



# One Warwickshire, Stronger Together

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Local government reorganisation:  
Proposal for a single unitary  
council for Warwickshire

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*November 2025*

# Introduction from the Leader of Warwickshire County Council

Local Government Reorganisation is a once in a generation opportunity to transform public services and improve outcomes for every resident in Warwickshire. The current system is costly, inefficient, and confusing. We can do better. We need a system that works for people, not against them.

This proposal is clear: a single unitary council, Warwickshire Council, is the best way forward. It delivers the strongest financial foundation, protects strategic countywide services and ensures consistent, high-quality services for all. It empowers local decision-making, keeping us rooted in the places we serve and provides the best platform for devolution and economic growth.

The financial case is compelling: at least £18.7m in annual net benefits, three times more than a two-unitary model, with a much shorter payback period, plus up to £119m in long-term transformation savings. This means more funding for frontline services like social care, housing, and community safety; services that so many residents rely on.

But this is about more than efficiency. It is about fairness and resilience. A single council avoids the fragmentation of countywide services, such as children's and adult social care. Disaggregating these

critical services would not only be costly and disruptive, but would pose a significant risk to the consistency, quality and sustainability of essential services.

The people of Warwickshire deserve better. A single council protects critical services and ensures no community is left behind. It avoids the scenario where a north unitary would face financial challenges and reduced service levels from day one, with the most deprived parts of the county being unable to meet need without having to deliver significant additional savings. To me that would not be the responsible thing to do.

A single council offers the scale and strength for strategic leadership alongside a commitment to place-based working, local presence and working in genuine partnership with residents and businesses. It delivers stronger outcomes for Warwickshire residents and builds stronger communities where local people have a real say in decisions that affect them.

The priority is simple: We must get the best deal for Warwickshire's residents. One council, one vision; stronger communities, better services, and real value for money. A single council is the only option that can deliver this. Together, we can make Warwickshire a place where everyone thrives.

## **Councillor George Finch**

Leader of Warwickshire County  
Council

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# Section 1: **Vision, opportunity and outcomes**

**This section sets out the vision for Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire, the outcomes it will deliver, and the specific ‘asks’ of Government to help achieve the vision.**

## **1. Vision, opportunity and outcomes**

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# The case for **Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire**

- Warwickshire is a county with a proud heritage, a dynamic economy and strong communities. However, the current two-tier system of local government is no longer fit for purpose. It creates duplication, inefficiency and confusion for residents, while limiting the county's ability to deliver high quality, sustainable public services and to respond to the challenges of the future
- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution is a once in a generation opportunity to reform public services. The focus must be on how best to improve outcomes for the people of Warwickshire and address some of the challenges and differences in opportunity that exist in some parts of the county and for some people.
- There is wide agreement in Warwickshire that there are only two realistic options for LGR for the county: a single unitary covering the whole county or two unitaries (north and south). This proposal sets out the case for a single unitary council for Warwickshire as the only model which meets the Government's six criteria for LGR.

# The benefits of a single unitary council in Warwickshire

A single unitary is the only model that can deliver genuine local presence and offer the scale and efficiency needed to be financially sustainable into the future. It enables coherent planning, strengthens strategic partnerships and improves accountability through unified leadership and delivery.

The key benefits of community engagement, local presence and neighbourhood working can be equally strong in a well-designed single unitary as they would be with two unitaries. The new unitary council will tailor its approaches to different places through effective place-based and neighbourhood working, working closely with different communities to progress their local priorities.

A single unitary will provide a consistent, countywide framework for community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment. It enables integrated, community-focused service delivery and aligns effectively with key partners to support joint working. Done well, it will ensure all communities have meaningful opportunities to shape local services and decisions.

A single unitary council for Warwickshire is stronger, delivers the greatest impact and makes sense for the following key reasons:

## **Simplicity and clarity**

- It gives every resident one council to contact, via consistent and integrated front doors, regardless of their query, location or service need.
- It will consistently deliver, high-quality services across all parts of the county, ensuring no person or community is left behind.

## **Strategic voice and devolution**

- Its larger scale amplifies influence both regionally and nationally, strengthening strategic partnerships and giving residents a stronger seat at the table for key decisions.
- It creates a countywide platform for strategic planning to improve the delivery of Government outcomes, like housebuilding and infrastructure targets.
- It preserves the heritage and identity of Warwickshire and its sense of place.
- It enables more effective and joined-up working with partners across the public sector to drive greater benefit from devolution.

## **Financial sustainability**

- It prevents costly and disruptive disaggregation of countywide provision like adult social care, children's services, education and public health.
- It can use its scale to ensure fair access to services in the most deprived places.
- It strips out the duplication and increased cost that two unitaries would bring, generating £18.7 million in annual net benefits, three times better than the two-unitary model, with a payback period of 2.9 years.
- It ensures that resources are available across the whole of Warwickshire, avoiding a situation where financial modelling indicates the north would not be financially viable and creating a clear winner and loser in a two unitary model.
- It meets the Government's guiding principle of a population of 500,000 or more based on Warwickshire's current population of circa 632,000, along with projected growth.

# Warwickshire Council

## The Vision



The vision is simple:

***One Warwickshire,  
Stronger Together***

Warwickshire will be a county where communities flourish and public services work together to make life better for everyone.

The vision for Warwickshire is rooted in the belief that people thrive when services are joined up, accessible, and community-led.

The new Warwickshire Council will be a bold and unifying force, working together with public services, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, businesses and communities to deliver real change.

### The new Warwickshire Council will build:



#### **Stronger communities**

Engaging local people, building trust, and working alongside communities to develop local solutions that reflect Warwickshire's diverse places and needs.



#### **Stronger finances**

Managing demand and future financial shocks as one county, delivering improved value for money, creating economies of scale and ensuring sufficient resources are available where they are most needed.



#### **Stronger voice**

Representing the whole county, using the power of a single voice to influence national and regional decisions, unlock greater investment and advocate confidently for Warwickshire's people and places.



#### **Stronger partnerships**

Working directly with partners, to reduce crisis interventions, shape preventative solutions to challenges across the public sector and investing in what works.



#### **Stronger services**

Joining up services and making it easier, simpler, and faster for residents to get the help they need first time and in the way that works best for them.



#### **Stronger places**

Driving economic growth across the county and delivering on national priorities, like economic growth, housebuilding and infrastructure targets.



#### **Stronger outcomes**

Breaking down barriers to opportunity and developing solutions to promote social and economic prosperity.



# Warwickshire Council

## The Outcomes

The outcomes the new Warwickshire Council will deliver are set out below, aligned to local and nationally driven priorities and the Government's draft Local Government Outcomes Framework.

### Outcomes for Warwickshire



**Access to jobs:** Accelerated economic growth delivering increased prosperity for residents, creating high quality jobs and reducing the gap in average earnings between the north and the south of the county.



**Healthy living:** Extended healthy life expectancy through coordinated and targeted action focused on the wider influences of health, maximising independence and reducing inequalities, with access to joined-up health and social care services.



**Access to homes:** Increased supply and affordability of housing, along with the associated infrastructure and school places required for population growth



**Opportunities to learn:** Lowering the barriers to opportunity, particularly by raising educational attainment and adult skills



**Growing up safely:** Ensuring all children have a good start in life through reformed children's services with the emphasis on prevention and early intervention, and effective safeguarding wherever it is needed.



**Getting around:** Improved transport and digital connectivity, especially in rural areas.



**Environment:** Meeting environmental challenges head on through an integrated approach.



**Places to be proud of:** Improved town centres and high streets, building pride in place.

### National Local Government Outcomes Framework

**Economic prosperity and regeneration**

**Health and wellbeing**

**Homelessness and housing**

**Adult Social Care: quality, independence and neighbourhoods**

**Every child achieving and thriving**

**Best start in life, child safety and poverty**

**Multiple disadvantage**

**Transport, local infrastructure and planning**

**Environment**

**Neighbourhoods and community safety**

# The opportunity for Warwickshire

With a clear focus on delivering the vision, the levers of local government reorganisation, Public Service Reform and devolution will be used to unlock the significant opportunities which exist for Warwickshire, its communities, people and places.

**Stronger communities** – Engaging local people, building trust, and working alongside communities to develop local solutions that reflect Warwickshire’s diverse places and needs.

- **Involving communities in decision making:** the creation of community networks, local committees and new town and parish councils in areas that do not have them will give councillors and residents greater influence in decisions that impact their area.
- **Working alongside communities to take practical action:** a consistent approach will be taken across the county to resident engagement and community participation.
- **Enabling communities to lead:** working directly with residents to understand challenges, deliver community-led solutions and deliver new programmes tailored to the priorities of their area.



**Stronger finances** – Managing demand and future financial shocks as one county, delivering improved value for money, creating economies of scale and ensuring sufficient resources are available where they are most needed.

- Working as one county enables economies of scale, reducing the cost of delivery and providing flexibility in how resources are used.
- Delivering substantial financial benefits while enhancing resilience to systemic financial challenges across the county.
- Protecting services against the impact and costs of disaggregation, better equipping the county to tackle inequalities and differences in service demand.



**Stronger voice** – Representing the whole county, influencing national and regional decisions, unlocking greater investment and advocating confidently for Warwickshire’s people and places.

- Building on Warwickshire’s Level 2 Devolution deal, further devolution will maximise powers and funds held locally, giving Warwickshire greater control to shape its future.
- One clear voice for Warwickshire, promoting Warwickshire on the national stage and influencing national policy decisions.
- Strong voice in the region, championing local priorities, influencing direction and, using the power of a single voice to negotiate and secure investment for Warwickshire.



**Stronger partnerships** – Working directly with partners, to reduce crisis interventions, shape preventative solutions to challenges across the public sector and invest in what works.

- Bringing public services together around shared goals, improving coordination and access to public sector services.
- A single voice for Warwickshire will enable better collaboration with NHS, Police, universities, businesses, voluntary, community and social enterprise sector both strategically and in local places.
- Using shared data and insights to improve outcomes and deliver services more effectively.



**Stronger services** – Joining up services and making it easier, simpler, and faster for residents to get the help they need first time and in the way that works best for them.

- Reducing duplication and increasing service synergies to enable a joined-up approach to addressing local issues.
- Residents experience a universal service offer, accessed through a range of different locations and consistent and integrated front doors.
- Locally designed services will give residents the right support at the right time.



**Stronger places** – Driving economic growth across the county and delivering on national priorities, like economic growth, housebuilding and infrastructure targets.

- Ensuring the right infrastructure and connectivity is in place to enable growth across the whole county, especially for key sectors.
- Taking a targeted and joined-up approach to education, skills, jobs and health to reduce economic activity and ensure all areas, including rural communities, benefit from growth.
- Pilot schemes and new trials will be rolled out to provide support for high growth potential businesses and to accelerate inclusive economic growth.



**Stronger outcomes** – Breaking down barriers to opportunity and developing solutions to promote social and economic prosperity.

- Working closely with individuals to enable deeper understanding of the root causes of complex, long standing challenges to co-create more effective solutions which unlock opportunities.
- Locally designed services will be closer and more accessible to residents giving them the right support at the right time.
- Integrated teams will use a place-based approach to reduce inequalities, removing barriers to opportunity and increasing social mobility.







## Welcome to Warwickshire

**Warwickshire is a well-connected county with a mix of thriving towns and rural communities. Home to literary greats, iconic heritage and a world-famous sporting legacy, Warwickshire makes a major contribution to the nation's cultural identity. Its towns and villages each have their own unique story, proud of their history while also looking to the future.**

**The County's economy is dynamic and diverse, with established links to world-class universities. It is a place which global talent chooses to call home.**

**Powered by automotive legends Aston Martin, BMW, JLR, and McLaren. Playing at the cutting edge with EA Sports, Meta, SEGA, and Microsoft's Xbox. Sharing the stage with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the page with George Eliot, and the green with The Belfry. Innovating across a dynamic tech landscape at MIRA, the Motor Industry Research Association, Manufacturing Technology Centre & UK Battery Industrialisation Centre.**

**Warwickshire is a county with a celebrated history and a bright and bold future.**

*Photo: Kingsbury, North Warwickshire*



# The local government landscape in Warwickshire

Democratic representation and responsibilities for delivering local services are currently split across three tiers of local government:

**Town and parish councils** – There are 202 town and parish councils and parish meetings covering 221 parishes in Warwickshire, covering most of the county except Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough and Rugby Town.

**District and borough councils** – Warwickshire has five district and borough councils, which collectively cover the whole county. They are Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, and Warwick District Council.

**County council** – Warwickshire County Council works in close partnership with the district and borough councils and other public, voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and business partners across the county, sub-region and region. The county council also administers the £3bn Warwickshire Pension Fund on behalf of 58 employers.

## How the current system could be improved

Duplication and overlap across two tiers of local government (district, borough and county) increases costs, creates inefficiencies and makes it more difficult to deliver key outcomes.

Complexity in the system creates inefficiencies in the use of resources and leads to slower decision-making and delivery, making it harder to drive improvement.

Multiple layers of local government are confusing for residents, who often struggle to understand which council is responsible for which service. This undermines public accountability and transparency in decision-making.

Having split responsibilities creates barriers to strategic planning, joined-up service delivery and effective partnerships with wider public sector partners.

*These themes are evident in the feedback received from the public engagement undertaken over Summer 2025.*

# The public service landscape in Warwickshire

**Blue light services:** Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Warwickshire operate on a whole-county footprint. Preserving service delivery on a county geography offers several advantages:

- The ability to take a coordinated approach to the deployment of resources across the county based on risk and demand.
- Simpler, stronger partnership arrangements between emergency services, local councils and health services.
- Joint training, shared intelligence and coordinated incident responses.
- More effective business continuity planning and disaster preparedness.

**Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS):** WFRS is part of Warwickshire County Council providing a fire and rescue service to everyone living in, visiting or travelling through Warwickshire. WFRS works to prevent incidents and emergencies from occurring, protects people through safe buildings and businesses, and responds to those in need during an emergency.

**The healthcare system:** Regionally, NHS England - Midlands provides oversight and support to the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (C&W ICB), which acts as the strategic commissioner of healthcare services across the sub-region.

Warwickshire is part of the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System (ICS), a partnership of NHS organisations, local councils and other stakeholders, working collaboratively to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities. The ICS is underpinned by the Integrated Care Strategy, which draws on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Health and Wellbeing Strategies of both Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council.

At a county level, the C&W ICB has delegated commissioning responsibilities for urgent and emergency care, community services, continuing healthcare and the NHS element of the Better Care Fund to the Warwickshire Care Collaborative Committee. This committee includes senior leaders from the NHS and Warwickshire County Council.

From a healthcare system perspective, Warwickshire is divided into three 'places', Warwickshire North, Rugby and South Warwickshire, each with its own health and wellbeing partnership. These partnerships are responsible for delivering the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, with oversight from the Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board.



Locally, Warwickshire County Council works with South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust to enhance joint commissioning and delivery, supported by the rollout of neighbourhood health plans and integrated neighbourhood teams.

