and emergencies, and all staff will know exactly which authority they belong to and how to manage cases. Safeguarding boards, urgent care pathways, out-of-hours services are critical services that will be robust and ready to continue without disruption.

Careful financial planning and due diligence will be undertaken to ensure that inherited pressures are fully understood, transparently managed, and addressed collaboratively. This will prevent the displacement of budgetary shortfalls from one authority to another and support the development of a financially sustainable model from day one.

Aligning how we commission across the new Councils, notably in areas where Derby City currently pays less for residential placements than Derbyshire County, will require delicate negotiations with providers and a thoughtful approach to avoid inflating prices. Yet done well, shared commissioning and market management can help deliver financial stability, better value, and higher quality support across all of Derbyshire.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

In the longer term, the two new Councils will continue to invest in training staff, upgrading digital infrastructure, and shaping a more resilient care market. Over the long term, a joint strategic board, led by both new Directors of Adult Social Care services, will oversee the continued alignment of policy and practice. We will scale up smaller successes like Derby's Local Area Coordinators into countywide initiatives that encourage independent living and keep older people connected to neighbours and community support. We will remain focused on co-producing services, ensuring every resident has a voice in how their care is planned and delivered.

Together, we can create a modern, inclusive Adult Social Care system that makes the best use of public funds, supports our workforce, and genuinely transforms people's lives. By harnessing technology, strengthening partnerships, and championing person-centred values, we will ensure Derbyshire remains a place where adults can thrive with dignity and compassion, now and for years to come.

Family Help and Children's social care services

What does it mean for Communities:

Services will be streamlined, ensuring high-quality care, and better outcomes for all families and children across Derbyshire. This will be achieved by focusing on prevention, and early, targeted support that keep children safe and support families in need.

Our strengths now...

As your local Councils, we want every family in Derby and Derbyshire to know that your children's safety and well-being are our top priority. We are proud of our 'Outstanding' and 'Good' children's services, a testament to our dedicated teams and strong partnerships. As we reorganise, we'll build on these proven strengths to ensure seamless, high-quality care and support for all children and young people across our communities, now and for the future.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

The creation of the two Unitary Councils provides a critical opportunity to redesign children's services around shared values and consistent delivery whilst also taking the best practice from the current service offer and this forming part of the operating model in the new Unitary structures. Robust financial planning and commissioning will ensure that both Councils can achieve better value from their combined resources, avoid duplication, and direct funding to areas of greatest impact.

We believe that every child should have the best start in life, no matter their circumstances.

Building on our Strengths

Currently, children's social care and family help in our county are delivered by both Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council. Over the years, we have consistently demonstrated

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

our commitment to helping children remain within their families wherever possible, intervening when there is a risk of harm, and taking on the role of corporate parent if children cannot stay safely at home. Ofsted inspections have highlighted Derby City's "Outstanding" performance in all areas, underlining strong leadership and a stable social work workforce, while Derbyshire has been recognised as "Good" with clear improvements and strategic frameworks in place. This track record gives us a firm footing for the path ahead.

Our success has always depended on strong partnerships. The **Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP)**, has brought key organisations, including the ICS, together to forge a collaborative approach to safeguarding children. **Derby's Youth Justice Service** is another example of this teamwork, having recently achieved an "Outstanding" grade across all judgement areas. We have shown how integrated working reduces duplication, improves processes and delivers better outcomes for children and young people, for example, Derby City's specialist children's homes and work with the regional fostering hub, which Derby City hosts on behalf of D2N2.

Case study

Family Hubs

Derby City's Family Hub network offers a range of activities, sessions, advice and support for families and young people aged from 0-19 years and up to 25 years for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. They have delivered positive outcomes in terms of early years, school readiness, infant feeding workshops, breastfeeding clubs and support for new parents, health and well-being and parent-infant relationships. This includes support for children with special educational needs and their families, dads, co-parents and other care givers activities, as well as targeted youth support work for young people aged 11 to 19. This is clearly an evidence-based model that could be rolled out across Derbyshire supporting better outcomes for early years and future generations.

Addressing Challenges

Although we are proud of Derbyshire's strong track record, we also recognise that we face financial pressures, particularly around rising costs for children looked after in external provisions. Last year, Derby City Council recorded a £5.1 million underspend in its children's services budget, but Derbyshire County Council saw an overspend of £27 million, underscoring the need for diligent financial planning, efficient commissioning, and a transparent approach so that budgetary pressures do not undermine the quality of care. Financial pressures remain in 2025/26.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Why Two Unitary Councils Will Deliver Further Value

Our proposed move to two Councils reflects our ambition to deliver even stronger services for children and families. By bringing together the best of both the city and county's expertise, we can reduce duplication, align our leadership, and foster innovative practice under one umbrella. We will continue to build on proven programmes like the **Families First Partnership Programme**, a key element of the Government's reforms of children's social care that looks to create one integrated system for helping families in need of help and protection. With the support of the Derby and Derbyshire Strategic Governance Group, both new authorities can further embed this approach, ensuring families have timely, tailored support right where they live.

At the heart of this reorganisation is a commitment to prevention. Family help services will be given the strongest possible footing so that fewer children need formal safeguarding interventions. We have already seen how expanding our early help offer, like family hubs, can tackle challenges at their roots. Our new structure will prioritise this proactive, joined-up support, especially for those most likely to face harm. Equally important are opportunities to strategically plan and commission projects with health partners through the use of Section 75 agreements, which will further strengthen collaboration.

A Shared Vision for the Future

As two new Unitary Council authorities, our vision is to build services that nurture children's safety, happiness, and ambitions. We will maintain a "family-first" ethos, encouraging close working between social workers, family help teams, and our vital partners in health, education, and the voluntary sector. We want children to grow up in their own family networks whenever possible, and, when they cannot, to receive high-quality care close to home.

Underpinning this vision are several guiding principles. Firstly, safeguarding remains paramount: from day one, our front door arrangements will triage all contacts and referrals effectively, pointing families towards the right level of support. Secondly, we will ensure no disruption to ongoing cases during the transition, preserving clear referral routes and workforce stability. Thirdly, our workforce, one of our strongest assets, will be supported through transparent communication and shared training, minimising any differences in ways of working. We will embrace data-led insights and cutting-edge technology, including the ethical use of AI, to improve decision-making and outcomes for children. Finally, we will aim for financial resilience through careful due diligence and smart commissioning strategies that reduce out-of-area placements and costly residential care.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Day One Readiness and Beyond

On day one of the new Councils, families must see no break in service. A robust transition plan will guarantee that emergency systems continue without interruption and that social workers have the resources they need to protect children. Each child receiving services will have confidence in a seamless transfer, and all our partner agencies; schools, GPs, police, and others, will know precisely whom to contact in each Council area. This clarity extends to out-of-hours services, which will remain firmly in place.

Throughout the early phases of reorganisation, there will be frequent communication with staff, children, and families, ensuring we address concerns immediately. Over the long term, a joint strategic board, led by both new Directors of Children's Services, will oversee the continued alignment of policy and practice. The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership will remain a crucial anchor, maintaining the continuity of our high safeguarding standards county-wide. We will also explore proposals for aligning digital infrastructure, ideally moving towards a shared system that simplifies case management and data analytics. In doing so, both Councils can capitalise on Derby City's national leadership in applying AI to frontline services.

Financially, we are determined to adopt a transparent approach that does not simply shift overspends from one authority to another. Instead, we will focus on joint commissioning, investing in the kinds of support that keep children at home where it is safe and appropriate, reducing expensive externally commissioned placements, and developing our local fostering and residential capacity. This will not only help us manage rising demand but also strengthen the bond between children in care and their communities.

A Bright Future for Derbyshire's Children

This reorganisation is more than a shift of structures. It is about storytelling for future generations, ensuring that, across Derby and Derbyshire, every child feels safe, supported, and valued. By capitalising on both Councils' history of good practice, strong partnerships, and talented workforce, the new Unitary Councils can continue to innovate and lead. Our record of engaging children and young people in shaping services will be central to our approach, honouring their voices as we create something better and more responsive.

Above all, we are driven by the belief that every child in Derbyshire deserves the chance to thrive. By focusing on family help, building on our established track record, and fostering cross-sector collaboration, we can deliver on that promise. Together, as two new Councils with one shared purpose, we will weave a future in which our children's welfare truly is at the heart of everything we do. We look forward to working with families, staff, and partners, on this exciting journey. Our commitment remains steadfast: that no child will be left behind and that Derbyshire's reputation for excellent care will only grow stronger in the years to come.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Education, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Skills

What does it mean for Communities:

Our ambition is to create a thriving educational landscape in Derbyshire in which every young person, no matter their background, circumstances, or level of need, feels supported and inspired to succeed

By aligning educational provision more closely with local communities and employment opportunities, we seek to foster a generation ready to contribute to Derbyshire's growing economy and vibrant neighbourhoods; creating a youth ambition that is meaningful to young people in rural and urban areas

Our strengths now...

A strong collaborative local area partnership has driven forward inclusive education, an ambitious early years 0-7 strategy, enhanced SEND support; trauma-informed schools; innovative interventions and provision to support children to thrive, Innovative programmes, like the Derby Promise, addressing low aspirations, youth employment, transitions, comprehensive post 16 pathways and a leading adult learning, employment and skills service driving regional inclusive growth.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

Creating a new operating framework that combines the best educational offerings, ensuring equal access to high-quality education with strong support for vulnerable learners, linking skills development directly to employment, fostering collaboration among all education providers for a cohesive system, and maintaining robust employer partnerships to align education with future career pathways.

Education

Context

Derby City Council employs a comprehensive, system-wide approach to education, focusing on early years, inclusive attendance services, and aspirational initiatives like the "Derby Promise," many of which contributed to the "outstanding" rating in the recent ILACS. Its ASEND inspection is scheduled for 2025/26. Derbyshire County Council offers extensive support to schools across its diverse geography and is on an improvement journey following a 2024 Ofsted ASEND inspection, aiming for significant progress before local government reform. Despite differences in educational engagement compared to Derby City, the County is committed to enhancing services, particularly by strengthening links between schools and intervention services.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Our Shared Vision for the Future

Our ambition for Derbyshire's education is to create a thriving landscape where every young person is supported and inspired to succeed, regardless of their background or needs. We envision two new Unitary Councils collaborating to deliver consistently high standards, promote inclusive cultures, and raise aspirations, aligning education with local communities and employment to foster a generation ready for Derbyshire's future economic ambitions. To achieve this, we will streamline services by consolidating expertise from Derby City and Derbyshire County to improve outcomes, driving forward inclusion and belonging. Support for schools will be simplified by moving to consistent guidance across areas like attendance, exclusions, and transport. We will align education with economic growth by working with businesses, employers, and EMCCA to design a local opportunity escalator and embed skill-building within a local skills and employment ecosystem. Finally, staff engagement and culture will be prioritised through clear communication and active involvement to cultivate a shared organisational culture that values local expertise and a unified approach.

Case study

In-Year Fair Access (IYFA)

The IYFA process in Derby coordinates schools, alternative provision, and local authority teams to re-engage pupils who have lost their school place, often due to exclusion. A recent case saw a phased reintegration into mainstream school, with one day a week spent in construction-focused provision to maintain interest and motivation. Joint planning between the PRU, mainstream school, and the LA allowed for a holistic support package addressing both academic progress and social-emotional wellbeing. The result was a youngster who not only completed GCSEs and formed new friendships but also gained the confidence to envision college, a powerful testament to strong partnership working.

Consolidation Strategy

A successful transition hinges on a clear joint workforce engagement and communication plan for both Unitary Councils, ensuring strategy, employment, and professional development are clearly communicated to retain a skilled workforce. Collaborating with system partners is essential for transforming education, sustaining a cohesive network focused on optimal outcomes for all young people. Early and significant stakeholder engagement is critical for transformational and sustainable change. Both new Councils will build on Derby's inclusive school cultures, extend best practices, and construct an operating framework that combines the best of Derby City and Derbyshire's offerings, exploring shared arrangements for school meals and support. They will ensure equal access to high-quality education, championing disadvantaged learners, and tackle deprivation by raising aspirations and linking skills to employment pathways. Collaborative work with academy trusts, early years providers, and further education colleges will unify the system and prevent fragmentation. Finally, building on the EMCCA Inclusive Growth Plan, strong partnerships with local employers will be maintained to foster ambition and clear plans for children in every community.

One Derbyshire,
Two Councils –
our case for change (cont.)

Day One Readiness and Beyond

From day one of the new Unitary Council arrangements, the primary commitment is to ensure seamless school operations without disruption to pupils, families, or staff. This will be achieved through **a focus on clear communication** to staff regarding roles, responsibilities, and fair management of pay disparities; **robust transition plans** for uninterrupted services like admissions, school meals, and transport; **strong, proactive support** from education and inclusion teams, focusing on vulnerable groups and maintaining advice, safeguarding, and inclusion work; **clear reporting lines** for transferring education staff to minimise confusion and uphold morale and service quality; **rapid financial alignment** through ongoing collaboration with Section 151 Officers for transparent and sustainable funding; and **detailed financial due diligence** to ensure accountability and a sustainable funding model from the outset.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Context:

Derby City Council has implemented a comprehensive strategy to support young people with SEND, featuring specialist multi-agency interventions for timely assistance. Our schools focus on trauma-informed support, with staff trained in trauma, attachment, play therapy, and relational approaches, including "Nature Explorers" programmes. The new SEND Skills Centre enhances preparation for adulthood from Key Stage 3, integrating careers guidance and coordinated pathways. The Employment and Skills Hub expands work experience for care experienced and SEND young people. Despite these initiatives, rising demand and funding pressures contribute to Derbyshire's DSG deficit of £44.1 million, while Derby City has reduced its deficit to £16 million. Collaborative efforts to manage these deficits are crucial before the statutory override ends in 2028. Derbyshire County Council is also improving its SEND provision following a 2024 Ofsted ASEND inspection.

Our Shared Vision for the Future

We share a bold ambition to create a truly inclusive Derbyshire where all children and young people with SEND can thrive and succeed. Our long-term aims focus on providing person-centred local support within schools, aligning with new reforms to adopt a social model of SEND that prioritises early intervention and barrier removal. We are committed to investing in skills and workforce development through targeted training for teachers, SENCOs, and allied professionals, alongside implementing a sustained financial strategy to transparently address SEND budget pressures and deficits, ensuring services can expand sustainably to meet future needs.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Consolidation Strategy for SEND

Our case for change aims to alleviate pressure by transforming support delivery, prioritising investment in preventative services, reablement, and technology-enabled care to reduce long-term demand on high-cost services. Closer alignment with health partners and community support will reduce duplication and costly crisis interventions. Our education and SEND proposals show how two new Unitary Councils can deliver consistent, inclusive, and high-quality services without fragmentation, leveraging best practices, local partnerships, and planning for both day one continuity and long-term transformation. Key actions include understanding pupil responsibilities for transparent expenditure and deficit management, aligning funding models, sufficiency, and demand management, and investing early in interventions to reduce later high-cost needs.

Day One Readiness and Beyond (SEND)

On day one, we pledge to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive timely support through local partnerships and specialist services, leading to positive outcomes. This commitment includes clear and early communication to parents and carers about new Council procedures for referrals, transport, and eligibility, as well as providing staff with clear roles, responsibilities, training, and induction. We will also swiftly align policies to avoid fragmentation, addressing any differences in how the former county and city managed SEND, home-to-school transport, adaptations, or commissioning to maintain consistent provision.

Public Health

What does it mean for Communities:	Our strengths now…	Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value…
We're committed to a proactive, person-centred, and community-focused approach to prevention, ensuring that wherever you live, you'll have access to fair, evidence-based services developed together with your local community that takes your wellbeing into account.	Our Public Health teams excel through strong working relationships and a shared commitment to improving health outcomes. Despite being distinct entities, Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council Public Health teams have a history of collaboration, particularly in providing statutory advice to the NHS, health protection, and joint health needs assessments. This collaborative spirit, combined with our expertise in serving diverse populations, allows us to leverage our collective knowledge for the benefit of all residents.	The creation of the 2 Unitary model will align functions like environmental health and leisure across the two organisations which will improve coordination, communication, and efficiency. This rebalancing creates equitable teams, fosters shared learning, and delivers high-quality, resilient services. It supports long-term sustainability robust workforce development, and financially resilient strategies prioritising prevention and equitable health outcomes.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

We are determined to shape a future where every resident, whether in the heart of Derby City or the furthest reaches of the county, can live a healthy and fulfilling life. Our region's geography and demography are as diverse as our communities. Derby is a compact, urban hub with a younger, more diverse population, whereas Derbyshire spans a much larger, largely rural area where many residents live in smaller towns and villages, often at some distance from major services. Through the transition to two new Unitary Councils, we will seize the opportunity to strengthen and reimagine how public health is delivered, ensuring we invest in approaches that prevent ill health, reduce inequalities, and bring lasting benefit to all.

Context and Current Landscape

Currently, two distinct Public Health teams operate in the city and county. Derby City's team of around 28 staff manages a Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant (PHRFG) of £23.8 million (projected for 2025/26), while Derbyshire County, with several hundred staff, has a larger grant of £50.25 million. These differences partly reflect the populations served: Derby is home to roughly a quarter of a million people but is geographically compact, while Derbyshire County covers a more dispersed population many times larger. Moreover, in Derbyshire, the Public Health department has inherited additional responsibilities, such as school crossing patrols and community safety, whereas Derby's team focuses strictly on core public health duties and commissions many services from other providers.

Although Derby City and Derbyshire County both share the same statutory responsibilities and commission similar services, differences exist in provider arrangements, contract mechanisms (e.g. Derbyshire's more frequent use of section 75 agreements), and the scale and scope of services. For instance, Derby City commissions external providers for most clinical and lifestyle services, such as smoking cessation and healthy lifestyle programmes, while Derbyshire often directly manages similar services in-house. This has resulted in differing contracts, service scale, and scope. Despite these variances, collaboration between the two teams remains strong, supported by mutual work on statutory NHS advice, health protection, and pandemic response. We have separate Health and Wellbeing Boards, but similar priorities guide both, highlighting our joint commitment to prevention, early intervention, and tackling health inequalities.

Our Shared Vision for The Future

Our overarching ambition is for a Derbyshire where everyone, regardless of who they are or where they live, can experience good health and wellbeing. With access to equitable, evidence-based services that are co-produced with local people. It is our desire that Public Health is central to driving and delivering this ambition. We aim to embed proactive prevention that is person-centred, community focused and asset based, with a partnership and joined up approach to improving health outcomes, tackling health inequalities and empowering communities.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Underpinning these aspirations are several core principles. First, addressing inequalities will remain paramount, with initiatives targeted to where people need them most. We will continue drawing on data, community insight, and professional expertise to identify and support our most vulnerable residents. Secondly, we will reinforce the importance of integration with social care, housing, education, leisure, culture, and other critical services to create seamless pathways and avoid duplication. Community co-production will further anchor our work, ensuring our approaches are guided by local voices and lived experiences. Finally, we will emphasise technology and innovation where it can accelerate prevention, improve access and outcomes, or streamline services for better value.

Day One Readiness and Beyond

We recognise that the upcoming transition to two new Unitary Councils must be handled sensitively and effectively. On day one, public health services must continue without interruption for residents and providers alike. Our priority is maintaining stability: essential contracts will remain in place, delivering the same level of care and support. Where services can be better aligned to meet local needs, we will work collaboratively to explore future models, but this will be done in a measured way so as not to compromise continuity.

Workforce considerations will be central to our readiness. We will support staff through the change by ensuring clarity about new roles and responsibilities and offering reassurance so that morale and performance remain high. Equally, we will engage our communities throughout the process, communicating openly and enabling sincere co-production. Residents are the reason these services exist, and we cannot maintain public trust without meaningful dialogue and transparency.

Implementation planning will include careful financial oversight to ensure each Unitary Council manages its share of the Public Health grants responsibly. We will fully map out all provider contracts, whether with NHS providers, voluntary organisations, or internal teams, to ensure our obligations are honoured, while at the same time exploring sensible, safe ways to create efficiency and alignment across the new Councils as soon as possible.

Although it presents many opportunities, reorganisation at this scale is not without challenge. Cultural alignment is a key consideration: Derby City's smaller, highly commissioning-focused team will need to work closely with Derbyshire County's broader in-house operations. We respect each team's ethos but must also encourage a shared identity and values that put people's health first. Understanding the different populations we serve remains critical, including the city's younger, increasingly diverse communities compared with the county's more rural makeup, its ageing population, and often longer travel times to major hospitals.

We also recognise that some existing contracts and services will need to adapt. What works well in an urban setting might not translate seamlessly to a county with pockets of extreme isolation. We are prepared to review and tailor these services, ensuring that no community is overlooked, and that economies of scale and emerging technologies are harnessed in ways that make sense to local people.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Once stability is secured from day one, our attention will shift to transforming Derbyshire's public health services for the long term. We envisage a people-centric approach that promotes prevention, early intervention, and empowering residents to manage their own health. Technology will be embraced to support local communities.

Housing

What does it mean for Communities:

The aim is to ensure Derbyshire has safe, secure, and affordable housing for all its residents. The goal is to build stronger, healthier, and more connected communities through equitable investment, affordable and specialist homes, integrated community planning, improved infrastructure, and housing upgrades.

Our strengths now...

We're leveraging significant investment and new powers from EMCCA to deliver more homes, guided by local plans and a regional strategy that prioritises inclusive growth and people-centred communities. We're strategically planning for sustainable development, addressing challenges like green belt protection, and ensuring a consistent approach to housing across our region.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

The structure allows for upholding local connection criteria and working closely with elected representatives and communities to preserve the 'local' essence and understand resident priorities more intimate needs whilst benefitting from shared expertise and ensuring funding is distributed effectively across both Unitary Councils

Context

Derbyshire's housing landscape must be viewed against the backdrop of rising house prices, varied local wages, and differing affordability levels across our districts. In 2024, the median house price across Derbyshire stands at £220,000, a notable increase of 22.2% since 2019, yet still below England's 2024 average of £280,000. Over the same period, total house sales in Derbyshire have declined by 29.3% to 11,330, highlighting the pressure on supply and the need for targeted interventions to stimulate the housing market appropriately.

This broad county figure conceals significant local variation. For instance, Derbyshire Dales has the highest median house price at £310,000 and the highest affordability ratio in the county at 7.8, making it particularly challenging for many residents to rent or buy a home. In contrast, Bolsover's median price stands at £167,500 with a more manageable affordability ratio of 5.3. Overall, Derbyshire's affordability ratio of 6.3, is below England's ratio of 7.7. Even within districts that appear more affordable, many residents still face difficulties accessing suitable accommodation, with homelessness challenges in some areas.

Affordability Ratio Across Derbyshire

Key	
	7.8 – 7.8
	6.4 – 7.4
	6.3 – 6.4
	5.8 – 5.9
	0.0 – 5.7
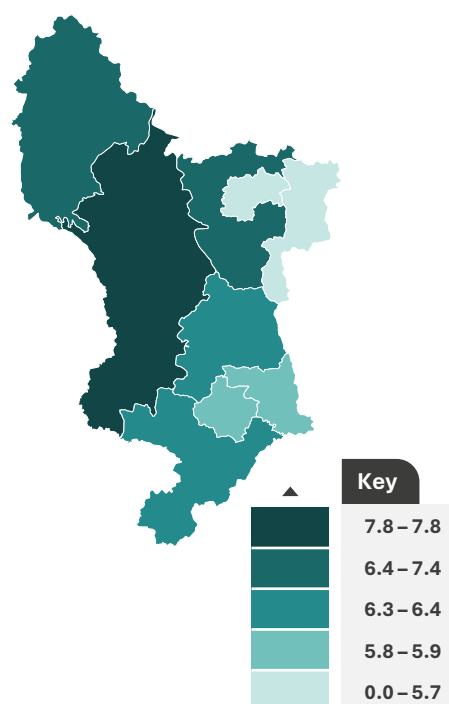
One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Housing Statistics
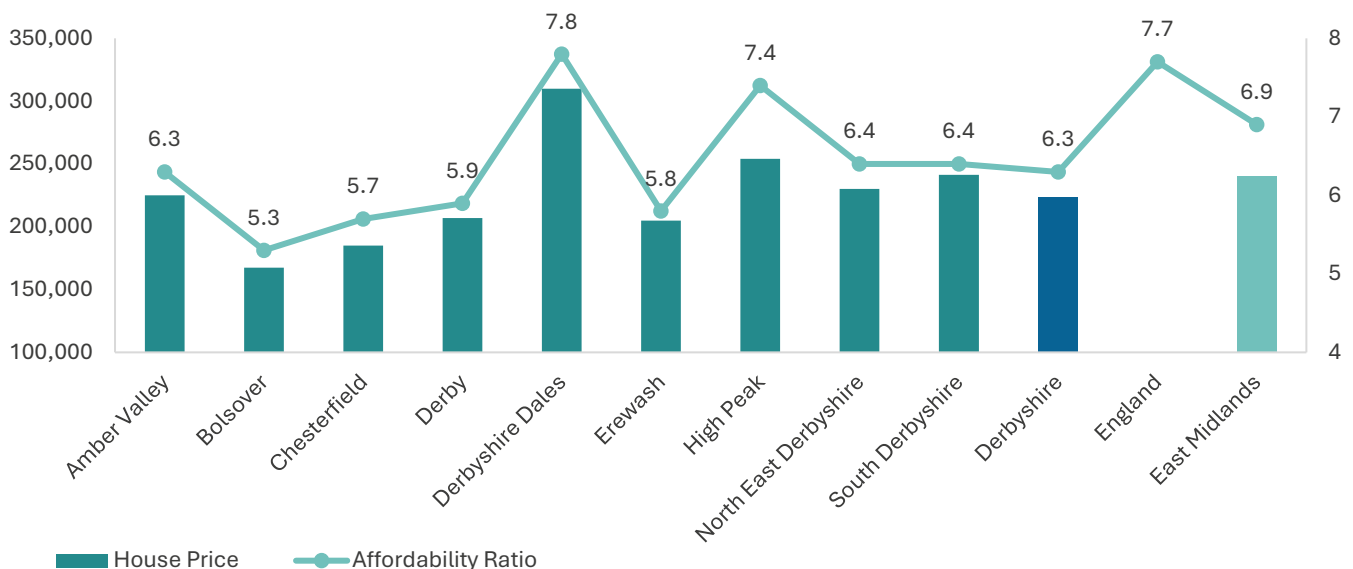
Building on our Strengths

Alongside Nottinghamshire, Derby, and Nottingham, we have secured a landmark devolution deal through EMCCA. This agreement brings £1.1 billion of investment over 30 years, to drive innovation, infrastructure, and housing growth. We are guided by a Strategic Framework which champions 'inclusive growth' with a core ambition to increase housing availability across the region.

Our two Unitary Council model will honour the distinct identities and geographies of northern and southern Derbyshire. Housing needs across the county range from the urban challenges of Derby City and its strong industrial base to the market towns and rural communities scattered across places such as the Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, and former coalfield areas in Bolsover and North East Derbyshire. By forming two Unitary Councils, we will streamline governance, pool expertise, and target responses more precisely to local needs.

Addressing Challenges

Delivering the intended housing outcomes will require navigating several complex challenges. Affordability remains a pressing concern, reflected in rising property prices and a critical shortage of social and affordable homes, while older housing stock often lacks modern insulation and design. Infrastructure gaps, such as limited transport networks and healthcare services, add further pressure, especially in areas where future development must align with EMCCA's spatial plans. Social housing shortfalls fuel homelessness and strain vital support systems, compounded by the complexity of merging differing policies, IT systems, and staff. Meeting temporary accommodation needs with appropriate move on proposals represents a significant challenge. Finally, policies around empty homes could be better aligned to ensure vacant properties do not go to waste.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

Housing improvement in

The initiative leverages the wider age network and |services to enhance support, originally named "Should I Stay or Should I Go," focuses on providing support to individuals over 50, helping them make informed decisions about their living arrangements and assisting individuals to remain in their current accommodation through benefit checks, adaptations, and referrals to social care. A "Help to Move" service has been introduced, offering practical assistance such as packing, downsizing support, and recycling furniture, plus additional support for issues like hoarding.

Case study

Local Authority Retrofit Accelerator (LARA)

Bolsover District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council lead the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA); a pilot program designed to help local communities develop tailored retrofit strategies for their areas. The collaborative effort, funded by The MCS Foundation, is aimed at accelerating the pace of home energy efficiency upgrades. This pilot has brought together partners across multiple sectors to co-design a Local Retrofit Strategy, addressing their unique needs and circumstances. Through collaborative workshops, they have identified key interventions to drive real change in energy efficiency and make homes fit for the future.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

Amber Valley Retrofit – A Model of Collaborative Success

Amber Valley, in collaboration with Futures Housing Group and Westville, transformed a modest retrofit project into a resounding success by offering external wall and loft insulation to residents. Through an inclusive approach, Amber Valley achieved an impressive 92% uptake across an estate of 101 properties, not only enhancing energy efficiency but also delivering a substantial regenerating impact on the wider area. This exemplary work, recognised with multiple regional and national awards, now stands as a showcase and best practice model for collaborative community initiatives.

This is a positive model for delivering retrofit at scale across a larger geographical area. It emphasises the importance of multi-agency collaboration and is more easily replicable in a larger authority with access to a wider skill set.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

How Two Unitary Councils will add value

The transition to two new Unitary Councils provides a strong foundation for tackling longstanding issues, harmonising efforts, and ensuring that no community is left behind. We will unify Derbyshire's current patchwork of housing policy, planning, and funding, enabling more coherent decision-making and localised support. Each new authority will develop a single local plan aligned with EMCCA's strategy, coordinating housing, infrastructure, and economic growth. Pooling resources will give both Councils the financial strength and capacity to invest in larger or cross-boundary projects, while the integration of district and county functions will clarify responsibilities and ensure services are delivered more efficiently to residents. Working at greater scale will ensure that where smaller Councils face challenge to address complex issues especially around issues like compulsory purchase, larger Councils will have the ability to focus on more specialised areas of work.

The northern Unitary Council authority will address the needs of areas characterised by rural expanses, scenic national parks, and recovering mining communities. Meanwhile, the southern Unitary Council area will encompass urban hubs such as Derby City, Erewash and South Derbyshire. Regional connectivity here, including proximity to Nottingham, propels both economic growth and demographic pressures. Crucially, though each new Council will set its own housing strategies, both will operate within the broader coherence of EMCCA's Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), ensuring that new homes are developed with a shared commitment to sustainability, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship.

Our Shared Vision for the Future

We want to ensure that the housing offer across Derbyshire, whether in the heart of our rural communities, or within our vibrant towns and cities, meets the needs of all our residents, regardless of age, income or vulnerability.

Whilst safe, secure and affordable housing provides the necessary physical infrastructure there are other factors equally important to create well rounded vibrant communities in which residents can lead fulfilling, healthy and prosperous lives. Having the right accommodation to enable residents to live independently, having access to healthcare services, being able to heat homes, maintain and furnish it, all improve social cohesion for our residents and communities. Housing is a key wider determinant of health, and working at scale offers the opportunity for housing to be more embedded in system thinking and moving the prevention agenda forward by ensuring that by addressing housing issues, the health impacts are reduced. The reorganisation will allow us reshape services, build capacity and expertise, share best practice and experience, streamline housing delivery and place-shaping, prevent service fragmentation, and ensure efficient use of public funds.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Under the new structure, our principles will guide how Derbyshire's two Unitary Councils shape housing provision for all our communities; urban, rural, and everything in between. We will ensure equitable investment that supports both local developments and larger strategic schemes, so no corner of Derbyshire is overlooked. Housing will be affordable, modern, and inclusive, incorporating options for older residents, those needing accessible layouts, and other specialist groups. Crucially, new homes will be planned alongside essential social infrastructure (schools, GP surgeries, and transport links) to foster cohesive, thriving neighbourhoods. We will concentrate on improving existing housing stock through refurbishment, reducing temporary accommodation use, and helping lower energy bills. Fair allocation processes will bring clarity and consistency, while collaborative early working groups will maintain a focus on housing and homelessness from the outset. Finally, strict environmental standards will underpin all developments, encourage green economic growth and ensure every community enjoys safe, high-quality spaces in which to live, work, and play.

Day-One Readiness and Beyond

On day one of the new Unitary Councils, our foremost goal is to keep housing services running smoothly for residents. We will maintain funding for homelessness and temporary accommodation, unify housing registers to ensure fair allocations, and provide clear communication channels so the public, developers, and partners know how to access support. Additionally, a countywide working group on housing and homelessness will be formed immediately to coordinate and prioritise efforts from the start.

Over time, the new Councils will spearhead large-scale developments to boost affordability, particularly vital in areas where both property prices and private rents are out of reach for many. They will also leverage regional investment in retrofitting older properties, updating insulation, heating, and accessibility, actively incorporating Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) into their strategic planning to ensure homes are adapted to meet the needs of disabled residents, thereby promoting independent living and improving quality of life. By working closely with health and social care partners, the Councils will ensure that Derbyshire's housing stock keeps pace with changing demographics, enabling older adults and those with complex needs to live with dignity and independence.

We will coordinate regularly with EMCCA to align housing growth with the development of roads, public transport, schools, and GP surgeries. Our commitment to community involvement ensures that local voices remain central to shaping new developments, preserving the distinctive character of market towns and rural villages, while meeting the pressing demand for homes in fast-growing urban areas.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Longer term transformation

Our case for change for two new Unitary Councils is an opportunity to elevate the lives of Derbyshire's residents by rethinking how we plan, build, and maintain homes. This reorganisation is not just about local government structures; it is about delivering a bold and transformative vision for housing. By championing equitable investment across regions, aligning efforts with EMCCA, and instituting clear governance from the outset, we aim to make Derbyshire a place where everyone can thrive. Our ambition is that every individual, from the heart of Derby's bustling city centre to the quiet lanes of the High Peak, should feel a sense of belonging, stability, and possibility in their home. This is the future we see for Derbyshire, and we are ready to work together to achieve it.

Transport and highways

What does it mean for Communities:	Our strengths now...	Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...
Connecting our communities with better transport. From improved bus services that the EMCCA Mayor will deliver, to smarter planning for new homes and easier commutes, we're building a transport network that works for you.	Our proven expertise in delivering major transport projects and innovative solutions means better, more reliable journeys for you. We manage our roads to the highest standards and work with regional partners to ensure our transport network is strong and future-proof.	With two Unitary Councils, we can integrate transport planning more effectively with your daily needs. This means better connections for jobs, education, and leisure within our communities, working together with regional plans for a truly joined-up transport network.

Context

Transport and highways are at the heart of our vision for future growth. By creating two new Unitary Councils and working closely with EMCCA, we will ensure every part of Derbyshire, rural or urban, benefits from better connectivity, integrated planning, and sustainable infrastructure. Public transport is in the process of moving from our current local councils to the East Midlands Mayor. This will be completed by the time of the formation of the new unitary councils. The Mayor's ambitions for public transport, combined with the creation of our unitary councils will reinforce Derbyshire's position as a thriving, accessible region for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. This transformation will reinforce Derbyshire's position as a thriving, accessible region for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Building on our Strengths

We already have a strong track record in delivering major projects such as the £161m Transforming Cities Fund and £17m Future Transport Zone. Our collaboration with EMCCA provides a robust framework for future investment, including a five-year pipeline to

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

strengthen our highways and public transport. We offer substantial expertise in asset management, risk controls, and developing innovative solutions like Demand-Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service (MaaS).

How Will Two Unitary Councils Add Value?

By aligning transport, planning, and highways responsibilities in two new authorities, we can streamline decision-making and better serve local needs. This approach secures a more cohesive network, linking communities to employment, education, leisure, and healthcare. Unifying county and city functions in the north and south will also ensure timely planning around new housing and economic developments.

Our goal is to enhance community connectivity by focusing on integrated travel, sustainability, resilience, and inclusive access. By simplifying ticketing, coordinating timetables, and improving rural connectivity, residents can move seamlessly throughout Derbyshire and beyond. Simultaneously, through effective asset management and proactive planning, we will reduce emissions, tackle congestion, and safeguard our infrastructure from extreme weather. Equally important is our commitment to inclusive access: we will prioritise walking and cycling routes, ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and promote concessionary fares so that no one is left behind.

Day One Readiness and Beyond

On day one, we will maintain safe, high-quality frontline services, covering highways, drainage, street lighting, and structural maintenance, while clearly communicating with staff and residents. Governance and policies will be in place for smooth service delivery, with agreed responsibilities and funding allocations. We will continue our partnership with EMCCA to secure strategic funding, attract further investment, and offer reliable travel options.

Together, our two Unitary Councils will build on Derbyshire's proud heritage of transport innovation, ensuring a future-ready network that is integrated, reliable, sustainable, and accessible. By looking beyond our boundaries and working with regional partners, we will shape a truly joined-up system that benefits every resident, business, and visitor in Derbyshire.

Growth

What does it mean for Communities:	Our strengths now...	Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...
The creation of two Unitary Councils will ensure that the benefits of economic growth are felt by all residents, addressing deprivation, expanding access to education and employment, and promoting community engagement through local governance.	Derbyshire boasts a strong industrial heritage, particularly in manufacturing (double the national rate), with a low unemployment rate of 3%. It is home to over 29,700 businesses, including global leaders in high-value industries like rail, automotive, aerospace, and aggregates, alongside a growing tourism sector.	Two Unitary Councils will provide the necessary scale and strategic approach to maximise growth opportunities, align with the EMCCA strategic ambitions, and streamline governance, planning, and service delivery to overcome existing barriers to productivity and investment.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Derbyshire has always had a strong industrial base. Having been a core part of the industrial revolution, Derbyshire has retained those strengths and skills and continues to have a strong reputation for innovation. Indeed, the county is home to over 29,700 businesses (rising to an estimated total of 29,890 in 2024) that collectively employ around 293,000 people.
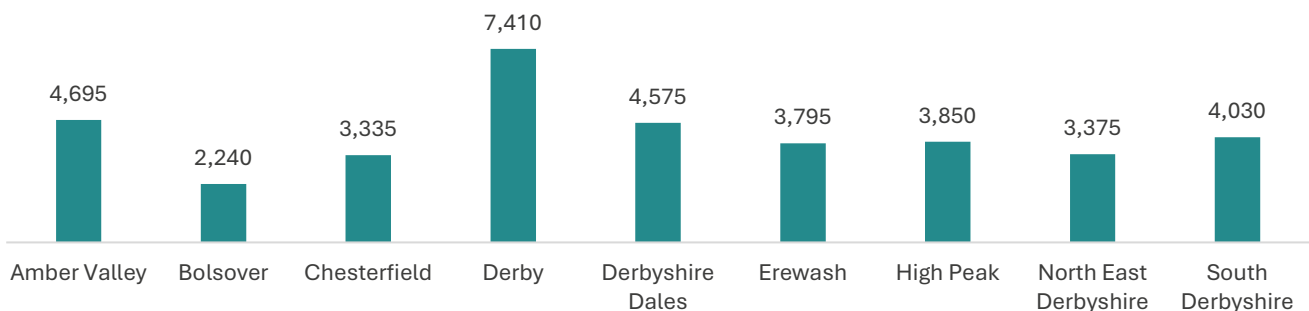
With a well-established and a growing base of high value industries in the south (including Rolls Royce, Toyota, Alstom and Vaillant), and with major aggregate industries in the north (including Tarmac, Breedon Group and SigmaRoc), together with a significant and growing tourist industry in High Peak and the Derbyshire Dales. Crucially, manufacturing remains a key sector in employment terms, accounting for nearly a fifth of all jobs in Derbyshire, more than double the national rate. The county's unemployment rate stands at 3%, markedly lower than the rate for England overall, making it uniquely placed to play a pivotal role in driving growth both in the East Midlands and in the UK more widely.

Number of people employed in the top three sectors

Derbyshire's largest sectors businesses	
1: Manufacturing	49,500
2: Health	39,000
3: Accommodation & food	26,000

Business Counts

Amber Valley	Bolsover	Chesterfield	Derby	Derbyshire Dales	Erewash	High Peak	North East Derbyshire	South Derbyshire
4,695	2,240	3,335	7,410	4,575	3,795	3,850	3,375	4,030

Top 5 Sector by GVA (£m)

Manufacturing	Real estate	Wholesale & retail	Health & social work	Construction
7,000	3,500	3,400	2,600	2,200

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Despite these assets and strengths, there is untapped potential across the county and the opportunity to drive further growth. Change is needed to overcome persistent barriers such as low levels of productivity, skills, inward investment and earnings, together with high levels of economic inactivity and deprivation. Now is the right time to reorganise Derbyshire, creating and aligning the delivery 'building blocks' to support and enhance the strategic growth ambitions of the recently established EMCCA. As envisaged in the Devolution White Paper, forming two sustainable and resilient Unitary Councils will underpin and complement the strategic role of EMCCA, creating an infrastructure to drive economic growth and the foundations for further devolution, underpinned by technology and AI.

