

The Future of Local Government in Warwickshire

Report of Survey Results

Executive Summary

A public online survey hosted on the Citizen Space platform, Ask Warwickshire (www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask), was open from 25th July 2025 until 25th August 2025. There was an option to request a paper version of the survey, or the survey in an alternative format and people were also able to respond directly via email. extensively through the County Council's internal and external communication channels.

Respondents

There were 857 responses received. Most respondents (n=790, 92.2%) indicated that they were a Warwickshire resident, with the next highest group indicating they were a council employee (n=77, 9.0%). Of the 790 respondents selecting they were a Warwickshire resident; the highest proportion of responses was from residents of Warwick District (34.3%, n=271), followed by 26.7% (n=211) of responses from residents of Stratford-on-Avon District. Respondents aged 16-39 years of age were underrepresented in the survey responses.

Benefits of bringing all council services together under one or more unitary councils for Warwickshire

The main themes with regards to benefits were:

- Potential for cost savings including savings made by streamlining services and reducing duplication of services such as administration and support services, or savings made by consolidating assets, and savings made due to economies of scale.
- Potential for improved and more efficient ways of working including improved integration across councils and departments leading to better services and more efficient ways of working; having one vision and unified strategies and policies that cover Warwickshire; and improvements to the workforce and use of technology.
- Potential for improved interaction with residents due to a simpler structure. The current structure of two/three tiers of councils is confusing to residents with regards to who is responsible for what service. A unitary model would make contacting the council much easier with potentially one point of contact and reduction of signposting between authorities. In addition, clearer routes to enable engagement and potential to enable better engagement between residents and the council.
- Potential for simpler governance and control. The way councils operate being much more transparent due to reduced numbers of councils, and improved accountability of officers, services and elected members. In addition, a less complicated hierarchical structure and simpler decision making process, and potentially fewer councillors.
- Potential for more consistent and equitable delivery of services across Warwickshire.

Some respondents felt that there no benefits or took the opportunity to mention concerns. In addition, some respondents gave their views on the proposed LGR models (single unitary or two unitaries) or mentioned other potential models.

Concerns of bringing all council services together under one or more unitary councils for Warwickshire

The main themes relating to concerns were:

- Loss of local understanding, local focus, the representation of local areas and the presence of council buildings and offices in local areas.
- Concerns about how local government reorganisation would be implemented, including costs of implementation and challenges associated with integration and transition. Job losses and impact on staff morale, along with loss of experience and knowledge in the workforce, were commonly mentioned.
- Concerns about the ability of a unitary council or council to understand and cater for differences in communities and their needs across Warwickshire in general but also differences between communities in the north and south of Warwickshire.
- Concerns about the impact of local government reorganisation on the delivery of services including disruption to services and inequalities in service delivery.
- Concerns about how funding would be distributed across Warwickshire and that this may be unfair.
- Concerns about governance and control particularly around reduced accountability, increased bureaucracy and power being with too few decision makers.
- Concerns relating to communication and engagement with residents, both increased difficulties in contacting the council and perceived fewer opportunities for engagement with the council or reduced communication from councils.

In addition, some respondents gave their views on the proposed LGR models (one unitary councils or two unitary councils) or mentioned other potential models. Some respondents said they had no concerns.

Importance of considerations for how any future unitary council (s) in Warwickshire should operate

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of several themes in thinking about how any future unitary council(s) in Warwickshire should operate. The themes which the highest proportion of respondents felt were either very important or important related to money: “Making sure the council manages money well so it can keep providing services in the future” (95.9%, n=822) and “Working efficiently to save money and provide good, reliable services for everyone” (93.9%, n=805). The theme that the highest proportion of respondents (7.8%, n=67) felt was not at all important was “Making it easier for you to find and use council services in one place”.

	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not answered
Making it easier for you to find and use council services in one place	40.0%	34.3%	9.8%	6.9%	7.8%	1.2%
Making sure the council is visible and available in your local community	62.7%	25.7%	4.6%	3.7%	2.7%	0.7%
Giving you options about how you want to contact or interact with the council (online, phone, in person, etc.).	48.0%	34.2%	9.3%	5.0%	2.3%	1.2%
Making sure the council manages money well so it can keep providing services in the future	77.9%	18.0%	1.3%	0.9%	1.2%	0.7%

Working efficiently to save money and provide good, reliable services for everyone	72.7%	21.2%	2.3%	1.6%	1.4%	0.7%
Making decisions in a way that's easy to understand and where it's clear who is responsible.	64.8%	27.9%	4.1%	1.5%	0.9%	0.8%
Involving local people in decisions that affect their area	71.1%	21.8%	3.2%	2.0%	1.5%	0.5%
Finding new and better ways to do things, including using the latest technology	44.5%	35.7%	11.4%	5.8%	2.2%	0.4%
Working together with other public services like the police and NHS to give you better, more joined-up support	63.6%	26.1%	4.9%	2.3%	2.0%	1.1%

Further comments

Finally respondents were asked, *“Is there anything else you would like to say about how local government in Warwickshire can work better for you and your community in the future?”*.

The main themes derived from responses focused on:

- a desire for improved engagement and communication with residents and stakeholders including reducing confusion that is caused by the current two-tier structure,
- further responses about local government reorganisation in general and the proposed models or alternative models,
- service delivery including ensuring needs of residents are met, improving collaboration between organisations/partners, efficient use of resources, and reducing bureaucracy,
- local needs, local representation and local decision making including comments on the role of elected members and parish councils, and
- a desire to monitor the impact of local government reorganisation.