Looking to the future, the C&W ICB is clustering with Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB, whilst retaining its own separate identity and legal status. The two ICBs are working together to streamline operations and develop a unified Population Health Plan.

## The sub-region

**West Midlands Combined Authority:** All six Warwickshire councils are non-constituent members of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

**Warwickshire devolution:** The county council is one of three county areas to have secured a Level 2 Devolution deal with Government, with devolved powers including adult skills and compulsory purchasing powers.

**The Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region:** Even though Coventry and Warwickshire are separate areas administratively, they share a great deal when it comes to the sub-regional economy. Many people who work in Coventry live in Warwickshire, and vice versa. The area's growing innovation sector, which is key to its future economic success, makes sense only when looking at the sub-region together.

As the UK seeks to redefine its global economic relationships, Coventry and Warwickshire has a major contribution to make.

**Coventry and Warwickshire Anchor Alliance:** The Coventry and Warwickshire Anchor Alliance is an informal alliance of local councils, acute hospital trusts and Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT), the University of Warwick and Coventry University. The Alliance works together and uses its influence to benefit local people and achieve the best value for money for Coventry and Warwickshire as employers, purchasers, land and asset owners.



## Creating opportunities in Warwickshire

Warwickshire has many strengths and performs well as a place to live, work and do business. Judged against national averages, the county compares favourably across many of the established social, economic and health indicators. The table below provides an illustrative overview of Warwickshire's performance and a broader range of measures can be found in the [\*\*State of Warwickshire Report\*\*](#).

### Employment

**80.9%** of 16-64 year olds are in employment.

This is the third highest rate of all county councils and **above the England average** of 75.8%

*Figures for Q2 2025*

### Economy

The latest data (2023) shows that **Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of population** was

**£40,735**  
**in Warwickshire**

compared to an England average of **£36,632**.

### Post-16 Journey

In 2024, the proportion of **16-17 year olds**

**Not in Education, Employment or Training** (inc. not known) was **3.2%**

**in Warwickshire compared to 5.4% in England**

### Education

**49.6%** of Key Stage 4 pupils achieved a **strong pass**

(Grade 9-5) in **English and Maths in Warwickshire** in 2024/25 compared to **45.2%** in England

### Community Safety

The total recorded **criminal offences** (excluding fraud) per 1,000 residents in **Warwickshire** in the 12 months to Q2 2025 was

**26% less**  
**than the England average.**

### Health

**Life expectancy at 65 years is significantly better in Warwickshire than the England average.**

The average woman can expect to live to 86.4 years and the average man can expect to live to 83.9 in Warwickshire.



## Public engagement - benefits

Engagement has included two survey-based activities, one open to the public and the other targeted at the Voice of Warwickshire resident's panel. This engagement set out to understand more about what people feel the benefits of LGR would be, along with any concerns.

Instead of asking people to comment on a specific model, broader questions were asked. These were designed to help shape the final proposal and future operating model. The results from the two main questions are set out below.

### What do you think are the benefits of bringing all your council services together under one or more unitary councils for Warwickshire in the future?

Themes	Sub-themes
Cost efficiency and savings	Reducing duplication and streamlining - staff, buildings, systems; economies of scale; potential reduction of tax for residents
Improved and more efficient services and ways of working	Improved services through integration and co-ordination; unified vision, strategies and policy; improved workforce; use of technology and data
Improved interaction with residents	Reduced confusion and improved understanding; simpler point of contact; improved engagement and presence
Simpler governance	Improved accountability and transparency; less bureaucracy; fewer councillors
Consistency and equity	More consistent and equitable delivery of and access to services
Opportunities and best practice	Calling on examples from areas that do things well and sharing best practice; potential for greater collaboration
Greater external influence	Greater political influence and lobbying powers; regional presence

“ It would mean residents only deal with one council for all services, rather than navigating between county and district councils.”

“ The same level of services across the whole of Warwickshire with less division for the north and south of the county.”

“ A single council could take a more holistic view of issues like housing, transport, and economic development, leading to more coherent and long-term planning across the region.”

## Public engagement - concerns

**What, if anything, concerns you about bringing all your council services together under one or more unitary councils for Warwickshire in the future?**

Main theme	Sub-themes
Loss of local knowledge, focus, representation and presence	Less local democracy and representation; lack of knowledge and understanding of local areas; smaller and rural areas overlooked; loss of local focus and identity; loss of proximity of council buildings to residents.
LGR implementation, integration and transition challenges	Job losses and staff morale; doubts about efficiency and cost savings; cost of implementation; loss of knowledge and expertise; impact on current partnerships and projects; identity and culture of current councils.
Understanding and meeting the needs of different communities	Difference in needs of communities across Warwickshire and particularly the north and south of the county.
Quality and responsiveness of service delivery	Concerns about service deterioration; inequalities in provision of services; impacts on planning and development.
Funding distribution	Questions and concerns about allocation and distribution of funds.
Governance and accountability	Reduced accountability; organisation too large and remote; increased power of fewer decision makers; increased bureaucracy; impacts on the role of a councillor.
Engagement and communication with residents	Contact and communication more difficult; reduced engagement with residents; reduced access to councillors and decision makers.

“ This could lead to short-term instability or service fragmentation, especially if the transition isn’t carefully managed.”

“ Lack of local people access to ‘in person’ contact with people in the council. Not everyone can use the internet or phone to interact with people. Some need to be able go into an office and speak to a real person.”

“ Money being pooled into larger projects and smaller infrastructure being left uncared for. Tourist areas being catered for/ more money spent on than other parts of the county”

# Stakeholder engagement

**Engagement has taken place with key stakeholders including public sector partners, town and parish councils, business groups and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. This set out to understand the impact of LGR on those the council most closely works with to shape the development of the final proposal.**

Group	Nature of engagement and key themes
Voluntary, community and social enterprise sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral conversations with groups and wider engagement sessions. Ongoing future engagement will be key in the journey towards implementation.</li> <li>• Local engagement essential especially with smaller grass-roots organisations; building on community strengths; importance of informed engagement as part of implementation process.</li> </ul>
Town and parish councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular engagement with town and parish councils and smaller working group supported by WALC (Warwickshire Association of Local Councils).</li> <li>• The creation of local committees and community networks, the parishing of currently non-parished areas, the options for devolved services and assets and how the funding would work</li> </ul>
Colleges and further education providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop.</li> <li>• Identifying opportunities to prioritise social mobility; existing data infrastructure and systems are fragmented and hinder progress; strategic decisions need to be locally informed.</li> </ul>
Businesses and large-scale employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop held by the Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce with the Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub and Federation of Small Businesses. Representatives from Coventry University and University of Warwick attended. A forum has been created for regular engagement.</li> <li>• Challenges around accessing funding and increasing supply costs.</li> </ul>
Warwickshire Police - Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral discussions.</li> <li>• Impact of local government reorganisation for community safety and supporting community cohesion, opportunities presented by preserving the countywide footprint for delivering of policing and council services.</li> </ul>
Anchor Alliance including Coventry City Council, universities and hospital trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral discussions.</li> <li>• Public Service Reform and discussing innovative solutions for collaborating across the system. Focus on short and long term opportunities for Public Service Reform.</li> </ul>
Health partners including Integrated Care Board and hospital trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral discussions.</li> <li>• Impact of local government reorganisation on the health system; how can local government reorganisation support existing health and wellbeing priorities; need to minimise disruption to partnerships and critical service delivery.</li> </ul>
Trade unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing bilateral engagement.</li> <li>• Impacts of local government reorganisation for workforce.</li> </ul>
District and borough councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective information sharing including a data repository.</li> <li>• Leader/Chief Executive meetings; monitoring officer meetings and S151 officer finance meetings.</li> </ul>

### **That Government:**

1. Decides to create a single unitary council for Warwickshire, to be called Warwickshire Council.
2. Affords the new Warwickshire Council the legal facility of continuing authority status, to ease transition and minimise cost to the public in dealing with staffing arrangements, contracts, assets and liabilities.
3. Adopts electoral arrangements for Warwickshire Council based on the county council's divisional boundaries and doubles up the number of elected members to 114 on an interim basis for transition, followed closely by a full Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) review.
4. Sets elections for Warwickshire Council on a four-year cycle.
5. Supports the admission of Warwickshire Council to full membership of the West Midlands Combined Authority at the earliest opportunity.

# Local Government Reorganisation: **Recommended model**

**A single unitary council, Warwickshire Council, is the recommended model which meets the Government's six criteria.**

A single unitary is the only model that can deliver genuine local presence AND offer the scale and efficiency needed to be financially sustainable into the future. It enables coherent planning, strengthens strategic partnerships, and improves accountability through unified leadership and delivery.

A single unitary offers the optimal scale for financial resilience, operational efficiency, and service sustainability. With a population of c.632,000, it provides financial sustainability and maximises long-term savings whilst requiring lower transition costs. This creates capacity to protect and enhance service delivery whilst avoiding the underfunding of the north to meet prevailing need in a two unitary scenario.

A single unitary delivers the platform for consistent, high-quality, and sustainable public service delivery. It is the only model that ensures financial viability across the whole county, particularly in the north, by enabling services to be maintained and improved in areas with the greatest need. It supports Public Service Reform (PSR) while avoiding the significant risks, costs, and disruption associated with disaggregating countywide services.

A single unitary preserves and promotes a unified Warwickshire identity, reinforcing the county's strong identity, historic heritage, cultural cohesion, and sense of place, working alongside communities to ensure that local voices are heard and influence decision making.

A single unitary provides the scale, coherence, and leadership capacity needed to take-on and utilise devolved powers effectively. It offers a single strategic voice for Warwickshire with regional partners and strategic authority arrangements, strengthening Warwickshire's direct influence and ability to deliver on local and national priorities.

A single unitary will provide a consistent, countywide framework for community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment. It enables integrated, community-focused service delivery and aligns effectively with key partners to support joint working. Done well, it will ensure all communities have meaningful opportunities to shape local services and decisions.

**1**

**Single tier of local government for the whole area**

**2**

**Right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks**

**3**

**Prioritise delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens**

**4**

**Work together to come to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views**

**5**

**Support devolution arrangements**

**6**

**Enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment**

## Case Study

### Health in All Policies

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a strategic approach that embeds health considerations across all services, beyond traditional healthcare. Instead of addressing issues like obesity in isolation, HiAP leverages areas such as transport, planning, and education to improve health outcomes. Since its endorsement by the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2021, all six councils in Warwickshire have committed to embedding HiAP into council culture and decision-making.

Since its endorsement, WCC Public Health has worked closely with planning colleagues across Warwickshire's districts and boroughs to embed health systematically into planning policy. Key achievements include developing practical resources, delivering workshops, and contributing to the South Warwickshire Local Plan and Nuneaton and Bedworth's health impact assessment guidance.

HiAP supports a whole-area approach to tackling the wider determinants of health. Local government reorganisation enables a consistent application of HiAP across all services, ensuring every policy decision contributes to improved health and wellbeing. This unified approach helps break down barriers to opportunity, address root causes of inequality, and promote long-term social and economic prosperity across Warwickshire.

## Section 2: Options appraisal

This section sets out an assessment of both a single and a two unitary model against the Government's criteria.

It includes the detailed analysis of the financial case and the impact of disaggregation.

### 2. Options appraisal

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The options

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Options appraisal

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Financial appraisal

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Impact of disaggregation

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1. Vision,  
opportunity and  
outcomes

2. Options  
appraisal

3. Transforming  
lives in  
Warwickshire

4.  
Implementation

# Local Government Reorganisation: Options appraisal



## Option 1 – Single unitary

Population (2024): **632,207**  
Population (2040)\*: **716,378**

### Alignment with current council boundaries:

Whole county area  
Expanding town and parish councils



## Option 2 – North-South unitaries

Population (2024): **632,207**  
Population (2040)\*: **716,378**

### Population (2024):

North unitary: **331,060 (52%)**  
South unitary: **301,147 (48%)**

### Population (2040)\*:

North unitary: **366,085 (51%)**  
South unitary: **350,293 (49%)**

### Alignment with current council boundaries:







North unitary: North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth and Rugby  
South unitary: Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon

Expanding town and parish councils

\*Mid-2022 based population projections to 2040 (ONS 2025)



# Local Government Reorganisation: Options appraisal

Criteria	Key elements	Option A One UA	Option B Two UAs
<b>1 - Sensible single tier of local government</b>  	Establishes a single tier of local government for the whole of the area concerned	High	Medium
	Sensible economic breakdown: with a tax base which does not create inequalities	High	Medium
	Sensible geographic breakdown: which will help increase housing supply and meet local needs	High	Medium
<b>2 - Right sized local government</b>  	A population of 500,000 or more (unless this figure does not make sense for an area )	High	Low
	Supports efficiencies and value for money for council taxpayers	High	Low
	Improves capacity and supports the council to withstand financial shocks	High	Low
	Manageable transition costs	High	Low
<b>3 - High quality, sustainable services</b>  	Improves local government and service delivery	High	High
	Avoids unnecessary service fragmentation / disaggregation	High	Low
	Opportunity for Public Service Reform including where this will lead to improved value for money	High	Medium
	Improves delivery of, or mitigates risk of, negative impact on crucial services	High	Low
<b>4 - Meets local needs</b>  	Meets local needs and is informed by local views	High	High
	Improves / mitigates risk to issues of local identity, cultural and historic importance	Medium	High
<b>5 - Supports devolution arrangements</b>  	Helps to support devolution arrangements / unlock devolution	High	Medium
	Sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority	High	High
<b>6 - Local engagement and empowerment</b>  	Enables stronger community engagement	High	High
	Delivers genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment	High	High

This options appraisal compares two potential models for local government reorganisation in Warwickshire. It assesses each model against the Government's six unweighted criteria, as reaffirmed in interim feedback to all reorganisation areas.

Each criterion is supported by sub-criteria, which guide the evaluation. Both models are rated high, medium, or Low against each sub-criterion, reflecting how well they align with the Government's priorities.

**High** = the option meets most or all of the criteria

**Medium** = the option meets some of the criteria

**Low** = the option meets few or none of the criteria

**Criteria 1-3 - this is where the two models differ the most and cover scale, financial benefit and disaggregation.**

**Criteria 4 -6 score similar for both models as both should deliver real benefit.**

## Criteria 1 - A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government

### MHCLG guidance

- a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.
- b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.
- c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.
- d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.

Option 1 – Single unitary	Option 2 – Two unitary model
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Preserves and enhances the functional economic geography of Coventry and Warwickshire which is critical to future economic growth for the county and enables a more coherent and integrated approach to economic development, inward investment, and strategic infrastructure planning.</li> <li>✓ Facilitates the creation of a single, cohesive local plan, streamlining spatial planning and enabling more effective alignment with housing, transport and environmental strategies.</li> <li>✓ Preserves county footprint which avoids imbalance in population size, council tax bases and service demands which would impact on future sustainability in a two unitary model.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Risk around local engagement and buy-in; operating model to address and mitigate the perception of being too large or remote.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reduces the number of local plans from five to two, offering a degree of streamlining in planning policy and development control functions.</li> <li>✓ There are differences in the economic strength and profile of each of the two unitaries and also within their proposed geographies allowing greater focus.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Creates imbalance in population sizes, council tax bases, and service demands between a north and a south unitary council, risks creating disadvantage to the north unitary and financial sustainability and resilience risks.</li> <li>✗ Risks disrupting and complicating the successful partnership working across the functional economic geography of Coventry and Warwickshire.</li> <li>✗ Transition complexity and scale provides significant risk to service delivery.</li> </ul>
High	Medium

## Criteria 2 - Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

### MHCLG guidance

- a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.
- b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.
- c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.
- d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.