As set out below, in each of the two areas covered by the two new Unitary Councils there are distinct characteristics that align strongly to the pillars and priority sectors set out in the National Industrial Strategy, in EMCCA's Local Growth Plan and to the ambitions of EMCCA's Inclusive Growth Framework. The creation of two new Unitary Councils will provide the scale and strategic approach required to maximise the growth opportunities and potential of each area.

Innovation and growth in the south of Derbyshire

The City of Derby has a strong and growing economic centre in the south of Derbyshire, with a long manufacturing history and a strong base in rail, automotive, nuclear and aerospace engineering. Rolls-Royce's plans for nuclear small modular reactors (SMRs) are some of the most ambitious and transformative in the UK's energy landscape. Rolls Royce recently won a £2.5 billion UK Government contract to build three SMRs in the UK and it has also been selected to build six SMRs for the Czech Republic. This is a rapidly growing market, and the company estimates that 400 SMRs will be needed globally by 2050, creating a trillion-dollar market. Rolls-Royce's Jubilee House facility in Pride Park, Derby, is the epicentre of SMR research and development and these contracts have and will secure hundreds of jobs in Derby and southern Derbyshire, confirming the city's place as a nuclear innovation hub. This success builds on the recent Ministry of Defence Unity contract with Rolls-Royce, worth c. £9bn, which will drive further growth in the defence sector across southern Derbyshire and wider region.

Toyota's production facility at Burnaston, in South Derbyshire, is the cornerstone of its UK operations and the company has ambitious plans to keep it at the forefront of automotive innovation. The Burnaston plant is one of Toyota's principal European production centres, producing the Corolla hatchback and Touring Sports hybrid models and was the first European plant to mass-produce hybrid vehicles. It continues to lead the development of Toyota's dual hybrid technology and has ambitious plans to be the first factory in the world to be carbon neutral.

Maximising the opportunities for growth and innovation from the presence of these global firms, as well as the buoyant rail sector anchored by Great British Railways' (GBR) new Derby headquarters, and the expansion of Rail Campus Derby, relies on a strong supply chain and the ability to foster SME creation and growth. The new Unitary Council will provide the scale and strategic relationships needed to support all components of the system to grow in these key Industrial Strategy sectors of clean energy, defence and advanced manufacturing.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

The new Unitary Council will also lead the place making that is critical to securing and retaining the investment and talent needed to drive growth. It will build on the recent steps taken to strengthen the offer in the city and surrounding towns, driving greater footfall and spend to make sure the benefits of industrial growth are felt by communities across southern Derbyshire.

Innovation and growth in the north of Derbyshire

The north of Derbyshire serves the key economic centres of Sheffield to the northeast and Manchester to the west, as well as supporting growth in the southern Unitary Council area, particularly through supply chains to the Industrial Strategy sectors identified above. With the right partnership arrangements with these two cities and close working with the southern Unitary Council, the Northern Unitary Council will support and benefit from these economic growth centres whilst simultaneously, driving growth within northern Derbyshire in its own right.

The M1 motorway forms a "growth corridor" through Derbyshire, particularly around junctions 28-30, supporting economic activity in areas like Pinxton, South Normanton, and Barlborough. This corridor connects to major cities like Nottingham, Derby, and Sheffield, and major industrial parks such as Markham Vale, Cotes Park, Barlborough Links and Castlewood Business Park. In doing so, the infrastructure knits together 6 of the 7 Growth Strategy Areas set out by the Mayor in EMCCA's Vision for Growth. The northern Unitary Council will seek to maximise the opportunities this connectivity brings, supporting the development of key sites and ensuring that local community's benefit from growth in line with EMCCA's new Inclusive Growth Framework.

One of the most important industries in the north of Derbyshire is the aggregates industry with 40% of all UK cement and lime being manufactured in the Peak District. This industry is a critical foundational sector underpinning growth across all Industrial Strategy sectors as well as wider Government priorities such as delivering 1.5m more homes. The sector has big plans, with some of the Peak District's biggest industrial employers creating a world-first partnership project to slash their greenhouse gas emissions and ensure a sustainable future for Derbyshire and the sector. They have joined together with the Lostock Sustainable Energy Plant in Northwich, Cheshire, to create the Peak Cluster, which will capture more than 3million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions a year(equivalent to taking 1.2m cars off the road) and then transport the gas via a network of underground pipelines to be locked away in the rock bed beneath the Irish Sea.

Tarmac's Tunstead facility (near Buxton) is a powerhouse of industrial innovation and strategic growth. It's not just one of the largest cement plants in Europe; it's a hub where tradition meets cutting-edge technology and sustainability. For example, the Tunstead facility has upgraded its rail infrastructure to reduce road traffic and carbon emissions, aligning with Tarmac's goal to cut CO_2.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

The tourism sector is identified as a high impact sector in EMCCA's Local Growth Plan. In Derbyshire and the Peak District, the visitor economy is now worth £2.3 billion, with a 7.4% year-on-year growth[1]. The new Unitary Council will be well placed to drive growth in this sector, engaging with partners to support the existing Peak District & Derbyshire Sustainable Tourism Action Plan, which emphasises low-impact travel, green accommodation, and nature-based experiences, as well as the emerging regional Destination Management Plan. It will build on activities such as those already delivering growth, for example in the Derbyshire Dales where artisan producers, farm shops, and gastro pubs are promoted as part of a "Taste of Derbyshire" campaign.

How our case for change will support and drive growth in Derbyshire

The establishment of sustainable Unitary Councils in the north and south of Derbyshire will transform the ability of local government in the area to remove barriers that are presently stifling growth. The new Unitary Councils will be of the right size and scale to collaborate with EMCCA, other key regional partners and national bodies. In doing so, the new structures will directly support all six enablers of growth identified in EMCCA's Local Growth Plan:

- Clean energy and climate-resilient infrastructure

- Innovation and the knowledge economy

- Housing and Place

- Workforce, education and skills

- Connectivity, Transport and Digital

- Business partnerships

Through retaining and enhancing local partnerships, engaging with communities and understanding place, the two new authorities will also ensure that the benefits of growth are felt by all its people, aligning with the ambitions in the regional Inclusive Growth Framework to:

- enable growth and opportunity

- deliver green growth and a better environment

- develop skills and good work

- enable better connected communities (including transport and digital infrastructure)

- support homes and places that enable a good life

- improve health, wellbeing and belonging

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Specifically, the creation of the two case for change Unitary Councils will support these ambitions by:

- Targeting investment in areas of deprivation and low social mobility.

- Expanding access to education, training, and employment, particularly for young people, rural communities, and underrepresented groups.

- Supporting health equity through integrated care partnerships and place-based public health initiatives.

- Promoting community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment through local governance structures and participatory planning.

These new Unitary Councils will deliver a streamlined and more agile structure, crucial for effective devolution. By replacing ten local authorities with two, we achieve clearer delineation of responsibilities and significantly streamline decision-making processes for EMCCA and the Mayor. This enhanced agility will enable quicker responses to regional priorities and more efficient coordination with EMCCA's funding cycles, promoting faster investment in vital areas. This approach ensures that Derbyshire's voice is heard effectively on a regional and national scale, providing the robust framework for delivery within current and future devolution arrangements.

The changes will also result in single points of contact for planning, licensing, and support services, reducing confusion and delays caused by overlapping responsibilities in two-tier systems and directly supporting the Industrial Strategy objectives to reduce regulatory burdens and remove planning barriers. Similarly, single planning functions will be more able to enact the changes set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, including the development of single local plans that take account of the requirements of the northern and southern areas and remove any conflicts or mismatches there might have been between district or borough Council's Local Plans. As set out in more detail below, the two Unitary Councils will also be able to drive investment infrastructure across the region in those areas that are critical to support growth including housing, infrastructure, transport, skills and digital connectivity, underpinned by technology and AI.

The case for change also drive growth by providing a clearer and more streamlined approach to working with private, community and voluntary sectors. The businesses that will be created, attracted and supported to grow, will benefit from having a single organisation covering key services and place-making with which to engage, rather than the current duplication and confusion that can hinder the relationship building that is needed to foster growth. The same is true of the critical partnerships with further and higher education, with the university and colleges able to engage directly with a single body in each area, building on the already strong collaborations in place.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

How the two new Unitary Councils will work with EMCCA

The new Councils will be empowered to develop and deliver locally tailored regeneration and growth strategies, while working in partnership with EMCCA to ensure regional coherence. They will provide clear leadership and accountability, making it easier to coordinate with EMCCA's mayoral office and regional partners, as well as enabling place-based strategies tailored to the distinct needs of northern and southern Derbyshire, urban regeneration in Chesterfield against rural innovation in Derbyshire Dales, for example.

Under a developing devolution framework, the two new Unitary Councils will be required to develop new local plans that will be underpinned by the region's new Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

Working alongside EMCCA, the SDS will define strategic land use and development policies and help unify planning across the newly merged areas. It will offer a framework for cross-boundary collaboration which will be translated by each Unitary Council into new local plans to guide future housing distribution, infrastructure delivery, environmental priorities, and economic growth within their defined geographies. Two new Unitary Councils will be much better placed to join up policies under this framework and to drive sustainable economic growth than the current arrangements. They will also be better positioned to collaborate with EMCCA to secure and implement funding and national grants, with unified economic growth strategies that align with regional priorities.

This alignment will ensure Derbyshire contributes to, and benefits from, coordinated regional investment, infrastructure delivery, and sectoral development. The Unitary Councils will also embed EMCCA's spatial priorities into their local planning frameworks, enabling joined-up delivery across boundaries.

To ensure clarity and efficiency, our case for change sets out distinct roles for EMCCA and the new Unitary Councils:

Function	EMCCA Role	Unitary Council Role
Strategic Growth	Regional strategy, spatial vision, funding allocation	Local delivery, place-based regeneration, planning
Transport	Regional network planning, major infrastructure	Local schemes, active travel, highways
Skills	Regional skills strategy, funding	Local education partnerships, workforce development
Housing	Strategic housing targets, funding	Local plans, delivery of housing and infrastructure
Business Support	Inward investment, innovation hubs	Local enterprise support, town centre regeneration
Inward Investment	Regional promotion, sector strategies	Local site development, investor engagement

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

For each of the roles specified above, the creation of two new Unitary Councils will reduce duplication, improve collaboration with partners, provide scale and strategic capability, all without losing the critical links to local places and people, to inform better policy making and service delivery.

EMCCAs 7 Growth Strategies

Through the implementation of 7 growth strategies EMCCA is looking to deliver 52,000 new homes, 100,000 new jobs and £4.6bn uplift in operational GVA per annum. Our case for change to establish two similarly sized Unitary Councils is well placed to support EMCCA with these goals. Specifically, Derbyshire Unitary Councils can support on 4 of the 7 strategies:

The Trent Arc

The Trent Arc is the greatest transformational opportunity in the East Midlands, creating the potential for 30,000 new homes, more than 40,000 full-time jobs, a £2.4bn boost to the regional economy and 2.7 million square feet of commercial space. The southern Unitary Council will play a leading role in facilitating the delivery of an urban network linking Derby and Nottingham, supporting investment in economic growth in Derby City centre, Infinity Park Derby and the redevelopment of substantial residential areas at Infinity Garden Village, Derby Riverside, Northern Gateway and Derby station as well as local implementation of the network throughout southern Derbyshire.

Canal Corridor

The Canal Corridor spans Chesterfield, Worksop and Retford as well as connecting into Rotherham (South Yorkshire) and Gainsborough (Lincolnshire). The northern Unitary Council will support the towns within the boundaries of the corridor to diversify their economies with a particular focus on improving transport and digital connectivity. Through this strategy 3,900 new homes, 7,800 new jobs and £473million uplift in GVA per annum could be delivered just in Chesterfield and Staveley.

Derwent Valley Mills

Derwent Valley Mills is a UNESCO World Heritage site that tells the story of the Industrial Revolution with preserved mill sites, museums and historic walks along the scenic River Derwent, stretching from Cromford in the north to Derby in the south. The role of both Unitary Councils will be to collaborate and support the delivery of new homes as well as creating the conditions to attract artists, makers, creatives and knowledge led businesses, whilst continuing to promote the visitor attractions.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Peaks and Dales

The Peak District and Derbyshire Dales are renowned for stunning landscapes, from rolling hills and limestone dales to picturesque villages like Bakewell, but these rural communities also need housing for local people.

The northern Unitary Council will work with developers to offer housing that's delivered in a way that addresses affordability issues related to second homes and holiday lets, whilst ensuring that protection policies are in place for sensitive sites and locations, restricting development where appropriate. In doing so, the northern Unitary Council will need to work in harness with the Peak District National Park Authority.

The northern Unitary Council will also create the conditions to deliver faster broadband and improved telecoms infrastructure that will assist locations within the 'Peaks and Dales' to diversify their economies, attracting new knowledge and digital businesses that can work remotely and stimulate local economies on a more sustainable and less seasonal basis.

Additionally, the two Unitary Councils will be better placed to support EMCCA's other objectives including:

East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ)

The East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ) will transform key sites within Chesterfield and Derby through the availability of targeted tax incentives and creating the conditions for robust public-private collaboration. The two new Unitary Councils will work with landowners, universities and business clusters to bring forward development of Hartington, Staveley and Infinity Park Derby to support growth in advanced manufacturing with a focus to develop rail, nuclear and green manufacturing technologies through appropriate investment in infrastructure, sustainable transport, skills and innovation.

Matching skills to economic need

Moving to two Unitary Councils will simplify how Higher and Further Education institutions such as Derby University and Chesterfield and Derby Colleges work with Councils and industry to design bespoke skills pathways aligned to local growth sectors. The new Councils will be ideally placed to implement the principles behind the Opportunity Escalator approach set out in the report of the regional Inclusive Growth Commission, using their knowledge and analysis of local communities to shape the pathways for skills progression. In particular, the Unitary Councils will coordinate training and lifelong learning delivery with providers, promoting free courses for specific skills and employment pathways and other funded programmes, ensuring that training is accessible to all in both urban and rural communities.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

DRIIVe Rail Innovation Centre

Construction has commenced on a modern rail innovation and training facility in Barrow Hill, Chesterfield, adjacent to the historic Roundhouse. Part of the Staveley Town Deal programme, the Derbyshire Rail Industry Innovation Vehicle (DRIIVe) will house research, development, and commercial workshop space, alongside classrooms and training areas. Funded by Chesterfield Borough Council and the Government (through the Town deal), this hub will partner with leading education providers to offer rail-related education from Level 2 to postgraduate (Level 7). DRIIVe amplifies Chesterfield's reputation for rail technology, conducive to the development of new supply chain businesses and creating skilled jobs that strengthen the local economy.

Creating a net-zero economy with a resilient energy supply

EMCCA have positioned clean energy innovation and generation as key drivers of economic growth across the region. The two new Unitary Councils will have the size and capacity to work with EMCCA to leverage existing infrastructure and expertise to attract new energy intensive industries to the county area. Likewise, to support existing clean energy industries to grow, and new ones to establish, whilst ensuring these new industries are developed in a way that support and enhances local areas and communities.

Derbyshire is already leading the way with ambitious projects. For example:

Toyota is making bold moves toward sustainability at its Burnaston plant near Derby, launching its first-ever Toyota Circular Factory (TCF), a global first for the company. The TCF is designed to systematically process end-of-life vehicles to maximize environmental benefits; in its first phase, starting later this year, the Burnaston facility will handle 10,000 vehicles annually, recover 120,000 reusable parts and extract 300 tonnes of high-purity plastic and 8,200 tonnes of steel. Toyota is targeting achieving net zero for the factory by 2030.

The streamlined governance model of two new Unitary Councils will be able to directly support Toyota's Circular Factory initiative and broader net zero goals. The Councils will be able to align waste collection and recycling services across the region to ensure consistent supply chains for reusable materials and simplify licensing and regulation for dismantling, remanufacturing, and transport of vehicle components. The Councils could also use devolved powers to fund apprenticeships and retraining programme for workers from high-carbon sectors and work with local education partners to establish, for example, a Green Skills Academy in south Derbyshire, with pathways into Toyota's operations.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Building new and coherent transport links for better and more sustainable access to our economic hubs

The new Unitary Councils will work in partnership with EMCCA to create a coordinated transport approach across the East Midlands area ensuring streamlined long-term transport planning and investment is in place. EMCCA and the two Unitary Councils will develop a strong pipeline of transport projects, create strong local delivery teams with consistent standards for asset management and programme delivery and a strong commitment to environmental and social value in every local transport initiative. EMCCA has recently secured millions of pounds in investment to implement its ambitions for the Trent Arc (see earlier section) which covers Derby station, the A38 and tram services into Nottingham.

Case study

Derby's Mobility Programme

Derby's Mobility Programme invested around £80m in over 20 projects to improve sustainable travel, enhance infrastructure and drive low-carbon journeys. The initiative, managed jointly by Derby and Nottingham, works under a 'live lab' ethos that encourages innovation, resulting in tangible outcomes such as new EV charging points, enhanced pedestrian and cycling routes, upgraded bus stops and junctions, and trialling cutting-edge approaches like a prototype Mobility as a Service platform. Although not all projects proved commercially viable, the successes include better public realm, green spaces, and notable increases in active travel options for residents, making it a showcase for modern mobility solutions.

Governance

To ensure good governance in relation to Derbyshire's growth position, the following structures are proposed at the two new Unitary Councils:

- Growth and Regeneration Boards: to oversee strategic planning, investment, and delivery.

- Joint Investment Frameworks: with EMCCA, universities, colleges and private sector partners.

- Member representation: on EMCCA's Business Advisory Board, Skills and Employment Committee, Transport and Infrastructure Committee, Investment, Finance and Audit Committee, etc.

- Senior Leadership Team Monitoring and Evaluation Dashboards: To track progress against GVA, employment, housing, and inclusion metrics.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Where the new Councils are members of wider partnerships, the proposed streamlining to two Unitary Councils will significantly enhance the effectiveness of regional policy and decision-making, removing the current duplication and confusion as to which council can speak and provide services for the communities in each area.

Embedding Climate Action into Derbyshire's Growth

What does it mean for Communities:

Addressing climate change safeguards community health and prosperity by reducing carbon emissions, protecting against flood risks, and fostering greener spaces through initiatives like rewilding and sustainable grassland management.

Our strengths now...

Derbyshire is actively transitioning to greener technologies, with Derby emerging as a global hub for nuclear innovation through Rolls-Royce's SMR plans. The county also demonstrates strong local climate initiatives, such as strategic flood management and significant reforestation efforts, supported by collaborative officer-led groups.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

Two Unitary Councils will enable more effective coordination of climate actions, streamlining operations, property portfolios, and procurement to reduce the carbon footprint. This unified approach will strengthen Derbyshire's voice in shaping EMCCA's clean growth agenda, secure funding, and ensure consistent, place-based planning for climate resilience across the county.

Climate change poses both urgent challenges and transformative opportunities for Derbyshire's future. Although carbon emissions per capita in the county have fallen from their 2010 levels, Derbyshire's 2022 rate of 6.2 metric tonnes per capita remains markedly higher than the England average of 4.4. Addressing this issue is not simply about meeting national targets; it is about safeguarding the health and prosperity of our communities, businesses, and natural landscapes.

The transition to two Unitary Councils in Derbyshire presents a significant opportunity to reduce the region's carbon footprint by collaborating with EMCCA and improving operational efficiencies. By consolidating administrative functions, property portfolios, and service delivery across the new unitary areas, there is potential to streamline operations, reduce the number of council-owned buildings, and optimise energy consumption. This consolidation can lead to a decrease in heating, lighting, and maintenance requirements for fewer, more efficient facilities. Furthermore, a unified approach to procurement and fleet management can facilitate the adoption of greener technologies, such as electric vehicles and renewable energy sources for Council operations, thereby directly contributing to lower greenhouse gas emissions and a more sustainable public sector.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Derby is emerging as a global hub for nuclear innovation, largely due to Rolls-Royce's ambitious Small Modular Reactor (SMR) initiatives. With significant government contracts and a projected trillion-dollar global market for SMRs by 2050, these developments are set to create hundreds of jobs and solidify Derby's leadership in this sector. This commitment to advanced nuclear technology, alongside other clean energy initiatives, underscores Derbyshire's proactive stance in transitioning to greener technologies. For more details on these developments, please refer to the "Innovation and growth in the south of Derbyshire" section.

EMCCA with support from the City and District/Borough Councils is actively positioning itself as a national leader in the future fuels space. With a strong focus on hydrogen, fusion, and advanced nuclear technologies and clean energy, directly contribute to EMCCA's future fuels agenda, fostering a synergistic approach to sustainable energy development across the region.

Moving to two Unitary Councils will also enable Derbyshire to coordinate climate actions more effectively, uniting planning, highways, waste, and environmental management under single authorities in the north and south. By consolidating responsibilities, Derbyshire gains a clearer voice to shape EMCCA's clean growth agenda, align regional planning, secure funding, and ensure consistent, place-based planning across the county. This streamlined governance makes it easier to adopt ambitious policies, extend existing local climate initiatives, and strengthen Derbyshire's resilience to extreme weather.

One such instance is flood protection. The county's varied landscapes, from former coalfields to urban centres along the River Derwent, face a spectrum of flood risks. Projects like Derby's Our City, Our River (OCOR), which secured £35m in Grant-in-Aid, show how strategic flood management protects communities while creating new public amenities. Under a two-Unitary model, these flood defence schemes, and others like them, can be planned and delivered in a more unified, streamlined way, embedding resilience in major infrastructural developments county-wide.

Case study North

Strategic Grassland Management in Chesterfield

Chesterfield's grassland management policy offers a clear, transparent framework for preserving local ecosystems, tackling climate pressures, and ensuring value for money. It outlines consistent mowing regimes and invites community involvement in conservation. With a Unitary Council, such strategies can be replicated more swiftly and consistently across wider areas, boosting biodiversity, reducing carbon, and engaging communities in meaningful stewardship of public spaces.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study South

Transformative Partnerships for Green Spaces

In South Derbyshire, partnerships with the National Forest Company have regenerated thousands of hectares of degraded land, planted 9.8 million trees and raising tree cover from 6% to 22%. As a single tier of governance, the new Unitary Councils will be able to forge and expand such partnerships more effectively, aligning reforestation and nature recovery projects with broader environmental goals. Similar transformation is underway in Derby with the Allestree Park Community Rewilding project, the largest urban rewilding scheme in Britain, which has revitalised over 130 hectares of parkland through local collaboration and volunteer support.

Case study

Environmental Sustainability Collaboration

Derbyshire is part of a powerful coalition delivering environmental sustainability and climate action with tangible results. This unified climate leadership sets a benchmark for effective local government action on climate change.

Officer-led groups like the D2 Energy Action Group and the Derbyshire Climate Change Officers Group, formed in 2020 and 2021, focus on zero and low carbon initiatives, local area energy planning, domestic retrofit, and county-wide climate strategies, such as the Vision Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy 2022–2025.

These groups have merged into the D2 Environmental Sustainability Group (D2 ESG), aligning with the EMCCA Green Growth Action and Advisory Group for consistent representation, streamlined communication, and efficient use of resources.

This consolidated approach coordinates key workstreams like energy efficiency, clean energy deployment, green economy support, and climate resilience county-wide, enhancing Derbyshire's ability to secure funding, innovate, and share best practices. The EMCCA Biodiversity Task Force complements these efforts by uniting regional ambitions for nature recovery, green and blue infrastructure, and flood management.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

Local Nature Reserve Erewash

Pewit Coronation Meadows has become the 12th Local Nature Reserve in Erewash. This newly established 25-acre site in Ilkeston was created with Government funding, and its long-term management and maintenance—spanning 30 years—has been fully financed through contributions linked to the redevelopment of the former Stanton Ironworks.

The reserve features a diverse mix of habitats, including newly planted woodland, fruit trees, grasslands, and areas of "open mosaic habitat creation." A network of footpaths and trails connects Pewit Coronation Meadows to nearby green spaces, including the Nutbrook Trail, Straws Bridge, Manor Floods, and Pewit Carr Local Nature Reserves, enhancing accessibility to the wider network.

Waste

What does it mean for Communities:	Our strengths now...	Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...
We are committed to providing reliable, efficient and effective waste collection and disposal services across Derbyshire. Our efforts will support local jobs, foster community pride, and help to safeguard the environment.	Collaborative efforts across Derbyshire, including the Derbyshire Waste Partnership and the Joint Working Group for Waste, ensure strong inter-Council cooperation. The mix of in-house, outsourced, and Teckal company services provides valuable insights for future service alignment.	The formation of Unitary Councils will streamline waste management by combining collection and disposal functions, enhancing coordination and efficiency. This approach will simplify waste collection for residents, unify recycling efforts, and leverage greater purchasing power for cost-effective procurement. Additionally, it will optimise waste collection routes and improve infrastructure planning.

Context

Waste collection services in Derbyshire are provided by Derby City Council and each district and borough Council, either through private contractors, joint venture partnerships or by the Councils' own teams. Each Council is responsible for planning, provision, management, and funding of these services based on local priorities. The Waste Disposal Authorities are Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council, responsible for procuring, management, and funding of waste disposal contracts.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Across Derbyshire, our authorities collectively collect around 471,000 tonnes of household waste per year. Within this total, individual areas show both similarities and important differences. For instance, Derby contributes 99,200 tonnes, while Derbyshire Dales produces 25,700 tonnes, reflecting its smaller population and rural character.

Total household waste (Kilo Tonnes) 2023/24

All Derbyshire
471

- Amber Valley
- Bolsover
- Chesterfield
- Derby
- Derbyshire Dales
- Erewash
- High Peak
- North East Derbyshire
- South Derbyshire
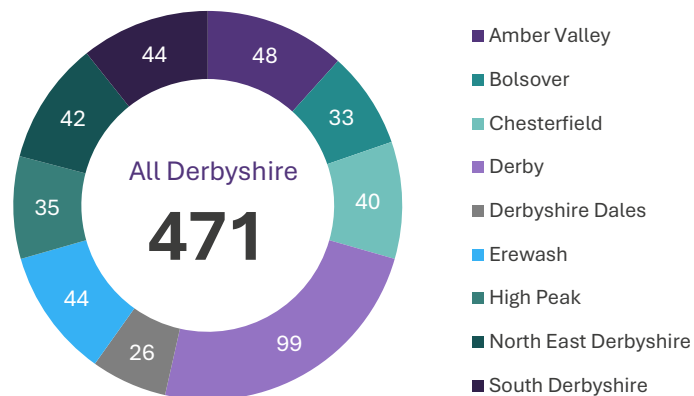
Likewise, the amount of unrecycled household waste per household highlights the varied picture across the county. Overall, Derbyshire produces 515 kg per household of residual waste which is below the EMCCA average of 546 kg. Within Derbyshire there is significant variation, which underscores the differing demographics, settlement patterns in Derbyshire and the opportunities to learn from best practice within the county.

Unrecycled household waste per household (kg) 2023/24

528	539	456	518	340	486	430	468	490	515
Amber Valley	Bolsover	Chesterfield	Derby	Derbyshire Dales	Erewash	High Peak	North East Derbyshire	South Derbyshire	All Derbyshire

Value — EMCCA — England
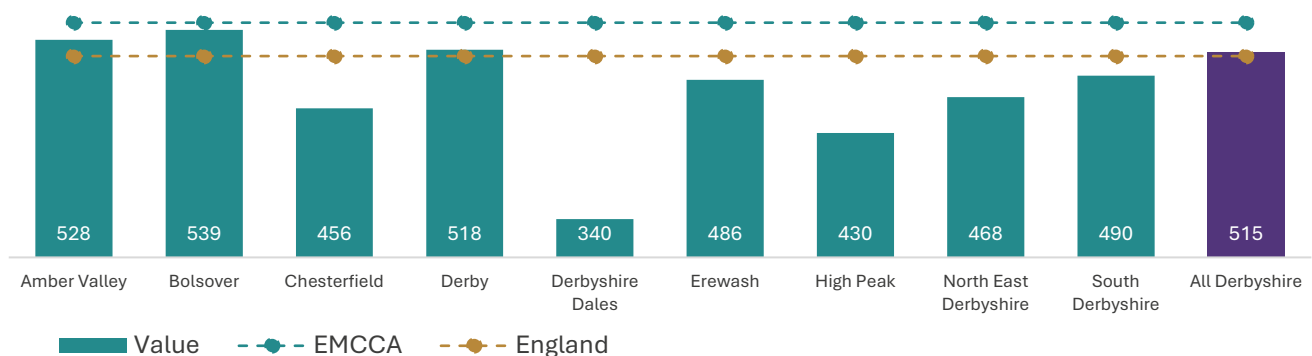
Building on our strengths

The Derbyshire Waste Partnership (DWP) and the Joint Working Group for Waste, with representatives from each of the 10 Councils, have been instrumental in developing and implementing the Derbyshire and Derby City Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (DJMWMS). This strategy, titled "Dealing with Derbyshire's Waste," outlines a sustainable waste management framework until 2026, aiming to reduce waste production, maximize reuse, recycling, and composting, and find sustainable solutions for residual waste. Derbyshire County and Derby City already partner as the two disposal authorities with several jointly procured contracts, covering residual waste disposal, transfer stations and HWRCs. The County and City Councils are beginning to engage the market as part of a Pre-Market Engagement exercise to help inform future joined up contracts post 2027 and beyond.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Challenges

The rural nature of the county, population spread, and the location of a National Park present challenges in terms of delivering efficient waste management services and provision of the supporting infrastructure.

There is a mix of in-house, outsourced, and Teckal company services currently providing collection services across Derbyshire, which will help provide a greater understanding of the benefits and shortcomings of each delivery model when considering future alignment of the service.

Our Shared Vision for the Future

Our vision for waste services under the new two-Unitary Council model is to deliver consistent, high-quality collection and disposal arrangements across Derbyshire, fostering local employment, community pride, and environmental protection. By adopting a joined-up approach, we will avoid fragmentation, optimise whole-system benefits and costs, achieve economies of scale, and enhance service quality. This will ensure we meet current legislative requirements and are prepared for future national policy changes, creating a cleaner, greener future for all our communities through simpler recycling and efficient, environmentally protective services. We aim to make responsible waste management an integral part of daily life, enhancing our county's beauty and sustainability.

To achieve this vision, our key aims are to maintain local control and presence when managing frontline waste collection services, ensuring a strong community presence and local employment through local depots. We will leverage existing knowledge to develop effective delivery models, considering the diverse landscapes of the county. For residents, we commit to simplicity and consistency, providing uniform, high-quality collection services and clear recycling rules with ongoing education focused on reduce, reuse, and recycle. Efficiency will be driven through collaboration, combining waste services across Unitary Council authorities to build scale, resilience, and shared expertise, while leveraging existing disposal contract alignments. We will ensure effective management and performance by establishing appropriate service models and defining clear performance metrics for continuous improvement. Finally, we will embrace innovation and actively seek new funding opportunities arising from LGR to continually enhance our waste services.

Consolidation Strategy

The creation of two Unitary Councils will enable the establishment of a unified and flexible waste management system, benefiting both residents and businesses through enhanced value for money and reduced fragmentation. This model allows for harmonised services, such as consistent recycling schemes with standardised bin colours and labels, implemented through joint working groups and phased rollouts with clear communication. Local delivery will remain tailored to specific community needs. By aligning business waste collection services, the Unitary Councils can maximise commercial income and expand successful initiatives across wider areas, fostering clear and simple waste management arrangement for all stakeholders.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Furthermore, the Unitary Council model fosters improved service delivery and significant cost efficiencies. As both collection and disposal authorities, the Councils can adopt a coordinated, whole-system approach, leading to greater influence over disposal sites and streamlined implementation of Government initiatives. This includes evaluating existing contracts and service models to decide on the most suitable in-house or outsourced approaches.

Performance will be rigorously monitored against key indicators such as missed-bin rates, response times, recycling rates, and resident satisfaction. The Unitary Council authorities will also benefit from increased purchasing power for containers, vehicles, and disposal contracts, and can explore joint procurement.

This structure presents opportunities for optimising collection rounds and strategically locating transfer stations and depots, ultimately leading to more efficient and resilient waste management services.

Day One Readiness and Beyond

On day one, our aim is to ensure a seamless start for our communities by delivering essential waste services with local knowledge and efficiency, building on existing strengths and adapting where necessary to lay the groundwork for a sustainable and responsive Derbyshire. This pragmatic transition will prioritise retaining familiar collection days, resolving contract overlaps, and minimising service disruption, with any future expansions of in-house provision or contract renegotiations following a robust roadmap focused on residents' needs. We will ensure operational preparedness by establishing necessary infrastructure, including depots, fleets, IT systems, and Operator's licenses, to maintain service stability and resilience. Concurrently, we will develop a roadmap for future innovation, continuously exploring emerging technologies like route optimisation and real-time collection updates, alongside innovative disposal methods, to enhance environmental outcomes and deliver best value in line with our long-term vision.

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One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

Materials Recycling Contracts and Local Suppliers: C3 Waste

Several Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) in Derbyshire collaborated to procure joint material recycling contracts, notably partnering with a local reprocessing supplier to handle dry recyclables. By regularly reviewing the contract and sharing best practice, Councils involved have reduced contamination rates and retained flexibility to add new materials. This approach supports local businesses, drives efficiency, and delivers consistency of service for residents. The collaboration also anticipates future policy changes such as the Extended Producer Responsibility and Deposit Return Scheme, ensuring authorities remain agile and cost-effective in meeting waste management targets. By integrating waste services under two Unitary Council authorities, Derbyshire can offer a consistent, high-performing, and cost-effective approach that reflects residents' expectations, meets future legislative demands, and builds on community pride.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Leisure, Culture and Libraries

What does it mean for Communities:

Cultural services, including libraries, are a vital part of community infrastructure, fostering well-being, strengthening social bonds, and contributing to local identity and economic health. Residents and visitors will experience a more cohesive and consistent experience.

Our strengths now...

Derbyshire County Council leads library and cultural strategies, managing all libraries, while District and Borough Councils operate local venues and events. Derby City Council manages libraries and cultural venues within its boundaries, with a strong emphasis on collaboration through regional partnerships.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

A two-unitary model would integrate service delivery, consolidating fragmented services for joined-up planning and reduced duplication. It would also allow for stronger strategic focus, tailoring cultural strategies to regional identities, and improving funding and investment capacity.

Each of our Councils provide essential Leisure and Culture services that are crucial for fostering well-being, strengthening social bonds, and contributing to local identity and economic health. We are committed to ensuring these opportunities are accessible and engaging for everyone, often working in collaboration with various partners to achieve these goals.

Leisure

Context:

District and Borough Councils are responsible for managing local leisure centres, swimming pools, and recreation grounds, leisure service contracts for trusts and private operators and running community wellbeing programs, such as walking groups, youth sports, and fitness classes.

Derby City Council, in addition to managing leisure centres, swimming pools, parks, and sports programs (through Derby Active, its in-house leisure brand) also oversees major venues like Derby Arena and Queen's Leisure Centre and offers community health and wellbeing initiatives, often in partnership with schools, charities, and private providers.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Derbyshire County Council plays a strategic role e.g. funding and coordination of county-wide leisure and cultural strategies, supporting inclusive access to leisure for vulnerable groups and working with districts and boroughs to align leisure with broader goals like mental health, social care, and education and manages public health and wellbeing initiatives such as physical activity campaigns, healthy lifestyle programs. The County Council also host Active Derbyshire, part of the Active Partners Trust, and a partnership with County Council, District and Borough Councils and Sport England with the strategic goal of increasing physical active across Derbyshire.

The benefits of moving to 2 Unitary Councils

Moving to a two-unitary model for leisure services in Derbyshire offers several specific benefits. It would unify the management of leisure assets, currently fragmented across various Councils, allowing for coherent planning, maintenance, and investment within each unitary area. This enables each Council to design services tailored to local demographics and interests, such as youth sports in urban areas or outdoor recreation in rural north Derbyshire.

The model facilitates targeted investment in areas with lower participation or outdated facilities and simplifies the coordination of county-wide events and sports leagues by reducing inter-council bureaucracy. Streamlined booking systems and marketing can boost public engagement, while holistic management of parks, green spaces, and play areas would improve cleanliness, safety, and accessibility.

Furthermore, consolidated data systems would enable smarter use of data for evidence-based investment, foster stronger partnerships with schools and health services to promote active lifestyles, and provide clearer accountability for residents regarding leisure service provision.

The Unitary Councils will also be able to adapt the membership offer, providing access to more leisure facilities across a wider geographical area. Not only will this support an increase in revenue, it will also help in the co-ordination and provision of school swimming programmes and public access to health and wellbeing activities.

Whilst GP Referral Schemes are already operating in most of the Councils in Derbyshire, the unitary model will provide an opportunity to renew priorities and align public leisure and wellbeing services with the health sector. This will enable the Unitary Councils to improve and introduce further early intervention measures, reducing the longer-term pressure and financial strain on the National Health Service (NHS).

Is worth mentioning service delivery models? HPBC have a Teckal arrangement which could be quite easily spread out across Derbyshire North Council?

Day One Vision

From day one, we aim to ensure that the places residents love to get active, connect, and unwind will continue to be available for them. We envision a smooth transition where our leisure centres and community spaces remain vibrant hubs, offering vital support and enjoyment for all ages. We are dedicated to keeping these services accessible.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

North East Derbyshire Leisure Services

North East Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) has transformed its leisure services through a strategic blend of investment, innovation, and community partnership. Over the past five years, the Council has invested more than £30 million into decarbonisation initiatives and facility upgrades, including the creation of Clay Cross Active, —a state of the art leisure centre that co-locates services with the NHS and Citizens Advice, forming a true community hub. The Council also safeguarded local access by acquiring a Parish Council facility at risk of closure, while its digitisation strategy introduced new apps and modernised gyms and pools across the district. Dronfield Active now operates on 100% renewable energy following extensive refurbishment. These efforts have led to record breaking attendance and membership figures, and a dramatic financial turnaround, from a £1 million subsidy to a forecast surplus by 2026/27. NEDDC's approach demonstrates how targeted investment and collaborative service delivery can create sustainable, inclusive, and commercially successful leisure offerings.

Culture and Libraries

Leisure and Culture is a vital part of our community infrastructure and disaggregation of Cultural services, such as Libraries, will need to be managed carefully.

Currently Derbyshire County Council leads library and cultural strategies and manages all libraries, and the District and Borough Councils operate local venues, events, support grassroots initiatives, and partner with community organisations. Derby City Council, which is already a Unitary Council manages libraries, cultural venues, and city-wide events within the City's boundary.

Overall, there is a strong emphasis on collaboration and integration among the Councils, facilitated through regional partnerships like Vision Derbyshire and the Derbyshire Cultural Education Partnership. Their shared objectives include promoting inclusive access to culture, supporting creative industries and tourism, and aligning cultural services with broader health, education, and economic development goals.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

The impact of moving to a 2 Unitary Model:

A two-unitary model for cultural services in Derbyshire offers several significant benefits as follows:

- **Integrated service delivery** by consolidating currently fragmented services under a single authority per area. This will facilitate joined-up planning across libraries, museums and arts venues, leading to reduced duplication, colocation opportunities and more consistent service standards.

- **Stronger strategic focus** - allowing each Unitary Council to tailor its cultural strategy to the distinct identity and needs of its region, such as leveraging Peak District heritage in the north or urban arts in the south. This bespoke approach would better align cultural provision with economic development, tourism, and wellbeing agendas.

- **Improved funding and investment**, as larger Unitary Councils typically possess greater capacity to attract regional, national, and arts funding, simplifying the coordination of bids to bodies like Arts Council England or EMCCA.

- **Community empowerment through more localised governance**, enabling responsive cultural programming and allowing libraries and leisure centres to evolve into broader community hubs.

- **Efficiency and value for money by** streamlining management and opportunities to align frontline services there are efficiencies through shared procurement and staffing models.

- **Enhancing impact and reach** there is potential for unified branding and promotion of the county's rich heritage, diverse festivals, attracting more visitors and boosting the local economy.

- **Greater opportunity for asset rationalisation** there is a greater potential, especially in the currently two-tier areas, to collocate services to create both financial efficacies, capital receipts and greater footfall, increasing sustainability. Examples would be Libraries into Leisure Centres, Adult Education Centres into Town Halls, etc.

One Derbyshire,
Two Councils –
our case for change (cont.)

Street Scene

What does it mean for Communities:

Residents will experience cleaner, safer, and more beautiful streets and green spaces, with local teams maintaining high standards and fostering community engagement in environmental initiatives.