### Option 1 – Single unitary

#### Strengths

- ✓ Population of c632,000 meets the Government's guiding minimum population size and makes sense for the area, providing a strong foundation for financial sustainability and operational resilience.
- ✓ There is greater financial resilience through a broader and more balanced council tax and business rates base compared to a two unitary model which helps spread financial risk across a stronger balance sheet. It avoids imbalances between funding and costs in the north unitary which would impact service levels in the parts of Warwickshire with the highest needs and levels of deprivation.
- ✓ Enhanced financial sustainability and resilience flows from higher savings and lower implementation costs compared to a two unitary model due to synergies, the avoidance of service disaggregation costs and risks, duplication and waste and simpler, quicker transition.
- ✓ Implementation will improve realisation of benefits by avoiding disaggregation of large volume/cost countywide services, by aggregating district and borough functions to a single council and by maximising the opportunities for transformation.
- ✓ Greater efficiency savings achievable through streamlined governance, integrated service delivery, and economies of scale across all major functions.
- ✓ Financial benefits of a single unitary provide the best means to protect and enhance universal services, such as libraries, youth services, and community development, as well as investing in transformation opportunities by reducing duplication and unlocking resources.
- ✓ Shorter payback period, with strong net financial benefits projected within five years and recurring annually thereafter, supporting long-term reinvestment in frontline services.

#### Weaknesses

- ✗ The risk of interruption to service delivery increases with a single unitary if implementation and change are not managed effectively. This is due to the size of the council and complexity of aggregating five sets of district and borough functions into a single council along with system integration.

High

## Criteria 2 - Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

### Option 2 – Two unitary model

#### Strengths

- ✓ Savings are achievable, particularly through rationalisation of district and borough level functions and overheads, but these are lower than a single unitary due to the costs of disaggregating major countywide service areas.

#### Weaknesses

- ✗ Neither north (331,060) nor south (301,147) Warwickshire meets the 500,000 guiding minimum population size now or in the medium-term (to 2040). This creates concerns about long-term financial resilience and capacity.
- ✗ No obvious reasons why Warwickshire is an exceptional case for which the risks and costs of disaggregation justify two unitaries.
- ✗ Population projections highlight differences between north and south unitaries, these population gaps impacting long-term trends in demand and financial sustainability.
- ✗ Lower net benefits (overall savings and higher implementation costs) due to duplication of services and overheads and the need to disaggregate countywide services such as adult social care and children's services, public health, education and highways, as well as aggregation of district and borough functions into two councils. This could increase unit costs which are currently low, especially in adult social care.
- ✗ Increased financial pressure on non-statutory services, as higher transition and operating costs may necessitate reductions in discretionary spending and constrain future investment in transformation opportunities.
- ✗ Fragmentation of business rates base and economic development functions likely to weaken the county and sub-regional strategic approach, impacting Warwickshire's regional and national influence over economic growth, skills and investment.
- ✗ Population distribution in relation to demand does not improve either the council tax base or projected split of funding between two unitaries, creating financial viability questions for the North Warwickshire council which has a higher share of service demand and cost than its share of funding and population in the highest cost service areas. In the longer-term, pressure on council tax and more rapid increases in demand and cost for social care and education services in the south will create growing financial pressures compounded by the absence of scale.
- ✗ ICT services and infrastructure would be duplicated across two newly formed unitary councils. Undertaking the aggregation and disaggregation of existing systems twice would be highly complex and costly, requiring significant duplicated investment in two sets of change management, ICT infrastructure, and workforce development activity rather than one set with a single unitary.

Low

### Criteria 3 - Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens

#### MHCLG guidance

- a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.
- b) Opportunities to deliver Public Service Reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.
- c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.

#### Option 1 – Single unitary

##### Strengths

- ✓ Population of c632,000 meets the Government's guiding minimum population size. This scale delivers enhanced purchasing power and economies of scale enabling benefits and efficiencies in commissioning, procurement and market management and supporting more effective use of resources and improved outcomes for residents.
- ✓ Streamlined organisational structures reduce overhead costs and eliminate duplication, releasing more capacity for service delivery.
- ✓ Integrated delivery models build on service synergies across areas and support early intervention and prevention, reducing long-term demand, improving sustainability and enabling approaches that reflect local needs and priorities.
- ✓ Economies of scale achieved across core services and support functions enabling higher quality services, reduced overhead costs and improved resilience. Shared systems and processes, and simpler transition enhance performance and planning.
- ✓ Consistent and integrated front doors for the whole of Warwickshire improve the resident experience, reducing failure demand and delivering greater simplicity, accountability and transparency for residents, businesses and communities.
- ✓ Strengthens strategic partnerships by aligning with the operational footprints of key partners such as Warwickshire Police, the NHS and Integrated Care System, sub-regional economic bodies and other anchor institutions such as universities.
- ✓ Avoids fragmentation of crucial countywide services, preserving strategic oversight and ensuring continuity in areas such as education and SEND, highways, public health, children's services and adult social care.
- ✓ Provides a single unified voice as system leader for Public Service Reform in Warwickshire, particularly in the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region.

##### Weaknesses

- ✗ If services like homelessness and planning are moved to a single council, there is a risk of disruption if the transition is not managed well.
- ✗ The size and complexity of the transition could cause short-term issues like service disruption, higher staff turnover and reduced confidence from stakeholders.
- ✗ Through transition, there is a risk of losing the close local connections that district and borough councils have with community groups and local partners.

High

## Criteria 3 - Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens

### Option 2 – Two unitary model

#### Strengths

- ✓ Increased service synergies can support early intervention and prevention, allowing each council to tailor approaches to local needs and priorities.
- ✓ Reduction in overheads and duplication compared to the existing two-tier model but compared to a single unitary, there will be less resource to invest in services due to duplicated costs.
- ✓ It will simplify access for residents, improving clarity of service responsibility and enhancing user experience.
- ✓ Differing approaches to service delivery between the two new unitary councils (north and south) allows for greater tailoring of service standards to better reflect the distinct demographic and socio-economic profiles of each area.

#### Weaknesses

- ✗ Fragmented delivery across key countywide services such as adult social care and children's services, education, SEND, highways, public health risks inconsistency and reduced strategic coherence.
- ✗ Disaggregation could complicate the operation and impact of Warwickshire Property and Development Group.
- ✗ Two separate, complex transitions may significantly disrupt service delivery and quality which is likely to impact services for several years.
- ✗ Disaggregation would have negative impacts on workforce capacity and capability, disparity of service provision and quality, market and financial impacts including increased costs, loss of purchasing power and leverage, loss of financial scale, and higher transitional costs, meaning less resource to invest in prevention and Public Service Reform in Warwickshire.
- ✗ Two councils would require the duplication of statutory posts, and many management, specialist and joint roles across services as well as statutory boards impacting on both councils and partners. This would present recruitment and retention challenges and have financial impacts.
- ✗ Transitional complexity of delivering both disaggregation and aggregation of services effectively from day one risks disrupting service delivery and impacting continuity of provision for residents.
- ✗ Trust models, partnerships and shared service arrangements for countywide services such as children's and adults reduce financial control, weaken service synergy, and introduce complex governance structures that may hinder effective decision-making and are at greater risk of future failure.
- ✗ Higher service demand in a north unitary, coupled with a lower tax base, is likely to create capacity and resourcing challenges and lack of flexibility and resilience to respond to demand-led pressures, impacting service levels in the places with the highest need.

Low



## Criteria 4 - Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views

### MHCLG guidance

- a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.
- b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.
- c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.

Option 1 – Single unitary	Option 2 – Two unitary model
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A single unitary model preserves and promote a strong and unified Warwickshire identity, reinforcing the county's proud heritage, historical importance, cultural cohesion and sense of place.</li> <li>✓ The operating model of a new, single unitary council would address the concerns raised through the public engagement feedback.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ The larger geographic and population footprint of a single council may risk diluting the distinct cultural and social identities of individual towns and districts if the council and its operating arrangements are poorly designed.</li> <li>✗ Some residents and stakeholders may perceive the council as too remote, impacting trust and confidence in the council if it is not well-designed and locally connected to different places.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This model may better reflect some of the distinct local identities, traditions, and historical affiliations that exist across different parts of Warwickshire.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ There is a risk that dividing the county into two councils could fragment Warwickshire's overarching cultural and community identity, potentially weakening the shared sense of place that underpins countywide initiatives and partnerships.</li> <li>✗ Risk from oversimplifying north-south boundaries. Within two unitaries there are still distinct identities which could be diluted within this model.</li> </ul>
High	Medium

## Criteria 5 - New unitary arrangements must support devolution arrangements

### MHCLG guidance

- a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor.
- b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.
- c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.

### Option 1 – Single unitary

#### Strengths

- ✓ A single unitary allows continued alignment of Warwickshire's governance footprint with the Coventry and Warwickshire functional economic geography and builds on the existing relationship with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).
- ✓ The strategic scale and capacity of a single countywide unitary is better suited to absorbing and deploying devolved powers, particularly in areas such as transport, skills, housing, and economic development.
- ✓ The model supports the Government's ambition for stronger, more accountable local leadership, with a clear mandate and capacity to negotiate and deliver Devolution deals that reflect Warwickshire's priorities.
- ✓ A single county voice offer the best option to build on existing Level 2 Devolution deal and secure enhanced devolution benefits for the whole of Warwickshire, including up to Level 4 powers with WMCA membership.

#### Weaknesses

- ✗ Risk of single unitary council being seen as too large within a combined authority compared to the size of other constituent members.
- ✗ Perception that Warwickshire's rurality is a poor fit with the WMCA metropolitan areas.

High



## Option 2 – Two unitary model

### Strengths

- ✓ This model allows each unitary council to tailor its approach to sub-regional priorities and partnerships, potentially enabling locally responsive devolution arrangements.
- ✓ North and south unitaries would have similar population size to other members of the strategic authority if membership of the WMCA is pursued by each new unitary council.

### Weaknesses

- ✗ A two unitary model risks a fragmented strategic voice for the county within a strategic authority and other regional forums which could weaken the county's overall influence and its ability to secure and coordinate devolution deals effectively.
- ✗ Different approaches to devolution between the two new unitary councils may lead to inconsistencies in service delivery and strategic planning, reducing the benefits of devolution to the county as a whole and to the strategic authority.

Medium

## Criteria 6 - New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

### MHCLG guidance

- a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.
- b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.

### Option 1 – Single unitary

#### Strengths

- ✓ A single unitary council provides a coherent framework for community engagement across the entire county, including local committees, community networks, and creating new town and parish councils in non-parished areas. This reduces fragmentation and ensures that all communities across the county benefit from a consistent offer and approach, tailored to local priorities, embedding a strong sense of local civic pride within the framework of a strong strategic Warwickshire Council.
- ✓ A countywide approach allows for the standardisation of engagement mechanisms, ensuring that rural, urban, and marginalised communities have access to influence and the ability to shape local services.
- ✓ A well designed single unitary can offer a highly localised operating model focusing on different places while maintaining strategic scale.
- ✓ More balanced resources will enable greater investment in local community engagement in all parts of Warwickshire.

#### Weaknesses

- ✗ If it is not well-designed, there is a risk that a single council may be perceived as more distant from local communities, particularly in rural or geographically isolated areas. This could impact levels of trust and engagement unless mitigated by strong local governance arrangements.
- ✗ Managing diverse local priorities within a single structure requires significant focus on local engagement mechanisms within the council's operating model to ensure that all voices are heard and valued.
- ✗ There is a risk that the scale of the council, if it is not well-designed, may limit the responsiveness to local issues, particularly in rural or more isolated communities, where local context is critical to effective service delivery and community engagement.

High

## Option 2 – Two unitary model

### Strengths

- ✓ Two smaller unitary councils may be perceived as more locally accessible and responsive, particularly in areas with strong local identities. This can enhance trust and foster a sense of ownership among residents.
- ✓ Each unitary council can develop bespoke community engagement strategies that reflect the specific needs, demographics, and priorities of their localities. This flexibility may support more innovative and context-sensitive approaches to neighbourhood empowerment.

### Weaknesses

- ✗ Operating two separate engagement infrastructures may lead to duplication of effort and increased administrative overheads.
- ✗ The two unitary model risks diluting the ability to deliver a coherent and unified strategic offer to communities, particularly in relation to town and parish councils and the local VCSE sector. Fragmentation may hinder the development of countywide frameworks for collaboration, funding, and capacity-building, reducing the overall effectiveness of neighbourhood empowerment initiatives.
- ✗ Financial viability risks for the North Warwickshire unitary are likely to reduce capacity to invest in local community engagement.

Medium

# Local Government Reorganisation:

## Options appraisal

### Housing

Annual housing targets across Warwickshire have increased by 69% under the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), representing an uplift in expected delivery. This change highlights the need to reassess the effectiveness of the current planning system in supporting growth.

At present, planning responsibilities are split between district and borough councils (local planning and housing services) and the county council (highways and infrastructure). This two-tier model contributes to delays in housing delivery due to fragmented processes, limited staff capacity, and inefficiencies caused by planning matters being passed between councils. All six councils report challenges in recruitment, retention, and overall service performance within their planning functions.

The current pace and capacity of planning services are a barrier to growth. A simplified, responsive system would support consistent infrastructure planning across a wider geography and enable Warwickshire to meet its housing and economic ambitions more effectively. A single countywide housing and homelessness service could combine with functions such as highways planning, transport, and public health to create a strategic and integrated approach to planning, housing and infrastructure. This would enable better use of staff resources, reduce duplication, and allow for digital innovation to accelerate planning processes.

### Service delivery

At present, many of Warwickshire's major council services, such as adult social care, public health, housing and homelessness, are the responsibility of either the county council or the district and borough councils. This creates fragmented strategic approaches and service delivery, delays in decision-making and inconsistent support for residents. A unitary model would remove these barriers, allowing services to be designed and delivered in a unified way.

Bringing services together under one unitary council creates new opportunities to offer earlier and more proactive support to residents. By adopting data-driven, preventative approaches, the council can spot emerging needs sooner and respond more quickly and in a joined-up way. This approach helps build stronger relationships with residents and supports them more holistically to live well. It represents a fundamental shift in how public services work in Warwickshire, aiming to reduce demand caused by crisis.

Service demand across Warwickshire is uneven and projected to rise over time, particularly in high-cost, high-pressure areas such as adult

social care, children's services and SEND. These services account for a considerable proportion of local authority responsibilities and expenditure, particularly in the north of the county where their costs per resident are higher, and their growth trajectory highlights the need for targeted resource planning and flexible delivery models.

A single unitary council provides the greatest opportunity to respond effectively to these pressures. It enables strategic, countywide commissioning and market management and avoids the complexity and longer-term implications of disaggregation in these critical services. This approach supports more resilient service delivery across the county and improves long-term outcomes. In contrast, a two unitary model risks higher costs, duplicated leadership teams, and fragmented commissioning. Existing localised approaches would need to be replicated, stretching capacity and reducing efficiency. A single unitary model supports sustainable service delivery by enabling smarter resource deployment, stronger market oversight, and a more coherent response to rising demand.

## **Disaggregation**

A single unitary model would avoid disaggregation of critical statutory services and minimise disruption to residents. Services such as adult social care, children's services, SEND, public health, home to school transport and highways benefit from maintaining scale and stability because of their countywide footprint. These services require strategic oversight, consistency, and economies of scale. A single unitary council would enable joined-up planning and delivery and ensure that resources are deployed where they are most needed. Currently, well-established, integrated partnership arrangements, including Warwickshire Health and Wellbeing Board, Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and the Home Environment Assessment and Response Team (HEART), have proven effective in improving outcomes for residents.

A single unitary would also support a unified approach to data sharing and population health management, reducing duplication and enabling services to be preventative and resident focused. Current locality working arrangements across adult social care and children's services demonstrate how countywide services can provide both scale and tailor services to reflect local need without needing separate councils.

Disaggregation in a two unitary model brings with it an additional £8.6m annual recurrent cost. In a two unitary model, the profile of demand and share of resources would result in the north unitary having insufficient resources to meet levels of need, reducing service levels in the most deprived parts of the county. Disaggregation is also a time consuming and complex exercise which would be required at the same time as aggregation of district and borough council functions into a two unitary model, adding to the complexity, costs and risks of implementation.

# Local Government Reorganisation:

## Financial appraisal

Our approach to assessing the financial aspects of LGR options has involved three key elements: firstly, to assess the costs and benefits of one and two unitary councils; secondly, disaggregating funding, costs, Medium-Term Financial Strategies, reserves and balance sheets in a two unitary scenario to understand financial resilience and sustainability; and thirdly, consideration of council tax harmonisation.



### Financial assessment of different LGR options

Costs and benefits of one and two unitary councils

Implementation costs

Disaggregation costs

Investment appraisal

- **Triple the net benefit:**

A single unitary council delivers a recurring annual net benefit of £18.7m which is over three times higher than a two-unitary model.

- **Lower transition costs and faster payback:**

Transition costs are 29% lower, and payback occurs in just 2.9 years versus 7.7 years for two unitaries.

- **Avoids disaggregation costs:**

A single unitary prevents £8.6 million in annual disaggregation costs, safeguarding public funds.

- **Financial advantage:**

In the first five years post-vesting, Warwickshire's financial position is projected to improve by £57.1 million, compared to a £11.0 million worsening under two unitaries which represents a difference of £68.1 million.

- **Stronger platform for transformation:**

Over ten years, a single unitary achieves 48% greater basic transformation benefits (an additional £46.7m) and 64% more stretch transformation gains (an additional £72.3m)



## Financial sustainability and resilience of different options (balance sheet)

Disaggregation of county council costs using appropriate cost drivers and work by Newton Europe to model 'people services' costs by district and borough.

Disaggregation of sources of revenue (Council Tax/ tax base, business rates, government grants) taking account of the estimated impact of the Government's funding reform proposals (using the national Pixel Model).

Balance sheet – debt, borrowing/Capital Financing Requirement, assets, reserves, commercial, SEND deficit, Housing Revenue Account.

Wider financial risks.

- **Stronger financial case:**

A single unitary delivers the greatest benefits to support Warwickshire's ongoing financial sustainability, helping fund rising costs and demand for children's and adults' services.

- **Lower risk, greater resilience:**

Predicted £11m annual surplus for a single unitary five years post-vesting, stronger reserves and balance sheet resilience, avoiding the risks and costs of disaggregation.

- **Long-term sustainability:**

Additional benefits of a single unitary become increasingly critical as cost and demand pressures grow, enabling continued savings and service improvements through transformation.

- **Fairest option to meet needs in all parts of Warwickshire:**

A two-unitary model creates structural financial risk with North Warwickshire facing a £16m shortfall, before the use of reserves, on day one, exhausting reserves within three years and reaching an estimated £43m annual deficit after five years.

- **Stronger balance sheet:**

A single unitary ensures a stronger balance sheet, with £102m available reserves after five years, compared to a two-unitary scenario that would require extra Government funding or additional service reductions in North Warwickshire.



## Council Tax harmonisation

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Harmonisation approach  
(lowest, highest, weighted  
average)

Timescale (up to 7 years)

Town and Parish Councils,  
Rugby town centre special  
expenses

- **Simple council tax harmonisation:**

There are multiple options for council tax harmonisation which will ultimately be decided by the shadow council/s. The recommended approach would align council tax to Warwickshire's weighted average within one year, ensuring simplicity and equity across the county.

- **Significant revenue gain:**

The recommended harmonisation approach delivers £14m additional council tax in the first five years post-vesting under both single and two-unitary scenarios.

- **Minimal variation:**

The recommended approach involves only a 3.6% gross difference in Band D rates to harmonise, comparable to mid-range recent reorganisations.

- **Smoother transition:**

Establishing new town and parish councils where they do not exist supports a smooth harmonisation process and addresses legacy anomalies such as special expenses in Rugby town centre.

- **Avoid financial imbalance:**

A two-unitary model creates unequal gains (£6m North vs £8m South) due to unequal tax bases and highlights structural disparities, reinforcing the case for a single unitary solution.



# Local Government Reorganisation: Costs and benefits of one and two unitaries

The financial assessment underpins the options appraisal and is particularly relevant to Government criteria 1 and 2. Although LGR will deliver significant financial benefits, these will not be sufficient to address all the financial challenges facing local government in Warwickshire. These pressures flow from increases in demand and cost which are unsustainable, increasing much more quickly than funding.

As a result, the new council/s will need to innovate and find additional savings in either scenario. Maximising the financial benefits of LGR, and financial sustainability and resilience of local government in Warwickshire, are therefore important considerations.

## Analysis of costs and benefits of LGR:

A single unitary offers the more compelling financial argument than a two unitary model, with increased net benefits over time and a shorter payback period. A single unitary model will support the easing of financial pressure across Warwickshire's councils.

## Summary of costs and benefits of LGR scenarios

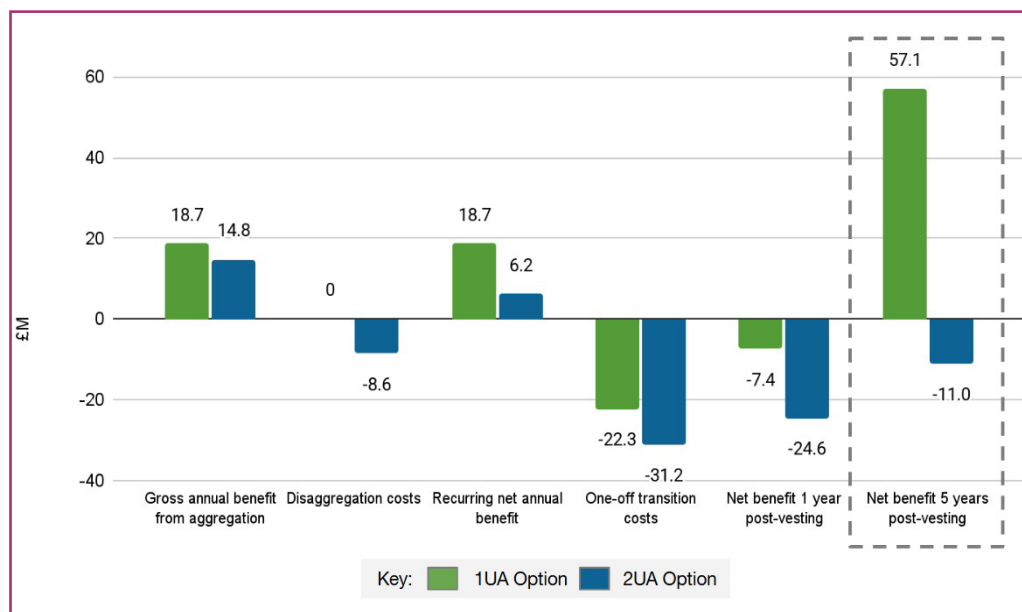
Option	Gross annual benefit from aggregation (£M) <sup>1</sup>	Additional Annual Costs (£M) (Disaggregation Costs)	Recurring net annual benefit (£M)	Recurring net annual savings per resident (£) <sup>2</sup>	One off transition costs (£M)	Net benefit one year post-vesting (£M)	Net benefit five years post-vesting (£M)	Payback Period (years from first costs incurred) <sup>3</sup>
1 Unitary Council	18.7	0	18.7	29.60	22.3	(7.4)	57.1	2.9
2 Unitary Councils	14.8	8.6	6.2	9.80	31.2	(24.6)	(11.0)	7.7

1.Gross annual benefit when at 100% phasing from Y3

2.Recurring savings per resident when benefits phased to 100%

3.First costs occurred in pre-vesting year, year 0 (2027/28)

## Key reorganisation costs and benefits for single and two unitary option



A single unitary offers significantly greater net benefit when compared to a two unitary model providing over three times higher recurring net annual benefit and 29% lower transition costs. This difference is predominantly driven by the additional annual costs of disaggregating services in a two unitary model. Five years post-vesting, this results in a single unitary model easing financial pressures across Warwickshire's councils by £57.1m, whilst a two unitary model worsens the financial position by £11.0m. This means that more funding will be required for significantly less financial gain.

## Implementation costs

One-off transition costs would be considerably higher for a two unitary model compared to a single unitary model. This is driven by the higher costs of external and programme management support, for example, in creating two new organisations.

Total one-off costs for a two unitary model would be **~40% higher** than those for a single unitary model. Redundancy costs are lower for a two unitary model compared to a single unitary model. This is a result of a reduction in staff savings achieved through aggregation.

### One-off transition costs

Cost category	Approach	Cost (£M)	
		1UA	2UA
Programme transition costs	See <i>Financial Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire</i> for breakdown of costs	16.2	26.1
Redundancy cost (incl. pension strain)	Redundancy cost as a proportion of salary (current assumption) multiplied by total FTE saving ( <i>detailed in Supporting Evidence Section 1 Financial Analysis</i> )	6.1	5.2
<b>Total one-off costs</b>		<b>22.3</b>	<b>31.2</b>

It is assumed that one-off transition costs for a single unitary will be funded from reserves which are at a healthy level across the six councils, with the option of flexible use of capital receipts as a backstop if necessary. However, there are risks about transition costs for a north unitary as the available to use reserves would run out by year three. This is further explored as part of the financial sustainability analysis.

## Disaggregation costs

In a two unitary model, there are additional recurring costs owing to the need to duplicate significant county council structures after disaggregating major services such as adult social care, children's services, public health, education, economic development and highways, as well as support services and the Warwickshire Pension Fund. This means that there would be additional costs incurred only when transitioning to a two unitary model.

### **Total impact of disaggregating to two unitary authorities compared to a single unitary model**

Category	Reduction in benefits from aggregation (£M)	Additional disaggregation costs (£M)	Increase in transition costs (£M)	One-year post-vesting impact	Five-year post-vesting impact
Impact (£m)	3.9	8.6	8.9	£17.2m of lost financial opportunity	£68.1m of lost financial opportunity.
Impact timeline	Ongoing	Ongoing	One-off		

One-off transition costs for a single unitary are £22.3m, £8.9m (30%) lower than for two unitaries. There are no additional disaggregation costs, whereas a two unitary scenario costs £8.6m each year in additional disaggregation costs.

## Payback period

A single unitary will have a lower payback period of 2.9 years compared to 7.7 years for two unitaries from the point of initial investment. The single unitary scenario payback period is lower due to the initial investment being recouped relatively quickly as cost reductions and efficiencies from reorganisation take effect, delivering full benefits sooner. In contrast, a two unitary scenario has a longer payback due to lower overall benefits and significantly higher ongoing costs, so it takes longer to achieve net financial benefits.

## Transformation costs and benefits

Transformation is the delivery of benefits from changes to systems, processes and broader approaches to service delivery that go beyond the benefits from aggregation as part of reorganisation.

Analysis compares two 'transformation scenarios' that have been developed to reflect the level of ambition that can be applied to LGR in Warwickshire. The benefits achieved through these scenarios are additional to the benefits described above from reorganisation. Each transformation scenario is based upon different assumptions for costs and benefits, detailed in Financial Case for Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire in the supporting evidence.

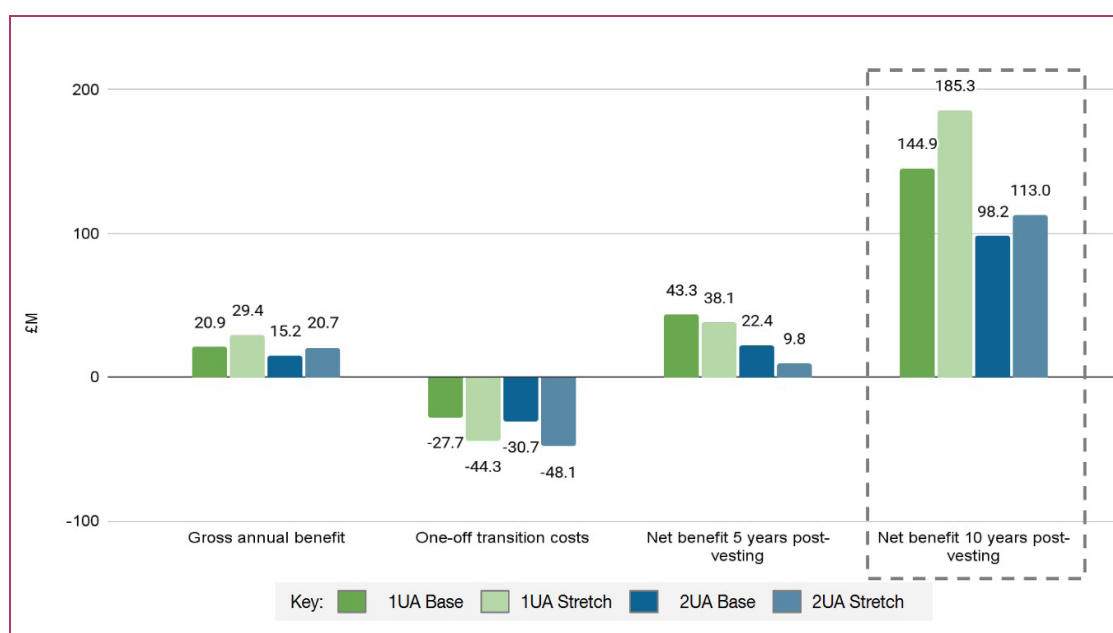
## Transformation scenarios

<b>Reorganisation</b>	This approach represents the savings delivered by bringing together teams from different councils and the immediate efficiencies of economies of scale across staffing, property and third party spend. This approach would involve the change required to ensure legal compliance and maintenance of essential services. This approach does not fundamentally alter service delivery mechanisms and benefits are primarily derived from amalgamation of existing councils. It is these financial benefits that have been included in the analysis to date.
<b>Lower level of transformation – Base</b>	This involves targeted enhancements within a council or multiple councils' service areas. It focuses on system changes and technological upgrades to improve efficiency and effectiveness within services, without necessarily affecting other council functions.
<b>Higher level of transformation – stretch</b>	This is an ambitious approach that leverages technology to transform multiple council functions across resultant councils. It aims for comprehensive improvements that enhance capabilities across services, leading to better overall performance and integration.