Our strengths now...

District, Borough, and City Councils manage street cleaning, litter, grounds maintenance, and graffiti removal with their own operational teams, often collaborating with the County Council on infrastructure and environmental projects.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

Two Unitary Councils will reduce resident confusion, streamline reporting, and allow for tailored services to distinct urban and rural needs. This model will also improve coordination, pool assets for efficiency, and enhance environmental management for climate resilience and biodiversity.

Context:

The Street scene service provided by district, borough and City Councils include street cleaning, litter management, grounds maintenance for parks, verges, and public gardens, graffiti removal, and fly-tipping response. Each Council has its own operational teams and service standards and often collaborate with the County Council on infrastructure projects and environmental initiatives, such rewilding and biodiversity matters. The County Council also currently contract some of the districts and boroughs to deliver services they are responsible for around highways and County Council owned land, such as verge mowing, footpath clearance, and gulley emptying.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

The benefits of moving to 2 Unitary Councils

The transition to two Unitary Councils in Derbyshire is expected to significantly benefit street scene management. This will reduce resident confusion regarding which Council is responsible for specific street scene issues, thereby streamlining reporting and response.

The model aims to preserve local identity and responsiveness, enabling each Unitary Council to tailor street scene services to the distinct needs of its urban and rural areas. Furthermore, it is anticipated to improve coordination of street scene services with other local functions, leading to more coherent and effective delivery, and contributing to enhanced community engagement and satisfaction with public spaces. In addition, the removal of district, borough and City boundaries and the pooling of assets and resources, such as systems, vehicles, and staff teams, will improve efficiency, help build resilience within the service and across the new unitary areas.

Environmentally, there's a growing need to manage green spaces and drainage systems for climate resilience, biodiversity and to meet carbon reduction targets by adopting sustainable practices. The formation of Unitary Councils will streamline communication and decision-making channels, providing greater consistency and focus on key environmental matters.

Having a single point of contact will simplify and encourage greater community engagement to help build on initiatives such as community managed rewilding of verges and open space. In the last few years Derbyshire Dales District Council has worked with several community groups to rewild over eighty verges and open spaces to support the increase of biodiversity in the district.

Day One Vision

On day one, we will keep our streets and green spaces clean, safe, and beautiful, ensuring a seamless experience for every resident. Our local teams, working from the heart of our communities, will continue to care for the places we all value maintaining the high standards that residents expect. Ensuring continuity, local pride, and building a foundation for even greater excellence in the future of Derbyshire's street scene.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Community Safety

What does it mean for Communities:

Resident safety will be a top priority, with seamless continuation of vital services and active promotion of green spaces for mental health and overall well-being.

Our strengths now...

Community safety is managed through a comprehensive, multi-agency partnership across the entire county, involving various councils and emergency/public services to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

A two-unitary model will establish clearer accountability and faster decision-making, providing a consistent approach to community safety matters and fostering stronger multi-agency collaboration. It will also enable more efficient resource use, tailored local strategies, and a coordinated approach to promoting mental health through green spaces.

Context:

Community safety in Derbyshire is managed through a comprehensive, multi-agency partnership that spans the entire county. This collaborative model brings together Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, and the eight district and borough Councils, working in conjunction with key emergency and public services. These include Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, the National Probation Service, and the Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board, all of whom contribute to a unified approach to ensuring the safety and well-being of residents across the region.

Together, these bodies form a network of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and strategic boards that coordinate efforts to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour, and threats to public wellbeing.

Beyond traditional safety measures, this multi-agency approach also recognises the profound impact of accessible green spaces and recreational opportunities on overall community well-being, including mental health. Our partnerships actively promote and support initiatives that leverage Derbyshire's diverse natural assets, including local parks, accessible tourism opportunities, and the many beautiful areas outside the Peak District National Park. These spaces provide vital opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, social interaction, and connection with nature, all of which are proven to significantly enhance mental health and resilience for residents across the county.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

The benefits of moving to 2 Unitary Councils

Moving to a two-unitary model for community safety in Derbyshire offers significant benefits by establishing clearer accountability and faster decision-making, replacing the current fragmented system across ten councils with single points of responsibility. It will provide a consistent approach to managing, communicating, and implementing community safety matters, initiatives and legislation, such Martyin's Law, the Prevent agenda, safeguarding and other key related issues etc.

This structure would foster stronger multi-agency collaboration with police, fire, health, and probation services, enabling more consistent engagement and alignment of strategies for county-wide initiatives like the Serious Violence Strategy. Improved data sharing and intelligence through consolidated systems and would allow for better identification of crime trends and support targeted interventions.

The model also promises more efficient use of resources by enabling shared training and technology, thereby freeing funds for frontline services. Each Unitary Council could develop tailored local strategies (e.g., urban Derby vs. rural High Peak) reflecting unique community needs, aligning more effectively with national policies such as Serious Violence Duty, and enhancing public confidence through simplified reporting and clearer service responsibilities. Crucially, this streamlined structure will also enable a more coordinated and impactful approach to promoting mental health and well-being through the strategic development and promotion of our green spaces, parks, and tourism assets, ensuring these benefits are accessible to all residents.

Day One Vision

From day one, resident safety is our top priority. We will strive for a seamless continuation of vital community safety services, working together with our trusted partners to keep our neighbourhoods secure and peaceful. We will listen to local needs, maintain the strong relationships that protect us, and endeavour to ensure that every resident in Derbyshire feels safe and supported from the very start of our new journey. This includes actively promoting and facilitating access to our natural environment and recreational opportunities, recognising their essential role in supporting the mental health and overall quality of life for everyone in Derbyshire.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

Chesterfield – Nighttime Economy and Community Safety Partnerships

Chesterfield sought to enhance both its daytime and evening economies by prioritising civic safety and public perception. Collaboration with youth services like Chesterfield Community Trust has led to educational and diversionary efforts, while partnership working ensures visible preventative measures such as improved lighting and intelligence sharing. The introduction of a vulnerable person's hub and the Best Bar None initiative also supports safety in nightlife venues. Consequently, the Council has seen reductions in antisocial behaviour and night-time crimes, underlining a robust, multi-agency commitment to building a secure town centre.

Enabling Services

What does it mean for Communities:

The consolidation and optimisation of back-office functions, such as Digital, HR, and Finance, will ensure a more efficient and responsive service for citizens and improved value for taxpayers.

Our strengths now...

We have strong collaborative capabilities, demonstrated by successful service aggregations like the High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands alliance, and shared services such as the Chesterfield and Derbyshire Dales Revenues and Benefits partnership. Derby City Council also showcases strong ICT, digital, and AI capabilities, while North East Derbyshire District Council provides excellent hosted ICT services.

Why two Unitary Councils will deliver further value...

Merging essential back-office functions will foster a unified Derbyshire identity, scale best practices, and create larger, more resilient teams with enhanced career pathways and specialist expertise. This will also improve consistency, quality, and resilience across administrative processes, with a phased integration over five years, prioritising day-one readiness and migrating to more advanced services.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

The success of the new Unitary Councils is reliant upon residents ultimately being at the heart of all services and while front-line improvements will attract a lot of attention, consolidating and optimising back-office functions is equally vital. The consolidation of back-office services represents a significant opportunity to remove duplication, improve efficiency, and reduce costs. These functions ranging from Digital and ICT, to Legal and Democratic Support, Procurement, HR and Audit act as the engine room that enables the new authorities to operate efficiently, transparently, and in a way that truly benefits every community in Derbyshire. Our goal is twofold, at vesting day, we want to ensure continuity and legal compliance and beyond vesting day we want to design modern, proactive, and cost-effective support services that unlock better outcomes for residents and deliver better value for taxpayers' money.

Context

The back-office services across Derby City Council, the eight district and borough Councils, and Derbyshire County Council are currently structured independently, reflecting their distinct governance and historical development and include common back-office functions across all Councils such as Finance, HR, ICT, Legal, Customer Services and Procurement.

Building on our Strengths

We are proud of our strong collaborative capabilities, exemplified by successful service aggregation such as the High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands alliance, which has yielded over £12 million in savings.

Our shared services, like the Chesterfield and Derbyshire Dales Revenues and Benefits partnership, effectively streamline operations. Furthermore, the Derbyshire Building Control Partnership efficiently pools resources across eight Councils to deliver consistent and effective regulatory services.

Since its introduction, Derby City Council's strong best of breed ICT, digital, and sector leading AI capabilities, exemplified through its successful AI assistants and professional co-pilots has streamlined customer service, handled over 2.3 million queries, deflected 58% of calls, radically improved customer responsiveness, increased professional productivity and saved over £12 million per annum. Additionally, North East Derbyshire District Council's hosted ICT service demonstrates excellence by supporting over 1,200 users across multiple organisations, achieving economies of scale, robust cybersecurity, and efficient development through centralised governance, joint procurement, and combined infrastructure.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

How Two Councils Will Add Further Value?

As we embark on the formation of our two new Unitary Councils, our primary goal is to merge essential back-office functions, including Finance, Human Resources, Legal services, ICT, Payroll, and Revenues and Benefits. We will foster a unified Derbyshire identity by embedding shared values, policies, and cultures across our new organisations. Our approach will be to assess the digital maturity and modernisation of systems within each service area. Where opportunities exist to enhance efficiency and user experience, we will explore options to scale best practices and align service delivery. This process will be guided by data-driven decision-making, collaborative working, and the adoption of modern technology. The consolidation of back-office staff will enable the creation of larger, merged teams across functions like ICT, HR, Finance, and Legal. This increased scale justifies the employment and retention of specialists in niche areas and provides a clear business case for such expertise. Consolidated teams also offer enhanced career pathways, fostering knowledge sharing and mentorship, while allowing for more efficient allocation of specialist resources and greater investment in training and development, ultimately attracting and retaining high-calibre professionals.

Our consolidation will also lead to improved consistency and quality across all administrative processes, thereby reducing errors and enhancing the customer service experience for both our residents and Council staff. It will also build greater resilience, ensuring we are better equipped to navigate future challenges.

We recognise that the integration of back-office services is a complex undertaking and have anticipated in our budget forecast that it will take up to 5 years to achieve a transformed and optimised state for some of these services. However, we are committed to establishing foundational elements swiftly, particularly for day one readiness. We understand that full integration across critical functions demands a phased and strategic approach and our experience, supported by examples from Councils such as Cumbria and North Yorkshire, demonstrates that the key to successful integration lies in carefully balancing the imperative for speed with the need for stability. Therefore, our strategy will be to identify the Council(s) with the more advanced and efficient services and prioritise migrating legacy services into these advanced services.
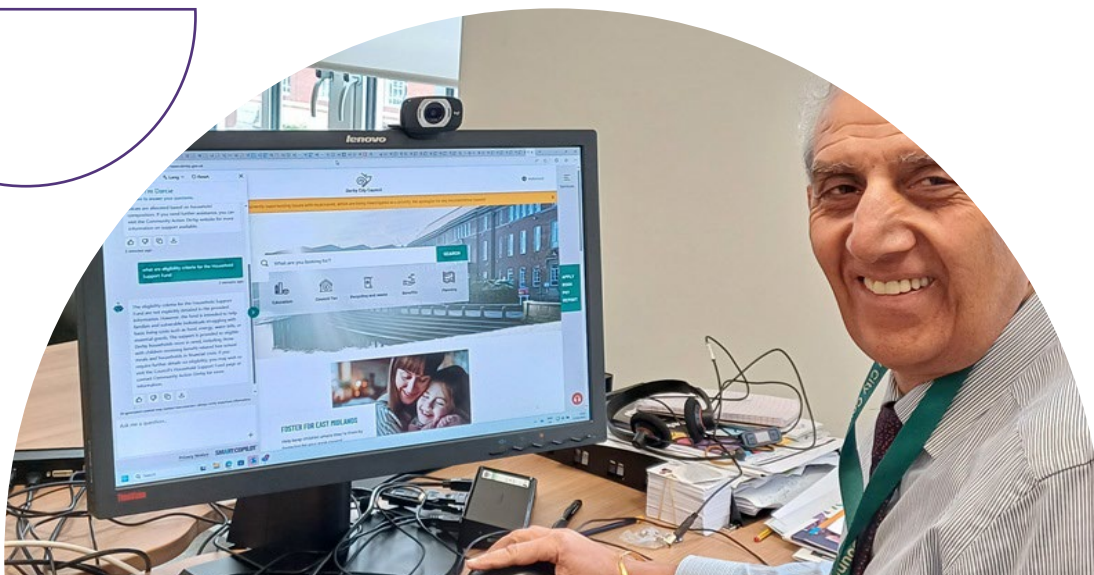
One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Long Term Ambition

As Councils, we are committed to building a future where our back-office services are unified, efficient, and strategically focused on delivering exceptional value for our residents. Across all functions, we envision leveraging modern technology, generative and agentic AI, streamlining processes, and fostering transparency to ensure our services are responsive, sustainable, and community centric. Our long-term goals include creating seamless digital experiences, optimising resource utilisation, and empowering our workforce to drive positive outcomes for Derbyshire.

Day One Priorities

As Councils, our day one priority is to ensure a seamless and stable transition for our residents and staff, establishing trust and continuity from the outset. This involves clear communication, consistent branding, and the uninterrupted delivery of essential services across all functions. We are committed to working collaboratively to harmonise processes and systems, laying a strong foundation for the new Unitary Councils.

Digital and ICT

For local government to continue to deliver services and provide value for taxpayer money we know that we will need to accelerate the adoption of digital technology within our services. To support this, we are already embarking on a programme to consider how best to optimise the provision of digital technology within the new Unitary Councils.

As part of the transition process, an IT target operating model and comprehensive transitional plan will be established before vesting day. The plan will address critical areas of our ICT, Digital and AI landscape and will be conducive to both Northern and Southern Derbyshire Unitary Council infrastructure, while retaining the strategic option for a unified, Derbyshire-wide single infrastructure.

The table outlines the proposed timescale for implementing the target operating model and the level of operational readiness that will be in place each year:

Timeline	Recommended Digital\Business System stage
Day 1 Vesting Day	Mission Critical Systems (incl. Microsoft Productivity, Finance, Democracy, Social Care, Websites and Customer Services, Ai Enabled Single Front Door, and Ai Enhanced Staff Productivity)
Year +1 to 3	Platinum and Gold Line of Business Systems consolidation
Year +4 to 6 –	Silver and Bronze Line of Business Systems consolidation
Year +7 to 10	Ancillary systems and lifecycle review

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Guided by the blueprint for modern digital and AI, we will simplify access, join up services, and foster innovation through open standards, inclusive design, and intelligent automation. We will champion digital leadership and invest in skills to drive transformation from within and developing partnerships across boundaries for virtual centres of excellence for Digital Skills.

Procurement

The procurement functions across Derbyshire are already beginning to look at opportunities for joint procurement, especially for contracts that will extend beyond vesting day.

Post vesting day there is an opportunity to reduce duplication and streamline procurement by appointing a lead Council for contracts that currently cover the county. This approach has already been adopted in specific areas, for example, Derbyshire County Council has led on strategic procurements such as highways and transport consultancy services.

Case study

SCAPE – Leveraging Shared Procurement Power for Efficiency and Local Benefit

Derby City Council and Derbyshire County Council are founding members and shareholders of SCAPE, a public sector-owned built environment procurement specialist. SCAPE provides fully compliant national frameworks, enabling the public sector to deliver high-quality infrastructure and property projects efficiently. These frameworks offer significant procurement benefits, including enhanced efficiency and compliance by avoiding lengthy tender processes, and delivering speed and certainty through pre-approved contractors. They also ensure value for money through aggregated purchasing power, securing competitive rates and standardised pricing. Beyond these, SCAPE frameworks embed quality and social value, promoting local supply chain engagement and sustainability. As a not-for-profit entity, SCAPE distributes surpluses as dividends to its local authority shareholders, providing a consistent income stream. Shareholding councils also gain strategic influence over future framework design and contribute to regional economic growth by prioritizing local supply chains and employment. SCAPE thus exemplifies how a shared, public sector-owned vehicle can achieve procurement excellence, efficiency, and reinvestment in local economies, demonstrating the benefits of scale, collaboration, and local control—principles that align directly with the ambitions of local government reorganisation in Derby and Derbyshire.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Criteria 4: Working together to develop a case for change that meets local needs and is informed by local views

Collaboration

This case for change has been jointly developed through collaboration between the Derbyshire district and borough Councils and Derby City Council with strong stakeholder engagement including key public service providers, community and voluntary sector organisations, businesses, residents, staff and all tiers of local government. Derbyshire County Council have developed their own case for change; however, all the Councils have worked together effectively to ensure that data and information is shared, and the evidence base is accurate, robust and consistent between the two case for changes. Regardless of which proposal is pursued by Government, all authorities remain committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for Derbyshire, through effective and efficient implementation of LGR.

A case for change informed by local views

We developed a comprehensive communication and engagement campaign to:

- Seek the view of residents and stakeholders to inform and refine the case for change to ensure it reflects our rich cultural heritage and maximises our strengths

- Increase the understanding of what LGR means and what it could achieve

- Develop a collective and consistent approach to communications, engagement and consultation

- Ensure that the consultation is transparent, robust and in line with the Gunning principles

A comprehensive information pack and guide was developed to support the communication, engagement and consultation campaign. This was available in a variety of formats including easy read and British Sign Language. Proactive media releases and social media content aimed to reach the widest possible audience for the consultation. The consultation included:

- A questionnaire which was available in a range of different formats including digital, paper, large print, easy read and a range of community languages including   BSL. Over 7,300 people responded to the consultation via the questionnaire

- Over 27 engagement sessions took place throughout the county, with over 500 quality conversations taking place to help inform the case for change

- Key stakeholder interviews took place with Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue, NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board, NHS Community Health, University of Derby, East Midlands Chamber, Chesterfield Royal Hospital Foundation Trust and Royal Derby Hospital

The full consultation report is attached at Appendix 4. It is clear from the consultation that this is an emotive subject, and the findings are polarised. However, through balanced consideration of this wide-ranging report there has been further refinement of the options assessment and case for change.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Many respondents recognised the need to modernise local government, improve efficiency, reduce duplication and streamline Councils. Being able to navigate Councils more easily to access services and improving the quality and consistency of services were significant factors for those in favour of reorganisation. Key stakeholders also recognised these potential benefits but also promoted the opportunities that will arise for stronger strategic planning and partnership working. However, there are concerns from residents about the loss of local representation and local knowledge and that could result in less responsive and tailored services.

It is important to all that we keep disruption to a minimum and ensure that our high quality local public services continue to support local communities during the transition. However, there is a real opportunity to focus on positive outcomes and impacts in developing the visions and strategies for the new Councils to help create the conditions for residents and businesses to thrive. Having a pan-Derbyshire outlook and working as partner authorities in the interests of benefitting the whole county of Derbyshire is vital.

Consistent approaches around policy and service provision were welcomed, but this needs to be sufficiently nuanced to take account of the different issues and needs of local communities and businesses. Many partner agencies raised the issue of preserving and enhancing local area and neighbourhood working. They and we want to ensure services are tailored to local needs and priorities, especially in diverse, affluent/deprived, and rural/urban communities.

Through our vision, design principles for implementation, assessment of challenges and opportunities and transformation plans, we have sought to reflect these views, maximise the benefits and address the concerns raised by residents and stakeholders.

Engagement with the East Midlands Mayor, MPs and Local Authority Leaders

Our engagement strategy included collaboration and coordination with the East Midlands Mayor, MPs and local authority leaders to ensure reorganisation complements regional and national initiatives. This included strategic alignment sessions with the East Midlands Mayor and local authority leaders to ensure LGR in Derbyshire aligns with EMCCA objectives, further devolution opportunities and enhanced service delivery. Local authority leaders have led on engagement with their local MPs to ensure they are fully sighted on LGR and have had the opportunity to contribute to case for change development.

Ongoing engagement

As we move through to implementation, further targeted engagement will be developed around specific service design options. Stakeholder analysis will be undertaken to ensure we reach current and future service users and harder to reach groups to ensure all can contribute to the future of local government in Derbyshire and our services.

One Derbyshire,
Two Councils –
our case for change (cont.)

During the case for change consultation there was a real commitment from stakeholders to remain closely involved in helping to shape implementation. They can support us to manage this change and make sure the benefits of reorganisation are realised. They also have experience and expertise to assist us with implementation and beyond. It is vital that ongoing dialogue and engagement continues into the next phase with other public service providers, education providers, the business community, community and voluntary sector and local parish and town Councils.

Dialogue with the East Midlands Mayor and EMCCA will also continue as we build up our new Unitary Council authorities to ensure our approach aligns with regional plans for inclusive growth and strategic service delivery. Engagement sessions and briefings will also continue with local MPs to ensure they are fully sighted on developments and can continue to contribute to this key transformation opportunity.

Successful LGR depends on ongoing transparency, accountability, collaboration and engagement. Our approach will support the tailoring of services to meet the needs of the local communities we serve, enable us to respond to new opportunities, while improving financial resilience and sustainability.

Criteria 5: A structure that supports devolution arrangements

Streamlined Structure for Effective Devolution

Our case for change presents a simpler and more unified structure, enabling clearer delineation of where responsibility sits for functioning and streamlined decision-making for EMCCA and the Mayor. Replacing 10 local authorities in Derbyshire with two partner authorities that can work effectively with EMCCA, and the Mayor of the East Midlands will drive sustainable growth and progress for the region. The new structures embody the respective roles set out for strategic authorities and principal authorities within the Devolution White Paper, providing the framework for delivery within the current and future devolution arrangements. This approach will ensure that Derbyshire's voice is heard on a regional and national scale.

Strategic Local Delivery and Aligned Timelines

Our partner Unitary Councils will focus on core everyday service provision and community engagement and representation, while supporting EMCCA to maximise inclusive growth, sustainable and integrated transport, the skills agenda and strategic housing delivery.

Neighbourhood-level insight will shape strategic decision making, providing the bottom-up perspective identified as critical to driving inclusive growth by the East Midlands Inclusive Growth Commission. By coordinating timelines with EMCCA's funding cycles and priorities, our model promotes quicker investment in vital areas to deliver impactful outcomes across Derbyshire.

Streamlined Representation, More Effective Councillor Ratios

The new governance arrangements will reduce complexity and ensure Councillors can better respond to the needs of their communities. With two similarly sized Unitary Councils, the total number of Councillors can be set at a level that balances efficiency with accountability, freeing representatives to devote time to local casework, community engagement, and the development of innovative policy ideas.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Context

Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council are constituent members of EMCCA who hold formal voting rights and help shape regional decisions on transport, housing, skills, and economic development. The district and borough Councils currently play a key advisory and delivery role, especially in areas like planning, regeneration, and local engagement. All Councils have a voice in shaping regional priorities through EMCCA's Board Scrutiny Committee and other subject matter Committees.

All Councils are already aligning local plans, investment strategies, and regeneration programmes with EMCCA's Vision for Growth and emerging Inclusive Growth Framework, such as collaborating with EMCCA to shape adult education and workforce development strategies, particularly in sectors like health and social care, green technologies and advanced manufacturing.

Advancing devolution

Our case for change for two partner Unitary Councils in Derbyshire offers a clear and collaborative framework to advance devolution. The Councils will be designed to integrate efficiently with EMCCA and the Mayor's strategic functions. This approach ensures sensible population sizes that preserve local identity and accountability, while fostering a strong partnership with EMCCA from the outset. Building on current engagement, the two new Unitary Councils will have the opportunity to strengthen this collaboration, leveraging shared resources and expertise to drive innovative solutions and sustainable growth across the region, hand in hand with EMCCA. The new structures will move away from the current two-tier levels of constituent and associate memberships for local Councils, ensuring all areas in the county (and in Nottinghamshire) have direct and equal voice within EMCCA governance structures.

Our case for changes for interim Council size represent a significant step forward, offering a pragmatic and well considered framework for future governance. It is designed to give local areas a strong voice in county-wide and regional decision-making, ensuring strategic planning is informed by neighbourhood-level insight. This supports devolution by enabling:

Streamlined and coherent governance and accountability for devolution

The two new partner Unitary Councils will simplify governance, moving away from the current two-tier membership arrangements and enabling clearer delineation of where responsibility sits for functions and streamlined decision-making. This makes it easier for EMCCA and the Mayor to work with both Councils, benefiting from clearer, more efficient dialogue. This arrangement, like existing successful examples, fosters constructive challenge, balanced debate, and quicker agreement on regional issues.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Strategic planning with strong local delivery resulting in economic resilience Retaining Derbyshire's local identities within two larger Councils allows each to focus on distinct social and economic priorities, rural, town, and urban, while jointly contributing to EMCCA's broader agenda. Region wide issues such as economic growth, cross-boundary infrastructure, and climate resilience will be developed in partnership with EMCCA. Meanwhile, each of the two Derbyshire Unitary Councils will retain their "local touch," focusing on day-to-day services and community engagement, so that neighbourhood level knowledge directly informs higher level decisions. This balance between preserving local identity and working at scale is proven to drive innovation and inward investment, fuelling inclusive growth that benefits all parts of the county.

Aligned timelines and partnership working

By building on our existing collaboration, we will aim to synchronise our transition planning with EMCCA's funding cycles and project milestones. This approach will support prompter investment in infrastructure, adult education, business support, and other initiatives that demand both local insights and region-wide coordination. Making a success of devolution arrangements will also require the new authorities to work closely with a wide range of system partners beyond EMCCA. The current arrangements can be a barrier to effective partnership working, with institutions in health, education, skills etc. required to work with two tiers of local government outside the City at a time when their capacity is ever more constrained. Two new Unitary Councils with clearly articulated roles focused on effective local services, place shaping and representation, will find collaboration to be straightforward and effective, which in turn will unlock opportunities for system reform.

Appropriate representation and local democracy

The two partner Unitary Council authority approach enables a Councillor to elector ratio of between 5,200 and 5,500 (based on 2029 electoral estimates). This strikes a balance between efficiency in local governance while retaining local accountability and strong local advocacy. The case for change has good electoral equality across Derbyshire, ensuring the voices of each area are heard equally. Effective neighbourhood governance arrangements will also allow elected members to focus on the specific needs of their diverse communities. Residents and businesses will work with representatives who know their neighbourhoods, balancing local autonomy with the collective scale required for effective partnership working with EMCCA and the Mayor. This will allow the two new Unitary Councils to provide the community and place-based insights needed to make a reality of the vision set out for inclusive growth in EMCCA's new regional Inclusive Growth Framework.

By balancing local representation with countywide coherence, our proposed governance model will unlock the benefits of devolution for Derbyshire's diverse communities. Fully aligned with national devolution objectives and EMCCA's strategic ambitions, our carefully planned transition will allow both new Councils and EMCCA to progress together as we plan for Derbyshire's long-term prosperity under a single combined authority. Combining the advantages of scale, balanced representation, and responsiveness to local needs, our case for change positions Derbyshire to realise its full potential for inclusive economic growth, social equity, and sustainable development.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Aligning with EMCCA's key priorities

Our case for change fully aligns with the Mayor of the East Midlands' key priorities by putting people and communities first, maintaining the same number of constituent councils in Derbyshire with two new coherent unitary councils, enabling strong foundations for high-quality public services, and ensuring a smooth transition that balances local identity with effective regional collaboration:

1. Proposals should be in the **best interests of the region** as a whole and put people and communities first. Best interests includes both how the new authorities relate to place and culture **and** how they enable a strong foundation for good public services and future reform. To achieve this, we welcome engagement by local authorities with the public and local stakeholders to inform the development of proposals.

2. The **number of constituent councils**, which is currently four, two from each area, once new principal authorities are established **should stay the same to enable a smooth transition to new arrangements** and balance between the two areas. As per MHCLG feedback, new unitary authorities must support devolution arrangements and should interact effectively with EMCCA as the Strategic Authority. Authorities should prioritise coherent new unitary authorities, that support the long-term development of the success of the East Midlands.

3. The **current planned timeframe** for the establishment of new principal authorities, who will be constituent councils of EMCCA, **should not be delayed beyond the shadow elections in April 2027 and full establishment from April 2028**. Authorities in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire should work towards the same timetable that enables a smooth transition for the region together. Proposals that involve splitting building blocks of existing councils should have a clear plan for meeting this timetable.

4. Proposals should meet the **sensible geography** criteria and **support housing delivery and wider spatial development** across the region, and the planning and delivery of high quality and sustainable **public services** to citizens. Authorities should explain how proposals for new authorities will provide for these, including with regards to EMCCA's Growth Strategy Areas and the sustainable expansion of current city boundaries. This is a once in a generation opportunity to establish new, coherent boundaries that support the long-term development of the region.

Criteria 6: Enabling stronger community engagement and delivers genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

Neighbourhood empowerment

We welcome the Government's consultative approach to developing neighbourhood-based approaches to local decision making and service delivery. This will help to ensure that local needs are understood and acted upon. We want to work with Government to design Neighbourhood Area Committees that see local people, communities and partners working alongside local area Councillors to identify and deliver on local priorities and provide local accountability.

This is an opportunity to ensure that the members of the new Unitary Councils are at the centre of their communities, providing local governance, support and oversight at a meaningful localised level. Neighbourhood Area Committees will act as a catalyst for partnership working at a local level, providing greater opportunities for community insight and the early identification of local needs and concerns, by leveraging advanced technology and AI, these committees will facilitate greater engagement in Council decision making and service design and development; ensuring local voices are heard and able to influence further locality based public service reform.

Progressing in time to bespoke neighbourhood plans, developed by a partnership of the public sector, community and voluntary sector and the private sector, will help to identify the core strengths of each area and understand the linkages and opportunities across Derbyshire and the broader East Midlands region to maximise inclusive growth.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

Strength based neighbourhood working in Derby

Derby City Council has a long history of community strengths-based neighbourhood working which enables Derby's diverse communities to help shape local services, tackle inequality and build long term resilience. The city has six geographically defined localities which each have tailored plans informed by data and community insight, influenced by Neighbourhood Partnerships established at ward level. The model prioritises prevention, inclusion and resilience, and is governed through the 'Place Partnership – Resilient Communities' jointly led by Derby City Council and Community Action Derby, the city's community infrastructure umbrella organisation.

The 'Place Partnership provides strategic oversight and co-ordination of local Neighbourhood Partnership Networks. A wide range of public sector organisations, key partnership bodies and community and voluntary sector organisations are involved. For example, Derby County Community Trust are a key partner who leverage the name recognition of Derby County Football Club to deliver a range of community projects and interventions.

Local neighbourhood partnerships comprise of three constituted bodies established for each ward, which seek to provide a framework for local engagement and decision-making about community priorities.

Neighbourhood Boards are chaired by a local ward Councillor and attended by a range of local community and voluntary organisations and public sector partners. These boards are responsible for developing neighbourhood plans and agreements with residents and partners, overseeing delivery and accountability, and recommending local spending priorities to the Ward Committees. Each Neighbourhood Board is allocated £15k of funding annually (£10k in two-member wards) which is spent on priorities identified by the community.

Ward Committees are comprised of the Ward Councillors only. They make formal decisions on the allocation of delegated budgets and ward-level priorities as recommended by the neighbourhood boards. They also determine representation of a neighbourhood board and the overall structure of neighbourhood engagement in the area.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Neighbourhood Area Committees provide regular opportunities for residents to raise concerns and participate directly in neighbourhood discussions.

These Neighbourhood Partnership Networks are hyper-local groups made up of Councillors, statutory services, community and voluntary sector partners, community leaders and residents. These networks respond to opportunities and need that are identified through data analysis and conversations with residents.

Direct support is provided to Neighbourhood Partnership Networks via Neighbourhood Managers, Neighbourhood Officers and Local Area Coordinators, who act as a conduit for enabling ward Councillors and residents to access support, collaborate on solutions and facilitate community led events.

Neighbourhood Managers are responsible for the day-to-day operation of Neighbourhood Teams. They connect and collaborate with Councillors, residents and partners on complex place-based issues. They also facilitate and co-ordinate the development of partnership plans, working across a range of priority areas.

Neighbourhood Officers focus on coordination and delivery of actions identified in the neighbourhood plans. They support the growth of capacity within communities and are responsible for engaging with the community and partners to review priorities and update plans.

Local Area Coordinators are a key element to the health and social care prevention offer, working with individuals to prevent, reduce or delay the need for more formal and expensive services.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Case study

Focus on Local Area Coordinators – health and social care empowerment

Through Local Area Coordination (LAC), Derby has demonstrated significant savings and efficiencies through its preventative approach to health, social care, and the wider public service system. Individuals and communities are empowered to find solutions within their personal networks and local communities, rather than relying solely on formal public services. By fostering independence and resilience, LAC reduces the demand for more intensive health and social care interventions and helps to reduce health inequalities. LAC aims to build on and build up the strengths and assets of individuals, families, and communities. Local Area Coordinators work closely with residents to understand their strengths, aspirations, and challenges. They help individuals navigate local services, connect with community resources, and develop personal networks, reducing isolation through the development of relationships and connections. The approach not only addresses immediate concerns but also looks to build long-term resilience, reducing the likelihood of future crises.

One of the most notable impacts of LAC in Derby is its capacity to generate cost avoidance and financial savings, achieved through reduced reliance on health and social care services alongside the wider system - Housing, Police, Probation etc. An evaluation of the project completed in 2021 demonstrated that LAC has led to significant reductions in nursing and residential care placements, resulting in savings of over £535,000 per year. Additionally, there have been reductions in social care packages, with savings estimated between £170k and £270k annually. These savings are attributed to the proactive support provided by Local Area Coordinators, which helps individuals manage their health and social care needs more effectively within their communities. The evaluation also demonstrated impact in targeted areas including young care experienced residents', attendance at the local hospital's Emergency Department.

Since 2023, Derby's LAC programme has been embedded within the Communities Directorate, emphasising the desire to move the service further 'upstream' to maximise its preventative capacity, aiming to reach people before they seek support from the system. The LAC team now sits within the Council's neighbourhood management function, which has started to embed the values and principles of the approach to wider community activities. This broader reach and focus have enabled the development of a strengths-based approach to community capacity building alongside opportunities to impact wider Council functions - planning, parks, community safety etc. This team now also supports and can help our elected members think about their community leadership roles.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Strengthening community partnerships

Our two new Unitary Councils will be at the forefront of working with public sector organisations, the community and voluntary sector and business community to deliver strong community partnerships that improve outcomes for local communities and neighbourhoods. There are significant opportunities to enhance key partnerships including community safety partnerships, health and wellbeing partnerships and local networks, neighbourhood alliances, skills and employment partnerships and place-based marketing and inward investment or business improvement districts.

These partnerships are focused on priorities but together they have the strength to support our communities to lead healthy, happy and fulfilling lives and make a big impact in terms of the wider determinants of health. Within a Unitary Council structure there will be strengthened opportunities for these partnerships to link in with other projects and programmes including the neighbourhood communities to respond to community voice effectively and tailor activity to local needs and priorities all underpinned by the strategic use of technology and AI.

Enhancing our community networks and partnerships will provide an important link between support agencies and the community. This relationship grows over time and can provide significant support to individuals and families but also enable communities to come together and celebrate their unique strengths.

In recent years, particularly since the Covid –19 pandemic, the links between local authority health and wellbeing partnerships and the neighbourhood alliance (previously called the Local Place Alliance) have been strengthened. A significant amount of work has been developed to ensure we are better capturing the voice of lived experience in the way in which we deliver and develop services. This has been helped by the existence of the community networks, both subject specific networks such as financial inclusion and mental health but also neighbourhood specific which can help to build community resilience.

As we look to develop the two new Unitary Council authorities and a strategic approach to neighbourhood working, it will be important to recognise the significance of the community networks that already exist, with a view to strengthening these networks and extending across each of the new Unitary Council areas. One of the key principles of these community networks, is that agencies are there to work with the community, not simply engage and consult.

During the development of our case for change, we have worked closely with colleagues in the NHS and have learned more about the emergence of the NHS neighbourhood model following the publication of the 10-year plan. There are significant opportunities to align neighbourhood working across these two programmes and we would welcome the opportunity for further discussions with Government and colleagues in health on how this could help shape the national neighbourhood empowerment model.

One Derbyshire, Two Councils – our case for change (cont.)

Parish and town Council liaison

There are 204 parish and town Councils in Derbyshire helping to ensure local voices are heard on a range of critical issues. Many also provide vital community services and engage in effective partnerships with many other public service providers. Parish and town Councils know and understand their local community needs and aspirations and are often a first point of contact for local people seeking support. This local knowledge will be essential to ensuring that the services provided by the two Unitary Councils are optimised to respond to the needs of local people and help to improve quality of life in Derbyshire.

We recognise the importance of ensuring there is effective communication, collaboration and co-ordination between the different layers of government and through neighbourhood arrangements. Leveraging technological advancements to enhance these interactions we will work with the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils and Derbyshire's Parish and Town Councils to co-design a parish charter and liaison group which will firmly establish the importance of the parish sector and define the relationship with the new Unitary Councils.

Protecting our historic and civic legacies

There are many market, fair and agricultural fair charters across Derbyshire and Derby City status, which are important to our distinct identify, culture and economy. They need to be preserved and celebrated. These charters have been identified for inclusion in the Consequential Parliamentary Order to ensure these important traditions continue to enrich Derbyshire's communities for many years to come.

The office of the Mayor of Chesterfield has existed since 1598 when Queen Elizabeth I issued a charter to the town, granting the town the right to have a mayor. Chesterfield's right to have a mayor was reaffirmed in a new Charter from Queen Elizabeth II in 1974, when Staveley and Brimington were added to the borough to form the new local authority, Chesterfield Borough Council.

The City of Derby's right to appoint a mayor was granted by King Charles I, following a visit to the town in 1632. The Great Mace bears his initials "C R" for Carolus Rex, and the badge at the bottom of the mayoral chain is hallmarked 1638.

Preserving the unique historical identities of these two historically rich civic offices is important to Derbyshire. Accordingly, we will be seeking to establish Charter Trustee status to ensure the continuation of the civic, historic and ceremonial traditions for Chesterfield in the Northern Derbyshire Unitary Council and Derby in the Southern Derbyshire Unitary Council. The Charter Trustees will be a non-political and non-statutory body with the primary objective being to maintain and promote the historic and ceremonial traditions for these two historic settlements.

6

Implementing local government reorganisation

Delivering for Derbyshire, meeting local needs

Implementing local government reorganisation

Preparing for implementing local government reorganisation

This section details our approach to implementing LGR, outlining the key timescales, critical activities, and significant opportunities involved. We recognise that building the optimal local government structure for Derbyshire presents both immense potential and inherent risks and challenges. To navigate this effectively, we have developed an approach that includes the necessary steps for the subsequent post-decision implementation activities. Our proposed programme structure is designed to maximise the efficient use of time leading up to vesting day.

We have experience of local government reorganisation

Our leadership, comprising experienced elected members and Chief Executives, bring a wealth of complementary skills and strategic governance expertise, supported by a strong officer base, ensuring we possess the necessary competencies and capabilities to successfully deliver LGR. Our Chief Executive from South Derbyshire has direct experience of LGR having successfully supported two LGR programmes.

There are already many examples of bringing together shared/joint services across Derbyshire and we will use this experience to accelerate this LGR and to minimise disruption for staff, residents and businesses.

Our design principles for our target operating model and implementation

Our approach to implementation is guided by a set of established design principles which will inform our target operating model and implementation. They have been developed from our extensive experience and informed by valuable insights gained through consultation with officers and specialist individuals who have previously delivered LGR:

Customer-focused - We will design services from the perspective of residents and businesses rather than organisational structures and simplify processes and communication, so customers are directed to the right support at the right time.

Locally accountable - We will design services that reflect local needs while achieving efficiencies at scale. Local decision-making will be transparent, visible, and accessible to residents.

Insight led - We will use robust data, analytics and citizen feedback to inform priorities, understand demands, monitor impact and improve outcomes.

Sustainable - We will drive financial sustainability with a clear emphasis on outcomes, focusing on longer-term consequences. This includes investment in prevention and early intervention, optimising our use of assets, and minimising our environmental impact.

Digital first, inclusive by design - We will leverage digital and AI technology to design services that are intuitive, integrated and accessible, ensuring appropriate support for digitally excluded or disadvantaged groups.

Empowered - We will foster a one-team, delivery-focused culture that encourages learning, innovation, trust and respect across the new organisations. Citizens and colleagues will be engaged and empowered to shape the development of the new Councils and their services.

Implementing local government reorganisation (cont.)