A single unitary council provides **a better springboard for additional benefits to be realised from LGR**. Reorganisation into a single unitary council enables the utilisation of greater economies of scale across staffing, third party spend and property, consistently automating and standardising processes, managing workload volumes more efficiently, applying consistent mechanisms for managing local markets to promote more consistent provider unit costs, conducting supplier consolidation and supplier relationship management.

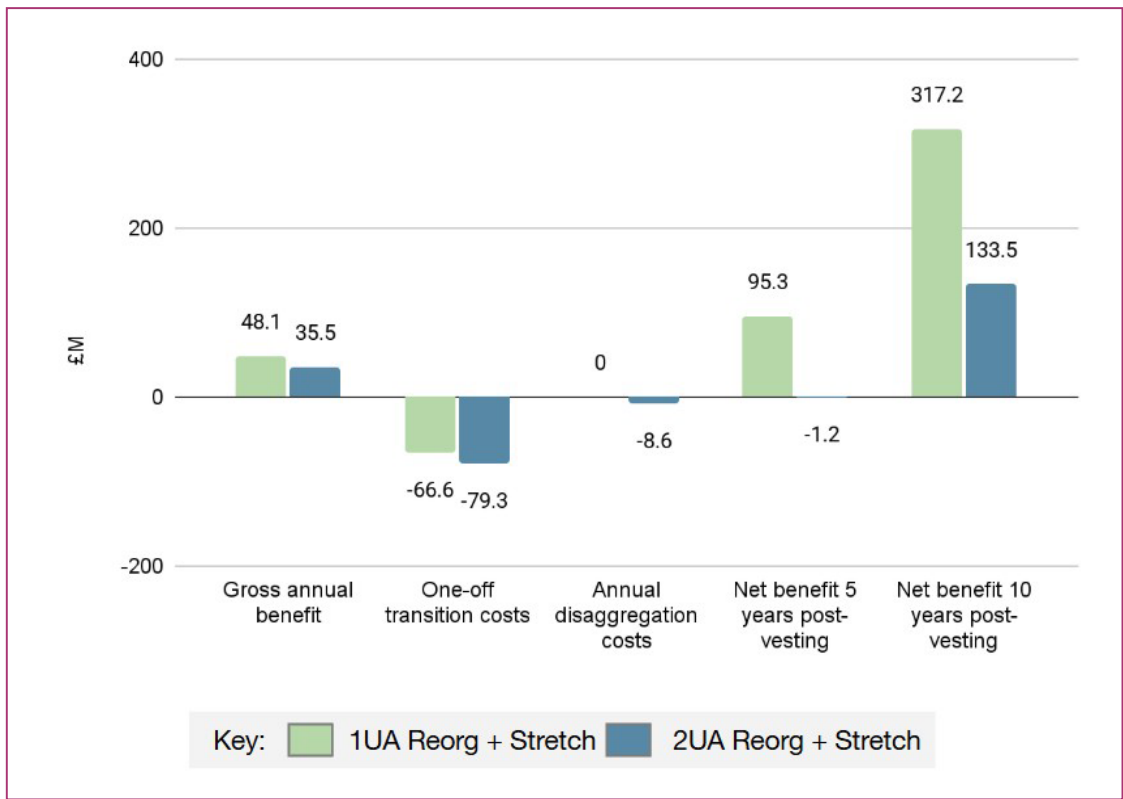
Ten years post-vesting, a single unitary council could realise **48% greater benefit from additional base transformation**, compared with a two unitary scenario.

### Key transformation costs and benefits for single unitary and two unitary options (additional to reorganisation cost/benefits)



The sum of costs and benefits of reorganisation and the ‘stretch’ transformation scenario together are illustrated below.

**Reorganisation and stretch transformation**



When stretch transformation is delivered alongside reorganisation, a single unitary could achieve 238% the net benefit of a two unitary option within ten years post-vesting.

In summary, three times higher recurring annual net benefits arising directly from reorganisation alone, giving a total net benefit of £18.7m per year. In addition the medium-term analysis shows that five years post-vesting, the total net benefit is projected to be £57.1m.

By investing in transformation activity, a single unitary scenario could realise 48% in additional benefits (£46.7m) in ten years post-vesting compared to a two unitary scenario. Analysis shows this figure rises to an additional 64% in a stretch transformation scenario (£72.3m). Transformation benefits would be additional to any benefits realised from reorganisation alone.

## Financial sustainability and resilience of different options

This section illustrates the financial sustainability through analysing how the costs and benefits of reorganisation align with the wider financial context of the proposed unitary councils in the single and two unitary scenarios given the pressures on local government finances more generally. It does this through consideration of the impact of reorganisation on resource forecasts, costs and the reserves position of the proposed unitary councils in one and two unitary scenarios.

Note that the financial sustainability analysis incorporates benefits from reorganisation but does not assume any additional benefits from transformation activity.

### Disaggregating funding

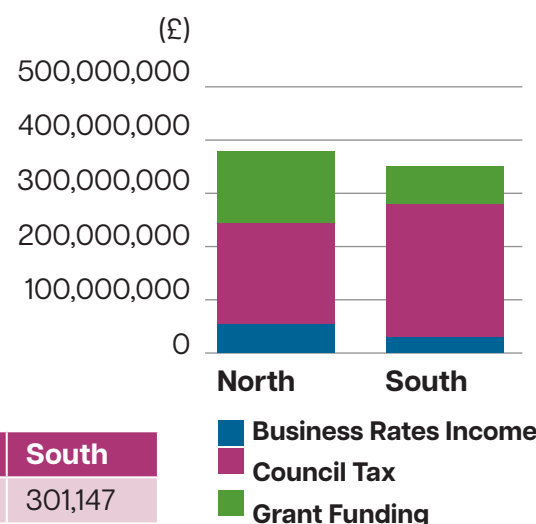
Using a national model developed by 'Pixel', used by all six Warwickshire councils, an assessment has been made as to how resources would be split between two councils. The Pixel model is a national model which takes account of the estimated impacts of the Government's Fair Funding reforms as set out in a recent consultation. The likely estimated impact of Fair Funding reforms, as set out in the Government's consultation, is therefore built into the MTFS modelling in this analysis. The final outcome is uncertain until we receive the provisional local government finance settlement.

Our analysis has split funding sources (business rates income, council tax and grant funding) between the two unitaries, which leads to an allocation which mirrors the population (52% north, 48% south). North Warwickshire will be more reliant on business rates and Government grants whereas South Warwickshire would see a heavy reliance on council tax to fund services.

#### This assumes:

- Annual council tax increases up to the referendum limit (2.99% + 2% Social Care Levy).
- A 1.5% annual council taxbase increase in line with historic trends.
- Abolition of Rugby town centre 'special expenses' and creation of new town and parish councils there and in Nuneaton, Bedworth and Bulkington.
- Government grants and Settlement Funding Assessment cash frozen each year.

#### Sources of funding in two unitary model excluding fire and rescue



	North	South
Population	331,060	301,147
Share of population	52.4%	47.6%
Share of council tax base	46%	54%
Share of business rates	58%	42%
Share of grant funding	63%	37%
Overall share of funding post-LGR	51.7%	48.3%



Using medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) returns from all six councils and published budget information for 2025/26, it has been modelled how county council spend would disaggregate between the two councils using appropriate cost drivers. The relevant district and borough costs have been added to the disaggregated county council costs for north and south unitaries in a two unitary scenario.

The following cost drivers have been used to disaggregate county council spend:

- Independent analysis by Newton Europe of current spending for 'people services' (social care and education)
- ONS mid 2024 population estimates
- Deprivation - count of population in lower super output areas (LSOAs) in most deprived 25% of LSOAs in England
- Area
- Taxbase
- Waste tonnages
- Pupil numbers
- Road lengths
- Overheads and support

### ***Analysis of the 2025/26 county council budget by cost driver***

<b>Cost driver</b>	<b>Budget (£'000)</b>	<b>Share of WCC Budget</b>	<b>Allocated to north</b>	<b>Allocated to south</b>
Adult social care	232,984	36.8%	52.7%	47.3%
Children's services	115,601	18.3%	60.8%	39.2%
Population <sup>1</sup>	83,386	13.2%	52.4%	47.6%
Population and pupil numbers <sup>2</sup>	56,544	8.9%	56.9%	43.1%
Population (inc. aged weighted) plus 5% deprivation <sup>3</sup>	33,032	5.2%	57.4-51.2%	42.6-48.9%
Waste tonnages	16,787	2.7%	53.2%	46.8%
Road length	19,622	3.1%	42.6%	57.4%
Pupil numbers	12,102	1.9%	54.5-60.4%	45.5-39.6%
Area	671	0.1%	36.2%	63.8%
Taxbase	(2,858)	-0.5%	46%	54%
Overheads and support	64,980	10.3%	54.7%	45.3%
	<b>632,849</b>			

#### **Notes:**

1.Used for economy and transport management, Trading Standards and Community Safety, Transport Strategy and Road Safety, Fire and Rescue, Regeneration and Strategic Planning, Customer Contact, Community Partnerships, Libraries, Heritage and Regeneration, Capital Financing, County Coroner, Members' Allowances and Expenses

2.Used for transport delivery only

3. Used for economy and skills, health and care commissioning and public health

## Local Government Reorganisation: Disaggregating the MTFS

The combined WCC budgets, adjusted for ongoing future spending pressures and savings built into existing MTFS figures, appear below.

	North Unitary					South Unitary					Single Unitary				
	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031- 32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031-32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031-32 £m	Year 5 2032-33 £m
Approved budget 2025/26	346	346	346	346	346	287	287	287	287	287	633	633	633	633	633
On-going Future Spending Pressures	70	95	120	145	170	60	82	103	123	143	130	178	223	269	314
On-going Future Savings	(27)	(31)	(31)	(31)	(31)	(23)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(50)	(58)	(58)	(58)	(58)
<b>WCC Net Revenue Requirement</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>889</b>

Additional spending pressures have been included for each district and borough council based on three-year averages and spend has been adjusted for creation of new town and parish councils in Rugby, Nuneaton, Bedworth and Bulkington and abolition of Rugby town centre special expenses. The net revenue requirement is split 55% to the north unitary and 45% to the south.

	North Unitary					South Unitary					Single Unitary				
Current by Council	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031-32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031- 32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031- 32 £m	Year 5 2032-33 £m
North Warwickshire	12	13	13	13	14						12	13	13	13	14
Nuneaton and Bedworth	20	22	24	25	26						20	22	24	25	26
Rugby	21	22	23	24	25						21	22	23	24	25
Stratford						22	22	22	23	23	22	22	22	23	23
Warwick						19	19	20	20	21	19	19	20	20	21
Warwickshire	389	410	435	460	485	324	343	363	384	404	713	753	798	844	889
<b>Unitary Net Revenue Requirement</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>998</b>

## Local Government Reorganisation: Financial viability

This table compares the disaggregated net revenue requirement (costs) against the funding split (income) generated by the national Pixel model, which takes account of the estimated impacts of the Government's Fair Funding reforms. This shows a material funding gap in the north. The main driver of this is the significantly higher proportion of costs of children's social care, Home to School transport, SEND and, to a lesser extent, adult social care, which arise in the north of the county relative to the estimated share of resources. This would create a clear financial sustainability issue from the outset and a clear imbalance of resourcing versus need in the north and south, risking damage to service levels in the places with the highest levels of need and deprivation.

Newton Europe's analysis shows that demand and costs grow faster in a south Warwickshire unitary between 2025-2040 compared with the north, but overall costs remain higher in the north. Taken in combination with higher unit costs in the south, this will create increasing financial pressures over the medium term compounded by lack of scale and higher overheads of two new unitary councils. Conversely, in the short term, a North Warwickshire unitary would exist with a budget deficit from day one of the new council requiring additional savings in the parts of the county with the highest levels of need, and significant use of available reserves which would run out by year three. This would reduce the scope to invest in transformation to address the causes of the higher demand levels in the north.

Considering Warwickshire as a whole, a single unitary is the more financially resilient and sustainable option, with only marginal additional savings required in years four and five. The surplus or deficit will be eroded if councils use the difference between the outputs of the Fair Funding review and current MTFS assumptions before vesting day.

	North Unitary					South Unitary					Single Unitary				
	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031- 32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031- 32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031-32 £m	Year 5 2032-33 £m
Net Revenue Requirement	442	467	495	522	550	365	384	405	427	448	807	851	900	949	998
Settlement Funding Assessment and Grants	(171)	(171)	(171)	(171)	(171)	(105)	(105)	(105)	(105)	(105)	(276)	(276)	(276)	(276)	(276)
Council Tax	(256)	(269)	(283)	(296)	(311)	(294)	(308)	(323)	(340)	(357)	(550)	(577)	(606)	(636)	(668)
Impact of Taxbase growth	(4)	(8)	(12)	(17)	(22)	(4)	(9)	(14)	(19)	(24)	(8)	(17)	(26)	(36)	(46)
Total Resourcing	(431)	(448)	(466)	(484)	(504)	(403)	(422)	(442)	(464)	(486)	(834)	(870)	(908)	(948)	(990)
<b>Annual (Surplus)/ Deficit before cost/benefit of reorganisation</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>(38)</b>	<b>(38)</b>	<b>(37)</b>	<b>(37)</b>	<b>(38)</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>

## Reserves to support reorganisation and MTFS

Based on estimated reserves at 31 March 2026 as reported by councils on the RA Form submission to MHCLG, Net Revenue Spend has been used to split reserves as follows - 54.7% north, 45.3% south. The following reserves are not available to support reorganisation or help balance the revenue budget - estimated school level reserves; Dedicated Schools Grant adjustment account level; reserves held on behalf of third parties for specific projects; and contractual commitments.

The existing provision to offset the DSG Schools Grant Adjustment Account has been retained pending a government decision on how to bring the DSG back into balance. 50% of the specific risk and budget stabilisation reserves have been retained, with the reduction based on no longer needing to hold reserves to cover financial risks associated with the Fair Funding Review and business rates reset, and rationalisation of risk reserves post any move to a unitary council structure.

### This analysis assumes:

- A provision for general reserves - estimated at 5% of net spend is retained as the minimum level of reserves.
- No reserves are used to support the revenue budget prior to vesting day given:
  - The more positive impact of the Fair Funding Review than Warwickshire councils had assumed in their previous MTFS.
  - The limits on council expenditure that would be covered by a Section 24 agreement issued by Government following its decision about LGR in Warwickshire.