The phases of local government reorganisation

From the experience of our Chief Executive for South Derbyshire and having reviewed other recent LGR programmes, we know the implementation of LGR has six clear phases. These are triggered by key events in the programme, some of which are externally driven e.g. the Minister of State decision and others are within the control of the programme e.g. the appointment of key officers. This graphic provides an overview of the phases and their purpose:

Implementation plan

- Minister of State decision (Jun-Aug)
- May Election
- Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Vesting Day

2025/26												2026/27												2027/28												
Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26	Apr 26	May 26	Jun 26	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	Oct 26	Nov 26	Dec 26	Jan 27	Feb 27	Mar 27	Apr 27	May 27	Jun 27	Jul 27	Aug 27	Sep 27	Oct 27	Nov 27	Dec 27	Jan 28	Feb 28	Mar 28	Apr 28

Phase 1 - Plan and Define

Phase 1 - Building the foundations

Phase 3 – Shadow Authority

Phase 4 -Leadership

Phase 5 Go Live

Phase 6 Extended transformation

Phases

Plan and Define 01	Building the foundations 02	Shadow Authority 03	Leadership 04	Go Live 05
• MoU with all Derbyshire councils • Set up the programme (governance, workstreams and finance) • Identify & agree resources for Pre and post vesting transition team • Set up the plan, timeline and critical path and design principles for the target operating model • Set up a data hub - Gather and maintain consistent programme data • Define and agree scope of LGR-related decisions with sovereign councils	• Progressing what is in appropriate scope of the programme e.g. ICT infrastructure, treatment of systems and contracts • Target operating model and transformation • Service alignment and integration • Preparing for key decisions • Preparation for Elections	• Election of Strategy Leader board • Appointing Chief Executives and statutory and leadership roles • Member inductions and service briefings • Role Mapping • Job evaluation strategy • Roadmap for jobs\service • Recruitment process – short and long term • Key decision timetable	• Tier 2 & Tier 3 Leadership Recruitment • Service Planning • Development of council plan, Budget MTFP • Key policies and strategies • Operating model and staffing allocations • Preparing for Day 1	• Focus on seamless experience for residents and partners and stability for staff.

Extended Transformation 06

- Enact council plan and commence integration
- Multi-year transformation plan
- Continual improvement

Implementing local government reorganisation (cont.)

The trigger point of each Phase is described below:

1. **Plan and define** - Before a decision on the proposed shape of the new Unitary Councils.

2. **Building the foundations** - When a decision on the shape of the proposed new Unitary Councils has been made but before the election of shadow members or appointment of officer leadership.

3. **Shadow authorities** - With members elected but only with interim, programme or unofficial groupings of officers for capacity.

4. **Leadership** - When Tier 1-3 officers have been appointed and can prepare the new Councils.

5. **Go-live** - Vesting day when new Councils are operational.

6. **Extended transformation** - Driving a continuous transformation agenda post vesting day.

Role	Details
Derby and Derbyshire Strategic Leadership Board	• This Board is already in existence and will continue to provide strategic leadership, coordination, and decision-making on issues affecting the entire county and city. • We would expect this board to take a strategic role in overseeing the transition and leaders from each Council will attend and continue to oversee the entire transition.
Derbyshire Chief Executive Group	• This group would comprise the Chief Executives of the 10 Councils that currently operate within the Derbyshire Unitary Council area. The group will work with EMCCA and other key stakeholders in Derbyshire, overseeing the entire transformation and shaping and driving future service development.
Unitary Council Coordination Group	• This group would be made up of directors from across the partner Councils and tasked with providing oversight and coordination across all workstreams and services. Key tasks would include: • **Day one readiness:** What is needed on vesting day - managing delivery of the programme plan. For example, tracking progress against milestones and completion of Day 1 requirements with a relentless focus on being safe and legal. • **Transformation:** Playing a pivotal role in steering and coordinating the complex process of change across Councils, starting before vesting with a multi-year programme that extends beyond vesting day.
Programme Management Office	• Appropriately resourced to ensure that the safe and legal requirements as well as transformation are delivered on time, within budget, and to the expected high-quality standards.

Implementing local government reorganisation (cont.)

Role	Details
LGR Support services	• Each support service executive has 3 roles which include the day job, supporting transformation of their service and performing an enabling role for each public service.
Public Services Leads	• Responsible for determining how services will be transitioned and integrated in the two new Councils. Subject Matter Experts have already been fully involved in defining the consolidation strategies within this case for change. • Services include Education/SEND, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Housing and Planning, Waste Disposal and Collection, Leisure, Revenue Collection and Highways and Transport. In a two Unitary Council model, the county Council's services will need to be disaggregated while the district and borough as well as city Council services will need to be aggregated across the new Unitary Council footprints. In both instances, it is important that all existing services are aligned to new policies and processes.
East Midlands County Combined Authority	• EMCCA sets the strategic vision for the region encompassing economic strategy, spatial planning, transport, and skills, while also managing regional funding.
LGR Joint Scrutiny Committee	• Enables transparency, accountability, and democratic oversight across the Councils that helps keep the process inclusive and focused on delivering better outcomes for residents.
LGR Advisory Group	• Subject Matter experts (e.g. experienced chief executives and commissioners) who share first-hand insights from previous reorganisations and provide critical feedback to through the transition process.

Table embedded within LGR Support services row:

People	Technology	Finance	Contracts and legal	Property & estates	Data Hub	Comms and engagement	Democratic
Day Job/Service Lead(s)	Day Job/Service Lead(s)	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead	Day Job/Service Lead(s)	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead
Workstream Lead	Workstream Lead				Workstream Lead		

Implementing local government reorganisation (cont.)

Our governance

We understand the importance of operating a robust programme with clear governance across Derbyshire to ensure consistency, efficiency, and to address challenges collectively where possible. The graphic below provide an overview of our proposed decision-making and accountability governance structure. This governance structure will evolve as the programme progresses, mostly notably post the establishment of the Shadow Authorities when they and the interim chief executives are expected to assume the oversight and strategic direction role:

Decision-making and accountabilities governance structure – From now until to the creation of the Shadow Authorities

Overseeing the entire transition and shaping and driving future service delivery ▶ **Derby & Derbyshire Strategic Leadership Board**

Derbyshire Chief Executive Group

Oversight and coordination across all workstreams ▶ **Unitary Coordination Group**

Maintains plan – on time, within budget & high quality ▶ **Programme Management Office**

EMCCA

Joint Scrutiny Committee

LGR Advisory Forum

Public Services Leads and supporting staff
(example workstreams)

Responsible for the service

Education\SEND	Adult Social Care	Children Social Care	Highways & Transport
Environmental	Leisure Services	Housing	Waste Disposal
Public Health	Planning	Revenue Collection	Waste Collection

Workstreams for each service

LGR Support Services
(example workstreams)

3 roles: Day job, supporting transformation of own operations & enabling role for each public service

People	Technology	Finance	Contracts and legal	Property & estates	Data Hub	Comms and engagement	Democratic
Day Job/ Service Lead(s)	Day Job/Service Lead(s)	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead	Day Job/Service Lead(s)	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead	Day Job, Service Lead(s) and Workstream Lead
Workstream Lead	Workstream Lead				Workstream Lead		

7

Transition and transformation of services

Transition and transformation of services

The disaggregation and transition of county Council services as required, particularly social care, demands meticulous planning to ensure minimal disruption for residents and the sustained quality of services. Our primary focus throughout this transition will be to achieve positive resident outcomes. To this end, here are the enablers that will be critical for a successful transformation:

1. Public Service Teams requiring disaggregation will play a key role in the design, planning and implementation of change, supported by leads from the wider LGR Support Services. This ensures the right skills and capabilities are in place and recognised that those with the most knowledge and experience are best placed to shape the future operating model.

2. Governance and Accountability will be established from the outset with robust interim structures, clear lines of accountability for statutory duties like safeguarding, and performance monitoring across all service areas. **Effective governance boards** (including Joint Scrutiny Boards) will provide robust challenge and oversight, aided by additional expertise as needed.

3. Service disaggregation will commence with a comprehensive review of our current locality structures and workforce deployment to ensure appropriate allocation to future authorities. This will include agreeing on future organisational designs and delivery structures, refining functional operating models and services to align with the Northern and Southern Unitary Councils and updating service policies, systems, processes, and procedures. Additionally, we will restructure board memberships and review local representation. These efforts will culminate in detailed transition plans designed to guarantee the continuity of essential services for our residents.

Detailed below are our Day One key priorities across all services:

- **Continuity and Stability** will be committed to ensure the seamless operation of essential services, from adult social care referrals and waste collections to public health initiatives and housing support. This means avoiding any delays in contracts or disruptions in care and maintaining existing provisions to ensure residents experience no interruption.

- **Workforce Harmonisation and Alignment** will be crucial to address differences in pay, terms, conditions, and role definitions across our teams to foster a unified and fair environment for all our dedicated staff. We recognise, based on experiences from other LGR implementations, that fully harmonising pay and conditions is a complex process that can take a number of years to manage. We will be transparent about this journey and actively manage staff expectations throughout, providing clear communication and support at every stage.

- **Staff Engagement and Culture** will be prioritised through open communication, clear role mapping, and transitional support, cultivating a shared culture that values every team member and maintains morale during this significant change.

- **Internal and External Communication Strategies** will be designed to ensure our partners, residents, and businesses understand precisely how to access services and information, alongside actively maintaining strong partnerships with all stakeholders.

Transition and transformation of services (cont.)

- **First point of contact arrangements** will need to be designed into the new social care service delivery models for the Unitary Council authorities to ensure demand is managed and social care teams do not become overwhelmed.

- **Proactive Risk Management** and Transition Planning is also fundamental; we will develop comprehensive risk registers, implement contingency plans, and apply lessons learned from previous transitions to minimise any potential disruption.

- **System and Data Integration** requires our immediate attention to ensure underlying operational effectiveness in all our IT systems, from case management to financial platforms, to enable operationally prepared and fully functional systems.

- **Partnership Maintenance** is key; we will actively sustain existing collaborations with health partners, schools, community groups, and providers, and leverage regional partnerships to enhance service delivery.

- **Financial Understanding and Oversight** is critical; we will gain a thorough grasp of all current contracts and budgets, coupled with robust financial oversight, to ensure the stability and sustainability of all our services from day one.

Case study

Case Study: Strategic Alliance between High Peak and Staffordshire Moorland Councils

Since 2008, our Strategic Alliance between High Peak Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has provided us with extensive experience of how to aggregate services. We successfully integrated our services, established a shared workforce, and implemented joint leadership and unified management structures across both authorities. This long-standing collaboration, which has delivered over £12 million in financial savings and earned recognition from the Local Government Association for our well-managed, high-performing services, clearly demonstrates our proven capability in navigating and implementing complex organisational changes within the local government landscape. We will use that experience to accelerate this local government reorganisation and to minimise disruption for staff, residents and businesses.

DERBYSHIRE

8

Risk and contingency planning

ONE DERBYSHIRE
TWO COUNCILS

Risk and contingency planning

Risk Management and Contingency Planning

Effective risk management is key to ensuring that we maximise opportunities and minimise the impact of the threats arising through the various stages of LGR.

At this stage, we understand the risks that LGR presents and are already working to mitigate them through our programme structure and approach. Key risks are identified as follows (reflecting this is not an exhaustive list of risks identified).

Type	Impact	Mitigation
Disaggregation complexity	Potential for disruption to essential services, leading to a decline in service quality and negative impacts on residents, particularly the most vulnerable.	Working closely with the Local Government Boundary Commission and building a critical service continuity plan that incorporates insights from other LGR programmes that have disaggregated services so that services are safe from day one. Maintain dual systems temporarily where needed and communicate clearly with residents about changes and contact points.
Lack of collaboration across the Councils	Significant delays in decision-making and implementation, resulting in inefficient resource allocation and duplicated efforts, exacerbated by political disagreements, hindering progress and creating instability that impacts service continuity and resident outcomes.	Already building strong collaborative arrangements and developing 'no regrets activities' that can be delivered across Derbyshire as a unified programme. Our programme will be set up efficiently to maintain a strong focus on service delivery in sovereign Councils while ensuring the success of the two new Unitary Councils
Insufficient capacity to deliver LGR and maintain business as usual activity	Insufficient programme and / or service resources to deliver LGR day one readiness, transformation activity and maintain business as usual. This could be due to inability to retain / recruit knowledge, skills and experience or meet current/future demands.	Local capacity 'stood up' through consultancy support and 'in kind' support from all partners through the Project Coordination Group and Subgroups.

Make use of MHCLG capacity funding and /or identified transition funding to deploy / backfill additional resource. |

Risk and contingency planning (cont.)

Type	Impact	Mitigation
Failure to full harmonise policies, procedures and funding	Inability to agree and deliver integrated policies and procedures, for example, financial, workforce, service based	Agreed process to engage and consult with internal and external stakeholders, with escalation route for issues dealt with by governance framework.
System failure or data loss during migration	Severely disrupt critical Council operations, compromise sensitive resident information, and lead to significant financial and reputational damage, ultimately undermining public trust and the effective delivery of services.	Conduct a comprehensive audit of all existing IT systems and data, mapping data flows and dependencies to inform a robust migration plan. Critical systems will undergo rigorous testing, including parallel runs and sandbox environments, to ensure seamless functionality and data integrity before full deployment. A dedicated team will oversee the entire process, implementing stringent cybersecurity protocols and disaster recovery plans to safeguard against potential disruptions and data loss.
Budget overspend or failure to realise savings	Severe financial strain on the new Unitary Council authorities, leading to reduced service provision, reputational damage and financial uncertainty, affecting staff morale.	We will develop a robust Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) with contingency buffers, track savings and costs through a benefits realisation framework and engage external auditors or financial advisors for independent assurance.
Opposition from residents, Councillors, or MPs	Significant erosion of public trust and engagement, leading to reduced participation in local processes and increased community discontent. This can hinder the new authority's ability to effectively address diverse local needs, weaken community cohesion, and create substantial challenges in implementing policies due to perceived disconnect and resistance. It could also result in Judicial Review.	Have conducted extensive public engagement and consultation and will continue to preserve local branding and community boards where possible, ensuring transparency and responsiveness throughout the process.

As part of the implementation phase, we will develop a risk management strategy for LGR, which includes a comprehensive framework and process designed to support effective delivery of the programme and ensure that existing and new authorities are able to discharge their risk management responsibilities fully.

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Appendices

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Appendix 1

Overview of Approach

Appendix 1: Overview

The interim proposal used the following core criteria to evaluate and down-select the fifteen original options to the two preferred "North and South" models:

Reflect Existing Boundaries	**Proposals utilise the current district, borough, and city boundaries as building blocks, avoiding any redrawing that might introduce unnecessary complexity or fragment Derbyshire's historic integrity.**
Contiguity	Each new Unitary Council's geography needs to be contiguous, ensuring no district or borough is isolated from the rest of its Unitary Council.
Limit Unitary Councils based on population	To meet the Government's population requirement (around 500,000 per Council) and streamline governance, the design includes a maximum of two Unitary Councils
Balanced Size	The options strive for roughly equal-sized Councils, measured by factors such as population count and Gross Value Added (GVA), to ensure fair distribution of resources and representation.
Practical Geography	With large rural areas, proposed boundaries need to maintain operational feasibility for service provision, transport, and infrastructure development
Alignment with Partners	Where possible, the proposed structures would complement the layouts of partner organisations (e.g., healthcare, police, or educational providers), minimising disruption and facilitating joint service delivery

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

Key

1 = High Peak
2 = Derbyshire Dales
3 = South Derbyshire
4 = Erewash
5 = Amber Valley

6 = North East Derbyshire
7 = Chesterfield
8 = Bolsover
9 = Derby

■ 1 Unitary Model	■ 3 Unitary Model
■ 2 Unitary Model	■ Other

Option 1

Unitary 1: High Peak, Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire, Amber Valley, Erewash, Derby City, South Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales

Option 2

Unitary 1: Derby City (266k)

Unitary 2: South Derbyshire, Erewash, Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire, (811k)

Option 3

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield (373k)

Unitary 2: South Derbyshire, Erewash, Amber Valley, Bolsover, City of Derby (705k)

Option 4

Unitary 1: Derby City, South Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Erewash (657k)

Unitary 2: North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield Bolsover, Amber Valley (420k)

Option 5

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, South Derbyshire, North East Derbyshire, Derby City (649k)

Unitary 2: Chesterfield, Bolsover, Amber Valley, Erewash (429k)

Option 6

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, South Derbyshire, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield (487k)

Unitary 2: Bolsover, Amber Valley, Erewash, Derby City (591k)

Option 7

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Erewash, Amber Valley (697k)

Unitary 2: Derby, South Derbyshire (381k)

Option 8

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, South Derbyshire, Erewash (391k)

Unitary 2: North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover, Amber Valley (420k)

Unitary 3: Derby City (266k)

Option 9

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield (373k)

Unitary 2: Bolsover, Amber Valley, South Derbyshire, Erewash (438k)

Unitary 3: Derby City (266k)

Option 10

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, South Derbyshire, Erewash, Amber Valley (519k)

Unitary 2: North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover (293k)

Unitary 3: Derby City (266k)

Option 11

Unitary 1: Derby City, South Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak (544k)

Unitary 2: Erewash, Amber Valley, Bolsover, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire (534k)

Option 12

Unitary 1: Derby City, South Derbyshire, Erewash (494k)

Unitary 2: Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire (584k)

Option 13

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover (456k)

Unitary 2: South Derbyshire, Erewash, Amber Valley, City of Derby (622k)

Option 14
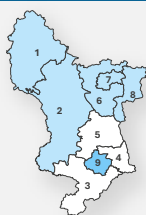
Unitary 1: High Peak, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover (~384k – 100k)

Unitary 2: Amber Valley, Erewash, South Derbyshire (~356k-100)

Unitary 3: Greater Derby: Derby City [....]

Option 15
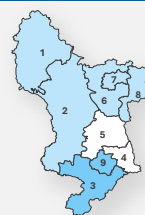
Unitary 1: Bolsover, Amber Valley, Erewash (324k)

Unitary 2: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire (373k)

Unitary 3: Derby City, South Derbyshire (381k)

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

Below is an overview of the process used to inform the decision on the preferred options:

1 **Options identified for analysis**

- Chief Executives and Leaders made the final decision regarding the two unitary council model: one in the north and one in the south of Derbyshire with three variations.

- The preferred variation was selected using this options appraisal alongside the financial sustainability assessment and the results from the consultation.

- This version of the analysis also includes two additional variations of Option C: one with Belper in the north and one with Belper in the south

2 **Key data sets gathered**

- Publicly available data sources were used that span the current authorities in Derbyshire

- The available data was combined in line with the future unitary authorities

- For Option C where new boundaries were proposed, population was used as the means of disaggregating the district level data sets

3 **Data sets presented**

- Metrics were identified that illustrated the extent to which each option met the first three MHCLG criteria and applied to the 3 options for each unitary.

- Insights and knowledge was used in addition to the consultations outputs to assess the three remaining MHCLG criteria.

3 **Scoring of options against criteria**

- Options were assigned an initial score from 1 to 3 for each metric.

- A total score was given for each option based on its assessment

- Weightings were also applied based on insights and experience from the CEO Strategic Group

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

The technical assessment was based on the structured set of criteria from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to guide our decisions:

Data based evaluation

Establishing a single tier of local government

- Sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base
- Sensible geography to increase housing supply and meet local needs
- Supported by robust evidence and analysis and the outcomes it is expected to achieve
- Describe the single tier structures

Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks

- Population of c500k
- Efficiencies to improve councils' finances and best value for taxpayers
- Set out how transition costs will be managed, including future service transformation
- No proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally

High quality and sustainable public services

- Show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery and avoid unnecessary fragmentation
- Opportunities to deliver public service reform
- The impacts for social care, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety

Working together to understand and meet local needs

- Engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way evidenced in your proposal
- Consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance
- Evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed

Supporting devolution arrangements

- Set out how EMCCA and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively
- Whether this proposal is supported by EMCCA's Mayor
- Ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and EMCCA, with timelines that work for both priorities

Stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment

- Explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged
- Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

Here is an overview of the final options\proposals:

Included in interim proposal

Proposal A
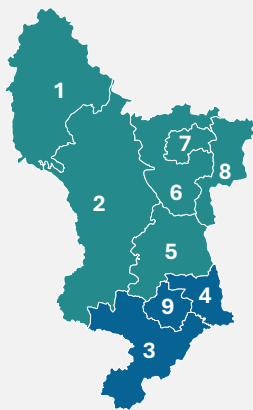
Unitary 1: Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire (584k)

Unitary 2: Derby City, South Derbyshire, Erewash (494k)

A north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being part of the northern unitary.
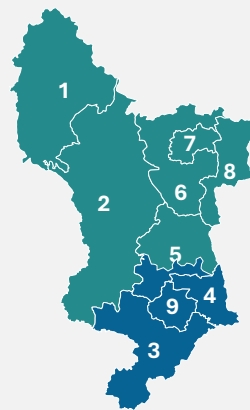
Proposal A1

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover, part of Amber Valley (567k)

Unitary 2: Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire, part of Amber Valley (511k)

Proposal A1 is a request for a modification to the base case of Proposal A, re-drawing the boundary through Amber Valley, using Parish Councils as the building blocks.

Included in interim proposal

Proposal B
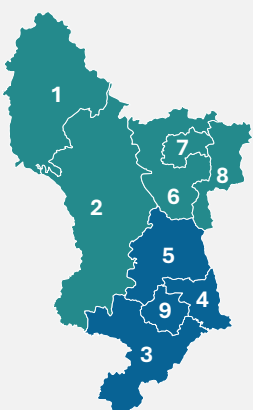
Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover (456k)

Unitary 2: South Derbyshire, Erewash, Amber Valley, Derby City (622k)

A north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being part of the southern unitary.
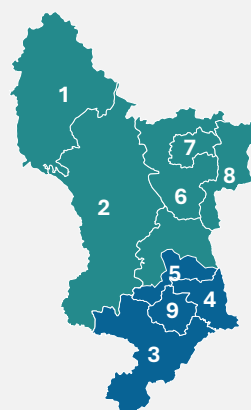
Proposal B1

Unitary 1: High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover, part of Amber Valley (539k)

Unitary 2: Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire, part of Amber Valley (538k)

Proposal B1 is a request for a modification to Proposal B, re-drawing the boundary through Amber Valley, using Parish Councils as the building blocks.

Key
North
South

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

This graphic provides an overview of the scores for each Proposal:

Government criteria	Criteria Weights	Metric		Sub-Criteria Weights	Proposal A U1	U2	Score	Weighted Score	Proposal A1 U1	U2	Score	Weighted Score	Proposal B U1	U2	Score	Weighted Score	Proposal B1 U1	U2	Score	Weighted Score
Establishing a single tier of Local Government	100%	Geographic area (sq km)	100%	15%	2,103	526	2	0.30	2,068	560	2	0.30	1,838	791	2	0.30	2,012	617	2	0.30
		GVA (£ million)		20%	13,719	13,148	3	0.60	13,309	13,558	3	0.60	10,565	16,302	1	0.20	12,632	14,235	2	0.40
		Council Tax base		20%	194,804	147,434	1	0.20	187,572	154,666	2	0.40	152,247	189,991	2	0.40	180,133	162,105	3	0.60
		Ratio of new minimum housing need to current Local Plan		20%			2	0.40			2	0.40			2	0.40	1.81	1.19	2	0.40
		Population density (per sqm)		15%	277	940	2	0.30	274	912	2	0.30	248	786	2	0.30	268	872	2	0.30
		Existing boundaries used as building blocks		10%			3	0.30			1	0.10			3	0.30			1	0.10
Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks	100%	Population	100%	40%	583,555	494,354	2	0.80	566,934	510,975	3	1.20	455,846	622,063	1	0.40	539,410	538,499	3	1.20
		Population Growth (2033)		10%	5.2%	3.8%	1	0.10	5.1%	4.0%	3	0.30	4.2%	4.8%	3	0.30	5.0%	4.2%	3	0.30
		Council tax income (£) per unit population		30%	747	651	3	0.90	747	656	3	0.90	749	669	3	0.90	747	659	3	0.90
		General Reserves (FY27/28) (£'000)		20%	164,468	242,633	2	0.40	152,688	254,413	2	0.40	132,292	274,809	2	0.40	153,309	253,792	2	0.40
High quality and sustainable services	100%	65+ Population	100%	40%	137,319	89,064	2	0.80	133,490	92,893	2	0.80	107,895	118,488	3	1.20	127,175	99,208	3	1.20
		Deprivation score		0%	0.11	0.12	3	0.00	0.11	0.12	3	0.00	0.12	0.12	3	0.00	0.11	0.12	3	0.00
		Total Crime rate per 1,000 Population		0%	66	88	3	0.00	66	88	3	0.00	66	84	3	0.00	66	87	3	0.00
		Homelessness Rate (per 1,000 Households) Apr-Jun 2024		20%	0.96	2.15	1	0.20	0.97	2.10	1	0.20	1.04	1.84	2	0.40	0.98	2.02	1	0.20
		Unemployment rates (%)		0%	3.6	4	3	0.00	3.6	3.9	3	0.00	3.5	3.9	3	0.00	3.6	3.9	3	0.00
		Percentage of Children (under 16) in Relative low-income families		40%	22%	26%	2	0.80	22%	26%	2	0.80	22%	25%	3	1.20	22%	26%	2	0.80
Working together to understand and meet local needs	100%	Sense of identity	100%	20%			3	0.60			3	0.60			3	0.60			3	0.60
		Views expressed through engagement **unweighted**		30%	36%		3	0.90	23%		1	0.30	34%		2	0.60	Not consulted		1	0.30
		Views expressed through engagement **weighted**		30%	32%		2	0.60	21%		1	0.30	39%		3	0.90	Not consulted		1	0.30
		Alignment with NHS and Fire, Police boundaries		10%			3	0.30			2	0.20			2	0.20			2	0.20
		Housing Market Area		20%			2	0.40			3	0.60			3	0.60			3	0.60
		Alignment with Travel to Work Areas		20%			2	0.40			3	0.60			2	0.40			3	0.60
Supporting devolution arrangements	100%	Population within a strategic	100%	50%			3	1.50			3	1.50			3	1.50			3	1.50
		Effective governance within future strategic authority		50%			3	1.50			3	1.50			3	1.50			3	1.50
Stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment	100%	Ability to deliver strong community engagement	100%	50%			3	1.50			3	1.50			3	1.50			3	1.50
		Ability to address unparished areas		50%			3	1.50			3	1.50			3	1.50			3	1.50
Total Unweighted Score								14.70				15.00				15.10				15.40
Total Weighted Score								14.40				15.00				15.40				15.40

Scoring and Weighting Approach

Scoring

For each metric across the three criteria, a Red, Amber, Green ('RAG') approach has been taken to provide a summary view of how each Proposal performed.

Green: Proposal meets the definition of 'what good looks like'

Amber: Proposal partially meets the definition of 'what good looks like'

Red: Proposal does not meet the definition of 'what good looks like'

These correspond to a score of '3', '2', or '1' respectively.

The definition of what good looks like and why for each metric or factor, which underpins the scoring, are presented in the following pages.

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

Weighting

The following logic was adopted when applying weighting:

- The Government Criteria have equal weighting.
- The Sub-criteria that align with the 6 Government Criteria all add up to 100%
- The Strategic Group's insights were also built into the weighting

In the tables below we have described what good looks like and why

Government criteria	Metric	What does good look like and why?
Establishing a single tier of Local Government	Geographic area (sq. km)	Relatively balanced population density and geographic areas between Unitary Councils, ensuring that each Unitary Council has sufficient space for housing development.
	GVA (£ million)	Each Unitary Council has a sufficient GVA to generate tax and there is a balance between Unitary Councils, meaning good long-term prospects for all future authorities.
	GVA per capita (£)	To give an indication of the general prosperity for citizens within the different Unitary Councils across the options. Zero weighted for this analysis as the GVA impact for each option is captured in the criterion above.
	Council Tax base	All authorities with a sufficient number and profile of properties to provide a Council tax base which can sustainably support services, with a reasonable balance between authorities.
	Ratio of new minimum housing need to current Local Plan	Low and balanced between Unitary Councils, suggesting that homes are planned and delivered in a way that reflects local demand and minimises inequalities.
	Population density (per sqm)	Relatively balanced population density and geographic areas between Unitary Councils, ensuring that each Unitary Council has sufficient space for housing development.
	Existing boundaries used as building blocks	New Unitary Councils align with the Government's ambition to use existing boundaries as "building blocks."
Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks	Population	Minimum population threshold for governance viability (500k)
		Ministers have indicated that an average Unitary Council population of 500,000 or more will make a Case for Change more likely to be considered as the chosen option during the final proposal phase.
	Population Growth (2033)	Balanced between Unitary Councils, reflecting a sustainable and equitable distribution of future population.
	Business rates (£) per unit population	Provides an indication of the income from business rates per population. Zero weighted for this analysis as the difference is immaterial between the different options.
	Council tax income (£) per unit population	Balanced between Unitary Councils, with all authorities having a sufficient level of Council tax income to enable a strong, stable economic foundation.
	General Reserves	Balanced between Unitary Councils, without any authorities at a level of reserves which would impact the ability to deal with financial shocks.
	Financing Costs as % NRE	No Unitary Councils exceeding 10% for debt financing as a percentage of net revenue expenditure. Whilst there is no single accepted level, 10% is sometimes quoted as a manageable level of financing costs as a percentage of net revenue expenditure (NRE). Zero weighted for this analysis because there is no material difference between the options.
	(Including County allocations)	A balance of financing costs as a percentage of net revenue expenditure across authorities suggests a serviceable debt portfolio and prudence within capital financing.

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

Government criteria	Metric	What does good look like and why?
High quality and sustainable services	**Deprivation score**	**Avoiding higher levels of deprivation and demand being clustered within individual Unitary Councils. Large differences would suggest areas with significant service delivery challenges, impacting resource allocation and financial planning.** **All options achieved the same score in this analysis; therefore, this criterion was zero weighted so that more weight could be applied to criterion where there were differences.**
	65+ Population	Balanced proportion of older people between Unitary Councils, avoiding excessive pressure and strain on services in one area.
	Homelessness Rate (per 1,000 Households) Apr-Jun 2024	Balanced between Unitary Councils, avoiding disproportionately high homelessness rates in each Unitary Council in assessment against the national average. Unitary Councils with disproportionately high homelessness rates will have resource allocation and financial planning implications.
	Rough Sleeper Counts	Balanced between Unitary Councils, avoiding disproportionately high rough sleeper counts in each Unitary Council in assessment against the national average. Unitary Councils with disproportionately high rates of rough sleeping will have resource allocation and financial planning implications. All options achieved the same score in this analysis; therefore, this criterion was zero weighted so that more weight could be applied to criterion where there were differences.
	Female Life Expectancy	Balanced between Unitary Councils. Large differences would suggest public health disparities across authorities. All options achieved the same score in this analysis; therefore, this criterion was zero weighted so that more weight could be applied to criterion where there were differences.
	Total Crime Rate per 1,000 Population	Balanced between Unitary Councils. Pockets or disproportionately high crime areas would impact resource allocation and financial planning. All options achieved the same score in this analysis; therefore, this criterion was zero weighted so that more weight could be applied to criterion where there were differences.
	Percentage of Children (under 16) in Relative low-income families	Balanced between Unitary Councils. Large differences would suggest Children's social care need disparities across Unitary Councils, leading to unbalanced levels of demand and therefore greater pressure on individual authorities.
	Unemployment rates (%)	Balanced between Unitary Councils. Large differences would suggest areas that struggle with job creation and high employment support needs. All options achieved the same score in this analysis; therefore, this criterion was zero weighted so that more weight could be applied to criterion where there were differences.

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

Government criteria	Metric	What does good look like and why?
Working together to understand and meet local needs	Sense of identity	Unitary Council geographies reflect factors including culture, sense of place, common geographical features, and historical links between areas. Ministers have indicated that future Unitary Councils should instil a sense of local identity and not lose this through reorganisation.
	Views expressed through engagement	Proposals should align as far as possible with the views expressed through engagement with both the public and partners. Where concerns are raised there should be confidence that theses can be adequately mitigated.
	Alignment with NHS and Fire, Police boundaries	Unitary Council boundaries do not split existing public service partner geographies or require multiple. Configures that do not split current public service geographies will be able to work more efficiently and effectively together for the benefit of residents and communities.
	Housing Market Area	Unitary Councils have housing that is affordable to meet demand, a supply that is sufficient to match current and future needs, and ability to address specific challenges such as affordability issues or overcrowding.
	Alignment with Travel to Work Areas	Unitary Council boundaries minimise splitting of existing TTWA areas. Unitary Council boundaries that align with established travel to work areas would represent areas where the majority of residents live and work, indicating a greater sense of place and community.
Supporting devolution arrangements	Population within a strategic authority	Balanced population ratio between all Unitary Councils within a future strategic authority. Unitary Councils should seek balanced population sizes resulting in even power balance in authorities.
	Effective governance within future strategic authority	Balanced and fair representation, with the ability to effectively make decisions at strategic authority level.
Stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment	Ability to deliver strong community engagement	A manageable geographic area and appropriate level of scale (i.e. not too large). Helps determine whether the area allows for meaningful interaction, effective communication, and equitable representation between local leaders and the community.
	Ability to address unparished areas	Ability to quickly establish appropriate local democratic representation in unparished area in order to deliver effective double devolution.

This evaluation criteria framework is designed to ensure each aspect of the reorganisation case for change is thoroughly scrutinised, ensuring benefits are maximised across service delivery, governance, community engagement, and economic performance. Each criterion and its weight reflect the critical components required for a successful transition to a new local government structure in Derbyshire.

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

Data Sources

Dataset	Metric	Link
Estimates of the population for England and Wales	Population density (2023), Population (2023), 65+ Population (2023)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/estimatesofthepopulationforenglandandwales
Standard Area Measurements for Administrative Areas (December 2023) in the UK	Geographic Area (2023)	https://geoportal.statistics.gov.uk/datasets/da8590c5f55f4664b32ad4339f43419c/about
Regional gross domestic product: local authorities	GVA (2022), GVA per capita (2022)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/datasets/regionalgrossdomesticproductlocalauthorities
Tables on homelessness	Homelessness Rate (Apr-Jun 2024)	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness
Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2023	Rough Sleeper Counts (2023)	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2023/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2023
Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain	Female Life Expectancy (2023)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/datasets/lifeexpectancyforlocalareasofgreatbritain?utm
Mapping income deprivation at a local authority level	Deprivation score (2019)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/datasets/mappingincomedeprivationatalocalauthoritylevel
LI01 Regional labour market: local indicators for counties, local and unitary authorities	Unemployment rates (Oct 23-Sept 24)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/li01regionallabourmarketlocalindicatorsforcountieslocalandunitaryauthorities?utm
Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables	Total Crime Rate (2024)	https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatatables
Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement	Housing Delivery Test (2023)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-2023-measurement
Local authority revenue expenditure and financing England: 2023 to 2024 individual local authority data – outturn	Financing Costs as % NRE (2023-24)	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2023-to-2024-individual-local-authority-data-outturn
Derbyshire Observatory – Population Projections	Population Growth (2033)	https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMWU2MTliYTgtNWQ0My00Njk0LThjZjMtNzdiODYxM2QyZmUzIiwidCI6IjQyOWE4ZWIzLTMyMTAtNGUxYS1hYWEyLTZjY2RlMGRkYWJjNSJ9
Turley & LPDF - Revised Standard Method Analysis - May 2025	Minimum housing need (2025)	https://www.turley.co.uk/comment/-standard-method-minimum-housing-need-england
National non-domestic rates collected by councils in England: forecast 2024 to 2025	Business Rates per unit population (2024-25), Council tax income per unit population (2024-25)	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-non-domestic-rates-collected-by-councils-in-england-forecast-2024-to-2025
Children in Low Income Families: local area statistics, United Kingdom, financial years ending (FYE) 2015 to 2024	Percentage of Children (under 16) in Relative low-income families (2024)	https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F67dc2c58c5528de3aa6711f9%2Fchildren-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2024.ods&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

Appendix 1: Overview (cont.)

Data Sources (cont.)

Dataset	Metric	Link
Council Taxbase	Council Tax base (2025-26)	https://democracy.highpeak.gov.uk/documents/s45054/HPBC%20-%20Council%20Tax%20Setting%202025-26%20FINAL.pdf https://democracy.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/documents/s12594/Council%20Tax%20Setting%20Report%202025-26.pdf#:~:text=This%20report%20enables%20the%20Council%20to%20calculate%20and,in%20Appendices%20A%20to%20C%20of%20the%20report. https://south-derbys.cmis.uk.com/south-derbys/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=N4pMQjcIjjit73m6Ufc3xEgXfFYQBth4Les79ifbl0r7753gAkLF2g%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7Ikn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNlh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&FgPlIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA%3d https://moderngov.erewash.gov.uk/documents/s39403/Item%208%20GF%20Rev%20Budget%20report2526_FEB%20FINAL%20tidy%20up%20gaps.pdf https://www.ambervalley.gov.uk/council/committees-and-meetings/committee-documents?CommitteeRef=CNL&MeetingRef=2367# https://democracy.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/documents/g2866/Public%20reports%20pack%2027th-Jan-2025%2014.00%20Council.pdf?T=10 https://chesterfield.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s52222/Council%20tax%20report%202025-26%20FINAL.pdf https://committees.bolsover.gov.uk/documents/s26319/item%2011%20Council%20Tax%20report%202025.pdf https://democracy.derby.gov.uk/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=M0zMu8aqi8OCOA6Y7Ab5cqA9sHTI99%2bR%2baLAYCicmDM0PwVrFstsPg%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7Ikn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNlh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlg%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&FgPlIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA%3d
Local plan	Housing need - current Local Plan	https://www.bolsover.gov.uk/services/p/planning-policy/planning-policy-documents/development-plan https://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/planning-and-local-plan/planning-policy-and-local-plan/development-plan https://www.ambervalley.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/ https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-the-local-plan/development-plan-the-local-plan/ https://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plan/local-plan/local-plan-information-and-adoption https://www.derby.gov.uk/media/derbycitycouncil/contentassets/documents/environmentandplanning/planning/localplan/evidencebase/Core-Strategy_ADOPTED_DEC-2016_V3_WEB.pdf https://www.erewash.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/Erewash%20Core%20Strategy%202011-2028.pdf https://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/adopted-local-plan https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/article/646/The-Adopted-Local-Plan-2016

Appendix 2

Financial appraisal and financial assumptions

Appendix 2: Financial appraisal and financial assumptions

Methodology Overview

The financial analysis followed a consistent, structured methodology, grounded in a national LGR approach and aligned with Government guidance. The steps included:

1. Scoping and Agreement of Method

    a. Collaboration between KPMG and Derbyshire S151 Officers to define scope, financial principles, and data needs.

    b. Agreement on the proposals to be modelled (variations of the 2 Unitary Council model) and the treatment of shared services and disaggregation.

2. Data Collection and Validation

    a. Standardised data requests used, covering revenue budgets, reserves, capital plans, balance sheets, and key service metrics.

    b. Gathered contextual and narrative information to understand pressures, risks, and transformation plans.

    c. Weekly meetings held with S151 Officers to verify data accuracy, reconcile discrepancies, and align on inputs.

3. Baseline Construction

    a. Built a consolidated financial baseline, combining all budgets into unified figures based on agreed assumptions (e.g., population apportionment, service cost splits).

    b. Ensured removal of internal recharges and accounting for any double counting.

    c. Developed opening balance sheet and reserve profiles for each proposed new authority.

4. Savings Estimation

    a. Applied standardised top-down models to estimate savings across key categories:

        i. Senior management and democratic structures

        ii. Corporate and back-office services

        iii. ICT rationalisation and systems integration

        iv. Estates and asset rationalisation

        v. Procurement and contract consolidation

        vi. Service transformation and demand management (where credible)

    b. Incorporated both direct (cashable) and enabling (efficiency) savings.

    c. Used a combination of local inputs and benchmark data from other LGR programmes to calibrate assumptions.

5. Implementation and Disaggregation Cost Estimation

    a. Identified one-off costs required to deliver the reorganisation, including:

        i. Programme management and transition team costs

        ii. Redundancy and pension strain

        iii. ICT integration or separation

        iv. Property and rebranding

        v. Legal and governance setup

    b. Costs were phased with timing aligned to implementation logic.

6. Scenario Modelling

    a. Developed a structured financial model that calculates, for each scenario:

        i. Annual and cumulative savings

        ii. Phased implementation investment

        iii. Year-on-year net benefit

        iv. Breakeven year

        v. Total net financial benefit

Appendix 2: Financial appraisal and financial assumptions (cont.)

Items Considered in the Financial Case

The financial analysis integrates a wide range of inputs and assumptions, grouped into three main elements:

- **Recurring Savings:** Cashable savings expected once reorganisation is complete and steady state is reached. These cover workforce reductions, systems rationalisation, contract management, and operating model changes. Savings are categorised by source, with baselines derived from current budgets.

- **Implementation Investment:** One-off investment required to implement the preferred model, typically incurred over the first two to three years. Includes programme delivery, ICT, staff redundancy, estates changes, and transitional double running.

- **Disaggregation Costs:** In proposals involving the separation of county-wide services (e.g., moving to two Unitary Councils), disaggregation costs reflect the additional effort, complexity, and duplication required to split shared systems and functions across new entities.

Scenario-Based Modelling Approach

Recognising the inherent uncertainty in savings realisation and implementation cost delivery, the analysis uses three financial scenarios to bracket the likely outcomes:

Scenario	Description
Base Case	A conservative scenario reflecting lower-end savings assumptions and higher delivery costs. Reflects cautious change with limited transformation ambition.
Midpoint Case	The most likely scenario based on agreed central assumptions. Balances prudent savings estimates with realistic implementation ambition, aligned to local capability.
Stretch Case	A more ambitious but achievable scenario, assuming bolder service transformation, more aggressive rationalisation, and faster delivery. Also assumes more investment in digital and commercial capacity.

Each scenario uses the same methodology but varies assumptions across:

- % savings by category
- One-off cost estimates and phasing
- Degree of service transformation

This enables the financial case to:

- Demonstrate the robustness of the preferred proposal under different delivery environments
- Quantify the risk and upside potential of reorganisation
- Support stakeholder discussions on ambition vs feasibility
- Outputs and Use in the Case for Change

For each scenario and proposal, the model outputs:

- Gross and net annual savings
- Cumulative implementation investment
- Payback period (breakeven year)
- Total net benefit over 7 years

Appendix 2: Financial appraisal and financial assumptions (cont.)

For the purposes of the submission the midpoint case has been used. The outputs from this inform both the financial case narrative and the comparative analysis between reorganisation options.

Financial Appraisal Evidence & Assumptions

This section provides the comprehensive technical evidence base that underpins the financial analysis presented in earlier sections of the Case for Change. It consolidates all supporting data, calculations, and assumptions used in constructing the financial model for the preferred LGR proposal, ensuring that the analysis is both transparent and auditable. The content here has been developed in close collaboration with finance teams from each existing Council, reflecting shared understanding of local data and a jointly agreed methodology.

The purpose of this section is to serve as the detailed reference layer that supports the narrative and conclusions reached in the main body of this document. It contains the full set of model inputs, mappings, and outputs, ranging from the derivation of the new revenue budgets to the disaggregation of reserves and capital positions, the workings behind estimated savings and implementation investment, and the 7-year financial forecasts under different scenarios. Each appendix clearly documents its source data, allocation approach, assumptions, and any material judgement applied in the modelling process. This ensures a clear audit trail from base data through to headline findings.

To support clarity and usability, the section is structured into three technical appendices, each aligned with a core element of the financial analysis:

- **Methodology and Assumption Log:** Captures the overarching modelling approach, data sources, macro assumptions, and the engagement steps taken to validate inputs with local finance leads.

- **Savings Assumptions:** Sets out the savings estimates in full, including baseline costs, percentage reductions, and rationale by category, as well as the modelling behind base, midpoint, and stretch scenarios.

- **Implementation Investment Breakdown:** Breaks down one-off transition and disaggregation costs by year and type, with cost drivers and any contingency assumptions clearly noted.

This section acts as the technical foundation upon which the financial case is built. It allows readers to interrogate the detail behind each modelling decision and to have confidence in the robustness, transparency, and evidential basis of the conclusions drawn.

Appendix 2: Financial appraisal and financial assumptions (cont.)

Methodology and Assumption Log:

The phased model has been prepared in three sections – assumptions, calculations and outputs. The outputs include the calculation of payback period, individual year impact of LGR and a cumulative impact of LGR. These outputs help in assessing the viability of the LGR proposals being assessed.

The model is based on the following three key assumptions:

1. Savings costs

2. One-off implementation investment

3. Disaggregation costs

The phased model projects the above across thirteen years, including three pre-implementation years (Base Year, Year -1 and Shadow Year) and ten post-implementation years.

The model is, however, based on 2024/25 prices and does not include any adjustment for future inflation for both costs as well as savings. The phased model also does not include the benefit of Council Tax harmonisation.

The inputs as well as outputs have been prepared and validated internally with Section 151 officers. These reflect the best estimates as of the writing of this case.

Savings Assumptions:

The overall savings assumptions have been prepared using a mix of top down and bottom-up savings approaches, as outlined below.

Top-down approach:

The overall savings assumptions for the current LGR have been calculated based on the outlined savings of Unitary Council authorities as outlined within previous Case for Change documentation. These included 14 previous cases for change across England ranging from cases submitted between 2009 and 2023. The data included Base Case and Stretch case savings.

For each individual previous case, an average savings per population base was calculated for both the Base case and Stretch case savings. These were subsequently indexed up from the relevant transition year (per the previous Case for Change) to April 2025 prices. A simple arithmetic average of indexed savings per population base informed the overall average indexed saving per population, which was used to calculate the total 'top-down' savings.

The top-down savings were split into underlying savings categories (as reflected in table below) using a percentage allocation mix based on internal discussions.

Savings by category as calculated from the top-down approach was subsequently compared with the savings calculated using the bottom-up approach.

Appendix 2: Financial appraisal and financial assumptions (cont.)

Bottom-up approach:

To estimate the potential savings using the bottom-up approach, an overall spend against each of the savings' categories was identified and a corresponding high-level saving against spend (in percentage terms) was made against each of the categories.

The total savings were then aligned across the bottom-up and top-down approaches to ensure a realistic savings assumption by category. Where spend data by savings category was not available (e.g. Service Contract Consolidation, Asset & Property Optimisation, Consolidating Fleets & Optimising Routes) the top-down savings assumptions were retained.

Saving Name	Description	Rationale and Assumptions	% of Total Savings	Value of Savings £'000
Leaner Leadership Structures	Reviewing the number of senior leadership roles required in the new Council structures, combining roles where possible, so we have fewer leaders doing more impactful work.	Assumes a single senior leadership team replacing multiple teams. Realisation assumes no significant delays from legal/TUPE, trade union or governance negotiations.	17%	7,366
Achieving the right team size	Ensuring we have the right number of staff for the services we provide, using technology and training to do more. Reviewing structures in the new Council to take account of role consolidation and automation.	Assumes structures will reduce through consolidation, automation and natural wastage. Realisation depends on culture change, system integration and union engagement. Realisation also assumes no significant delays from legal/TUPE, trade union or governance negotiations.	26%	11,540
Streamlining Support Services	Bringing together supports services such as HR, Finance, and IT from multiple organisations and merging into single, unified teams to improve efficiency and reduce costs	Merger of centralised functions at each new Council, rightsizing where appropriate. Requires effective digital systems, unified policies and process harmonisation to be in place. Realisation also assumes no significant delays from legal/TUPE, trade union or governance negotiations.	11%	4,911
Smarter Buying and Outsourcing	Reviewing how we buy goods and services to find better deals and reduce costs. Where appropriate, consolidating similar contracts presents an opportunity to renegotiate terms and achieve economies of scale with suppliers.	Centralised procurement team at each new Council. Assumes common suppliers to lever purchasing scale. Realisation requires effective digital systems, unified policies and process harmonisation to be in place.	11%	4,911

Appendix 2: Financial appraisal and financial assumptions (cont.)

Saving Name	Description	Rationale and Assumptions	% of Total Savings	Value of Savings £'000
Combining Service Contracts	Understanding current and joint service arrangements between existing Councils, combining similar service contracts and using our buying power to get better prices and terms from suppliers. This will need to consider existing arrangements with third parties.	Assumes merging of contracts and renegotiation over time. Realisation is dependent on contract cycles, procurement capacity and provider cooperation.	11%	4,911
Right Sized Governance	Aligning the number of Councillors and the costs of running elections and Council meetings match the size of the new Council.	Realisation assumes reduction in number of Councillors and associated committee and democratic support costs Also assumes new governance model implemented immediately post-reorganisation.	8%	3,238
Use of Technology	Using technology to automate tasks. Rationalise platforms and architecture and associated support.	Streamlining systems, rationalising IT estate. Rationalisation dependent on upfront investment in digital infrastructure, system integration and culture change.	2%	982
Making the best use of Assets	Reviewing land and buildings to make sure they're being used in the best way to support organisational and community needs	Release of surplus office space, lease terminations, or revenue from letting/disposals. Contingent on lease terms, alignment of asset strategies including capital receipts and local market conditions.	10%	4,420
Improving Customer Services	Improving how we communicate with residents, including better contact centres and online self-service options, to create savings and boost satisfaction	Channel shift to digital, contact centre consolidation, and automation of transactions. Rationalisation dependent on upfront investment in digital infrastructure, system integration and culture change.	2%	737
Smarter use of Fleet	Reducing the number of Council vehicles and planning smarter routes to save fuel, cut costs, and help the environment	Integration of transport assets across services Rationalisation benefits depend on upfront investment in consolidated fleet management tools, depot locations and service redesign.	2%	982
Total			100%	43,998

Appendix 2: Financial appraisal and financial assumptions (cont.)

Implementation Investment Breakdown:

The overall implementation investment assumptions have been prepared using a top-down approach only, based on the implementation investment as outlined within previous Case for Change documentation. These included the same previous cases for change used to inform the top-down savings assumptions, to ensure consistency. The data included Base Case and Stretch case implementation investment.

These were calculated as One-off implementation investment and Disaggregation costs.

One-off implementation investment:

For each individual previous case, an average one-off implementation investment per population base was calculated for both the Base case and Stretch case. These were subsequently indexed up from the relevant transition year (per the previous Case for Change) to April 2025 prices. A simple arithmetic average of indexed one-off implementation cost per population base informed the overall average indexed one-off implementation per population. The final figure was then apportioned across the cost categories underpinning the one-off implementation investment (see below table).

The top-down estimates were validated against bottom-up analysis, particularly for digitisation and consolidation of the ICT estate and infrastructure. No additional ongoing costs have been included for the disaggregation of Adult Social Care and Children's Services as these services are already being delivered in two existing Councils. However, one off costs for reshaping the two Council's services on separation have been included. District disaggregation costs have been included for proposal A1 and B1.

Cost Category	Description	Rationale and Assumptions	% Costs	Costs £'000
Staff Exit Costs	Payments to staff who leave due to restructuring, including redundancy, pensions, and contract changes.	Redundancy and termination costs will reflect staff remuneration and length of service. Negotiations (legal/TUPE, trade union or governance) required	39%	26,132
Staff Training and Development	Extra costs to train and prepare staff for new roles and responsibilities in the reorganised Councils.	Cost allowed for retraining through redeployment of workforce. Will depend on actual training needs on review of skills at each new Council	4%	2,582
Transition Support Team	Costs for the team managing the change, including legal experts, contract negotiators, project managers, and other specialists.	A significant transition team required for each Council. Includes legal, HR, finance, project support, public consultation. Some benchmarks include change management and creation of new Councils.	10%	6,456

Appendix 2: Financial appraisal and financial assumptions (cont.)

Cost Category	Description	Rationale and Assumptions	% Costs	Costs £'000
Communication and Culture Change	Spending on branding, public information, staff communications, and training to help everyone understand and adapt to the new Council setup.	Cost allowed for rebranding, change, and engagement.	3%	2,066
Processes Alignment	Work required to align policies and procedures, and facilitate effective service transition, including constitutional updates.	Cost allowed for upfront investment needed to harmonise processes and procedures as part of the transition.	6%	3,873
Systems and IT Integration	Costs to align/merge digital systems and infrastructure, including data migration, commonality of cyber security, and training.	Costs reflect the increasing reliance on digital systems and infrastructures and the significant size of this integration. Assumed costs incurred are to ensure both Councils can operate on day 1 (network connectivity, servers/cloud, telephony, website, service systems etc) and exclude costs that relate to transformation	18%	12,000
Buildings and Facilities Changes	Costs for changing how buildings are used, ending leases, and selling or repurposing properties.	Costs allowed for lease termination fees, asst rationalisation planning and ongoing operating costs such as NNDR and Utilities	6%	4,132
Contingency	Extra budget set aside to cover unexpected costs and ensure financial prudence	Standard across all cases for change	8%	5,165
District Realignment and Upper Tier Disaggregation (one off)	One-off costs to reorganise district level services (proposal A1 and B1). One off cost for reshaping upper-tier Council services on separation.	Costs to reorganise service delivery structures to align to the new structures. Additional district disaggregation costs have been included in proposal A1 and B1.	6%	4,042
Total			100%	66,448

Appendix 3

Case For Change Proposals

Delivering for Derbyshire, meeting local needs

ONE DERBYSHIRE
TWO COUNCILS

DERBYSHIRE

Appendix 3: Case for Change: Proposals Summary

Introduction

The main part of this document describes the benefits of establishing two unitary councils in Derbyshire. This appendix explains the specific benefits associated with the individual proposals that have been developed around the two unitary council case for change. Each council that is a signatory to this proposal is proposing one of these proposals.

The 8 District and Borough Councils and Derby City Council have identified 2 alternative base proposals (A and B) with 2 modifications (Proposals A1 and B1) that each include a boundary change (please see separate documents):

- **Appendix 3.1 – Case For Change - Proposal A** – built on existing district and borough boundaries with Amber Valley being part of the northern council.

- **Appendix 3.2 – Case for Change - Proposal A1** – a modification request based on Proposal A as the base proposal and the modification with Amber Valley split at parish level. This proposal was consulted on in the public consultation (Formerly Option C).

- **Appendix 3.3 – Case for Change - Proposal B** – built on existing district and borough boundaries with Amber Valley being part of the southern council.

- **Appendix 3.4 – Case for Change - Proposal B1** – a modification request based on Proposal B as the base proposal and the modification - a further variation splitting Amber Valley along a different set of parish boundaries. This proposal was formulated after the consultation in response to evidence gathered and further analysis and deliberation.

These four proposals have been evaluated based on the criteria set by the Government, including their financial, geographical, and community impacts. Full details on the benefits of each Proposal And how each configuration meets key standards and supports residents, businesses, and partners are included in this appendix. At the end of the description of each proposal we have confirmed which council(s) support that proposal.

Below is a summary of the key statistics:

		Proposal A	Proposal A1	Proposal B	Proposal B1
Overview		Proposal A proposes creating 2 Unitary Councils using the District and Borough Councils as building blocks, with Amber Valley in the northern Unitary.	Proposal A1 is a request for a modification to the base case of Proposal A, re-drawing the boundary through Amber Valley, using Parish Councils as the building blocks.	Proposal B proposes creating 2 Unitary Councils using the District and Borough Councils as building blocks, with Amber Valley in the southern Unitary.	Proposal B1 is a request for a modification to the base case of Proposal B, re-drawing different boundaries through Amber Valley, also using Parish Councils as the building blocks.
Key statistics	Population	583,555 494,354	566,934 510,975	455,846 622,063	539,410 538,499
	GVA	13,719 13,148	13,309 13,558	10,565 16,302	12,632 14,235
	Council Tax Base	194,804 147,434	187,572 154,666	152,247 189,991	180,133 162,105
	65+ Population	137,319 89,064	133,490 92,893	107,895 118,488	127,175 99,208
	% Children Low income	22% 26%	22% 26%	22% 26%	22% 26%
	Homelessness	0.96 2.15	0.97 2.10	1.04 1.84	0.98 2.02
	Weighted Views	32% (2)	21% (1)	39% (3)	n/a
	Unweighted views	36% (3)	23% (1)	34% (2)	n/a
Total Weighted score		14:40	15:00	15.40	**Total assessed score 15:40**
Total Unweighted score		14.70	15.00	15.10	n\a consultation 15.40

Appendix 4

Public Perspectives
Report

Proposed changes to councils in Derby and Derbyshire

Consultation report

September 2025

DERBYSHIRE

public perspectives

Research, consultation and evaluation
for the public and charitable sectors.

Contents

Proposed changes to councils in Derby and Derbyshire - Consultation report

Executive Summary

Introduction and background

1. In February 2025, as part of the Government's local government reorganisation plans, it contacted local councils in areas such as Derbyshire to work together to draw up initial proposals to reduce the number of councils by replacing two-tier councils with larger unitary councils.

2. Following considering key criteria and a range of potential options, Derbyshire's eight district and borough councils submitted a joint interim proposal to Government in March 2025. Together with Derby City Council they propose to create two new unitary councils – one in the north and one in the south – that would be responsible for all council services in their areas.

3. An important part of the local government reorganisation process is engaging with residents and stakeholders. This report relates to a consultation on the councils' proposal to replace the ten existing councils with two new unitary councils, including three different options for the configuration of the new councils. The councils have been supported to conduct the consultation by independent research and consultation organisation, Public Perspectives.

4. The results of the consultation will be used to inform the development of the councils' final proposal for the future of local councils in Derbyshire, alongside a range of evidence. This must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025, and feedback on how any proposal will be taken forward for Derbyshire is expected in 2026, and then subject to statutory consultation by Government.

Approach to the consultation

5. The consultation was conducted over a six-week period ending on Sunday 10 August 2025.

6. The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online consultation questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity. The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats such as paper copies, Easyread and BSL, alongside e-mail and phone support.

7. Local councils also supported some 27 community outreach and engagement events across Derbyshire, promoting the consultation and engaging with over 500 residents and stakeholders, including businesses.

8. In addition, local councils drew-up a list of key stakeholders who were directly contacted and invited to participate in the consultation. This included town and parish councils, VCSE organisations and local businesses, as well as strategic and pan-Derbyshire organisations such as health, police, fire, Peak District Park Authority, Derby University, East Midlands Chamber, and the East Midlands Combined County Authority. A 'stakeholder' pack was produced and circulated amongst stakeholders and other interested parties, and referenced in the consultation questionnaire, providing information about the proposal and options to help inform responses.

9. Relatedly, in-depth stakeholder interviews were conducted with 9 of these strategic and pan-Derbyshire partners.

10.   In total, the consultation questionnaire received 7,335 responses, plus an additional 7 submissions via e-mail/letter.[1]

Key findings

11.   The following summarises some of the key findings of the consultation, highlighting often polarised views and a balanced debate:

- Overall, 94% of respondents are aware of the current structure of local councils, including 36% that have a reasonable amount of knowledge and 25% that know a lot about it.

- 46% perceive the current structure of local councils and approach to service delivery to be effective, while 26% believe it is ineffective.

- 88% of respondents are aware of the Government's plans for local government reorganisation, including 29% that know a reasonable amount about it and 14% that know a lot about it.

- 43% of respondents agree with the plans to reduce the number of councils in England, while 38% disagree.

- 39% of respondents agree with the proposal to replace the ten existing councils in Derbyshire with two councils – one in the north and one in the south – while 45% disagree.

Figure 1: Summary of key findings about local government reorganisation

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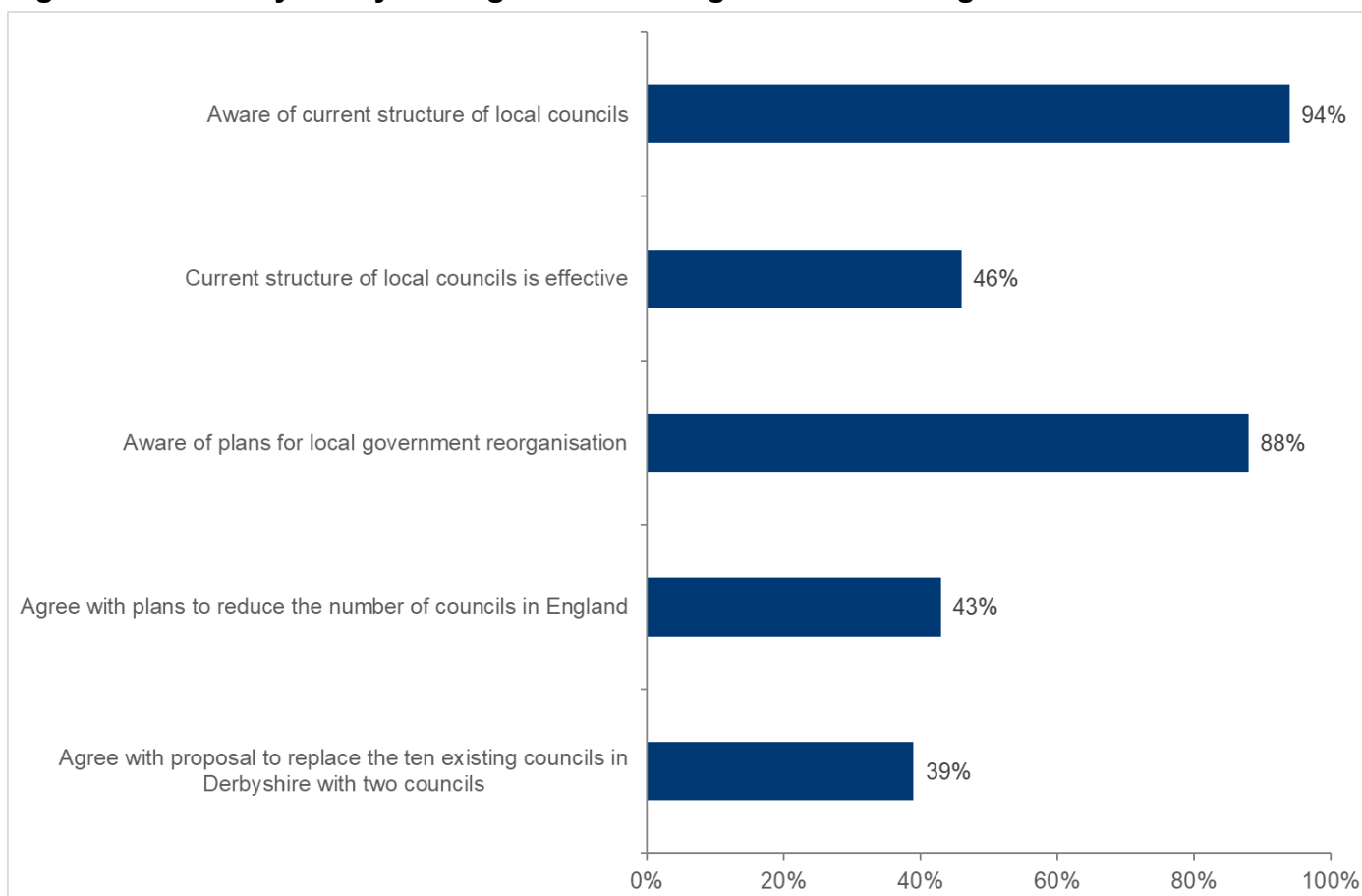
[1] As is the nature with self-selecting/open-access questionnaires, the responses are not proportional to the population sizes in each of the local council areas. Consequently, the results in the main report are analysed and presented both as they are and also re-weighted to be in-line with the population sizes in each local council area. The results in Figure 1 above are all non-weighted i.e. they have not been changed to reflect the actual population sizes of a local council area.

12. There is a **close relationship between perceptions of effectiveness and agreement for the Government's plans** to reorganise local government and **local proposals** to replace the existing ten councils in Derbyshire with two councils. In other words, those that **consider the current system ineffective are more likely to state there is a case for change.**

13. Likewise, those that tend to agree with the Government's plans also tend to agree with local proposals to reduce the number of councils, highlighting **'in principle' agreement/disagreement with the plans and proposals.** Relatedly, those that agree with the plans and proposals around local government reorganisation are also more likely to agree with any given option.

14. **Awareness and knowledge levels of the current council structure and/or local government reorganisation also influence agreement levels**, with those most knowledgeable more likely to agree with the plans, proposals and options to a lesser or greater degree. Relatedly, some of those that are neutral said they lacked sufficient information or knowledge to form a firm opinion or had mixed experiences or perceptions. This highlights the **importance of effective communications and presentation of the evidence base and business case for change.**

15. Alongside perceptions and experiences of the current system and approach to service delivery as well as awareness and knowledge levels, the **main reasons driving agreement with the plans and proposals for local government reorganisation are that it would modernise local government, improving efficiency, reducing duplication and streamlining councils.** This could result in cost-savings while making it easier to navigate councils, and access services as well as improve the quality and consistency of service delivery. Key stakeholders tended to support the case for reorganisation, recognising the aforementioned potential benefits, including promoting strategic planning and partnership working.

16. Those that **disagree with the plans and proposal for local government reorganisation are concerned about the loss of local representation and knowledge**, resulting in less responsive and tailored services to meet local needs and priorities, as well as a system and services that could be harder to navigate and access. There are also **concerns that larger councils could lead to inequity and inconsistencies in access to services and service quality in rural areas compared with urban areas**, especially where a large urban area is at the centre of the new council. Similarly, some raised **concerns about loss of sense of place and identity.** Relatedly, there are **concerns that in practice any changes will not lead to positive impacts in terms of efficiencies or cost-savings.** Some that disagreed felt that there is **not a case for change or that any changes or improvements to local councils should be made in-situ** rather than as part of large-scale reorganisation.

17. Businesses are **slightly more in agreement with the plans to reduce the number of councils across England** (48% agree compared with 43% of other respondents) and **proposal to replace the existing ten councils in Derbyshire with two new unitary councils** (43% agree compared with 39% of other respondents).

18. Businesses that agree with local government reorganisation note **opportunities to improve efficiencies and reduce duplication, alongside streamlining and improving access to services and support.** This includes reducing red tape and bureaucracy on issues that affect businesses, as well as inconsistencies due to operating across multiple local councils with different approaches and policies, such as business support, access to finance and grants, and planning. Ultimately, businesses are keen that any **changes support economic growth** in the proposed new councils, across Derbyshire and the wider region.

Specific points relating to Options

19. The aforementioned points tended to come through in discussions about specific options, with concerns coming to the fore depending on the local council area.

20. The following chart summarises the level of agreement with each of the potential options. The results in Figure 2 below are presented both as they are (i.e. non-weighted) and also re-weighted to be in-line with the population sizes in each local council area. This is because the level of response varied between local council areas, while there are differences between some of the areas regarding their level of agreement with each of the potential options.

Figure 2: Level of agreement with potential options (non-weighted and weighted results)
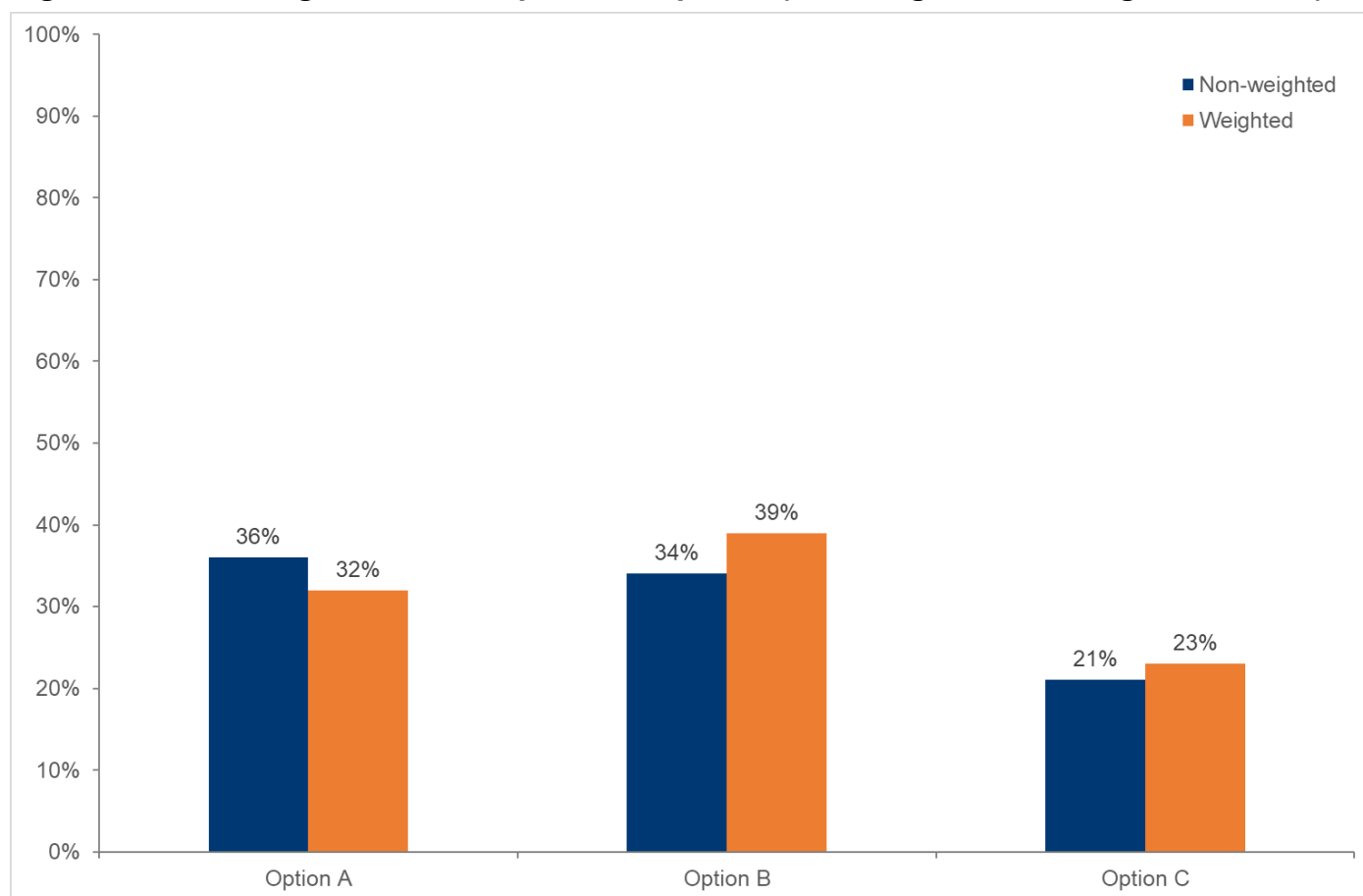
Option A

Option A - a north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being part of the northern council along with High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North-East Derbyshire, Chesterfield and Bolsover District. The southern council would include South Derbyshire, Erewash and Derby City

21. Respondents living in **Amber Valley council area are much more likely to agree with this option** (54%) than respondents in other areas. Also, to a lesser extent, respondents living in the Derbyshire Dales council area are more positive than some other respondents with 38% in agreement with Option A.

22. Those that **agreed with Option A primarily said it is a logical/natural division that makes geographical sense in keeping with local identities and connections, is a neat split and reflects that the north and south of Derbyshire are naturally distinct** in terms of needs, identity, or infrastructure (this was particularly stressed by Amber Valley respondents and also Derbyshire Dales respondents).

23. In contrast, those that **disagreed with Option A said it does not reflect natural community ties, separating areas that tend to have close associations with one another** such as some parts of Derby and Erewash from some parts of Amber Valley. Some respondents suggest that Derbyshire is too diverse (e.g. urban and rural) and complex to be divided neatly and simply into a north and south option. Similarly, some said it is **imbalanced as the northern council is too large relative to the southern council with a consequent impact on resources and service delivery for the south.** Likewise, the north could be too large, with too broad a mix of communities to manage effectively and therefore undermine potential benefits. There was also **concern that Derby City could dominate the southern council.** This includes concern that funding and resources would be pulled into Derby City, leaving outlying communities under-served. This is a particular concern of respondents from South Derbyshire.

Option B

Option B - a north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being part of the southern council along with South Derbyshire, Erewash and Derby City. The northern council would include High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North-East Derbyshire, Chesterfield and Bolsover District

24. The reasons for **agreement include it being a fairer and more balanced division compared to Option A**, which has the potential to be more sustainable and achieve more equitable benefits for both areas. It is also considered by those that agree with the option to **maintain the close and natural connections between areas such as Derby, Amber Valley and Erewash** (although some respondents in Amber Valley said that they do not have connections with Derby and look northwards). Those that agree tend to see it as the **best of the three options and a good compromise between options A and C.**

25. Those that **disagreed with Option B cited urban-rural concerns that risk forcing rural areas (such as those in Amber Valley) into a structure dominated by urban centres with a consequent negative impact on meeting local needs, and service access and delivery.** There are also concerns about **Derby City dominance and not wanting to be in a council with Derby City at its centre.** This is partly due to lack of connections and partly due to concern that it could dominate the southern council in terms of voice, funding and resources, leading to neglect of surrounding rural or suburban areas (these concerns were particularly cited by Amber Valley and South Derbyshire respondents).

26. Respondents living in the **High Peak council area (55% agree) and Derby City council area (49% agree) are more likely to agree with this option** than other respondents. In the case of High Peak respondents, this is because they tended to see Option B as a fairer

and more balanced approach in terms of size and resources, while they also felt it is a more natural split in terms of geography, identity and connections. Similar reasons are also expressed by Derby City respondents.

27. In contrast, respondents in the **Amber Valley council area (22% agree) and South Derbyshire council area (23% agree) are less likely than other respondents to agree.** In the case of Amber Valley respondents this is largely to do with their preference for Option A, which in part is driven by concerns around being in a southern council with a large urban centre in the form of Derby City, while Amber Valley respondents also said their connections and identity are more north than south (which is in slight contrast with some of the findings in section 2 around movement across Derbyshire). South Derbyshire respondents tended to not agree with Option B because they saw it as a worse option than A, creating a perceived too-large and unbalanced unitary authority that risks diluting South Derbyshire's voice and resources due to the inclusion of Amber Valley. Likewise, respondents in South Derbyshire felt less connected to Amber Valley than other nearby areas. They are also concerned about being in a council with Derby City, as per the reasons outlined relating to Option A.

Option C

Option C - a north / south split of the county, with different parishes from Amber Valley joining each of the two councils, depending on where they best fit. The northern council would include High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North-East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover District and some parishes of Amber Valley. The southern council would include South Derbyshire, Erewash, Derby City and other parishes of Amber Valley

28. Those in **agreement with Option C felt that it makes the most geographical sense and is the more even north-south split providing for balanced councils, population and resources.** Respondents living in the Derby City council area were more likely than other respondents to agree with Option C (36% agree) because it groups together urban/suburban areas closely tied to Derby, recognising, as they perceive it, that large parts of Amber Valley function as suburbs of the city. Consequently, these respondents feel that Option C reflects the real geography of daily life and would align council boundaries with existing patterns of service and amenity use. Derby City respondents often contrasted Option C favourably with Options A and B, which they felt did not adequately reflect Derby's urban pull. Rural and district residents, on the other hand, leaned toward Options A or B, which they viewed as simpler and less disruptive to community boundaries.

29. Most respondents that **disagree with Option C said that they oppose splitting-up Amber Valley.** The reasons for this are two-fold – firstly it is in part about identity and connections towards the north and also **splitting Amber Valley is considered 'divisive', 'unnatural' and 'unfair'.** Secondly, there are concerns that restructuring under Option C would be more problematic as it would involve **dividing an existing council, which could result in higher costs and practical issues undermining the potential benefits of reorganisation.** In addition, similar points were made by those that disagree with Option C as those raised with other options including **concerns over the urban-rural divide and Derby City dominance.** Likewise, some that disagreed mentioned they simply prefer the other options to Option C.

Next steps and points for consideration

30. Whilst the **consultation findings are polarised and the discussions balanced,** raising as many challenges and questions as clear ways forward, there are a number of important **points and considerations raised through the consultation (including by key stakeholders and businesses) that can help shape future decisions and actions, including the implementation of new councils:**

- Stakeholders want to **remain closely involved in helping shape the future proposals and supporting their implementation.** This is partly about managing the changes and making sure the benefits of reorganisation are realised, and also about using their experience and expertise to develop, test and challenge proposals. Similarly, some stakeholders said that this consultation should be part of an **ongoing dialogue with them and their sectors**, including local businesses, and town and parish councils.

- Relatedly, stakeholders are generally **agnostic about each of the options, albeit broadly supportive of local government reorganisation.** On a practical level, all strategic and pan-Derbyshire partners interviewed said they would **adapt relatively easily to whatever option is selected**, partly because several are organised around local authority areas and/or in a north-south structure and it would just be a matter of 'repositioning the building blocks'.

- This said, stakeholders want to work closely with the councils to achieve a smooth transition and said that **mechanisms needed to be in place to support the implementation process.** This includes maintaining the Chief Executives' meetings and other partnership boards as well as practical liaison between those involved in day-to-day operations, helping maintain existing key relationships and working practices.

- Whilst acknowledging that the timescale is ambitious and the process is understandably political, there was a **call to action to 'get it done' and coalesce behind an agreed option,** following the consultation. This is because stakeholders can already see that local government reorganisation is a distraction politically and strategically as well as eating up officer time, while concern around change and jobs will be a further distraction. The stakeholders and businesses were **keen to ensure 'the wheels keep turning' and that 'business as usual' continues, with disruption kept to a minimum.**

- There was a **further call to action to focus on positive outcomes and impacts, developing a vision and strategy for the new councils to help create the conditions for residents and businesses to thrive.** Some stakeholders said that at the moment it feels like the focus has been on administrative boundaries and practicalities rather than on making the most of the opportunities that local government reform will present. This is not a criticism as stakeholders acknowledged that it is early in the process and naturally a political issue, but that down the line they would want the process to become focussed on visioning and strategy to **achieve positive social and economic outcomes.**

- Relatedly, stakeholders said it is **vitally important that the two new councils have a 'pan-Derbyshire' outlook and work in close partnership with one another in the interests of benefiting the whole county.** Likewise, they expected the councils to work closely at a **regional level**, including with the Combined Authority.

- This includes the **potential to create a single, pan-Derbyshire vision, strategy and priorities, as well as a commitment and mechanisms for partnership working to deliver these shared priorities.**

- Similarly, businesses want the new councils to **create business-friendly environments and prioritise economic growth and the support provided to businesses.** With this in mind, they want the two new local councils to work closely together with a 'pan-Derbyshire' and regional mind-set, including developing a **singular economic growth strategy.**

- Businesses also see an **opportunity for local government reorganisation to help improve the local planning system**, making it more efficient, streamlined, clear and easier to access with the aim of supporting economic growth rather than acting as a barrier. This can be achieved by developing **consistent planning approaches, policies and service provision rather than working with multiple local councils and associated different approaches.**

- This said, the approach should be **sufficiently nuanced to take account of the different issues and needs of local communities and businesses**, including different equality groups, urban-rural communities and businesses, communities and businesses in different localities, and different business sectors and sizes.

- Relatedly, there were some concerns about the impact on **local area/neighbourhood working/priorities** as many of the partners have such practices and believe that services should be tailored to local needs and priorities, especially in diverse, affluent/deprived, and rural/urban communities. Consequently, they want to **see mechanisms in place to ensure this continues and thrives in future arrangements. This can include local area forums, research and consultation to identify local issues and priorities, and working closely with town and parish councils.**

- Some stakeholders said that the changes and implementation should be **mindful of other reform/changes/reorganisation taking place across the public space to promote coordination, achieve synergies and maximise benefits**, such as NHS reform, evolution around the role of the Combined Authority and also potential DEFRA reform around the governance of National Parks.

- Throughout the consultation results, there are differences in experience, perceptions and opinion by different demographic groups. The reasons for this are not unpicked in this consultation report, although it highlights the **importance of understanding local issues and priorities and tailoring services and support to different communities (both equality groups, different localities and urban-rural communities)** as part of any future arrangements.

Proposed changes to councils in Derby and Derbyshire - Consultation report

Main report

Section 1: Introduction

Introduction and background

1.1.   Derbyshire is a two-tier area served by eight district and borough councils and a county council. The city of Derby is contained within the boundary of Derbyshire, but all council services are provided by Derby City Council, which is already a unitary council. In total, 10 different councils provide services across the county.

1.2.   In February 2025, as part of the Government's local government reorganisation plans, it contacted local councils in areas such as Derbyshire to work together to draw up initial proposals to reduce the number of councils by replacing two-tier councils with larger unitary councils.

1.3.   Following considering key criteria and a range of potential options, Derbyshire's eight district and borough councils submitted a joint interim proposal to Government in March 2025. Together with Derby City Council they propose to create two new unitary councils – one in the north and one in the south – that would be responsible for all council services in their areas.

1.4.   An important part of the local government reorganisation process is engaging with residents and stakeholders. This report relates to a consultation on the councils' proposal to replace the ten existing councils with two new unitary councils, including three different options for the configuration of the new councils. The councils have been supported to conduct the consultation by independent research and consultation organisation, Public Perspectives.

1.5.   The results of the consultation will be used to inform the development of the councils' final proposal for the future of local councils in Derbyshire, alongside a range of evidence. This must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025, and feedback on how any proposal will be taken forward for Derbyshire is expected in 2026, and then subject to statutory consultation by Government.