	Single unitary	North unitary	South unitary
	£m	£m	£m
Reserves held to cover planned future revenue and capital spending	31	12	19
50% of specific risks reserves	35	18	17
50% of budget stabilisation reserves	33	22	11
Other reserves	8	8	0
Estimated unallocated financial reserves level	58	31	27
Less provision for general reserves (est 5% of net spend)	(40)	(22)	(18)
<b>Total reserves to support reorganisation</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>56</b>

## Impact of LGR costs, benefits and use of reserves

Bringing together the benefits and costs of LGR with the MTFS model and disaggregation of reserves shows that a single unitary council would have stronger financial resilience and sustainability compared with a two unitary model. In a two unitary model the north unitary would run out of reserves by year three without significant further spending reductions on top of current savings and the benefits of LGR. A single unitary would maintain a strong and stable reserves position, excluding the issue of SEND deficits, throughout its first five years, and would generate a surplus position at the end of each of the five years.

	North Unitary					South Unitary					Single Unitary				
	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031- 32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029-30 £m	Year 3 2030-31 £m	Year 4 2031- 32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m	Year 1 2028- 29 £m	Year 2 2029- 30 £m	Year 3 2030- 31 £m	Year 4 2031-32 £m	Year 5 2032- 33 £m
Budget position pre LGR cost/gain	11	19	29	38	46	(38)	(38)	(37)	(37)	(38)	(27)	(19)	(8)	1	8
Benefits	(4)	(6)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(4)	(5)	(7)	(7)	(7)	(9)	(14)	(19)	(19)	(19)
Disaggregation costs	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
Transition costs	4	4	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0
Budget position post LGR (surplus)/ deficit	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>(34)</b>	<b>(35)</b>	<b>(40)</b>	<b>(40)</b>	<b>(41)</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>(18)</b>	<b>(11)</b>
Available Reserves at year start	(69)	(45)	(23)	0	0	(56)	(45)	(41)	(41)	(41)	(125)	(108)	(102)	(102)	(102)
Pre-vesting day transition	8	0	0			7	0				11	0			
In-year transition costs	4	4	0			4	4				6	6			
Reserves to balance budget	12	18	23			0	0				0	0			
Available Reserves at year end	<b>(45)</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>(41)</b>	<b>(41)</b>	<b>(41)</b>	<b>(41)</b>	<b>(108)</b>	<b>(102)</b>	<b>(102)</b>	<b>(102)</b>	<b>(102)</b>
Extra savings needed to balance	-	-	<b>3</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Consolidated Warwickshire balance sheet

Based on the 2023/24 audited accounts, modelling of a disaggregated balance sheet shows the total value of Warwickshire's net assets is £2.6bn, which has been allocated. 53% North Warwickshire and 47% south Warwickshire. Property, plant and equipment has been allocated by physical location and value rather than a proxy indicator.

14% of net assets are current. 86% are long-term assets. 85% of long-term debtors (12 months + in accounting terms) are in south Warwickshire which relate largely to loans made by Warwick District Council for the construction of housing which are due to be repaid by 2028.

By value, only 20% of the six councils' combined balance sheet is held in usable reserves and therefore available to support the revenue budget and/or the housing revenue account.

An analysis of three Government indicators of borrowing and debt risk shows a slightly higher risk in south Warwickshire but no fundamental issues. This does not account for SEND deficits.

	Single unitary	North unitary	South unitary
	£m	£m	£m
Property, plant and equipment	3,050	1,558	1,493
Investment properties	71	46	25
Long-term investments	112	62	50
Long-term debtors	111	17	94
<b>Long-term assets</b>	<b>3,343</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>1,661</b>
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>	<b>(329)</b>	<b>(193)</b>	<b>(136)</b>
Long-term borrowing	(700)	(315)	(385)
Net pension liability	(220)	(104)	(115)
Other long-term liabilities	(168)	(87)	(81)
<b>Long-term liabilities</b>	<b>(1,088)</b>	<b>(507)</b>	<b>(582)</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>2,636</b>	<b>1,389</b>	<b>1,247</b>
Usable reserve - non HRA	(441)	(232)	(209)
Usable reserve - HRA	(80)	(48)	(33)
Unusable reserves	(2,114)	(1,109)	(1,005)
<b>Total reserves</b>	<b>(2,636)</b>	<b>(1,389)</b>	<b>(1,247)</b>

	North Warwickshire	South Warwickshire	Single unitary
External borrowing as a percentage of net assets at March 2024	20%	26%	22%
Internal borrowing as a percentage of usable reserves at March 2024	27%	37%	31%
Debt servicing as percentage of 2025/26 council tax requirement	8%	9%	9%



## Key balance sheet and wider financial risks

**General balance sheet risks:** A series of balance sheet risks apply in all scenarios such as SEND deficits, borrowing, commercial ventures and concerns about opening balances for four of the district and borough councils who received disclaimed audit opinions for 2023/24, three of which also have recommendations from their external auditors to improve their production of the annual accounts.

**Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) statutory override:** DSG is the main government grant for education, with the High Needs Block (HNB) funding services for ages 0-25 with SEND. The DSG deficit is the county council's biggest financial risk, mirroring a national issue with deficits expected to exceed £6bn by March 2026 due to underfunding and rising demand post-Covid.

A statutory override has been in place since 2020 which allows negative reserves to be placed on balance sheets to cover accumulated DSG overspends, extended to March 2028. Warwickshire's DSG HNB deficit is forecast at £151m by the end of 2025/26, impacting cash and borrowing (costs could reach £25m/year by 2030/31). Current spend is £92m north (62%), £55m south (38%); by 2040, demand could shift this to 55% north, 45% south. Without extra government funding, new councils must find resources to cover DSG deficits if and when the statutory override ceases. Government is due to announce how it intends to deal with these deficits in the provisional local government finance settlement in December.

**Capital Financing Requirement (CFR):** this measures the amount of borrowing that still needs to be repaid to fund capital spend that has already been incurred, i.e. the amount of capital expenditure that is not funded by capital receipts, capital grants or revenue

contributions incurred. Warwickshire's CFR is projected to be £1,268m by March 2028 split £570m (45%) north and £698m (55%) south. Three quarters of the CFR relates to just two authorities: Warwick District Council (29%) and Warwickshire County Council (46%). There is a relatively higher CFR in the south than north, which means there is higher risk associated with borrowing in the south and greater revenue costs of borrowing.

**Commercial activity:** The six local councils in Warwickshire are currently owners (or part owners) of seventeen companies, eleven of which are owned (or part-owned) by Warwickshire County Council. A number of opportunities arise from companies operating over a wider area and synergies between companies, but there are risks of disaggregating county council company ownership between two councils.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA):** Four of the district and borough councils have a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for their housing stock. This financially ringfences the HRA from councils' general funds. For the purposes of this analysis, the HRA has not been factored in as it is separate from core council budgets. Further detailed work on the HRA will be required as part of aggregation once the new model of local government in Warwickshire has been decided.

**Pay harmonisation:** the 2023/24 accounts reported 6,650 employees across the six councils (66% in the county council, 34% in the district and borough councils). Creation of a standard and consistent grading structure (pay harmonisation) across all services is a financial risk whereby potential cost will depend on relative differences in pay scales, the balance of in-house and contracted out services and variations in service offer. Legal compliance, staff morale and operational effectiveness would indicate that the new council or councils should do this relatively quickly.

## Council Tax harmonisation – the starting point

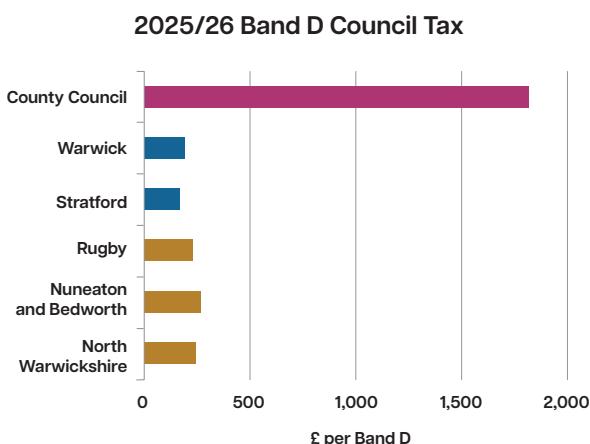
The majority of total council tax is the charge from the county council. This is almost 90% of the council tax to be harmonised and is already harmonised. The focus on council tax harmonisation is the equalisation of those council tax charges levied by the district and borough councils.

### Five principles have driven the modelling of harmonisation options:

1. Support financial sustainability through the maximisation of council tax income.
2. Ensure the council tax set provides for a consistent service offer across all areas.
3. Strive for fairness to taxpayers within and between areas.
4. Enable the delivery of savings and transformational change.
5. Drive operational effectiveness and enable forward-looking decision making.

The key choices and recommended approach to harmonisation are set out below. Ultimately, decisions on harmonisation will be for the new unitary council/s depending on the MTFS position at the time.

Under the recommended approach the gross difference in council tax levels across the five areas of Warwickshire is £78.85 or 3.6%. This places the range of council taxes in Warwickshire broadly in the middle of other council areas that have unitarised recently.



Choice	Recommended approach
Increase by weighted average or to maximum of 4.99% increase for any predecessor area.	Weighted average council tax increase at referendum level.
Abolish or maintain Rugby town centre special expenses.	Abolish Rugby town centre special expenses through the creation of a town council with spending reduced by the same amount as the council tax income.
Introduce new town and parish councils in Nuneaton, Bedworth, Bulkington and Rugby.	Create town and parish councils across Warwickshire with the cost of service responsibilities transferred equivalent to the council tax income generated.
Period of harmonisation between one and seven years.	One year harmonisation.

## Local Government Reorganisation: Impact of disaggregation

Disaggregating services, where responsibilities currently held by the county council are split between two different councils, can create a variety of challenges depending on the service area. The table below outlines the degree of impact on delivery, cost and accessibility for different service areas.

Service area	Impact rating	Commentary
<b>People based services</b>	<b>High</b>	<p>Large scale/ cost/ volume, people-based services covering adult and children's social care, children's services, education and public health would face the greatest impact for disaggregation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent care and service standards across areas due to split and potentially more complex governance.</li> <li>• Loss of economies of scale, increased market competition, unit costs and competition for staff.</li> <li>• Duplication of safeguarding boards and SEND coordination efforts.</li> <li>• Impact on partnerships and services delivered or commissioned in partnership (eg with health)</li> <li>• Challenges in maintaining continuity for vulnerable individuals moving between areas.</li> <li>• Added complexities of new boundaries for service delivery</li> <li>• Newton Europe's work allocating costs to each district and borough by service user postcode provides the detailed financial picture.</li> </ul>
<b>Community services</b>	<b>High</b>	<p>Services such as transport, highways delivery, planning, waste disposal and economic growth would be significantly impacted by disaggregation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased costs for maintaining separate vehicle fleets and potential impact on location of depots.</li> <li>• Inefficient waste management strategies and varied recycling standards.</li> <li>• Inconsistent road maintenance and infrastructure investment.</li> <li>• Fragmented economic growth strategies and reduced leverage for inward investment.</li> </ul>
<b>Universal services</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<p>Services like libraries, registration and heritage already deliver services across the county at multiple access points however, disaggregation would require some duplication of systems and management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate library catalogues and membership systems reducing access to shared resources.</li> <li>• Increased administrative overheads for birth, death, and marriage registrations.</li> <li>• Increased competition in the local area for national funding programmes.</li> <li>• Reduced ability to run countywide cultural or literacy programmes.</li> </ul>
<b>Support services</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<p>All six councils have a range of support services including HR, legal, ICT, finance and facilities. Disaggregation would require two established functions with management and leadership capability. It is estimated that this would not be achievable with current capability and capacity of the workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplication of IT systems and cybersecurity frameworks.</li> <li>• Increased costs for legal services and procurement processes.</li> <li>• Challenges in maintaining consistent HR policies and payroll systems.</li> <li>• Reduced efficiency in public asset management.</li> </ul>

## Local Government Reorganisation: Impact of disaggregation

The service areas listed below face significant impact and challenges from disaggregation.

Service Area	Commentary
<b>Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service</b>	Moving to a two unitary council model could require creation of a Warwickshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority, other options either not being viable or legally possible. Whilst this would importantly preserve countywide coverage, allowing flexible deployment of resources, and co-terminosity with the Police footprint, transitioning to a new governance structure would initially be disruptive with transition costs and shorter term funding pressures following its separation from the county council. It may also result in two governance changes in quick succession if Government pursues the model of Strategic Authority Mayors taking on accountability for policing and fire functions.
<b>Education</b>	Currently, SEND provision in schools is planned to meet countywide needs. New boundaries would complicate placing children, as current rules are based on distance, not council borders. Home-to-school transport would become more complex and harder to manage with additional boundaries. Recruitment challenges would likely mean that specialist countywide teams that currently work to place geographies would need to be replaced with more generalist teams, reducing flexibility and resilience, and creating pressures for a north unitary as a result of the imbalance in demand. With demand greatest in a north unitary, workload would be increased and costs increased without the scale to smooth and absorb this. Planning responsibilities, such as school sufficiency, capital investment, and new school funding, could become less clear, with overlaps and potential disputes between councils. Admissions processes may become inconsistent, especially for schools near borders. Creating two sets of management and support teams would increase costs and reduce capacity.
<b>Public health</b>	Unless a shared public health function is established, splitting public health services between two smaller councils risks increasing cost as a result of reduced scale. This could have a detrimental impact on the quality and level of services provided. It would disrupt local delivery alignment from NHS strategic footprints, reduce economies of scale and disrupt commissioning, making services less viable and attractive to providers. A key concern is the disaggregation of 11 core public health contracts worth approximately £22.5 million per year, some of which are jointly commissioned with Coventry and have breakpoints post-2028. Splitting contracts and workforces would lead to downsizing, duplication of statutory duties e.g. pharmaceutical needs assessments, and reduced capacity, resulting in less detailed input and potentially poorer health outcomes. Smaller councils would also have reduced national influence and a limited ability to address health inequalities, particularly in the north where these are most acute with life expectancy worse than in the south.