Approach to the consultation

1.6.　The consultation was conducted over a six-week period ending on Sunday 10 August 2025.

1.7.　The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online consultation questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity. The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats such as paper copies, Easyread and BSL, alongside e-mail and phone support. The questionnaire is available in the appendices.

1.8.　Local councils also supported some 27 community outreach and engagement events across Derbyshire, promoting the consultation and engaging with over 500 residents and stakeholders, including businesses.

1.9.　In addition, local councils drew-up a list of key stakeholders who were directly contacted and invited to participate in the consultation. This included town and parish councils, VCSE organisations and local businesses, as well as strategic and pan-Derbyshire organisations such as health, police, fire, Peak District Park Authority, Derby University, East Midlands Chamber, and the East Midlands Combined County Authority. A 'stakeholder' pack was produced and circulated amongst stakeholders and other interested parties, and referenced in the consultation questionnaire, providing information about the proposal and options to help inform responses.

1.10.　Relatedly, in-depth stakeholder interviews were conducted with 9 of these strategic and pan-Derbyshire partners. The stakeholder discussion guide is available in the appendices.

1.11.　In total, the consultation questionnaire received 7,335 responses, plus an additional 7 submissions via e-mail/letter.

1.12.　The following table summarises the background of respondents:

Figure 1.1: Background of respondent*

A resident living in Derbyshire	93%
Someone who works in Derbyshire	23%
A local councillor	2%
A business owner or business leader operating in Derbyshire	3%
A voluntary or community organisation	2%
A Housing Association	0%
A Town or Parish Council	1%
A District / Borough / City / County Council employee	9%
Another public sector organisation	1%
Other	1%

*Respondents could select more than one answer, hence why responses add up to over 100%.

1.13. The following table shows the local council area in which respondents live and compares this to the population sizes in each local council area. As is the nature with self-selecting/open-access questionnaires, the responses are not proportional to the population sizes in each of the local council areas. Consequently, the results are analysed and presented both as they are and also re-weighted to be in-line with the population sizes in each local council area.

Figure 1.2: Location of respondents

Location	Respondents	Population
Amber Valley Borough Council area	24%	11.9%
Bolsover District Council area	7%	7.6%
Chesterfield Borough Council area	9%	9.8%
Derby City Council area	8%	24.7%
Derbyshire Dales District Council area	16%	6.7%
Erewash Borough Council area	14%	10.6%
High Peak Borough Council area	5%	8.5%
North-East Derbyshire District Council area	7%	9.7%
South Derbyshire District Council area	8%	10.4%
Outside of Derbyshire	2%	N/A

1.14. There is a spread of responses across different demographic groups, albeit a skew towards older and more affluent groups.

Figure 1.3: Demographic profile of respondents (only asked to those that live in Derbyshire)

Sex	
Female	49%
Male	46%
Another term	0%
Prefer not to say	4%
Age	
Under 16	0%
16-17	0%
18-24	1%
25-34	7%
35-44	13%
45-54	19%
55-64	24%
65-74	20%
75+	11%
Prefer not to say	5%
Disability	
Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a lot	6%
Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a little	9%
Yes, but they don't reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities at all	10%
No	65%
Prefer not to say	9%
Ethnicity	
White British-Irish	88%
Non-White British-Irish	4%
Prefer not to say	9%
Housing situation	
Owner-occupier	82%
Privately renting	5%
Renting from the council or housing association	4%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	7%

Reporting

1.15. The rest of this report presents the key findings from the consultation. The results have been analysed against all demographic and key variables/questions to identify any important differences in opinion between different groups. In particular, the focus is on geography i.e. the local council area respondents live in.

1.16. In addition, the open-ended comments received in the questionnaire have been reviewed and key themes presented in the report.

1.17. The report is organised in-keeping with the structure of the consultation questionnaire, as follows:

- Section 2: Living and working in Derbyshire
- Section 3: The current structure of councils in Derbyshire
- Section 4: Local government reorganisation in England
- Section 5: Local government reorganisation across Derbyshire

Section 2: Living and working in Derbyshire

Introduction

2.1.   This section presents findings about living and working in Derby and Derbyshire, including movement across the area and sense of place.

Thinking about your day-to-day activities, what parts of Derbyshire do you visit?

The Derbyshire Dales area is the most visited, followed by the Amber Valley and Derby City areas, with places visited influenced by home location and proximity to neighbouring areas

2.2.   46% of respondents visit the Derbyshire Dales area, 41% Amber Valley, 40% Derby City and 31% Chesterfield Borough Council area. The least visited areas are Bolsover District Council area (14%) and the South Derbyshire District Council area (18%).

Figure 2.1: Movement across Derbyshire
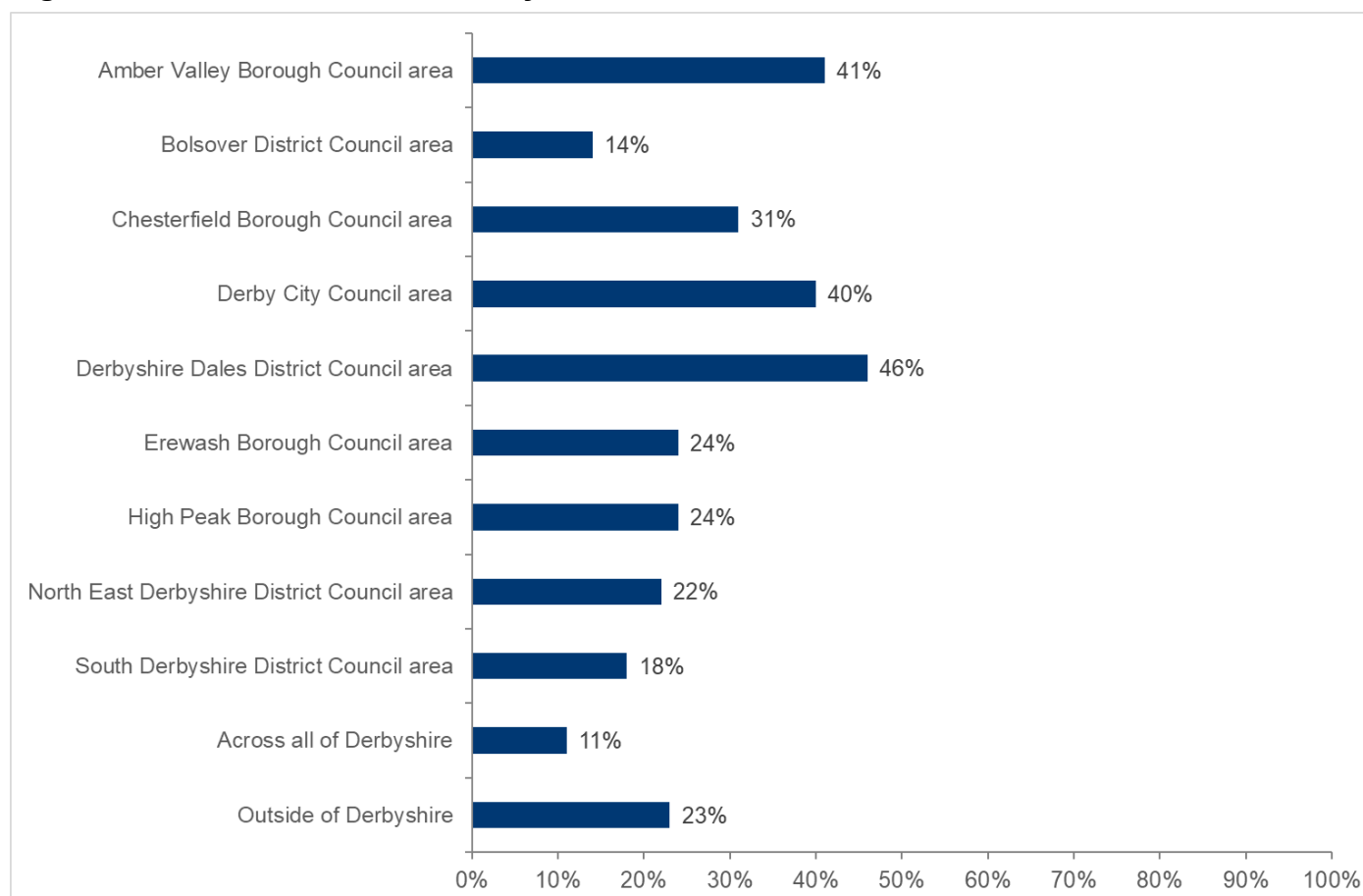
Number of respondents: 7,304 (Non-weighted data i.e. the results have not been changed to reflect the actual population sizes of a local council area. This is the case for all graphs and tables in this report. The weighted data is referenced in separate paragraphs and clearly indicated).

2.3. Places visited are closely linked to area lived in and proximity to neighbouring areas with residents most likely to visit areas they live in[2]. The following are the main places visited by each council area in which the respondent lives:

- **Amber Valley residents (AV):** 93% Amber Valley area, 54% Derby City area, 50% Derbyshire Dales area and 26% Erewash area.
- **Bolsover residents (B):** 89% Bolsover area, 64% Chesterfield area, 35% North-East Derbyshire area and 26% outside of Derbyshire.
- **Chesterfield residents (C):** 95% Chesterfield area, 54% North-East Derbyshire area, 45% Derbyshire Dales area and 31% Bolsover area.
- **Derby City (DC):** 91% Derby City area, 42% Amber Valley area, 37% South Derbyshire area and 31% Erewash area.
- **Derbyshire Dales (DD):** 94% Derbyshire Dales area, 38% High Peak area, 37% Chesterfield area and 31% Amber Valley area.
- **Erewash (E):** 88% Erewash area, 56% Derby City area, 37% Amber Valley area and 28% outside of Derbyshire.
- **High Peak (HP):** 92% High Peak area, 42% Derbyshire Dales area, 33% outside of Derbyshire and 12% Chesterfield area.
- **North-East Derbyshire (NED):** 86% North-East Derbyshire area, 76% Chesterfield area, 40% Derbyshire Dales area and 29% Bolsover area.
- **South Derbyshire (SD):** 89% South Derbyshire area, 56% Derby City area, 28% outside of Derbyshire and 23% Derbyshire Dales area.

Figure 2.2: Movement across Derbyshire by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NED	SD
Amber Valley Borough Council area	93%	21%	9%	42%	31%	37%	4%	18%	16%
Bolsover District Council area	7%	89%	31%	4%	3%	4%	2%	29%	2%
Chesterfield Borough Council area	18%	64%	95%	6%	37%	7%	12%	76%	3%
Derby City Council area	54%	11%	7%	91%	30%	56%	3%	10%	56%
Derbyshire Dales District Council area	50%	25%	45%	29%	94%	25%	42%	40%	23%
Erewash Borough Council area	26%	4%	2%	31%	3%	88%	1%	2%	14%
High Peak Borough Council area	20%	15%	21%	11%	38%	12%	92%	19%	10%
North-East Derbyshire District Council area	14%	35%	54%	4%	18%	6%	7%	86%	3%
South Derbyshire District Council area	10%	4%	2%	37%	9%	19%	2%	3%	89%
Across all of Derbyshire	12%	11%	10%	12%	9%	15%	6%	10%	12%
Outside of Derbyshire	17%	26%	19%	15%	22%	28%	33%	24%	28%

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[2] A similar pattern exists in terms of where people work. Likewise, respondents tend to work in areas closest to where they live.

2.4.	Given the variations by council area lived in, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire the overall results for places visited change as follows:

- Amber Valley: 33%
- Bolsover: 15%
- Chesterfield: 30%
- Derby City: 45%
- Derbyshire Dales: 38%
- Erewash: 22%
- High Peak: 23%
- North-East Derbyshire: 22%
- South Derbyshire: 23%
- Across all of Derbyshire: 11%
- Outside of Derbyshire: 22%

Thinking about where you currently live, please list all the places you would name to describe where you are from if asked by someone that does not live near you?

Residents reference a combination of local towns and villages alongside larger urban centres (in and out of the county), county-references, and local landmarks and landscapes, all influenced by proximity

2.5.	Respondents were asked which places they would name to describe where they are from when speaking to someone unfamiliar with the area (only asked to respondents that live in Derbyshire – 6,284 responses). In summary, across Derbyshire place **identity and sense of place is layered** with respondents using immediate localities, well-known towns/cities, and county or landscape references depending on which is most recognisable to outsiders (and depending on who they may be talking to). In **urban centres**, such as Chesterfield and Derby, residents' identity is strongly **anchored in the main town or city.** In more **rural areas** such as Derbyshire Dales and High Peak, residents highlight **market towns and the Peak District landscape**, alongside **county or cross-regional identifiers.** In **mixed urban-rural areas**, such as, Amber Valley, Bolsover, Erewash, North-East Derbyshire, South Derbyshire, respondents draw on a **combination of local towns/villages, county identity, and nearby larger centres.** There is also a **tendency for residents living on the edges of the county to reference towns and areas outside of the county**, such as Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, and Sheffield.

2.6. The following summarises the responses by each council area:

Amber Valley Borough Council area

Residents regularly mention the main towns such as Alfreton, Belper, Heanor and Ripley. Broader references to Derbyshire and Derby are also common, providing wider recognition. There are also references to smaller villages and areas such as Codnor, Holbrook, Kilburn, and Horsley. This reflects a pattern of local village/town references combined with county or nearby city references.

Bolsover District Council area

Respondents often cite Chesterfield, even more than Bolsover itself, highlighting the influence of the nearby larger centre. Bolsover (including Bolsover Castle) and other local centres such as Shirebrook and Clowne are mentioned, alongside reference to Derbyshire. Places along the Nottinghamshire border such as Worksop and Mansfield are also referenced. This indicates a hybrid approach, spanning local, county, and cross-border associations.

Chesterfield Borough Council area

Chesterfield dominates responses, showing a very strong town-based association. Broader reference to Derbyshire is common, while Sheffield appears occasionally due to proximity and external recognition. Local areas such as Staveley, Walton, and Brimington are also mentioned. This reflects a town-centred approach reinforced by county and neighbouring city links.

Derby City Council area

The overwhelming majority of residents identify simply as being from Derby. Some supplement this with Derbyshire for clarity, while others mention Nottingham and recognisable landmarks such as East Midlands Airport. This shows a single-city focused approach with occasional use of wider regional markers.

Derbyshire Dales District Council area

Reference is spread across several market towns, with Ashbourne and Matlock most prominent. Many respondents also highlight Derbyshire and the Peak District. Other towns and areas such as Bakewell, Wirksworth, and Cromford also feature. The pattern reflects a blend of market town identity with strong geographic, county and landscape association.

Erewash Borough Council area

Respondents frequently cite Derby, Nottingham, and Derbyshire, with local towns Ilkeston and Long Eaton also heavily mentioned. Smaller places such as Sandiacre, Breaston, and Sawley feature too. This reflects a dual orientation towards both Derby, Derbyshire and Nottingham, alongside local towns and areas.

High Peak Borough Council area

The most commonly cited places are Buxton and Glossop, alongside Derbyshire and the Peak District. Proximity to Greater Manchester is evident, with Manchester, Stockport, and Sheffield also named. Towns such as Whaley Bridge and New Mills appear as local anchors. The pattern highlights a mixed approach —local market towns, natural landscape, county references and connections to nearby metropolitan areas.

North-East Derbyshire District Council area

Respondents often name Chesterfield, despite it being in a neighbouring borough. Sheffield and Derbyshire are also cited, while Dronfield, Clay Cross, Wingerworth, and other settlements are more local references. The pattern reflects a mixed approach centred on Chesterfield, with local towns and regional associations.

South Derbyshire District Council area

The strongest mentions are Swadlincote, Derby, South Derbyshire, and Derbyshire. Border proximity influences responses, with frequent references to Burton-upon-Trent (in Staffordshire), alongside local towns and villages such as Hilton, Etwall, Hatton, and Melbourne. This reflects a mix of local references alongside larger regional and county associations.

2.7. A point raised by some stakeholders in the in-depth interviews (and also by other respondents through the consultation questionnaire) is for the **future local councils to be aligned with, and maintain, local connections and sense of place.** This is both so that the new councils 'make sense' in terms of geography, identity and connections, but also so that they align with the way people live and access services and amenities, as well as generating a sense of buy-in and community pride in the new council areas. As one stakeholder said:

> "The challenge, as I see it, is for the new councils to be built around and maintain local connections and that all important sense of place. They have to reflect the way people live as otherwise they'll just be working against the tide and not be as effective or impactful as we'd like."

Section 3: The current structure of councils in Derbyshire

Introduction

3.1.   This section presents findings about the current structure of councils in Derbyshire, including awareness and knowledge, and perceptions of effectiveness.

Before today, were you aware, and how much did you know about, the current structure of councils in Derbyshire and the different services delivered by each council?

Most respondents were aware of the current structure of councils and the different services delivered, and had varying levels of knowledge

3.2.   94% of respondents were aware of the current structure of councils, including 25% that knew a lot about it, 36% a reasonable amount, 20% a little and 13% not much about it. 6% were not aware of the current structure of councils in Derbyshire before responding to the consultation questionnaire.

Figure 3.1: Awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils in Derbyshire
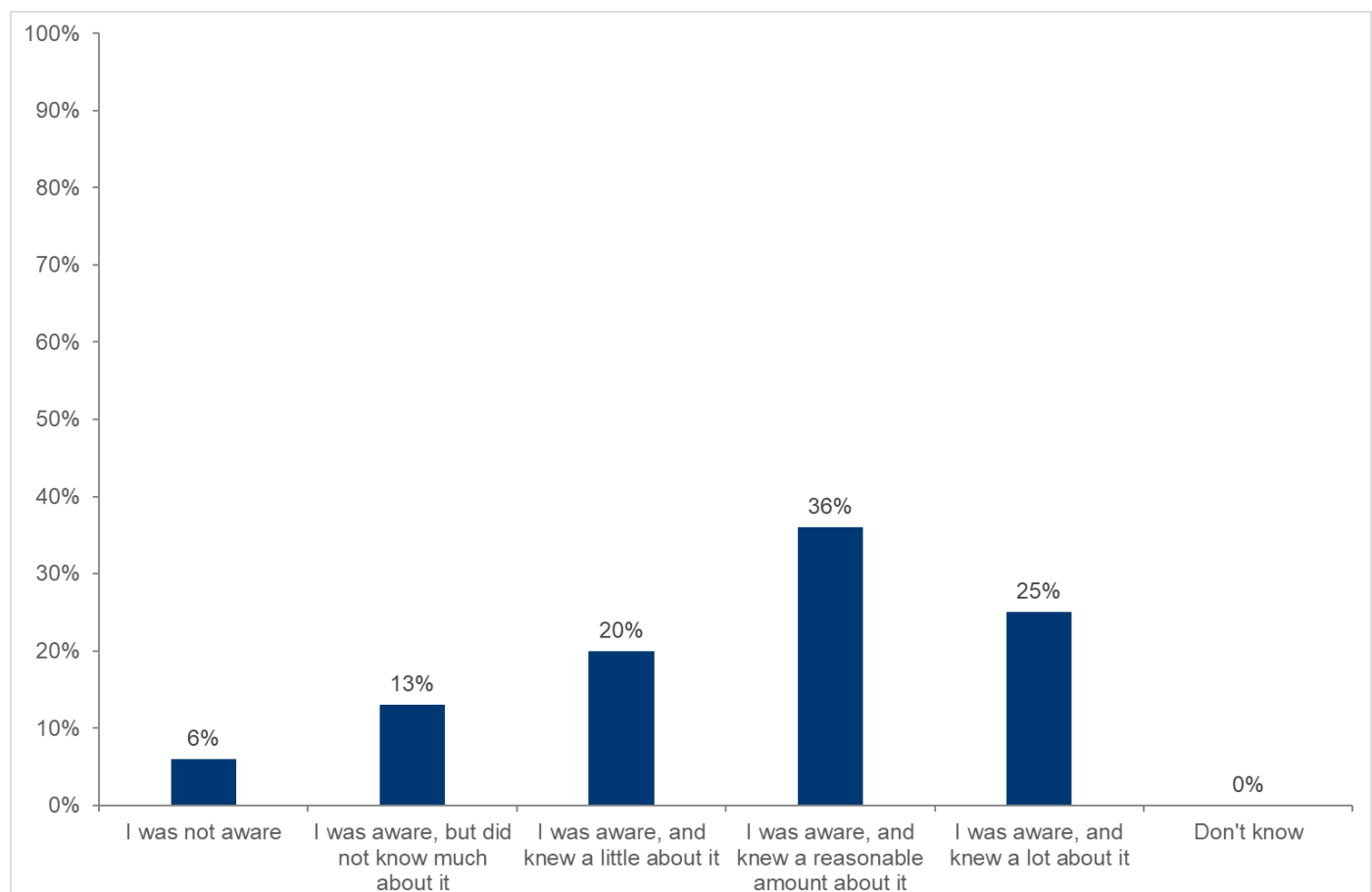
Number of respondents: 7,321.

3.3.   Whilst there is some minor variation between different areas, awareness and knowledge of the structure of councils in each of the council areas is within a few percentage points of each other and/or the average.

Figure 3.2: Awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils in Derbyshire by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NED	SD
I was not aware	7%	5%	5%	7%	5%	5%	6%	7%	9%
I was aware, but did not know much about it	14%	15%	12%	16%	12%	13%	14%	15%	11%
I was aware, and knew a little about it	20%	18%	15%	21%	18%	23%	17%	20%	22%
I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it	36%	33%	37%	31%	39%	39%	35%	35%	33%
I was aware, and knew a lot about it	23%	29%	31%	24%	25%	19%	27%	24%	25%
Don't know	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

3.4.   Consequently, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire there is little change in the results – the only changes are that 14% of respondents in the weighted sample are aware, but do not know much about it (compared with 13% in the non-weighted sample), while 35% are aware and know a reasonable amount in the weighted sample (compared to 36% in the non-weighted sample).

3.5.   Respondents with lower levels of awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils and the different services delivered are:

- Women (7% not aware and 17% aware but do not know much about it) compared with men (5% not aware and 10% aware but do not know much about it).

- Aged under 35 (11% not aware and 15% aware but do not know much about it) compared with older respondents (5% not aware and 13% aware but do not know much about it).

- People living with a disability that affects them a lot (12% not aware and 15% aware but do not know much about it) compared with others (5% not aware and 13% aware but do not know much about it).

- Non-white British-Irish (11% not aware and 18% aware but do not know much about it) compared with White British/Irish respondents (6% not aware and 13% aware but do not know much about it).

- Private renters (10% not aware and 17% aware but do not know much about it) and social renters (12% not aware and 23% aware but do not know much about it) compared with owner-occupiers (5% not aware and 13% aware but do not know much about it).

How effective do you think the current structure of councils is in Derbyshire and the approach to service delivery?

More respondents said the current structure and approach to service delivery in councils across Derbyshire is effective than ineffective with some variations by area

3.6.   46% of respondents said the current structure and approach to service delivery is at least quite effective (35% quite effective and 11% very effective).

3.7.   21% are neutral stating it is neither effective nor ineffective. 26% said it is at least quite ineffective, including 9% that said it is very ineffective.

3.8.   Respondents that knew a lot about the current structure and approach to service delivery were polarised in their views about its effectiveness, albeit just over half are positive – 53% said it is at least quite effective while 31% said it is ineffective.

Figure 3.3: Effectiveness of the current structure and approach to service delivery in councils across Derbyshire
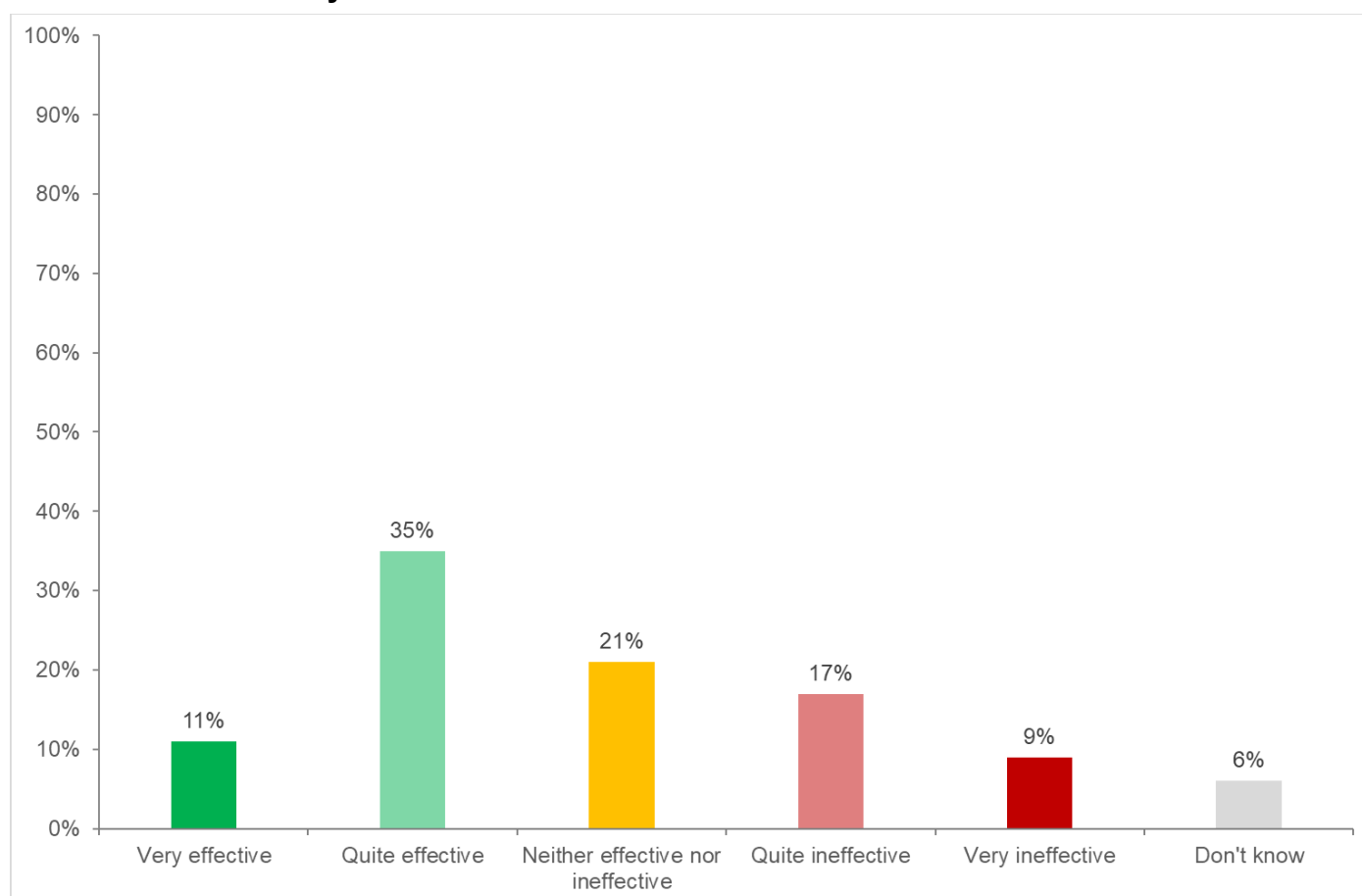
Number of respondents: 7,321.

3.9.   There is some variation by area with Derby City (36% effective and 33% ineffective) and High Peak (33% effective and 38% ineffective) councils having lower positive ratings and higher negative ratings. While Derbyshire Dales (58% effective and 20% ineffective) have more positive results, as too to a lesser extent South Derbyshire (52% effective and 24% ineffective).

Figure 3.4: Effectiveness of the current structure and approach to service delivery in councils across Derbyshire by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NE	SD
Very effective	11%	15%	11%	5%	14%	11%	7%	13%	15%
Quite effective	36%	33%	32%	31%	44%	34%	26%	35%	37%
Neither effective nor ineffective	22%	19%	22%	21%	17%	25%	23%	20%	19%
Quite ineffective	16%	13%	18%	23%	14%	17%	25%	15%	16%
Very ineffective	8%	13%	11%	10%	6%	8%	13%	10%	8%
Don't know	7%	7%	6%	8%	5%	6%	6%	8%	5%

3.10.   When the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire there are minor changes to the overall results with them becoming slightly less positive – 10% very effective, 34% quite effective, 21% neither effective nor ineffective, 18% quite ineffective, 10% very ineffective, and 7% don't know.

3.11.   Respondents that rated lower the effectiveness of the current system are:

- Aged under 35 (39% effective and 31% ineffective) compared with older respondents (47% effective and 25% ineffective).
- Non-White British/Irish (35% effective and 37% ineffective) compared with White British/Irish respondents (47% effective and 25% ineffective).

3.12.   Whilst **stakeholders in the in-depth interviews generally said that they had positive experiences and relationships with local councils**, they could also appreciate that there are **opportunities for change and improvement, especially in terms of promoting partnership working and consistency of approach/service delivery:**

"We work well with each of the councils and I think in the main they all do a good job and work well together. However, I can see that there is sometimes duplication and that reducing the tiers and number of councils could make life easier for everyone and promote collaboration. I think where it can have the biggest benefit is around consistency in approach and quality. Some councils are better at doing some things than others. Having a single, combined and more strategic approach could benefit everyone."

3.13.   Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the reasons behind their perceptions about effectiveness with 63% of respondents providing further explanation. In summary, those rating the system **effective** tend to highlight **service reliability, local knowledge and responsiveness, local representation, resilience and adaptability despite funding and service pressures, and a sense that the current system is fit for purpose.** Those who said **neither effective or ineffective** often

expressed **mixed experiences, or uncertainty/lack of clarity.** Those rating the system **ineffective** emphasised **confusion, duplication, lack of joined-up/partnership working, inefficiency, and inequity and inconsistency in services between different local councils**, with some advocating for change and unitary authorities.

3.14. The following provides more detail on the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for rating the current system as effective:

- **Satisfaction with services** (cited by approximately 10% of respondents): Service provision is generally considered effective and satisfactory including key services such as bin collections, highways maintenance, and schools working well.
- **Resilience and adaptability** (cited by approximately 10%): Despite funding, budget and service pressures councils have worked effectively to maintain satisfactory service delivery. In part this is because of their understanding of their local area and the priorities of residents and consequent ability to adapt to changing needs and issues.
- **Local knowledge and responsiveness** (cited by approximately 5%)**:** Smaller/more localised councils such as District/Borough councils allow services to be tailored to local need and priorities, and be more aware of, and responsive to, issues as they emerge at the neighbourhood level.
- **Representation** (cited by approximately 5%)**:** Councils are closer to their communities and there is greater local accountability and political representation, reflecting local needs/priorities.
- **Familiarity, stability and continuity** (cited by approximately 3-4%): The current approach works sufficiently well and does not need to change, just potentially improved in-situ.

Reasons for rating the current system as neither effective nor ineffective:

- **Mixed experiences and views** (cited by approximately 5% of respondents): Some services/aspects work well and others could be improved. This includes an appreciation that there is scope for change and improvement, allied with concerns that change could be disruptive or not lead to positive benefits in practice.
- **Lack of knowledge, information or understanding of the current structure or approach to services** (cited by approximately 5%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding effectiveness.

Reasons for rating the current system as ineffective:

- **Confusion** (cited by approximately 10% of respondents): The two-tier structure makes the system difficult to navigate, as well as creating a lack of accountability between councils.
- **Duplication and inefficiency** (cited by approximately 10%): The two-tier structure is inefficient with resource duplication between councils, unnecessary tiers of management and staffing resulting in wasted resources, added bureaucracy and negative consequences for service delivery/quality as well as cost-effectiveness.
- **Service delivery issues** (cited by approximately 10%): Mixed experiences of service delivery and quality, with scope for improvement.
- **Joined-up/partnership working** (cited by approximately 5%): The current two-tier system makes coordination challenging between councils and partners across the different tiers of local government, with scope to improve partnership working.
- **Inequity and lack of consistency** (cited by approximately 5%): Experiences of inconsistent services depending on location and challenges accessing services in neighbouring areas, as well as some concerns around a bias to service provision in urban areas compared to more rural areas.

Section 4: Local Government Reorganisation in England

Introduction

4.1.   This section presents findings about the Government's plans for reorganisation of local government across the country, including awareness and knowledge, and levels of agreement with these plans.

Before today, were you aware, and how much did you know about, the reorganisation of councils across England?

Most respondents are aware of the reorganisation of councils across England, and had varying levels of knowledge, albeit towards the lower end

4.2.   88% of respondents are aware of the reorganisation of councils across England, including 14% that knew a lot about it, 29% a reasonable amount, 24% a little and 21% not much about it. 12% were not aware at all before responding to the consultation questionnaire.

4.3.   There is a close relationship between awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils and that of the reorganisation of councils across England. For example, 63% that were not aware of the current structure of councils are also not aware of the reorganisation of councils. Similarly, 48% that were aware and know a lot about the current structure of local councils are also equally aware and knowledgeable about the reorganisation of councils across England.

Figure 4.1: Awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England
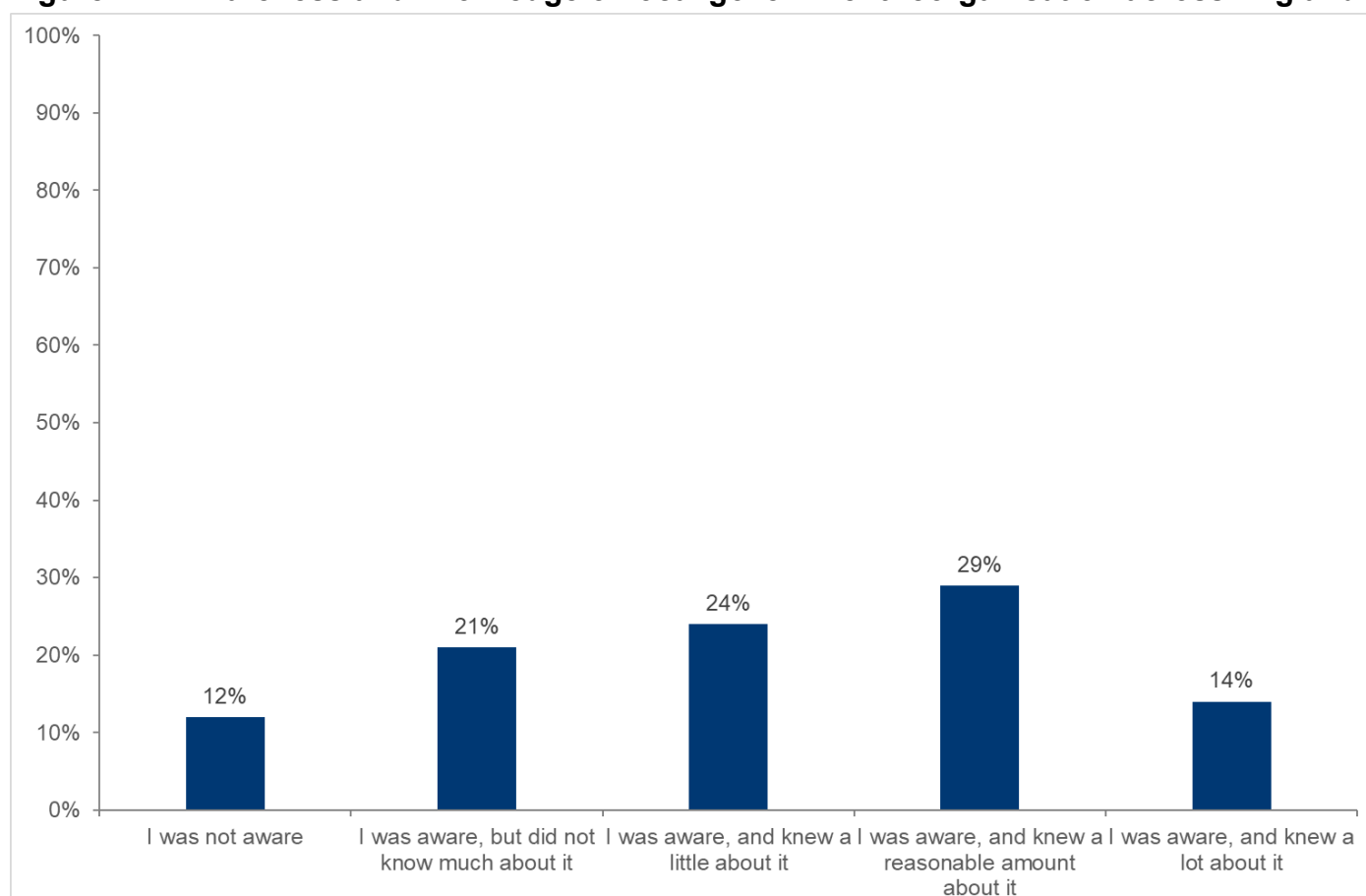
Number of respondents: 7,308.

4.4. Awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England amongst respondents in different council areas tends to be within a few percentage points of each other and/or the average, although noting that awareness is greatest amongst respondents that live in Erewash and High Peak.

Figure 4.2: Awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NED	SD
I was not aware	14%	14%	10%	14%	12%	7%	9%	19%	18%
I was aware, but did not know much about it	22%	20%	21%	20%	21%	23%	14%	20%	19%
I was aware, and knew a little about it	25%	22%	21%	24%	26%	28%	22%	22%	22%
I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it	27%	29%	31%	27%	28%	30%	34%	28%	25%
I was aware, and knew a lot about it	11%	15%	17%	15%	12%	11%	21%	11%	16%
Don't know	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

4.5. Consequently, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire there is little change in the results – the only changes are that 13% of respondents in the weighted sample are unaware (compared with 12% in the non-weighted sample), 20% are aware, but do not know much about it (compared with 21% in the non-weighted sample), and 28% are aware and know a reasonable amount in the weighted sample (compared to 29% in the non-weighted sample).

4.6. Respondents with lower levels of awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England are:

- Women (15% not aware and 24% aware but do not know much about it) compared with men (11% not aware and 18% aware but do not know much about it).

- Aged under 35 (24% not aware) compared with older respondents (12% not aware).

- People living with a disability that affects them a lot (18% not aware) compared with others (12% not aware).

- Non-white British-Irish (22% not aware) compared with White British/Irish respondents (12% not aware).

- Private renters (21% not aware and 19% aware but do not know much about it) and social renters (20% not aware and 29% aware but do not know much about it) compared with owner-occupiers (12% not aware and 21% aware but do not know much about it).

4.7. **Stakeholders in the in-depth interviews were all aware of the national and local plans and proposals for reorganisation and felt sufficiently engaged in the process to date.** That said, several said it would be **important to increase the intensity and scale of engagement to ensure effective implementation and maximise benefits**, especially around partnership and local area working:

> "I feel like to a lesser or greater degree that we've been informed, been able to share our views and influence things to date and that there are mechanisms in place to continue this, such as the Chief Executives' meetings."

> "When we move towards implementation we will need to increase the level of engagement between ourselves and the councils, beyond my level to managers, team leaders and people on the ground. We want to make sure that we maintain those relationships and working practices that are at the heart of our joint-working and tailoring our services at a neighbourhood level."

To what extent do you agree or disagree with plans to reduce the number of councils across England?

Views are generally polarised, albeit with a slightly higher proportion agreeing with the plans to reduce the number of councils across England, with views affected by levels of knowledge, and perceptions of the effectiveness of the current system and services

4.8.   43% of respondents agree with the plans to reduce the number of councils across England, including 29% that tend to agree and 14% that strongly agree.

4.9.   18% are neutral stating they neither agree nor disagree. 38% disagree with the plans to reduce the number of councils across England, including 20% that strongly disagree.

4.10.   The more respondents are aware/have knowledge of the plans the more likely they are to agree with them. For example, 33% that were not aware agree with the plans compared with 54% that know a lot about the plans.

4.11.   There is also a relationship between perceptions of the effectiveness of the current system and levels of agreement with plans to reduce the number of councils. For example, 36% of those that said the current structure of local councils is effective agree with plans to reduce the number of councils across England compared with 70% of those that said the current system is ineffective i.e. in other words, those that consider the current system ineffective are more likely to state there is a case for change.

Figure 4.3: Level of agreement with plans to reduce the number of councils across England
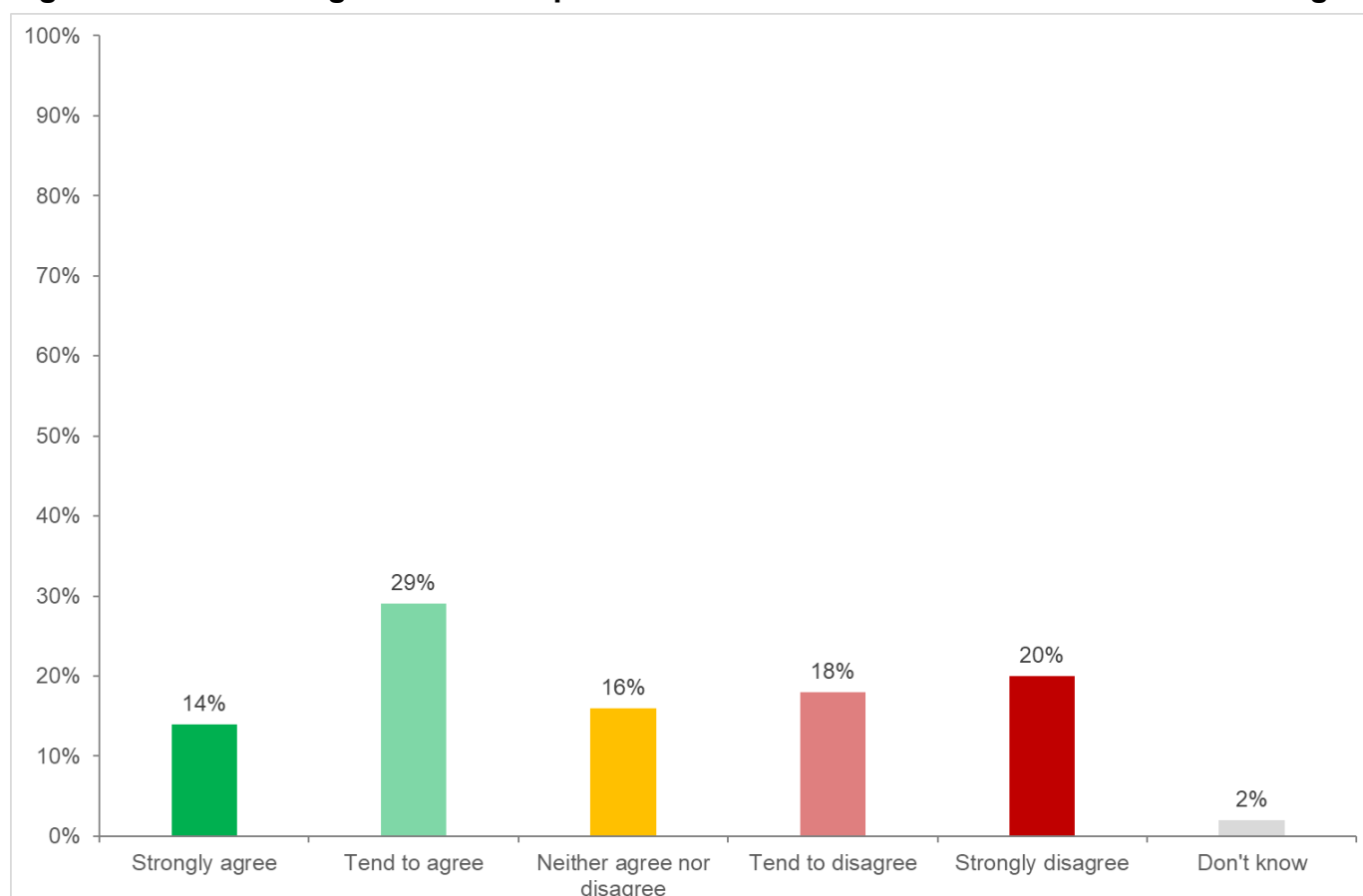
Number of respondents: 7,310.

4.12. There is some variation by area with respondents in Derby City (52% agree) and High Peak (53% agree) more likely to agree with the plans for local government reorganisation in England (the two areas that rated lowest the effectiveness of the current system). While South Derbyshire respondents are less likely to agree (31%) – an area that rated the effectiveness of the current system relatively highly.

Figure 4.4: Level of agreement with plans to reduce the number of councils across England by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NED	SD
Strongly agree	12%	17%	17%	18%	13%	13%	15%	16%	14%
Tend to agree	28%	24%	28%	34%	34%	27%	38%	31%	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%	18%	17%	16%	14%	17%	18%	15%	12%
Tend to disagree	20%	18%	16%	16%	17%	19%	16%	18%	21%
Strongly disagree	20%	20%	19%	14%	21%	22%	11%	17%	34%
Don't know	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%

4.13. When the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire there are minor changes to the overall results with them becoming slightly more positive – 15% strongly agree, 29% tend to agree, 16% neither agree nor disagree, 18% tend to disagree, 19% strongly disagree and 3% don't know.

4.14. Respondents that are less likely to agree with the plans to reduce the number of councils across England are:

- Women (39% agree) compared with men (50% agree).
- People living with a disability that affects their lives a lot (37% agree) compared with other respondents (45% agree).
- Social renters (33% agree) compared with other respondents (45% agree).

4.15. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the levels of agreement for plans to reduce the number of councils across England with 68% of respondents providing further explanation. In summary, those that **agreed** with the plans tended to state that it would **lead to efficiencies and cost savings, making the system more streamlined, modern and consequently easier to navigate and access services.** Those that are **neutral** are **uncertain about the potential benefits and impacts.** Those that **disagree** are concerned about the **loss of local representation and local knowledge,** resulting in **less responsive and tailored services to meet local needs and priorities**, as well as a **system and services that will be harder to navigate and access.** Relatedly, there are concerns that **in practice any changes will not lead to positive impacts in terms of efficiencies or cost-savings.**

4.16. The following provides more detail on the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for agreement:

- **Efficiencies, streamlining and cost-savings** (cited by approximately 25% of respondents): Fewer councils would reduce duplication and bureaucracy with less waste and administrative layers resulting in cost-savings.
- **Simplification of system and services** (cited by approximately 15%): Related to the above, a single layer/simplified structure could be easier for residents to navigate and access services, as well as partners to engage with.
- **Modernisation** (cited by approximately 5%): The current system is outdated and not fit for purpose, and change to a more modern and efficient form of government is overdue, especially in light of funding, budget and service pressures.
- **Issues with the current system and services** (cited by approximately 5%): Poor experiences of the current system or services, or concerns about local areas and quality of life provide a case for change in the hope of improvements.

Reasons for neutrality:

- **Uncertain about impact or benefits** (cited by approximately 5% of respondents): Whilst there is an appreciation that changes may have a positive impact, there is also scepticism that these will be realised in practice. This is related to concerns about effective implementation of changes and/or the negative impact of short-term disruption.
- **Lack of knowledge, information or understanding of the plans to reduce councils** (cited by approximately 2-3%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding agreement with the plans or were uncertain in practice what the changes would entail and the potential benefits.
- **General indifference or resignation** (cited by approximately 2-3%): These changes will take place regardless of the views of residents and stakeholders and in practice will not make a major difference to their lives.

Reasons for disagreement:

- **Loss of local representation and knowledge** (cited by approximately 20% of respondents): Merging councils would increase the distance between decision-makers and communities, and reduce accountability and local connections. This could result in less responsive and tailored services to meet local needs and priorities, as well as a system and services that will be harder to navigate and access.
- **Concerns over efficiency and complexity** (cited by approximately 15%): Scepticism that larger councils will be more efficient, simpler to navigate and improve access to services but rather in practice would add complexity and bureaucracy.
- **Value for money concerns** (cited by approximately 10%): Relatedly, the potential lack of efficiencies combined with the costs of reorganisation could outweigh financial and other benefits. Similarly, concern that the proposed benefits may be over-stated and not backed by evidence.
- **Preference for reform within existing structure** (cited by approximately 5%): As a result of the above concerns, some respondents said existing councils should be improved rather than replaced.
- **No need for change** (cited by approximately 5%): The system is not broken, so there is not a need to fix it, especially with risk that any changes could lead to less effective councils and services.

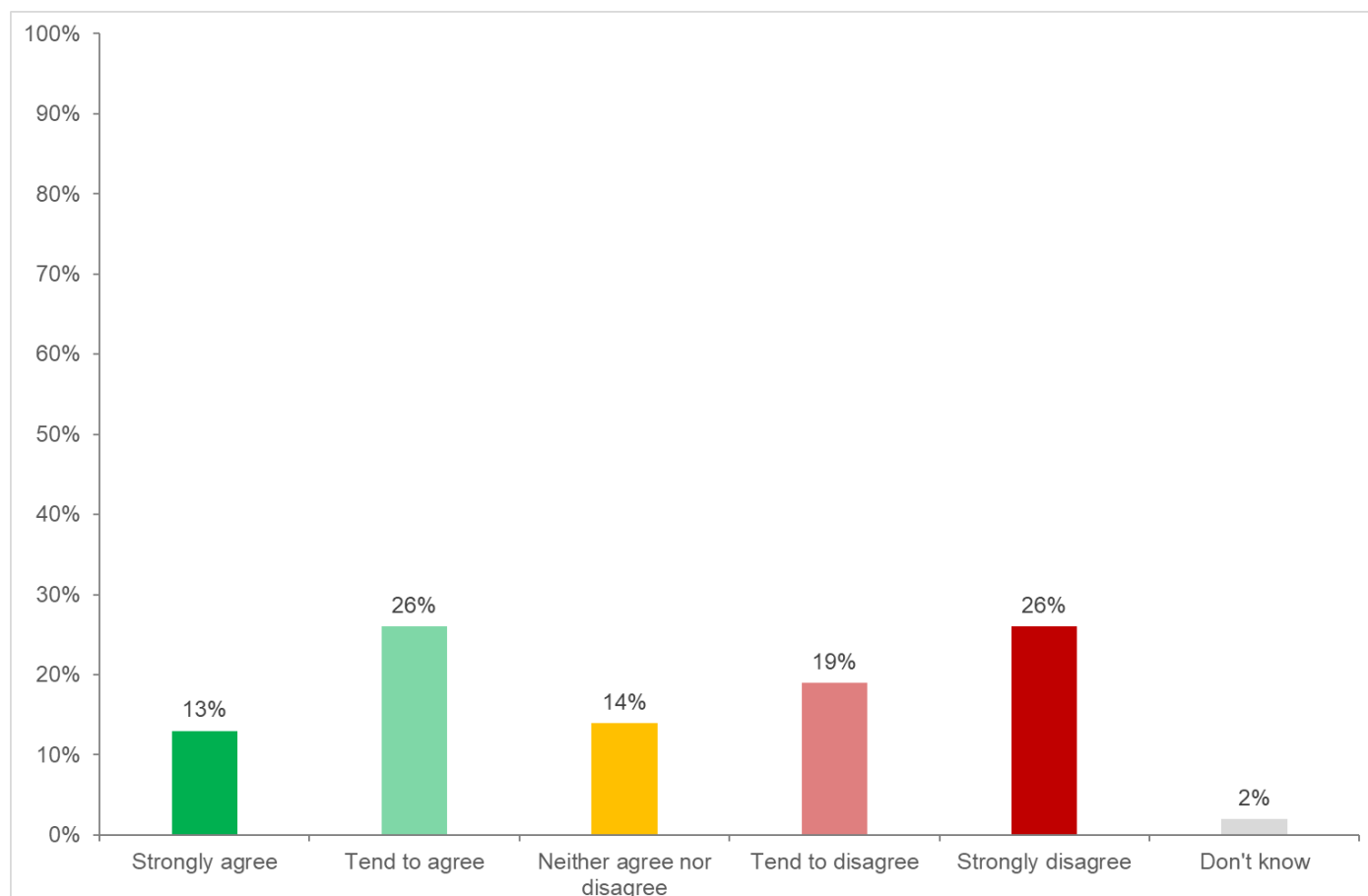# Section 5: Local Government Reorganisation across Derbyshire

Introduction

5.1.	This section presents the proposals for reorganisation of local government across Derbyshire, including the proposal to replace the ten existing councils with two councils in Derbyshire and three options for the proposed new councils.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace the ten existing councils with two councils to run local government across the whole of Derbyshire?

Views are polarised, albeit with slightly more disagreeing with the proposal to replace the ten existing councils with two councils across Derbyshire, with responses influenced by perceptions of the effectiveness of the current system and in principle agreement or otherwise with the wider Government plans to reorganise local government across England

5.2.	39% of respondents agree with the proposal, including 26% that tend to agree and 13% that strongly agree.

5.3.	14% are neutral stating they neither agree nor disagree. 45% disagree with the proposal to replace the ten existing councils with two councils across Derbyshire, including 26% that strongly disagree.

5.4.	There is a relationship between perceptions of the effectiveness of the current system and levels of agreement with the proposal. For example, 24% of those that said the current structure of local councils is effective agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils in Derbyshire compared with 64% of those that said the current system is ineffective. i.e. in other words, those that consider the current system ineffective are more likely to state there is a case for change.

5.5.	Likewise, those that agree with the Government's plans to reorganise local government are more likely to agree with the proposal in Derbyshire to reduce the number of councils. For example, 79% that agree with the Government's plans also agree with the proposal in Derbyshire compared with just 4% of those that disagree with the Government's plans, highlighting 'in principle' agreement/disagreement with the plans and proposals.

Figure 5.1: Level of agreement with proposal to replace ten existing councils with two across Derbyshire

Number of respondents: 7,318.

5.6. There is similar variation by area as in the previous question regarding the wider plans for local government reorganisation. Derby City (51% agree) and High Peak (55% agree) respondents are more likely to agree with the proposals in Derbyshire. While South Derbyshire respondents are less likely to agree (28%). Part of the reason for these variations are that respondents in Derby City and High Peak tend to perceive the current structure and approach to service delivery as benefiting from change, while those in South Derbyshire are more positive about the current system. Relatedly, Derby City respondents said they can see the benefits of a unitary local council approach given they already live within a unitary authority. In the case of South Derbyshire there appear to be some concerns about a loss of local representation and knowledge, alongside concerns that rural areas may not be served as well in a larger authority with a core urban centre such as Derby City.

Figure 5.2: Level of agreement with proposal to replace ten existing councils with two across Derbyshire by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NED	SD
Strongly agree	10%	12%	19%	21%	11%	12%	15%	15%	13%
Tend to agree	24%	25%	23%	30%	29%	24%	40%	27%	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	15%	13%	15%	15%	12%	14%	15%	14%	9%
Tend to disagree	20%	20%	17%	16%	20%	19%	14%	17%	18%
Strongly disagree	28%	28%	24%	16%	26%	29%	15%	24%	44%
Don't know	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%

5.7.   When the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire there are minor changes to the overall results with them becoming slightly more positive – 15% strongly agree, 26% tend to agree, 14% neither agree nor disagree, 18% tend to disagree, 25% strongly disagree and 2% don't know.

5.8.   Respondents that are less likely to agree with the proposal to replace ten existing councils with two across Derbyshire are (similar patterns as per the previous question on wider plans for reorganisation across England):

- Women (35% agree) compared with men (45% agree).
- People living with a disability that affects their lives a lot (33% agree) compared with other respondents (41% agree).
- Social renters (31% agree) compared with other respondents (41% agree).

5.9.   **Stakeholders in the in-depth interviews were generally supportive of local government reorganisation (both in general and locally)**, in part as a way of **modernising** and also as they could see the potential benefits for **streamlining and partnership working:**

"Reorganisation is just a thing that happens in the public sector or indeed in any sector. You can't stand still. It's just about modernising. It is something that the health sector does regularly, so it is not a surprise or anything new."

"On paper there are obvious benefits to reorganisation and having less councils and larger councils. The two-tier system has some advantages around local area and neighbourhood working, but there is duplication and unnecessary layers. There's obvious benefits to making everything more streamline. From my perspective it will make partnership working a lot easier."

"We prefer to work with two larger local authorities. The more partners there are, there more organisations there are, it makes it more difficult around things like referrals and discharges, which can then lead to variability and inconsistencies, as well as duplication, wasted resources and poor communication."

5.10. Several stakeholders also said they **tended to organise in a north-south way** and therefore the proposal for two local authorities (one in the north and one in the south) seems appropriate and will help lead to further benefits:

> "In principle, we support reorganisation and the move to unitary councils to support strategic working, partnership working and efficiencies. The two local authority model seems sensible in being organised north and south, so it is now just a matter of where the line is drawn. One of the benefits of the two council model is that it will resolve issues like the footprint in the south, where hospitals are split between two authorities currently, which has issues because there are currently different processes with referrals and discharges."

> "The north-south model makes sense and seems both intuitive and also fits with the way we organise, which itself is based around the flows of residents. So it feels both natural and appropriate and would work well with us and local people. Within this, I'm fairly agnostic about the detail of the options and which parts of Derbyshire are in which new authority. We just have our building blocks, our neighbourhood teams, and will adjust accordingly."

5.11. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the levels of agreement for the proposal to replace the ten existing councils with two across Derbyshire with 65% of respondents providing further explanation. In summary, **many of the reasons are similar to those provided in the preceding questions about the wider plans for local government reorganisation in England.** In addition, some that disagreed raised **concerns that larger councils could lead to inequity and inconsistencies in access to services and service quality in rural areas compared with urban areas**, especially where a large urban area is at the centre of the new council. Similarly, some raised concerns about **loss of sense of place and identity.**

5.12. Some respondents (approximately 2-3%) also said that a **one council solution should be considered across the whole of Derbyshire to maximise the benefits and avoid splitting the county into two.** That said, some of these respondents and others noted that two councils could be a pragmatic "middle ground" between keeping the current system and moving to one large unitary and/or that Derbyshire is too big for a single council, so two may balance efficiency with manageability.

5.13. In addition, some respondents said that the plans and proposals are a **Government agenda being imposed on local areas with limited benefit to local residents** (cited by approximately 2-3%).

5.14.   The following provides more detail on the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for agreement:

- **Efficiencies, streamlining and cost-savings** (cited by approximately 20% of respondents): Fewer councils would reduce duplication and bureaucracy with less waste and administrative layers resulting in cost-savings and potentially improved services.

- **Simplification of system and services** (cited by approximately 10%): Related to the above, a single layer/simplified structure could be easier for residents to navigate and access services, as well as partners to engage with (resulting in more joined-up/partnership working, including between the two new councils).

Reasons for neutrality:

- **Balanced views** (cited by approximately 5% of respondents): Whilst there is an appreciation that changes may have a positive impact, there is also scepticism that these will be realised in practice. Similarly, some respondents said that the current system works satisfactorily and that change is not essential, even if it leads to improvements.

- **Lack of knowledge, information or understanding of the proposals** (cited by approximately 2-3%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding agreement with the proposals or were uncertain in practice what the changes would entail and the potential benefits.

Reasons for disagreement:

- **Loss of local representation, knowledge and accountability** (cited by approximately 20% of respondents): Concern that two councils would be more detached from local communities and not responsive to local issues, needs and priorities. This includes less access to councillors and decision-makers, with the concern heightened in more rural areas located away from urban centres.

- **Rural inequality and urban-rural divide** (cited by approximately 10%): Concern that larger councils will not be able to tailor services to suit rural areas and that rural areas will receive inconsistent service provision or be deprioritised compared to urban areas, as well as suffer from some of the challenges in urban areas and councils currently serving those areas. This view is heightened in areas (such as South Derbyshire and potentially Amber Valley) where a relatively large urban area will be at the centre of the new council in the case of Derby City, and where some respondents in these areas do not want to take on the problems and challenges experienced by the council. Relatedly, some respondents suggested that Derby City could be a separate council in its own right to avoid some of these concerns and provide services specific to an urban area.

- **Feels unintuitive and not linked to natural boundaries** (cited by approximately 5%): Related to the above point, there are some concerns that established local authority boundaries linked to sense of place, history and culture will be eroded.

- **Concerns about implementation** (cited by approximately 5%): Scepticism that proposed benefits may not be realised and concern that disruption and confusion in making changes may outweigh benefits, at least in the short-term. This includes not realising the potential financial benefits and making it harder to navigate councils and access services.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option A?

(Option A is a north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being part of the northern council along with High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North-East Derbyshire, Chesterfield and Bolsover District. The southern council would include South Derbyshire, Erewash and Derby City)

More respondents disagree than agree with Option A with local area variations influencing responses alongside, to a lesser extent, in principle agreement or otherwise with local government reorganisation

5.15. 36% of respondents agree with Option A, including 22% that tend to agree and 14% that strongly agree.

5.16. 16% are neutral stating they neither agree nor disagree. 46% disagree with Option A, including 24% that strongly disagree.

5.17. Those that agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils in Derbyshire (and also those that agree with the wider Government plans for reorganisation of local government in England) are more likely to agree with Option A. For example, 45% that agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils also agree with Option A compared with 28% of those that disagree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils.

Figure 5.3: Level of agreement with Option A
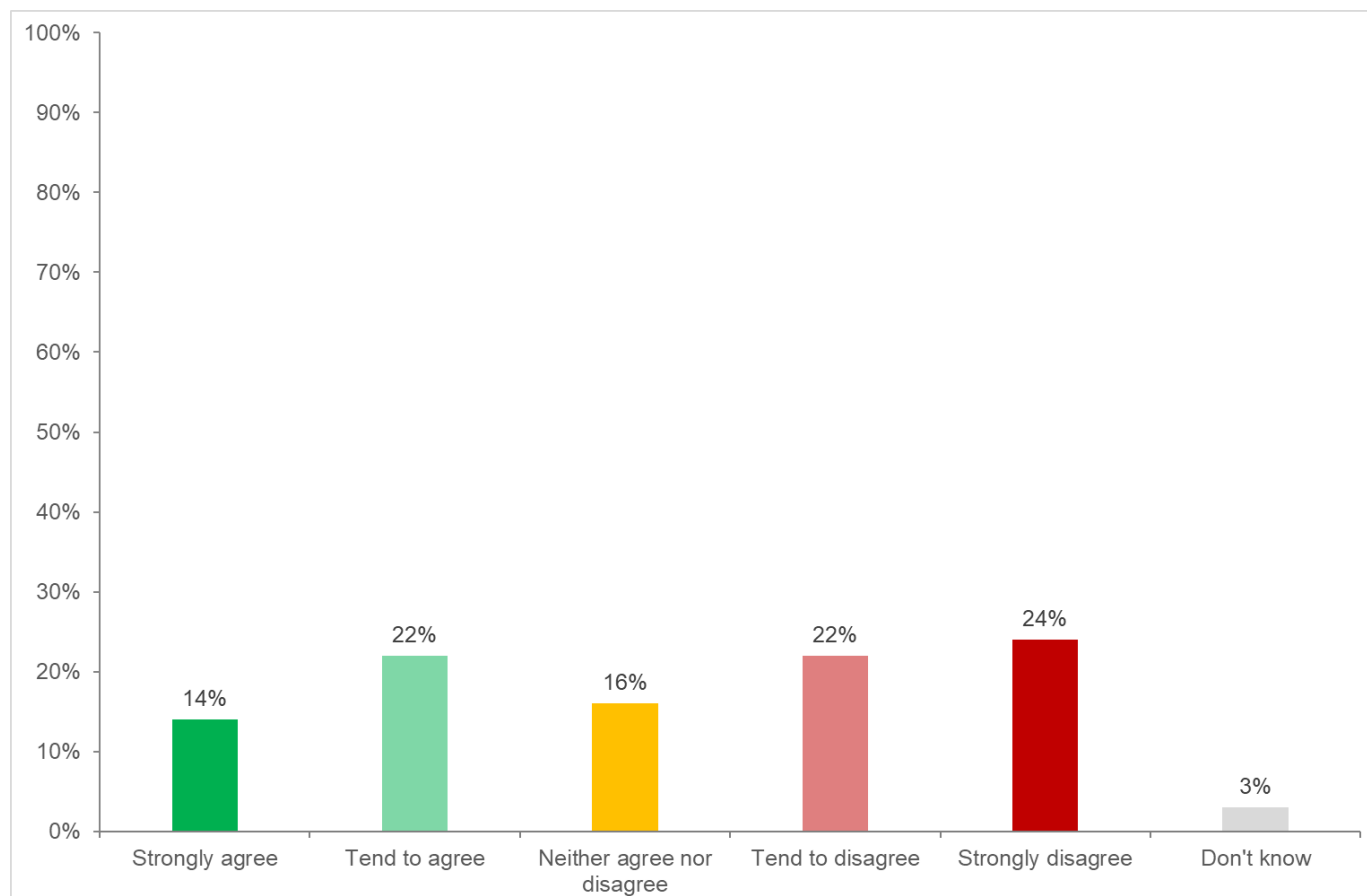
Number of respondents: 7,287.

5.18. Respondents living in Amber Valley council area are much more likely to agree with this option (54%) than respondents in other areas. Also, to a lesser extent, respondents living in the Derbyshire Dales council area are more positive than some other respondents with 38% in agreement with Option A.

Figure 5.4: Level of agreement with Option A by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NED	SD
Strongly agree	28%	10%	8%	9%	15%	8%	8%	9%	6%
Tend to agree	26%	15%	22%	20%	23%	17%	19%	23%	22%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%	23%	19%	16%	18%	17%	20%	20%	14%
Tend to disagree	14%	25%	26%	26%	23%	24%	28%	25%	19%
Strongly disagree	19%	25%	21%	26%	19%	32%	21%	20%	37%
Don't know	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%

5.19. When the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire there are changes to the overall results with lower levels of agreement – 11% strongly agree, 21% tend to agree, 17% neither agree nor disagree, 23% tend to disagree, 25% strongly disagree and 3% don't know.

5.20. Levels of agreement are broadly similar across different demographic groups.

5.21. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the levels of agreement for Option A with 62% of respondents providing further explanation. The following outlines the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for agreement:

- **Logical/natural division** (cited by approximately 15% of respondents): Makes geographical sense, in keeping with local identities and connections and reflects that the north and south of Derbyshire are naturally distinct in terms of needs, identity, or infrastructure (this was particularly stressed by Amber Valley respondents and also Derbyshire Dales respondents).
- **Fair and balanced** (cited by approximately 5%): Offers a more balanced split in terms of size, workload, and resources with a clean line between north and south (especially cited by Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales respondents).
- **Maintains local council boundaries** (cited by approximately 5%): Avoids any splitting of existing local councils (a particular concern of Amber Valley respondents), which could be challenging and problematic, affecting the successful implementation and undermining the potential benefits. Likewise, there is alignment with existing services or partnership arrangements, making it a lower risk option by supporting a degree of continuity.
- **Rural focus** (cited by approximately 5%): Avoids being part of a new local council that would have a large urban centre at its heart in the form of Derby City with consequent perceived risks of rural inequity and inconsistency in service access and delivery (this is a particular concern of Amber Valley respondents).

Reasons for neutrality:

- **Balanced views** (cited by approximately 2-3% of respondents): Can see the pros and cons of Option A in that it offers a neat split, but with flaws such as an imbalance in size.

- **Lack of knowledge or information** (cited by approximately 2-3%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding Option A.

Reasons for disagreement:

- **Geographical and community misfit** (cited by approximately 20% of respondents): Option A does not reflect natural community ties, separating areas that tend to have close associations with one another such as some parts of Derby and Erewash from some parts of Amber Valley. Some respondents suggest that Derbyshire is too diverse (e.g. urban and rural) and complex to be divided neatly and simply into a north and south option.

- **Imbalanced** (cited by approximately 15%): The north council is too large relative to the south council with a consequent impact on resources and service delivery for the south. Likewise, the north could be too large, with too broad a mix of communities to manage effectively and therefore undermine potential benefits.

- **Derby City dominance** (cited by approximately 5%): Derby City could dominate the southern council, leading to neglect of surrounding rural or suburban areas. Concern that funding and resources would be pulled into Derby City, leaving outlying communities under-served. This is a particular concern of respondents from South Derbyshire.

- **Other options preferred and/or general opposition to change** (cited by approximately 5%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B?

(Option B is a north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being part of the southern council along with South Derbyshire, Erewash and Derby City. The northern council would include High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North-East Derbyshire, Chesterfield and Bolsover District)

As with Option A, more respondents disagree than agree with Option B with local area variations influencing responses alongside in principle agreement or otherwise with local government reorganisation

5.22.   34% of respondents agree with Option B, including 22% that tend to agree and 12% that strongly agree.

5.23.   17% are neutral stating they neither agree nor disagree. 45% disagree with Option B, including 28% that strongly disagree.

5.24.   As with Option A, those that agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils in Derbyshire (and also those that agree with the wider Government plans for reorganisation of local government in England) are more likely to agree with Option B. For example, 51% that agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils also agree with Option B compared with 20% of those that disagree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils.

Figure 5.5: Level of agreement with Option B
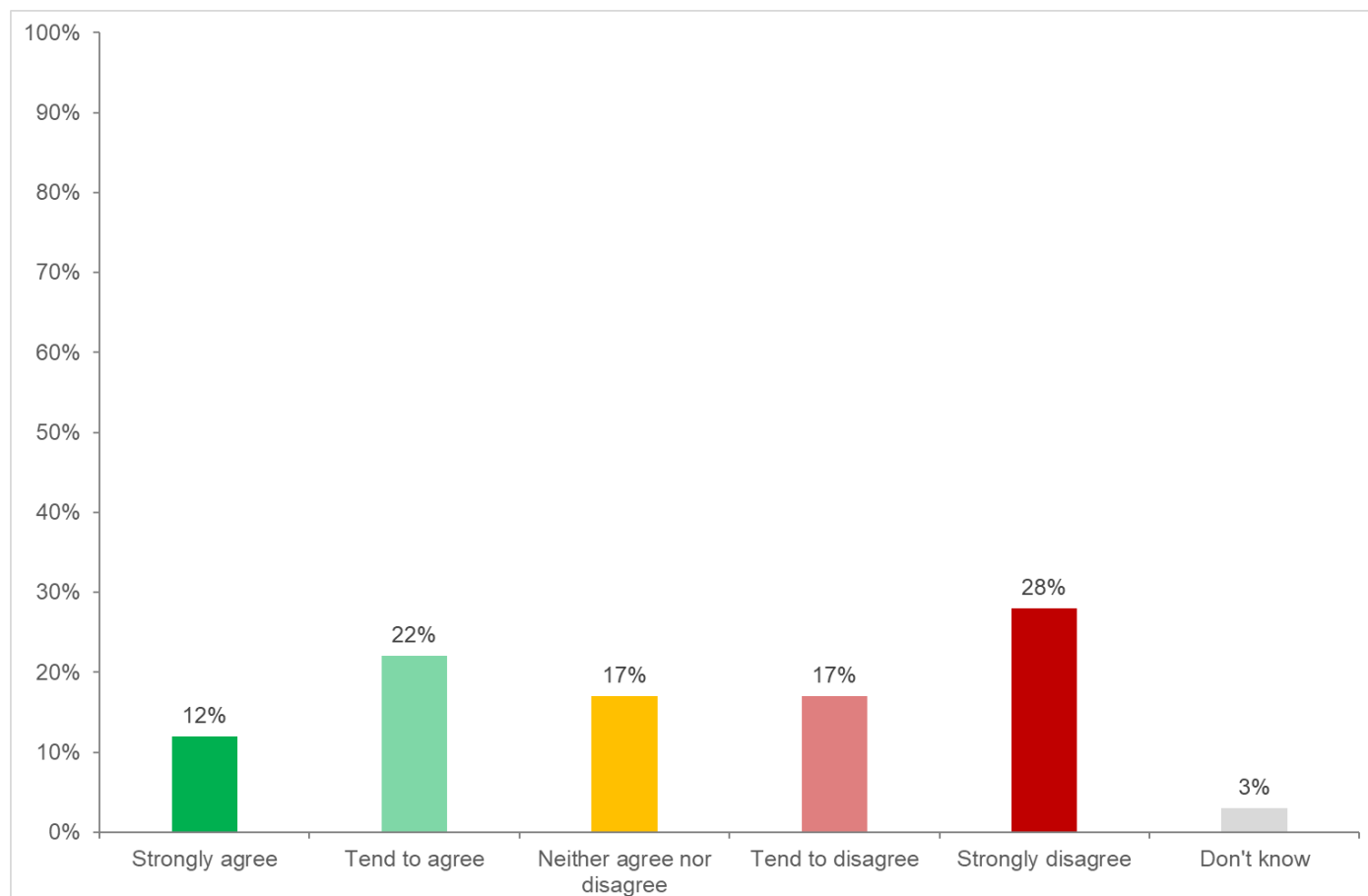
Number of respondents: 7,264.

5.25. Respondents living in the High Peak council area (55% agree) and Derby City council area (49% agree) are more likely to agree with this option than other respondents. In the case of High Peak respondents, this is because they tended to see Option B as a fairer and more balanced approach in terms of size and resources, while they also felt it is a more natural split in terms of geography, identity and connections. Similar reasons are also expressed by Derby City respondents.

5.26. In contrast, respondents in the Amber Valley council area (22% agree) and South Derbyshire council area (23% agree) are less likely than other respondents to agree. In the case of Amber Valley respondents this is largely to do with their preference for Option A, which in part is driven by concerns around being in a southern council with a large urban centre in the form of Derby City, while Amber Valley respondents also said their connections and identity are more north than south (which is in slight contrast with some of the findings in section 2 around movement across Derbyshire). South Derbyshire respondents tended to not agree with Option B because they saw it as a worse option than A, creating a perceived too-large and unbalanced unitary authority that risks diluting South Derbyshire's voice and resources due to the inclusion of Amber Valley. Likewise, respondents in South Derbyshire felt less connected to Amber Valley than other nearby areas. They are also concerned about being in a council with Derby City, as per the reasons outlined relating to Option A.

Figure 5.6: Level of agreement with Option B by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NED	SD
Strongly agree	9%	10%	14%	20%	12%	12%	21%	11%	9%
Tend to agree	13%	25%	27%	29%	24%	24%	34%	30%	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%	22%	21%	15%	22%	17%	20%	22%	17%
Tend to disagree	15%	18%	16%	17%	20%	19%	13%	15%	17%
Strongly disagree	49%	22%	18%	17%	20%	26%	9%	19%	41%
Don't know	2%	2%	5%	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	2%

5.27. When the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire there are changes to the overall figures resulting in higher levels of agreement – 14% strongly agree, 25% tend to agree, 18% neither agree nor disagree, 17% tend to disagree, 24% strongly disagree and 3% don't know.

5.28. Levels of agreement are broadly similar across different demographic groups.

5.29. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the levels of agreement for Option B with 59% of respondents providing further explanation. The following outlines the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for agreement:

- **Fairer and more balanced** (cited by approximately 15% of respondents): Compared to Option A, this option is a fairer and more balanced division between north and south, which has the potential be more sustainable and achieve more equitable benefits for both areas.
- **More natural geography and connections** (cited by approximately 10%): Option B maintains the close and natural connections between areas such as Derby, Amber Valley and Erewash (although some respondents in Amber Valley said that they do not have connections with Derby and look northwards).
- **Middle ground option** (cited by approximately 5%): Seen as the best of the three options and a good compromise between options A and C.

Reasons for neutrality:

- **Balanced views and all options have some merit** (cited by approximately 5% of respondents): Can see the pros and cons of Option B, primarily that it is more balanced, but also that it may have challenges as indicated below.
- **Lack of knowledge or information** (cited by approximately 2-3%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding Option B.

Reasons for disagreement:

- **Urban-Rural concerns** (cited by approximately 15% of respondents): Option B risks forcing rural areas (such as those in Amber Valley) into a structure dominated by urban centres with a consequent negative impact on meeting local needs, and service access and delivery.
- **Derby City dominance** (cited by approximately 10%): Relatedly, as similar with Option A, some respondents did not want to be linked with Derby City. This is partly due to lack of connections and partly due to concern that it could dominate the southern council in terms of voice, funding and resources, leading to neglect of surrounding rural or suburban areas (these concerns were particularly cited by Amber Valley and South Derbyshire respondents).
- **Lack of connection with the south and/or Derby City** (cited by approximately 5%): Respondents look north rather than south, especially some in Amber Valley, in terms of connections and identity.
- **Other options preferred and/or general opposition to change** (cited by approximately 5%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option C?

(Option C is a north / south split of the county, with different parishes from Amber Valley joining each of the two councils, depending on where they best fit. The northern council would include High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North-East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover District and some parishes of Amber Valley. The southern council would include South Derbyshire, Erewash, Derby City and other parishes of Amber Valley)

Over half disagree with Option C and just over a fifth agree, with Derby City respondents more positive than others

5.30. 21% of respondents agree with Option C, including 13% that tend to agree and 8% that strongly agree.

5.31. 18% are neutral stating they neither agree nor disagree. 58% disagree with Option C, including 38% that strongly disagree.

5.32. As with Options A and B, those that agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils in Derbyshire (and also those that agree with the wider Government plans for reorganisation of local government in England) are more likely to agree with Option C than other respondents (although only a minority agree). For example, 33% that agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils also agree with Option C compared with 12% of those that disagree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils.

Figure 5.7: Level of agreement with Option C
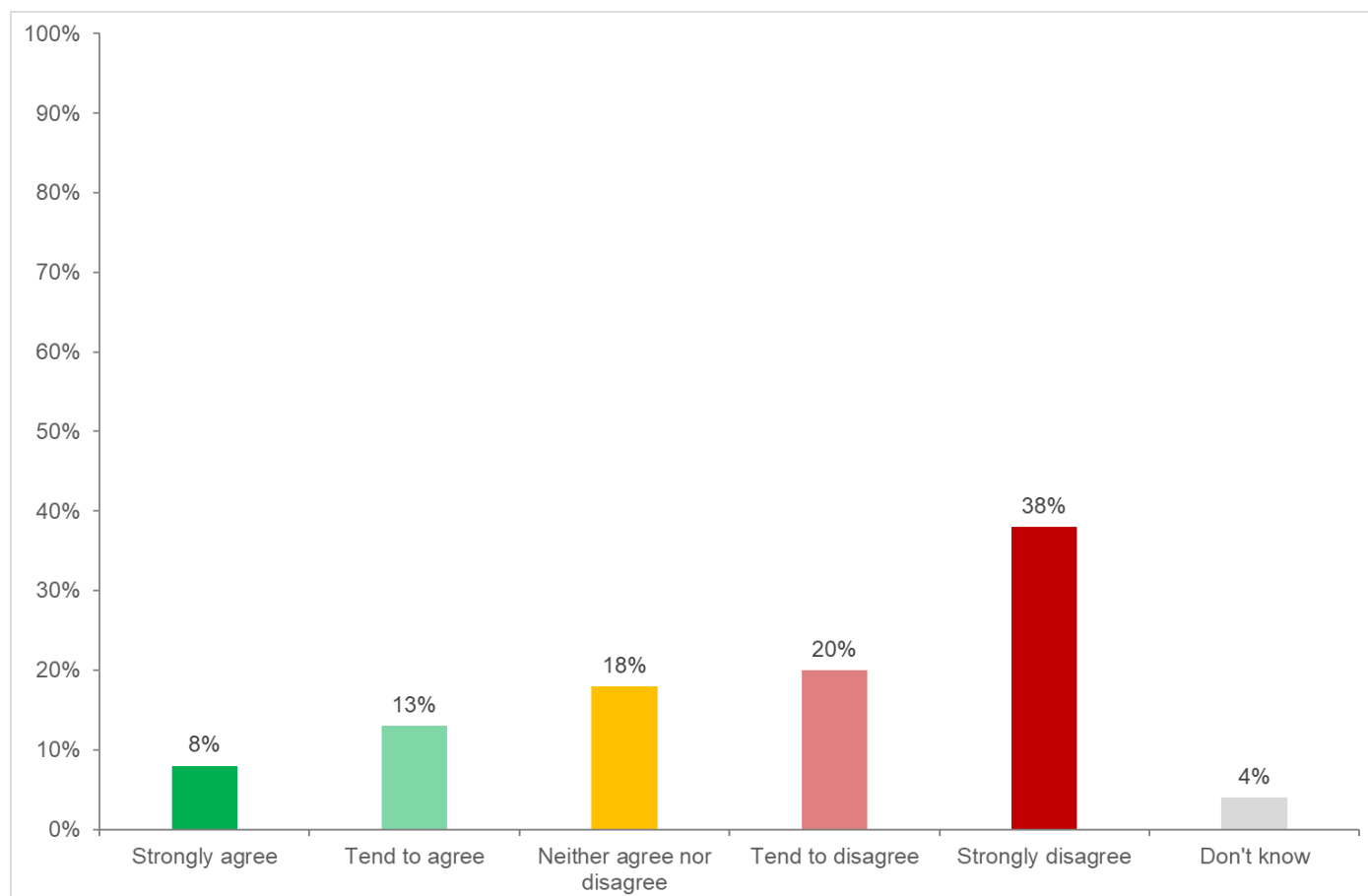
Number of respondents: 7,258.

5.33. Respondents living the Derby City council area (36% agree) are more likely to agree with this option than other respondents.