<b>Adult social care</b>	Splitting services between two councils would lead to duplication, disruption, and fragmentation of the care market. It would require duplication of management roles (statutory and non-statutory), worsening already difficult local and national recruitment challenges. Statutory partnerships like the Warwickshire Adult Safeguarding Board would need to be duplicated, and renegotiated. It would also cut across existing integrated work with the NHS. Partners would face extra work to engage with two councils, and splitting existing Section 75 agreements could destabilise staff and services. A smaller market footprint may reduce provider interest, increase competition and drive-up commissioning costs. Service standards and practice could become inconsistent across the two new councils, and data sharing, IT systems, and performance monitoring across the two councils would be more complex. Income differences between the two councils could affect resilience and the ability to deliver consistent services. The transition to the new model could cause delays in care, missed assessments, and safeguarding risks, with there being significant technical issues in relation to ordinary residents for a number of years specifically resulting from the breaking up of the current Warwickshire county footprint.
<b>Highways</b>	Supply chains and labour movements that currently operate across the county would be disrupted, and transport networks, especially bus routes, would cross boundaries, making coordination more difficult. Smaller commissioning areas may struggle to attract providers, leading to higher prices or reduced delivery capacity for services like transport delivery and parking enforcement. A recent review highlighted a lack of market interest in tendering at a below county level. Specialist countywide teams would be broken up, reducing resilience and expertise. Budget splits may not reflect the differing infrastructure and network needs (e.g. more dual carriageways in the north), and procurement is likely to become more expensive. Small teams with unique roles may be particularly affected, as they cannot be easily replicated across two councils.
<b>Children and families</b>	Currently, Warwickshire's children's services are delivered on a countywide footprint. Disaggregation of this service would lead to duplication, potential delays and gaps in delivery, causing significant disruption to statutory countywide partnership arrangements, including Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. This will unnecessarily require additional resource from already stretched external partner organisations. These capacity concerns apply equally to integrated services such as Family Connect and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team. Additionally, teams such as Early Support, Family Help, Multi-Agency Child Protection and Leaving Care have existing strong locality and place-based approaches. A two unitary model requiring disaggregation of such services would risk losing the existing strong local connectivity and place-based focus within these services.

## Case Study

### **Warwickshire's Fair Chance Employment Programme**

Warwickshire County Council's Fair Chance Employment Programme is an initiative developed with local employers to make recruitment more inclusive, flexible and accessible. Delivered by the Warwickshire Skills Hub, the programme helps businesses reshape job opportunities to better support individuals who face barriers entering the workforce, helping employers access untapped talent and supporting people into employment. Central to this is the Fair Chance jobs portal, which showcases high-quality roles designed with progression pathways and inclusive practices, reflecting a commitment to opening up employment opportunities across the county.

LGR and further devolution will help Warwickshire to shape a more locally responsive skills system. Building on Warwickshire County Council's Level 2 Devolution deal, which devolves responsibility for 19+ skills provision from 2026, the council can pursue additional devolved powers, such as free courses for jobs, skills bootcamps and careers education. These opportunities would enable Warwickshire to expand and tailor initiatives like the Fair Chance programme, ensuring employment and skills support meets local needs and delivers real impact.



## Section 3: **Transforming lives in Warwickshire**

**This section sets how the vision for Warwickshire will be delivered through transformation activity and new ways of working.**

### **3. Transforming lives in Warwickshire**

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Warwickshire Council

Target Operating Model

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Stronger services:

Service synergies and joining up

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Stronger communities:

Community governance

Democratic representation

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Stronger communities, stronger partnerships:

Public Service Reform in Warwickshire

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Stronger places:

Devolution for Warwickshire

Delivering for Warwickshire

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1. Vision,  
opportunity and  
outcomes

2. Options  
appraisal

3. Transforming  
lives in  
Warwickshire

4.  
Implementation

# Warwickshire Council Target Operating Model

**Warwickshire Council's operating model will build on all the best elements of the six predecessor councils, driven by the following key principles that are aligned to the vision for a stronger Warwickshire:**

A single council means residents will experience easier and simpler access to services, with less bureaucracy and faster responses, enabled by good service design and digital innovation at scale. By removing duplication, more funding can be directed to frontline services that matter most like social care, housing, and community safety.

**Community powered:** The council will embed community involvement in its decision making, working alongside communities to take practical action which delivers local priorities and supports communities to lead.



**Stronger Communities**

**Value for money:** Using the right balance of working at scale and local presence to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of local government in Warwickshire, with a laser focus on delivering and tracking tangible benefits for residents.



**Stronger Finances**

**Systemic approach with partners:** Collaborating closely with partners, focusing on collectively agreed outcomes, enabling Public Service Reform and systemic approaches to tackle Warwickshire's biggest challenges and deliver on its major opportunities.



**Stronger Voice**

**Integration for prevention:** A model that balances strategic scale with local delivery by combining the best of the previous six councils and maximising the benefits of integrating services, shifting resources upstream to support prevention based on effective use of data.



**Stronger Partnerships**

**Visible local presence and digitally-enabled services:** Accessible services and choice of channel for residents, businesses and visitors, with consistently high standards of customer service driven by data, insight and digital innovation.



**Stronger Services**

**Place and neighbourhood working:** The structure will combine countywide activity where it is most effective with place-based working embedded within the operating model and integrated neighbourhood teams working as locally as possible.



**Stronger Places**

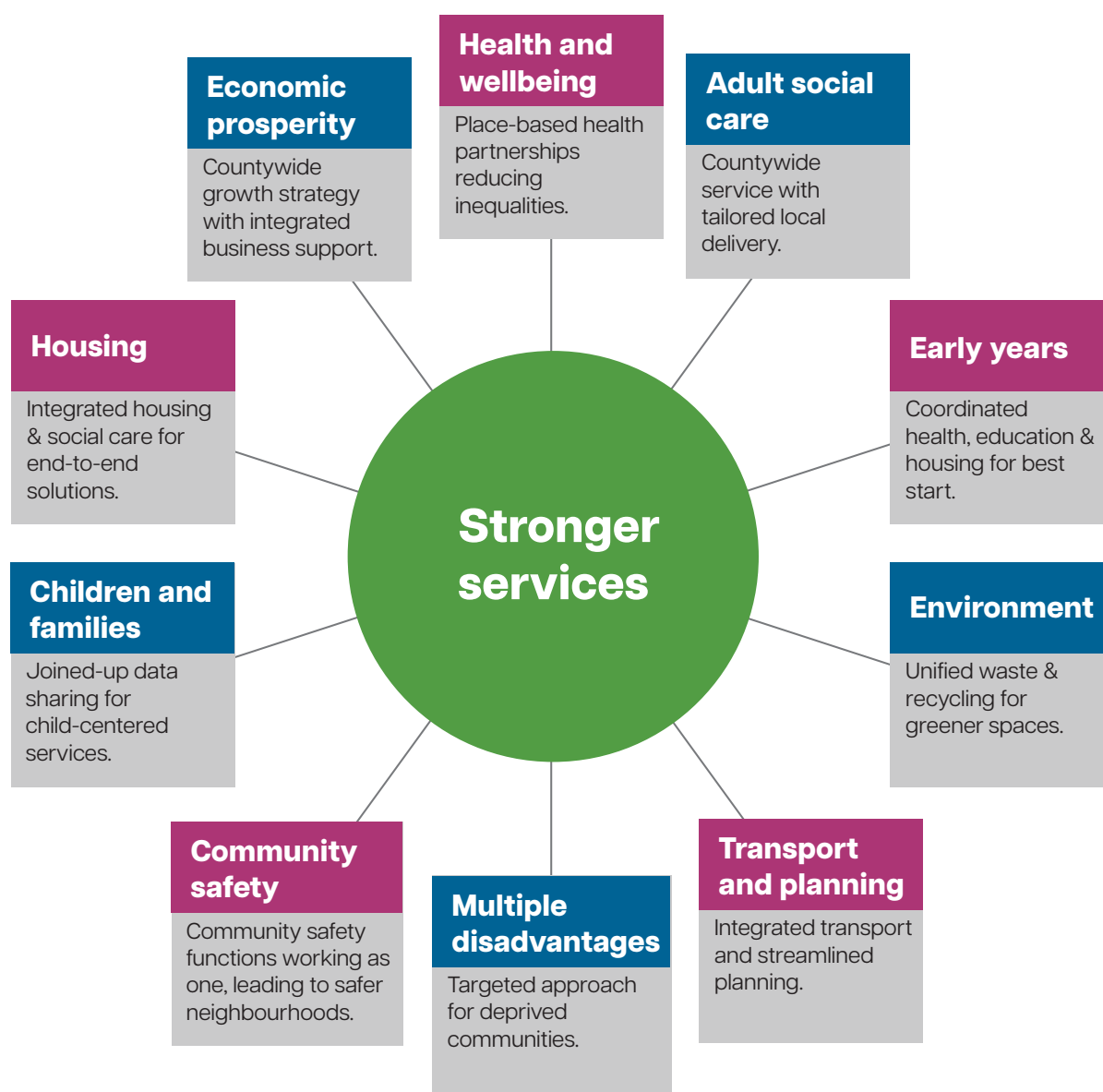
**Purpose-driven culture:** Driven by a clear purpose to improve lives and communities through prevention and supported by strong council culture, values and behaviours; simple, clear, forward-thinking, evidence-based strategies and commissioning approaches to achieve the best outcomes.



**Stronger Outcomes**

## Stronger services: Service synergies and joining up

Creating Warwickshire Council provides an opportunity to work more efficiently by combining the best ideas and practices from the six current councils. It also allows new ways for services to work together so the council can be more innovative, efficient, and effective. Below are some examples of the impact that combining services will have on delivering the vision.



## Local presence, local pride, local leadership

### **Linking housing to children's and adult social care services**

will better support families in temporary accommodation, the ageing population and people of working age with physical, mental and learning disabilities. Closer collaboration means homes can be designed to support independence and reduce future care needs.

**Bringing together public health, environmental health and leisure** will support a holistic approach to wellbeing, social care and economy and skills and, increase access to healthy lifestyle options, support employment and reduce demand on health and social care services.

## Value for money, high performing service delivery

### **Bringing together waste collection, disposal and recycling**

will enable better route and schedule optimisation, staff utilisation and access to shared resources.

**The aggregation of support services such as human resources, legal, finance and IT** will enable financial efficiencies through reduced duplication and streamlined staffing arrangements.

**Joining up property ownership across the county** will cut costs by reducing the number of buildings needed, enabling Warwickshire Council to drive better value for money and regeneration activity from its property portfolio.

**Combining customer and digital services** will create consistent and integrated contact points for residents and enable greater innovation using integrated data to improve the user experience.

## Case Study

### **Housing Services**

In Warwickshire, housing services are split across five district and borough councils, while highways and infrastructure planning sit with the county council. This fragmented system causes delays, duplication and inconsistent service quality, challenges that are becoming more pressing with the 69% rise in housing targets under the new National Planning Policy Framework. LGR offers a chance to streamline planning services under a single-tier authority. A single housing service working alongside social care, health and transport will create a strategic and integrated approach to planning, housing and infrastructure that reduces delays for developers and the council whilst better meeting residents' needs.

## Outcomes and impact for residents

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**A single set of planning policies**, will enable a more consistent approach to planning. This will improve the ability to make land available for developments to coordinate faster delivery of housing and infrastructure and promote a holistic approach to regeneration.

**A single heritage and culture offer** will retain and build on Warwickshire's strong identity and brand as a destination of choice.

**A single strategic approach to traffic management and regulation** will improve parking in town centres and give property and business owners clear and consistent standards to guide applications for licences (for example HMO licences, premises licences, food related licences)

**A countywide approach to transport** will create joined-up planning, coordinated infrastructure investment and better connections across the county.

**A joined up approach to community safety** will deliver improved responses to antisocial behaviour and crime and better prevention initiatives leading to safer neighbourhoods.

### Case Study

#### Local Transport Plan

Warwickshire County Council adopted its fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) in July 2023, setting the framework for maintaining and improving the county's transport network. Developed through extensive consultation, LTP4 and its supporting area strategies reflect local priorities. LGR offers the opportunity to consolidate governance and streamline decision-making, enabling sharper resource alignment and faster delivery of LTP4's goals, such as boosting active travel, improving public transport and using smart technology. A single unitary council can better target investment, avoid conflicting strategies, tackle transport inequality and unlock sustainable economic growth right across Warwickshire.

# Stronger communities: **Community governance**

## **Community governance and locality working**

Warwickshire Council's approach to community governance will place residents and local communities at the heart of local decision-making. Through the establishment of local committees and community networks (neighbourhood area committees) there will be clear, accessible structures that enable communities to get involved in shaping priorities, influencing outcomes and taking ownership of local initiatives.

These governance mechanisms will build a coherent framework that fosters collaboration, amplifies local voices and aligns efforts around a shared vision. Empowering residents to lead on what matters most to them will drive more responsive, inclusive and effective local decision-making.



### **Community Powered Warwickshire**

Since 2021, the Community Powered Warwickshire approach has focused on harnessing the power of communities to tackle inequalities and social inclusion. This approach will become the DNA of a new council, embedded countywide, and at local place and neighbourhood level. The approach will put communities in the driving seat, leading from the front to deliver local priorities that are important to them.



### **Involve communities in decision making**

- Bring the voices and experience of communities into the heart of decision making.
- Let communities have a greater say in the big decisions that affect them, involve them early in the process and let them know what gets agreed.



### **Working alongside communities to take practical action**

- Listen to practical community ideas and changes that can improve their lives.
- Work with communities to put their ideas into action and involve them in the process.
- Be honest, take risks and learn by doing.



### **Enable communities to lead**

- Welcome people who choose to step forward in their community.
- Let communities determine the focus of their community leadership role.
- Make it as easy as possible for communities to lead, at times this may mean simply getting out of their way.



## Stronger communities: Community governance

A consistent, countywide approach to community engagement and governance will ensure all residents have equal opportunities to participate in local decision-making. This will lead to more sustainable community-led solutions and enable the council to respond more quickly to take local action when and where it is needed. This approach will be tailored to reflect the diverse needs of different communities, especially recognising the distinct challenges and opportunities in rural areas, ensuring that engagement is relevant, inclusive and locally meaningful.

### 1) Local committees

Local committees will be formal council committees made up of councillors and responsible for a defined set of functions over a specific area, with scope to expand as the committees mature. A senior council officer will lead for each local committee, ensuring the council co-ordinates and integrates delivery, performance and engagement on a place perspective.

Local committees will enable councillors to make place-based decisions and provide a local forum for involving partners and stakeholders and facilitating engagement with communities. This approach will reduce duplication in partnership working and create a more streamlined process for residents to share their views.

#### Local Committee functions may include:

- Recommending or approving local grant funding awards.
- Influencing policy and strategy development, including helping to shape major proposals affecting their area.
- Receiving and scrutinising performance information relevant to the area.
- Advising on boundary consultations.
- Acting as consultees on major decisions affecting the area.
- Decision-making in relation to specific service areas where appropriate to delegate on an area basis.

## Case Study

### Community Powered Mancetter South and Ridge Lane

A community powered pilot in Mancetter and Ridge Lane has united residents, councillors, voluntary groups, and police to tackle shared priorities. Quarterly meetings drive action through a joint plan shaped by the community. Outcomes include highways improvements, a junior Police Community Support Officer scheme in schools, Social Fabric Fund investment, and targeted events like cost-of-living support showcases. This grassroots model strengthens local decision-making and community ownership of services. It shows how deeper resident involvement can drive more responsive outcomes. LGR presents an opportunity to embed and scale this approach across wider areas, building stronger, more empowered communities.

## 2) Community networks (Neighbourhood Area Committees)

The new community networks will likely cover 20,000-30,000 residents and will be a forum to collaborate with communities. Their initial design could include the following key features:

**Partnerships:** Community networks will enable communities to lead, bringing together local councillors, town and parish councils, partners and stakeholders to collaborate and stimulate local action.