Figure 5.8: Level of agreement with Option C by area

	AV	B	C	DC	DD	E	HP	NED	SD
Strongly agree	10%	5%	8%	12%	6%	7%	4%	7%	5%
Tend to agree	13%	12%	11%	24%	14%	12%	10%	13%	12%
Neither agree nor disagree	12%	23%	26%	15%	19%	18%	24%	21%	15%
Tend to disagree	13%	21%	20%	20%	21%	24%	25%	22%	21%
Strongly disagree	49%	35%	30%	25%	35%	37%	32%	32%	44%
Don't know	2%	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%	5%	5%	2%

5.34. When the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Derbyshire there are changes to the overall figures resulting in slightly higher levels of agreement – 8% strongly agree, 15% tend to agree, 18% neither agree nor disagree, 20% tend to disagree, 34% strongly disagree and 4% don't know.

5.35. Levels of agreement are broadly similar across different demographic groups.

5.36. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the levels of agreement for Option C with 59% of respondents providing further explanation. Most respondents that **disagree with Option C** said that they **oppose splitting-up Amber Valley** (cited by approximately 20% of respondents). The reasons for this are two-fold – firstly it is in part about **identity and connections** towards the north and also splitting Amber Valley is considered 'divisive', 'unnatural' and 'unfair'. Secondly, there are concerns that restructuring under Option C would be **more problematic as it would involve dividing an existing council**, which could result in higher costs and practical issues undermining the potential benefits of reorganisation. In addition, similar points were raised by those that disagree with Option C as those raised with other options including concerns over the **urban-rural divide and Derby City dominance.** Likewise, others that disagreed mentioned they **prefer the other options to Option C.**

5.37. Those in **agreement with Option C** felt that it makes the **most geographical sense and is the more even north-south split** providing for balanced councils, population and resources. Respondents living in the **Derby City** council area were more likely than other respondents to agree with Option C because it **groups together urban/suburban areas closely tied to Derby**, recognising, as they perceive it, that large parts of Amber Valley function as suburbs of Derby. Consequently, these respondents feel that Option C **reflects the real geography of daily life and would align council boundaries with existing patterns of service and amenity use.** Derby City respondents often contrasted Option C favourably with Options A and B, which they felt did not adequately reflect Derby's urban pull. Rural and district residents, on the other hand, leaned toward Options A or B, which they viewed as simpler and less disruptive to community boundaries.

Reflecting on the three options, which option do you prefer?

(Question only asked to residents that live or work in Amber Valley)

Option A is the preferred approach by almost half of Amber Valley respondents, followed by Option B

5.38. 47% of Amber Valley respondents prefer Option A, 21% Option B and 16% Option C, while 12% do not have a preference and 4% do not know.

Figure 5.9: Preferred option (Amber Valley)
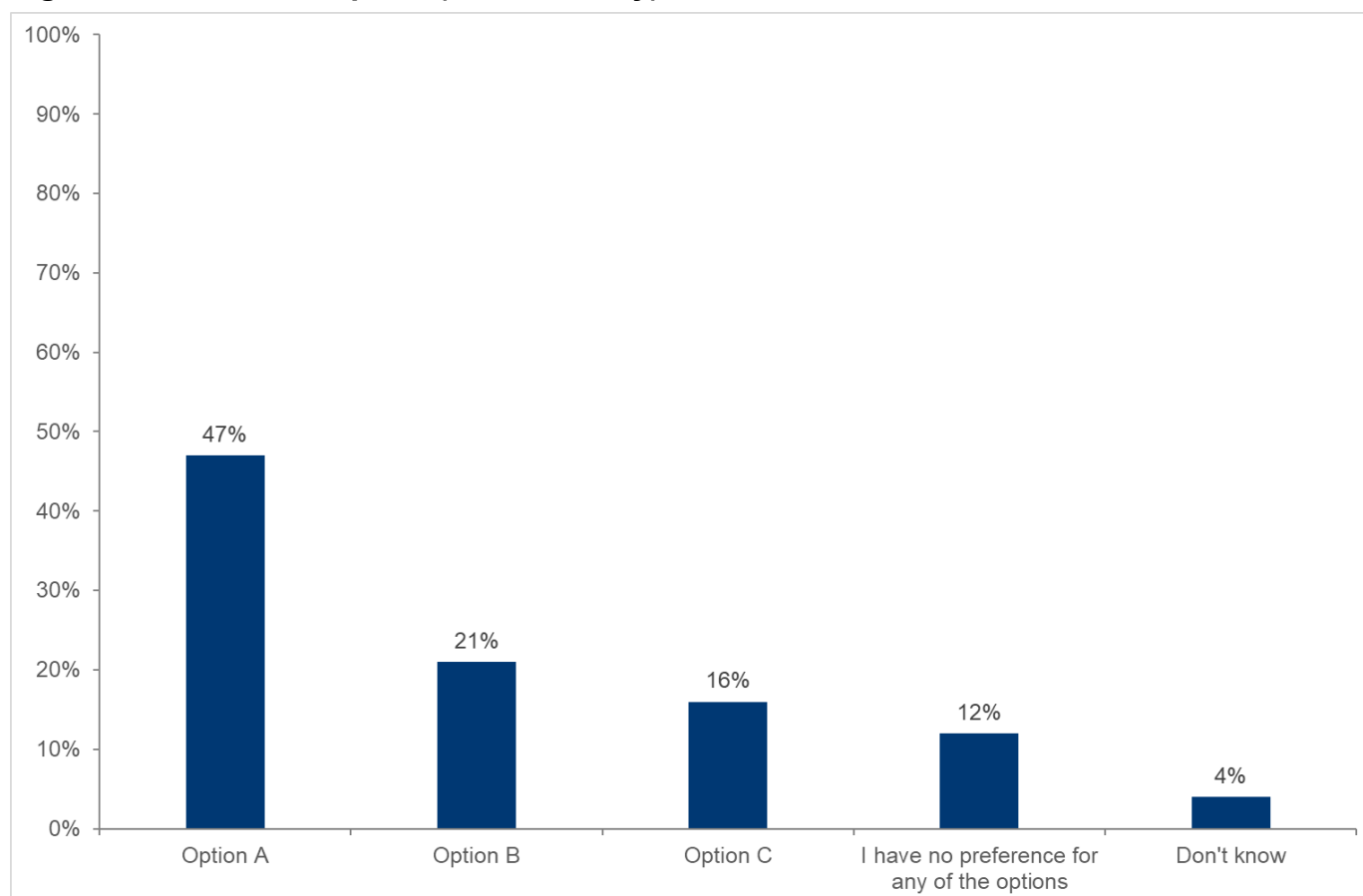
Number of respondents: 1,875.

5.39. Respondents were asked to explain their answers with 57% of Amber Valley respondents providing further explanation. The comments tended to reflect those made earlier about the plans, proposals and specific options. **Option A** is (often reluctantly) preferred because it is the **'least disruptive' or 'simplest' option** and/or **'more natural' or 'geographically makes sense'** reflecting connections, identity and practical ties. **Option B** was supported by those who felt it **balanced population and resources** better, but criticised it for creating unnatural divisions. Some Amber Valley respondents viewed **Option C** as the **fairest split by geography and identity**, but others strongly opposed it for **'splitting Amber Valley'** or breaking community links.

5.40. A strand of responses **rejected all three options outright**, describing them as unnecessary, potentially undermining local representation, and service access and delivery, while the financial and service benefits may be difficult to achieve in practice.

5.41. Some **stakeholders in the in-depth interviews** said that **inclusion of Amber Valley in the north (Option A) did not necessarily fit with their use of services:**

> "From a health perspective, Amber Valley residents tend to look south rather than north, accessing healthcare providers in the south. It will be more impactful if health and local authorities are aligned, for example if people use hospitals in the south then it would make sense that their discharge is managed by the local authority in the south rather than the one in the north."

The view from businesses

5.42. 232 business owners or leaders from across Derbyshire responded to the consultation questionnaire, alongside an in-depth interview with East Midlands Chamber and two engagement events - Destination Chesterfield Business Breakfast (attended by c25 local businesses) and a session hosted by Marketing Derby (attended by over 50 Derby-based businesses). The following represent key points and themes from businesses:

- Businesses are **slightly more in agreement with the plans to reduce the number of councils across England** (48% agree compared with 43% of other respondents) and **proposal to replace the existing ten councils in Derbyshire with two new unitary councils** (43% agree compared with 39% of other respondents). Businesses tended to share similar views as residents about the specific options, although some mentioned that **the final decision should include consideration of economic links and opportunities to promote economic growth.**

- Businesses that agree with local government reorganisation note **opportunities to improve efficiencies and reduce duplication, alongside streamlining and improving access to services and support.** This includes reducing red tape and bureaucracy on issues that affect businesses, as well as inconsistencies due to operating across multiple local councils with different approaches and policies, such as business support, access to finance and grants, and planning.

- Businesses want the new councils to **create business-friendly environments and prioritise economic growth and the support provided to businesses.** With this in mind, they want the two new local councils to work closely together with a 'pan-Derbyshire' and regional mind-set, including developing a **singular economic growth strategy.**

- This said, they want such a **strategy to be sufficiently nuanced to provide appropriate economic growth interventions and business support that helps different types of businesses** - both rural and urban businesses, as well as different business sectors and sizes.

- Businesses also see an **opportunity for local government reorganisation to help improve the local planning system**, making it more efficient, streamlined, clear and easier to access with the aim of supporting economic growth rather than acting as a barrier. This can be achieved by developing **consistent planning approaches, policies and service provision rather than working with multiple local councils.**

- However, businesses also raised **concerns that the proposed changes could temporarily disrupt services that businesses rely on**, while there was also some scepticism whether the changes would achieve the proposed benefits in practice.

Next steps and points for consideration

5.43. **Stakeholders in the in-depth interviews** were fairly agnostic about the different options. They were just keen that **decision-making is relatively quick and collaborative, implementation is smooth and that the benefits and impacts are maximised:**

> "I don't really have a preferred option. The right option will really be in the implementation, creating a positive environment to deliver quality services, economic growth and improving the quality of life of local residents."

> "To date this has felt a very political process, understandably. But it needs to move on to looking to get this thing done and done as well as possible. I'd like to see the councils put the politics to one side now and move ahead collaboratively and speedily. It's then about making the process as painless as possible and building a new structure and approach, which leads to positive outcomes."

> "The sooner we know the way forward, the sooner we can start planning ourselves both practically and strategically. There needs to be a smooth transition both strategically and operationally. Practically to make sure we adapt to whatever changes they make and strategically to make sure we're aligned in our approaches with the new councils and have the right relationships and partnerships in place."

> "We don't have a strong opinion either way, we'll just work with it. Our only concern is that the National Park isn't split between two different authorities, which would make it very difficult for us."

5.44. This said, some stakeholders said that **Option C is more problematic for them because they are broadly organised around local authority boundaries, although this would not be insurmountable:**

> "My only view is on Option C really. I find that slightly curious as it just feels a bit more difficult to deliver, splitting an existing local council and all the administrative aspects that go with that. It would also be more of a challenge for us as we are organised around the local authority boundaries mainly. It wouldn't be a major challenge, but we'd have to consider if we'd need to re-structure slightly to adapt to this."

> "The one option I'm less convinced about is the one in which Amber Valley is split (Option C). I can see why on paper this may look attractive and balanced, but in practice I'm concerned about splitting historical communities and established local services, organisations and relationships. It just seems more challenging, although not something that can't be managed if it's felt to be the best option."

5.45.   Relatedly, stakeholders are **practical and pragmatic about adapting to any future changes regardless of the option selected**, although they would appreciate as much support and preparation as possible to minimise disruption**:**

> "We will just adapt. We will make any necessary tweaks and slot in with whatever is decided. Our focus will mainly be on just getting on with our day-to-day business. It will help us to have as much notice and support required to adapt so we can do this smoothly."

> "We're experienced around transformation and will just dock in with the new structures as appropriate. We just need to make sure the structures are in place to achieve this such as maintaining the conversations at a strategic level, but also establishing sub-groups with key colleagues across organisations on specific changes or issues. We just need to work together to manage the transition."

5.46.   Some stakeholders said that the **changes and implementation should be mindful of other reform/changes/reorganisation taking place across the public space,** such as NHS reform, evolution around the role of the Combined Authority and also potential DEFRA reform around the governance of National Parks:

> "I don't have any major concerns around adapting, we'll just plug in as required. That said, colleagues should be mindful that the NHS is also undergoing reform currently, including around the ICB, to make things more seamless and efficient. I'm also aware of changes and reform regionally with the Combined Authority. So any changes should be aware of this and ideally they would be managed alongside each other to achieve synergies and maximise benefits."

5.47.   Stakeholders wanted the councils to **focus now more strategically, at a pan-Derbyshire and regional level** (including the two new councils working well with each other and the Combined Authority)**, as well as on generating positive social and economic impacts:**

> "The conversation to date has felt quite detail focussed, small picture stuff and practical, but I'd now like the councils to start thinking bigger picture. What will be the vision for these new councils and the areas they operate in? How will they work in partnership with each other and with local partners, as well as regional partners such as the Combined Authority? What are the mechanisms for this? The focus has now got to be on creating an environment that allows businesses and people to flourish."

> "I'm more interested in the bigger picture and outcomes rather than the small politics of it. There's a risk that this could all just become about changing organisations and an elaborate boundary review rather than about fundamentally improving service delivery to meet the needs of local areas and people. This includes ensuring that the new councils have good economic strategies and are able to adapt services to support different communities, including urban and rural communities."

"We provide a county-wide service and think regionally. So any new arrangement should be doing the same. For it to have the impact that's intended, the councils need to start thinking county-wide and strategically, about overarching priorities and working closely together for the benefit of the county and to deliver pan-Derbyshire infrastructure and services. They need to move away from the politics of it and work collaboratively and not in competition. There may be two new councils but they need a singular pan-Derbyshire and regional strategy rather than risk working in isolation and separately."

5.48. Alongside the above points, several stakeholders said that it is important to **ensure that local area working and neighbourhood models are supported within the new council structures.** Some stakeholders said this is currently easier to achieve under the district based system and there is a risk it could be lost in larger councils, although there are also opportunities for greater flex and adaptation under larger councils:

"Working at the local level, neighbourhood working, is really important to us and local people. There's a risk that larger councils will struggle to deliver this and there will be incongruence between our neighbourhood models and larger unitary councils. This can be managed, but will require the new councils to prioritise this issue and ensure there are mechanisms to support neighbourhood models and working closely with us at the local level."

"There's an opportunity around the neighbourhood model. On one level there's a risk this gets lost in larger councils, but if the structures and systems are in place then it could be better under larger councils as we'd be less restricted by local authority boundaries and can organise around neighbourhoods and their local needs and priorities, around natural neighbourhoods."

5.49. These key stakeholders want to remain **closely involved in the process** to ensure effective implementation and **minimise disruption, allowing partners to get on with their day-to-day business:**

"They should keep us closely involved. They should be using us and our experience. It's not just about making sure the approach and implementation work for us, but we have lots of experience around transformation and reorganisation so they should be using us to test their ideas, develop their evidence bases, and challenge them. But this all needs to be done quickly and well, with the focus being on making improvements to the benefits of our communities."

"There's a lot going on in this space currently, lots of reform and reorganisation. It's difficult to plan around it all and coordinate it all, so the best we can ask is that it's done in earnest and done well, as smoothly as possible and that communication and collaboration remains in place. The long-term aim of these reforms and reorganisations is that they have positive benefits, but we can't allow them to be a distraction from our daily business as usual."

Appendices

Appendix 1: Stakeholder in-depth interview discussion guide

The interviews provide an opportunity for key stakeholders to discuss in-depth the following:

- Their understanding of, and perspectives on, the proposed changes.
- The potential impact and implications of the proposed changes on their organisation/sector.
- The way in which their organisation/sector will adapt to the proposed new arrangements, including any support to mitigate challenges/issues around reorganisation.
- Views on each of the options, including any concerns, challenges or benefits of each option.

In addition, the interviews will explore how they can promote the consultation amongst their networks and how they would like to remain engaged in the process in the future.

The interviews are timed to last up to 45 minutes.

In each interview, participants will be introduced to the purpose of the interview and their anonymity and confidentiality stressed, along with a request to record the conversation for research purposes.

Please note: These questions will be used flexibly and depending on the flow of discussion. Not every question will be asked or worded as below, but the key subjects will be covered.

Key lines of questioning:

Warm-up/context (c2 minutes)

- Could you briefly describe your role and that of your organisation?
- What has been your/your organisation's involvement with local government reorganisation to date?

Understanding of local government reorganisation in general and in Derbyshire (c5 minutes)

- What is your understanding of local government reorganisation in England?
- What do you think in general about local government reorganisation?

  Prompt/probe:
  – What do you think of the current structure of local government?
  – How does the current structure/approach of local government facilitate partnership working with you/your organisation/your sector? And how does it facilitate effective service delivery?
  – Are they positive changes? Why?
  – Are they negative changes? Why?
  – What general impact or implications does it have for you/your organisation/your sector?

- What is your understanding of the proposals for local government reorganisation in Derby and Derbyshire?

Impact and implications of proposed changes (c10 minutes)

- What do you think in general about the proposed changes to local councils in Derby and Derbyshire?
- How, if at all, do these proposed changes affect you/your organisation/your sector?

  Prompt/probe:

  − What do you think of the current structure of local government across Derbyshire, and the way services are delivered?
  − How does the current structure/approach of local government in Derby and Derbyshire facilitate partnership working with you/your organisation/your sector? And how does it facilitate effective service delivery?
  − Are they positive changes? Why?
  − Are they negative changes? Why?
  − How will these changes affect the way you work in partnership with local councils/in the local area in the future? Or affect your service delivery?
  − What impact do you think these proposed changes will have on any of the following:
      o Access to services
      o Quality of services
      o Savings/efficiencies/reducing duplication/making delivery more streamline
      o Capacity and resilience of local councils and financial sustainability
      o Local democracy – accountability, responsiveness, meeting need, connectedness
      o Empowering local leaders and organisations
      o Improving local areas

Adapting to changes (c10 minutes)

- How, if at all, will you/your organisation/your sector adapt to the proposed changes to local councils in Derby/Derbyshire?

  Prompt/probe:

  − Strategic changes?
  − Structural changes?
  − Practical changes?

- What support, if any, do you/your organisation/your sector require to help you better understand the proposals and/or adapt to the proposed changes/help mitigate any issues associated with the changes?

Specific options (c5 minutes)

- Do you have any specific comments, including any concerns, challenges or benefits, about each of the 3 options?

  Prompt/probe:

  − Which, if any, of the options impact you/your organisation/your sector the most? Why?
  − Which, if any, of the options have implications for your partnership working with local councils/in the local area? Or service delivery?

Summing-up (c5 minutes)

- Are there any interesting lessons or good practice you're aware from elsewhere in the country around local government reorganisation and how you/your organisation/your sector has adapted?
- Do you have any other comments you would like to make?
- How are you/your organisation/your sector planning to respond to the consultation?
- How are you/your organisation/your sector promoting the consultation amongst your networks?
- How would you like to remain involved and engaged in the process in the future?

Appendix 2: Consultation questionnaire

Note: This is the paper version of the consultation questionnaire.

Proposed changes to councils in Derby and Derbyshire - Consultation Questionnaire

Introduction

The way local councils in England are organised is being fundamentally changed for the first time in 50 years. Your views will help shape how local services are delivered in Derbyshire in the future.

Derbyshire's eight district and borough councils and Derby City Council are working together to propose a new structure that best meets the needs of local communities. This consultation will help inform their final proposals to Government.

This consultation questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. **Please complete it by: Sunday 10 August 2025.**

The consultation is being conducted with support from Public Perspectives, an independent organisation that works with local councils and communities.

Your personal details are managed securely and within data protection laws. Your responses are anonymous and confidential. This means your personal information will not be reported alongside your answers. Each of the partner council privacy notices will apply and anonymised data will be shared between councils. Please visit the following to read Public Perspectives' privacy notice:

www.publicperspectives.co.uk/data-security-and-privacy/

Information in a different format:
If you need help or support to respond to the consultation, or the questionnaire in an alternative format (large print, British Sign Language etc.) or language, please contact Public Perspectives via e-mail on: Derbyshire@publicperspectives.co.uk or Freephone: 0800 533 5386 (please leave a message and we will call you back).

Access for Deaf people contact numbers:
Relay UK: 18001 0800 533 5386
BSL Signing Service www.derby.gov.uk/signing-service
Text: 07774 333412

Returning the questionnaire:
Once you have completed the questionnaire, you can return it via the Freepost address at the end of this questionnaire.

If you have not already, you may wish to view the background information before responding to the consultation questionnaire. This is available on your local council website or visit: bit.ly/Backgroundinformation

Living and working in Derbyshire

Q1a. Are you responding as . . .?

Please select all relevant answers. These questions help us understand who is responding to the consultation.

☐ A resident living in Derbyshire

☐ Someone who works in Derbyshire

☐ A local councillor

☐ A business owner or business leader operating in Derbyshire

☐ A voluntary or community organisation

☐ A Housing Association

☐ A Town or Parish Council

☐ A District / Borough / City / County Council employee

☐ Another public sector organisation

☐ Other

If 'Other', please state:

Please state the name of the organisation or business you represent (if relevant):

Q1b. If representing an organisation or business, in which of the following areas does your organisation mainly operate?

Please select all relevant answers.

☐ Amber Valley Borough Council area

☐ Bolsover District Council area

☐ Chesterfield Borough Council area

☐ Derby City Council area

☐ Derbyshire Dales District Council area

☐ Erewash Borough Council area

☐ High Peak Borough Council area

☐ North East Derbyshire District Council area

☐ South Derbyshire District Council area

☐ Across all of Derbyshire

☐ Outside of Derbyshire

☐ Don't know

Q2a. Where do you live?

If you are uncertain which council covers your area, visit the following website and enter your postcode: **www.gov.uk/find-local-council**

Please select one answer only.

☐ Amber Valley Borough Council area
☐ Bolsover District Council area
☐ Chesterfield Borough Council area
☐ Derby City Council area
☐ Derbyshire Dales District Council area
☐ Erewash Borough Council area
☐ High Peak Borough Council area
☐ North East Derbyshire District Council area
☐ South Derbyshire District Council area
☐ Outside of Derbyshire
☐ Don't know

Q2b. If you live in Derbyshire, what is your postcode? (This is asked so we can analyse the results by different areas. We will not be able to identify you personally)
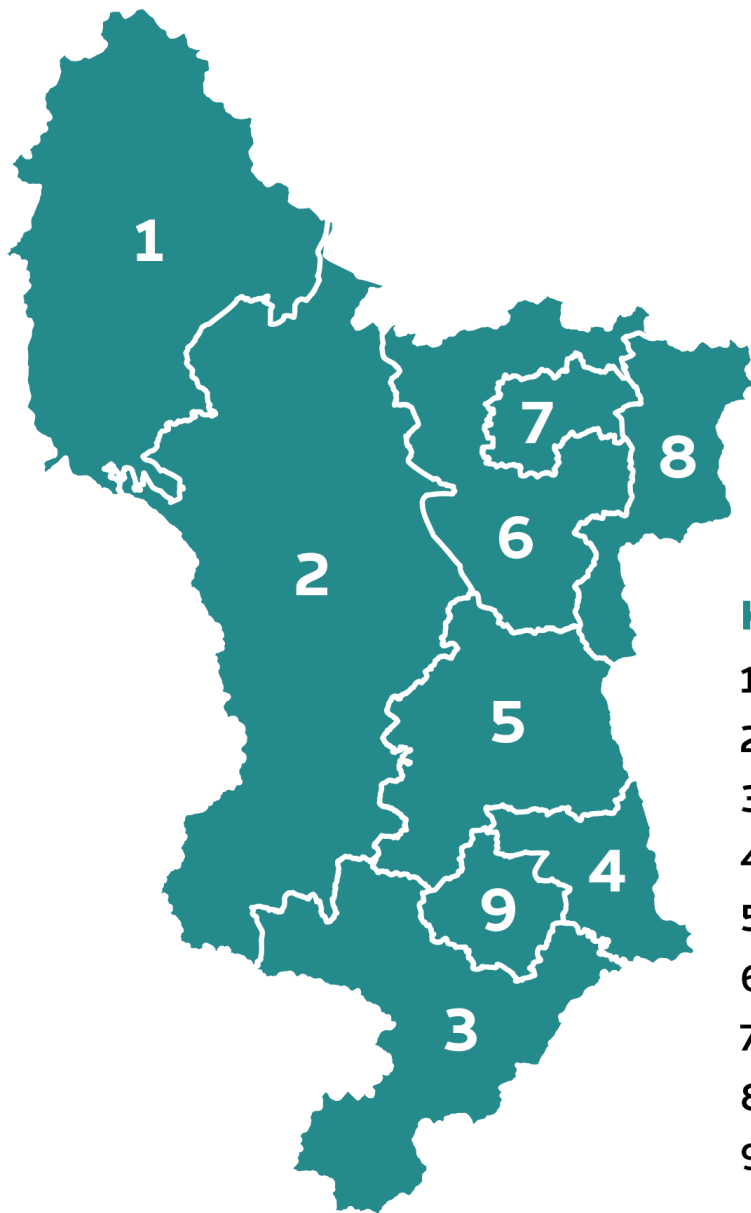
[   ]

Q3. Where is your main place of work?

Please select all relevant answers.

☐ Amber Valley Borough Council area
☐ Bolsover District Council area
☐ Chesterfield Borough Council area
☐ Derby City Council area
☐ Derbyshire Dales District Council area
☐ Erewash Borough Council area
☐ High Peak Borough Council area
☐ North East Derbyshire District Council area
☐ South Derbyshire District Council area
☐ Across all of Derbyshire
☐ Outside of Derbyshire
☐ Don't know
☐ Not applicable - not currently in work / retired

If 'Outside of Derbyshire', where is your main place of work?

[   ]

To help you answer the following questions, this map shows the boundaries of the local councils in Derbyshire:

KEY

1 = High Peak

2 = Derbyshire Dales

3 = South Derbyshire

4 = Erewash

5 = Amber Valley

6 = North East Derbyshire

7 = Chesterfield

8 = Bolsover District

9 = Derby

Q4a. Thinking about your day-to-day activities, what parts of Derbyshire do you visit?

Think about activities such as shopping, socialising, leisure and recreational activities, visiting friends and family, banking and health services, amongst others.

Please select all relevant answers.

☐ Amber Valley Borough Council area

☐ Bolsover District Council area

☐ Chesterfield Borough Council area

☐ Derby City Council area

☐ Derbyshire Dales District Council area

☐ Erewash Borough Council area

☐ High Peak Borough Council area

☐ North East Derbyshire District Council area

☐ South Derbyshire District Council area

☐ Across all of Derbyshire

☐ Outside of Derbyshire

☐ Other

☐ Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

_____

Q4b. If you live in Derbyshire, thinking about where you currently live, please list all the places you would name to describe where you are from if asked by someone that does not live near you?

Please list below:

_____

The current structure of councils in Derbyshire

Local services in most of Derbyshire are currently delivered under what is known as a 'two-tier' council structure.

This means that some services in your local area are delivered by a borough or district council (e.g. bins, housing, planning, leisure centres) and others are provided by Derbyshire County Council (e.g. social care for children and adults, education services and highways). If you live outside of Derby, the council tax you pay helps to fund county, borough and district council services, with a portion also going to the local police and fire service.

Within Derbyshire, we also have Derby City Council which is a 'unitary' council providing all services to the communities it serves. If you live in Derby, the council tax you pay helps to fund the city council's services, with a portion also going to the local police and fire service.

In total, 10 different councils provide services across the county (not including town and parish councils and these councils aren't included in the reorganisation).

Q5. **Before today, were you aware, and how much did you know about, the current structure of councils in Derbyshire and the different services delivered by each council?**

Please select one answer only.

☐ I was not aware

☐ I was aware, but did not know much about it

☐ I was aware, and knew a little about it

☐ I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it

☐ I was aware, and knew a lot about it

☐ Don't know

Q6. **How effective do you think the current structure of councils is in Derbyshire and the approach to service delivery?**

Please select one answer only.

☐ Very effective

☐ Quite effective

☐ Neither effective nor ineffective

☐ Quite ineffective

☐ Very ineffective

☐ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government wants to change the way local councils are structured in places that have the two-tier system described in the previous section. This is known as 'local government reorganisation'.

This structure dates back to 1974. The way we live our lives has changed substantially since then, and Government believes services could be delivered more efficiently and effectively by having fewer councils.

Local councils have therefore been asked to work together to draw up initial proposals for new organisations that are:

- Simpler and more efficient
- Better value for money
- Closer to communities
- Able to deliver joined-up services

The proposals, which will include a range of evidence alongside the feedback from this consultation, must be submitted by November 2025.

Ultimately, Government will make the final decision on how new council arrangements are implemented.

Q7.   Before today, were you aware, and how much did you know about, the reorganisation of councils across England?

Please select one answer only.

- ☐ I was not aware
- ☐ I was aware, but did not know much about it
- ☐ I was aware, and knew a little about it
- ☐ I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it
- ☐ I was aware, and knew a lot about it
- ☐ Don't know

Q8.   To what extent do you agree or disagree with plans to reduce the number of councils across England?

Please select one answer only.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Tend to agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Tend to disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

Why have you answered i this way?

Local Government Reorganisation across Derbyshire

All councils in Derbyshire (except Derbyshire County Council) worked together to develop an initial proposal about how councils could be restructured in Derbyshire. This was submitted to the Government in March 2025. Since then, further work has taken place to review options and develop more evidence to inform the proposals.

The proposals would see Derbyshire's 10 existing councils be replaced by two new authorities (one in the north and one in the south). Each of the two new councils would deliver all local government services in their area.

You can see a summary of the different options later on in this consultation questionnaire.

Q9. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace the ten existing councils with two councils to run local government across the whole of Derbyshire?**

Please select one answer only.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Tend to agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Tend to disagree

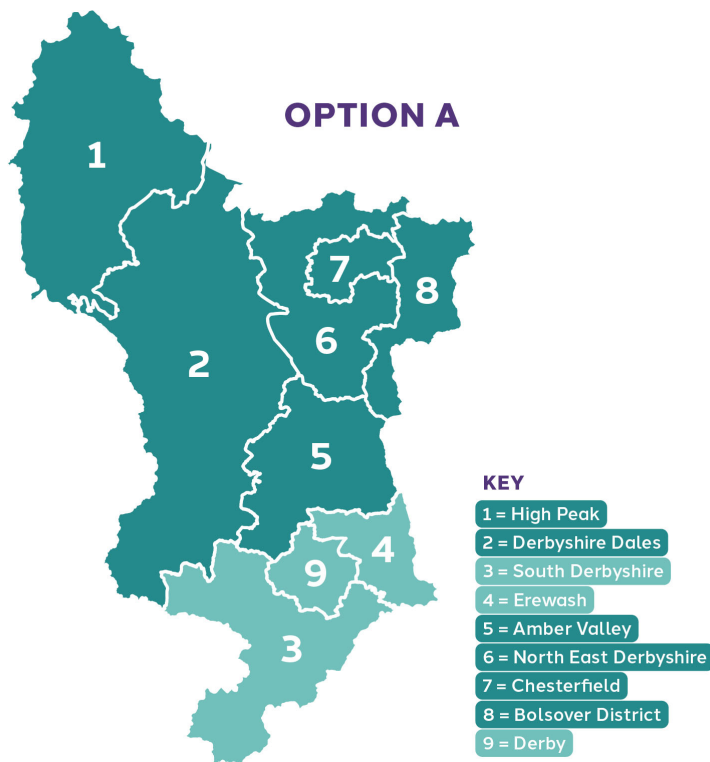☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

Three options have been identified.

This includes how the area currently covered by Amber Valley Borough Council could be included in the new structure: placed entirely in the northern council, entirely in the southern council, or with different parishes joining each of the two councils, depending on where they may best fit.

Option A

Option A is a north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being part of the northern council along with High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield and Bolsover District. The southern council would include South Derbyshire, Erewash and Derby City:

OPTION A

KEY
1 = High Peak
2 = Derbyshire Dales
3 = South Derbyshire
4 = Erewash
5 = Amber Valley
6 = North East Derbyshire
7 = Chesterfield
8 = Bolsover District
9 = Derby

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option A?
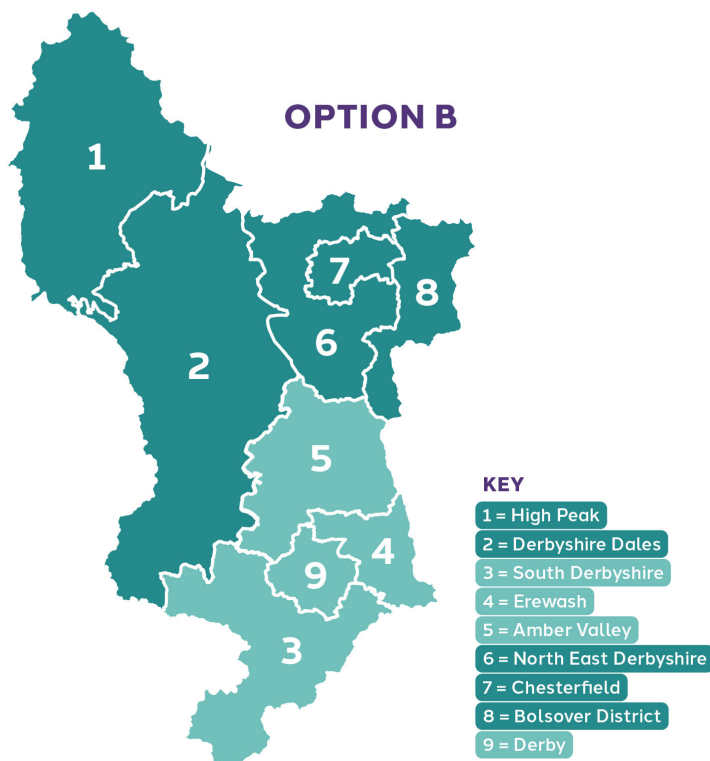
Please select one answer only.

☐ Strongly agree
☐ Tend to agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Tend to disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

Option B

Option B is a north / south split of the county, with Amber Valley being part of the southern council along with South Derbyshire, Erewash and Derby City. The northern council would include High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield and Bolsover District:

OPTION B

1
7
8
6
2
5
9
4
3

KEY

1 = High Peak
2 = Derbyshire Dales
3 = South Derbyshire
4 = Erewash
5 = Amber Valley
6 = North East Derbyshire
7 = Chesterfield
8 = Bolsover District
9 = Derby

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B?

Please select one answer only.

☐ Strongly agree
☐ Tend to agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Tend to disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

Option C

Option C is a north / south split of the county, with different parishes from Amber Valley joining each of the two councils, depending on where they best fit.

The northern council would include High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover District and the following parishes of Amber Valley: Shipley, Heanor and Loscoe, Denby, Kilburn, Belper, Hazelwood, Shottle and Postern, Idridgehay and Alton, Ashleyhay, Alderwasley, Ripley, Codnor, Aldercar and Langley Mill, Ironville, Riddings, Somercotes, Alfreton, Swanwick, Pentrich, South Wingfield, Crich, Dethick, Lea, and Holloway.

The southern council would include South Derbyshire, Erewash, Derby City and the following parishes of Amber Valley: Kirk Langley, Mackworth, Kedleston, Ravensdale Park, Weston Underwood, Quarndon, Turnditch and Windley, Duffield, Holbrook, Horsley, Horsley Woodhouse, Smalley, and Mapperley.

OPTION C

KEY
1 = High Peak
2 = Derbyshire Dales
3 = South Derbyshire
4 = Erewash
5 = AmberValley
6 = North East Derbyshire
7 = Chesterfield
8 = Bolsover District
9 = Derby

Q12. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option C?** Please select one answer only.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Tend to agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Tend to disagree
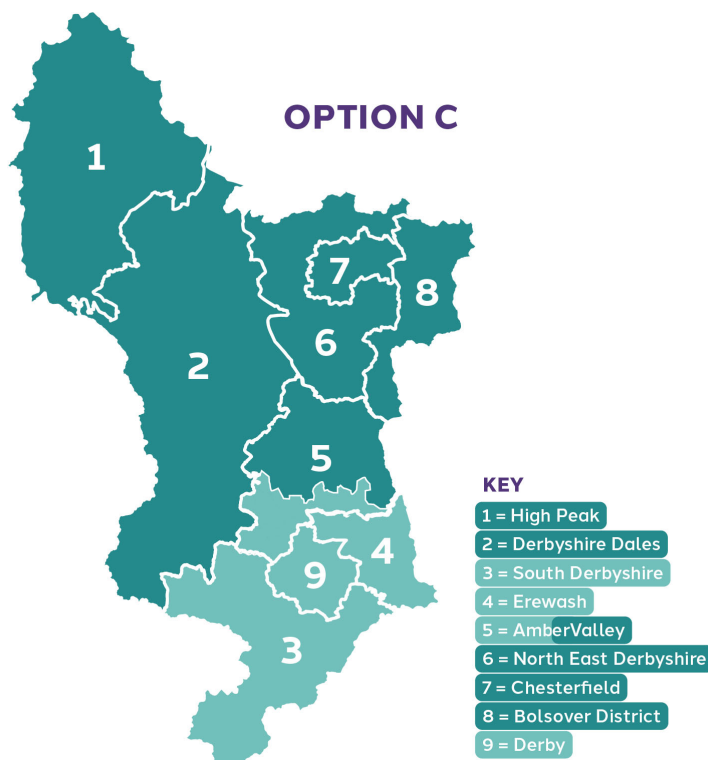- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

Q12a. <u>If you are a resident of Amber Valley or a stakeholder that works with or in Amber Valley, please answer the following question:</u>

Reflecting on the three options, which option do you prefer?

Please select one answer only.

☐ Option A
☐ Option B
☐ Option C
☐ I have no preference for any of the options
☐ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

Other comments

Q13. Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestions about the proposals for the reorganisation of councils in Derbyshire?

Please make comments below:

Q14. How did you hear about this consultation?

Please select all relevant answers.

☐ Council website
☐ Council e-mail or newsletter
☐ Other council communication or event
☐ Council social media
☐ Other social media
☐ Via a local councillor
☐ Via a local organisation
☐ Poster or flyer
☐ Direct e-mail or letter
☐ An advert in a local newspaper
☐ A relative or a friend
☐ Other
☐ Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

Would you like to be kept informed of progress with proposals about the future of local councils in Derbyshire?

Please select one answer only.

☐ Yes

☐ No

If 'Yes', please provide your contact details below.

We will only use this information to update you about progress with proposals for the future of local councils in Derbyshire. Your details will be stored securely, kept separate from your questionnaire responses, and will not be published.

Name:

E-mail:

Address:

The following questions are only relevant if you live or work in Derbyshire.

About you

We would like to ask you some questions about yourself and your household. This will help councils understand the opinions and impact of the proposals on different groups of people that live or work in Derbyshire. Please be assured that your answers are confidential and will be treated anonymously. This means that we will not report your answers alongside your personal details in such a way that you can be identified and the information you provide will only be used for the purposes of this consultation. All your answers and personal information will be managed securely and in accordance with data protection laws.

This information is **optional**.

Q15. Are you . . .?

Please select one answer only.
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Another term
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q16. What is your age group?

Please select one answer only.
- ☐ Under 16
- ☐ 16-17
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q17. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

Please select one answer only.
- ☐ Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a lot
- ☐ Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a little
- ☐ Yes, but they don't reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities at all
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q18. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group or background? Please select one answer only.

☐ White British or Irish
☐ Central or Eastern European
☐ Other White background
☐ Asian or Asian British
☐ Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
☐ Mixed background
☐ Other ethnic group
☐ Prefer not to say

Q19. Which of the following best describes your current housing situation? Please select one answer only.

☐ Owner-occupier
☐ Privately renting
☐ Renting from the council or housing association
☐ Other
☐ Prefer not to say

Next steps

You're nearly finished – thank you for taking part so far.

Before you send your response, please take a moment to read the information below about what happens next.

Following the close of the consultation on Sunday 10 August 2025 we will be collating and analysing all of the questionnaire responses received from across Derbyshire, to understand the views of everyone who has taken part.

The results will be used to inform the development of the councils' final proposal for the future of local councils in Derbyshire alongside a range of evidence.

This must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025, and feedback on how any proposal will be taken forward for Derbyshire is expected in early 2026. Your local council will keep you updated as things progress.

Please complete the questionnaire and put it in the post by: Sunday 10 August 2025.

Put the questionnaire in an envelope and send to the following Freepost address (no stamp needed):

Derbyshire consultation
C/O Public Perspectives Ltd
RUER–BYCU–TEJA
PO Box 1340
St. Albans
AL1 9NT

public
perspectives

ONE DERBYSHIRE
TWO COUNCILS

DERBYSHIRE