**Community led:** Each community network will be supported to develop a locally-owned neighbourhood plan to reflect community priorities.

**Dedicated leadership:** A senior council officer will be assigned to each network to provide strategic oversight and ensure communities are being heard.

**Place-based focus:** Community networks will focus on addressing local challenges, improving the local area, driving pride in place and sharing learning across the county. This will enhance the work of the Coventry and Warwickshire Place Forum, Health and Wellbeing Board, place-based health and care partnerships, community safety partnerships and council overview and scrutiny committees.

Aligned with a community powered approach, community networks will reflect local needs and allow flexibility in structure, function and ways of working, potentially building on existing networks.

Community network footprints will be developed with local councillors and partners, building on the best of what already exists. To allow for flexibility but ensure consistency, community networks will follow a set of guiding principles.

### Such guiding principles may include:

- Based on recognised communities and population centres.
- Using existing forums that work well and not reinventing the wheel.
- Adopting a flexible and iterative approach, not 'one size fits all'.
- Developed with communities, utilising existing assets.
- Multi-agency, informal partnerships of local stakeholders.
- Complementing and building on existing partnership arrangements and footprints, such as health based Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.
- Setting community priorities and creating a local action plan.

## Case Study

### Lillington Community Action Forum

The Lillington CAF brings together local groups and partners to coordinate community-led action, amplify local voices and support initiatives that boost wellbeing, inclusion and neighbourhood pride. Projects like Arty-Folks' Window Wonderland, the Sunflower Campaign, and Mosaic Mural have transformed public spaces through creative collaboration. LGR offers the chance to scale LCAF's impact. By formalising its role, LCAF can access larger funding and deliver ambitious, joined-up projects. Its place-based approach ensures services reflect Lillington community's needs. With stronger recognition and support, LCAF can build long-term capacity and secure grassroots initiatives and could be a blueprint for other community networks.

### 3) Town and parish councils

Town and parish councils have an essential role in supporting thriving communities and will have the opportunity to take on devolved assets and services. The approach will be flexible and collaborative; offering a list of devolution options that allow town and parish councils to take on responsibilities aligned with their capacity, appetite, and local priorities.

New town and parish councils will be created in areas that do not currently have them including Bedworth, Bulkington, Nuneaton and Rugby.

#### Principles of working with town and parish councils could include:

**Building on strong foundations:** The new Warwickshire Council will build on existing relationships and structures to foster collaboration and continuity. These relationships provide a trusted platform for engagement, enabling shared learning, co-design, and a consistent approach to local governance while recognising the important and distinct role that town and parish councils play.

**Flexibility:** The flexible framework supports tailored arrangements that reflect the diversity of communities, empowering councils to shape their role in service delivery and local leadership.

**Community-centred:** Town and parish councils will continue to play a key role in local democratic accountability, acting as visible and trusted leaders within their communities.

**Financial neutrality:** That any devolution would be financially neutral, and, at the point of transfer, would ensure town and parish councils are adequately resourced to undertake any additional functions and services.

### Case Study

#### Local Council Charter

The Local Council Charter sets out how the county council works with district, borough, town and parish councils to improve services and decision-making locally. It reflects a commitment to community powered approaches and stronger collaboration across the different tiers of local government. LGR offers an opportunity to build on the Charter, making it simpler for town and parish councils to work within new governance arrangements. A single council will streamline communication, strengthen local representation, and ensure communities are directly involved in shaping decisions, making service delivery more joined-up, responsive and aligned to local priorities.

#### Unlocking the Power of Warwickshire's VCSE Sector

Warwickshire's VCSE sector is a dynamic force of over 10,000 organisations, from national charities to grass-roots community groups, driving innovation and reaching communities others can't. These groups play a vital role in tackling complex social challenges and supporting our most vulnerable residents.

Warwickshire County Council is proud of its strong and enduring partnership with the VCSE sector. As we move towards Local Government Reorganisation, we have a real opportunity to deepen this collaboration, embedding Community Powered Warwickshire principles at the heart of a new unitary council.

#### Stronger together, we will:

- Champion strategic partnerships that go beyond transactional relationships.
- Jointly design flexible solutions that reflect different community needs.
- Amplify collective voices to shape policy and practice.
- Break down systemic barriers to inclusion and impact.
- Build capacity to help the sector thrive.

This is about more than services; it is about shared leadership, community led action and lasting change.

## Stronger communities: Democratic representation

### Councillor numbers - proposed approach

The proposal for councillor numbers has taken into account the current electorate size and councillor numbers in Warwickshire, alongside the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) criteria. A number of options have been considered. This proposal presents a simple solution, based on doubling up on an interim basis pending a full LGBCE review.

#### Current position

Electorate for Warwickshire based on 2025 data is **461,453**.

Warwickshire County Council has **57 councillors** over **57 divisions**, average of **1:8,096 ratio** electors per councillor.

District and borough councils have a total of **200 councillors** over **108 wards**, average of **1: 2,307** electors per councillor.

District and borough councils have wards of 1, 2 and 3 councillors - no uniformity of ratios or councillors per ward.

The last Warwickshire County Council LGBCE review was in 2015.

The latest district and borough council LGBCE review was in North Warwickshire, this is currently under review.

Given housing development growth in Warwickshire there is a recognised need for a full LGBCE review following the establishment of the new council.

#### LGBCE criteria

The need to secure equality of representation.

The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities.

The need to secure effective and convenient local government.

The proposal on an interim basis pending a full LGBCE review is to adopt the county council divisions as the building blocks and to double up the number of councillors in existing county divisions leading to **114 elected members**.

Although above the LGBCE upper limit of 99 it presents a simple solution which retains the existing county council divisional boundaries, which are established and recognisable, as the interim building block.

It would result in an **average of 4,047 electors per councillor** based on 2025 electorate data which provides equality of representation and is comparable to other unitary councils.

It is relatively close to the LGBCE number of 99 (+15) and would not require changes to divisional boundaries which would require a disproportionate amount of attention and engagement for a short interim period given there would be a full LGBCE review post vesting.

It would provide sufficient councillors to engage with and discharge expected committee and scrutiny committees, securing effective and convenient local government.

It would provide the representation required to reflect the identities and interests of local communities pending a full review without creating a democratic deficit over the short term.

## Councillor numbers - options appraisal

Options	Comments
<b>1. Adopt WCC existing divisional boundaries as building block (57) and double up to two councillors per division</b>	<b>114 councillors</b> – above Local Government Boundary Commission for England 's (LGBCE) upper limit but simple, retains existing divisional boundaries, sufficient to discharge governance requirements and allows for a full boundary review following vesting day.
<b>2. Adopt the district and borough council ward boundaries as the building block with one councillor per ward</b>	<b>108 councillors</b> - above LGBCE upper limit but retains existing ward boundaries and allows for a full boundary review following vesting day. Would likely result in more significant electoral variances across the county.
<b>3. Option one but scaled back (-15) to upper LGBCE number of 99</b>	<b>99 councillors</b> – meets LGBCE upper limit, would require boundary changes or 15 divisions having a single councillor on an interim basis. Would likely result in electoral variances in some areas.
<b>4. Option two but scaled back (-9) to upper LGBCE number of 99</b>	<b>99 councillors</b> – meets LGBCE upper limit, would require boundary changes or reducing a number of two and three member wards on an interim basis. Would likely result in significant electoral variances in some areas.
<b>5. Calculation based on governance requirements (number of committees, number of seats)</b>	<b>91 – 97 councillors</b> – Likely closer to 97. Assumes a similar ratio of councillors to seats as in current model (57:64 or 0.89 councillors per seat) with an assumption of 7.5% of councillors sitting on more than one committee. Would require boundary changes on an interim basis and LGBCE involvement.
<b>6. Calculation based on electoral equality (5,000 electors per councillor) with new divisional boundaries</b>	<b>92 councillors</b> – would require the merging or redrawing of boundary lines to standardise electoral equality but does not take account of future growth and development potential prior to or close to shadow elections. Would require boundary changes on an interim basis and LGBCE involvement.



# Stronger Partnerships: Public Service Reform in Warwickshire

Local Government Reorganisation provides a launch pad for Warwickshire Council to drive wide reaching and lasting Public Service Reform with partners across the county.

The opportunity for Public Service Reform is a significant benefit of Local Government Reorganisation and represents a unique moment to transform how public services are delivered in Warwickshire.

Partners will work together, putting residents first to address complex challenges through integrated solutions informed by deep local knowledge.

Services will be joined-up in clear pathways that prioritise upstream prevention and people and communities will be empowered to shape, design and deliver local services.

By working as one system, with shared ambition and goals, change will be delivered at scale and with pace.

Partners will inspire one another to embrace innovation and adopt forward thinking ways of working, with the common core goal of improving lives and outcomes for communities, helping business grow and enhancing people's life opportunities in Warwickshire.

## Case Study

### Warwickshire Resilience Forum

Warwickshire's Resilience Forum (WRF) coordinates multi-agency responses to major emergencies and involves government departments, emergency services, NHS bodies, utilities and transport providers. Currently, it works across six councils, which can slow decision-making and resource deployment. Replacing these with a single council will streamline coordination and enable faster, more efficient emergency responses. This structural simplification will reduce duplication, improve accountability and support clearer engagement with communities. A single council strengthens WRF's ability to deliver joined-up, nimble and timely responses which best protect residents and address the wider impacts of emergencies.

## Public Service Reform: the principles

Working with partners we will ensure that the following principles are embedded in the delivery of Public Service Reform.

### People-centric

Public services will be personal and suited to each person and place reflecting the unique strengths and needs of Warwickshire's different communities.

### Integration by default

Services will work together across organisational boundaries to create smooth, joined-up experiences for those needing support, ensuring residents receive the right help at the right time.

### Prevention first

Providing early support to those who need it and moving away from costly crisis intervention. It will reduce long-term costs by understanding the root causes of problems, removing waste and duplication and ensuring residents receive timely, effective support that improves outcomes.

## Public Service Reform: the enablers

Public Service Reform will be underpinned by the following enablers to drive positive outcomes:

### Technology

Public services will utilise digital innovation and technology to coordinate and target action, drive effective service delivery, reduce costs and improve outcomes for residents.

### Data

Public services will use a solid, shared evidence base, enhanced by Artificial Intelligence and predictive analytics to maximise impact and efficiency.

### System-wide

Transformation will be planned and delivered at a system level with shared ambition, goals and resources.

## Public Service Reform: the ways of working

Public Service Reform will build on existing strong relationships across the county. It marks a new way of partners working together to improve the lives of Warwickshire residents.

### Test, learn and grow

Change will be developed through a flexible and iterative approach, enabling innovation to meet the specific needs of different parts of Warwickshire.

### Integrated leadership

Integrated, countywide leadership will enable the sharing of ambition, responsibility and risks across sectors and open up opportunities for integrated, preventative working and integrated budgets, delivering better value for money.

### Community Powered Warwickshire

Giving the residents of Warwickshire more control over decisions that affect their lives and the services they rely on.

### This approach will build on Warwickshire's strong track record of innovation including:

- Creating Opportunities
- Community Powered Warwickshire
- South Warwickshire Local Plan
- Integrated Care System Place Boards
- Homes for Ukraine
- LEADER agreement with North Warwickshire Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and DEFRA
- Families First Pathfinder
- Level 2 Devolution deal.
- Believe in Bedworth Neighbourhood Regeneration Plan
- Business Growth Warwickshire Programme
- Warwickshire Property and Development Group



## Public Service Reform as transformation

Local Government Reorganisation provides the platform required for system wide Public Sector Reform, which in turn will enable continuous change and improvement for people and communities in Warwickshire.

Theme	Local Government Reorganisation	Public Service Reform
Stronger communities	Enhance local accountability and community engagement by creating structures that are more transparent, accessible, and responsive, creating better outcomes for residents.	Residents will be actively involved in designing and delivering services, creating genuine connection between public services, people and place.
Stronger services	Streamlining structures and reducing duplication across councils, leading to cost savings, faster decision-making and better targeting of resources.	The redesign and integration of public services will breakdown organisational barriers, giving residents a smooth, joined-up pathway to receive the tailored support they need.
Stronger outcomes	Providing clearer strategic direction, improved service delivery and stronger capacity to tackle countywide challenges such as housing, transport and public health. Improving outcomes, reducing long-term costs and delivering better value for money.	Digital and data transformation will align public service provision around a clear purpose of prevention to help people live their best lives by tackling root causes and providing early support.
Example	Local Government Reorganisation	Public Service Reform
Council on the high street	Maximising the benefits of bringing all services together in a single council, co-locating council teams in community hubs in key locations across the county.	Co-locating public sector partners to create one stop shops and access points for residents.
Community voice	Local committees and community networks incorporate community voice into decision making.	Public services across Warwickshire designed with residents.
Data	Multiple access points through consistent and integrated front doors for council services in Warwickshire, bringing together data and a single view of the resident to support solution-focused, preventative approaches.	Joining up public service data and using predictive analytics to support efficient use of resources.

## Public Sector Reform Top 10 opportunities

**Engagement with partners through Warwickshire's Anchor Alliance has identified an initial top ten opportunities for Public Sector Reform across the county, demonstrating real commitment and drive to deliver system wide transformation.**

A joined-up, slicker and quicker planning process with partners to support the faster, simpler and more cost-effective delivery of the infrastructure and homes Warwickshire needs.

1

One-stop shops in Warwickshire towns where public services are co-located, utilising existing community facilities such as libraries.

2

Technical and vocational education opportunities for young people to meet the needs of the local economy and businesses.

3

Wraparound support for mental health, substance misuse and employment.

4

Joined-up support by bringing health and care teams together in local areas to make it easier for people to get the support they need. This includes health, public health and social care working side by side in neighbourhoods to help prevent problems before they happen.

5

Enhancing the business experience through joined-up, integrated support for the setup, scale-up and growth of businesses.

6

Utilising the combined regulatory powers of trading standards, public health, Fire and Rescue, environmental health and licensing to take a whole-system approach to tackling complex challenges.

7

A public service strategy for regeneration across towns and rural areas.

8

Public services committed to working together with community networks to provide opportunities for residents to have their say and influence changes that affect them.










9

Joined-up digital, data and community solutions to tailor the support people need, enabling them to tell their story once and receive help more quickly.

10

## Stronger places, stronger voice: Devolution for Warwickshire

**Warwickshire Council will build stronger places and a stronger voice for the county, optimising further devolution opportunities, by:**

-  Continuing Warwickshire's devolution journey, building on the Level 2 Devolution deal, by enabling Warwickshire to join a strategic authority, securing maximum powers and resources through devolution.
-  Unlocking access for greater investment in housing, transport, skills and infrastructure. This means more jobs, better connectivity and greater opportunities for residents from all communities.
-  Exercising greater strategic influence over targeted initiatives delivered over a wider strategic authority geography including economic growth, spatial and infrastructure planning, transport, housing and employment pathways.
-  Aligning local growth plans to help attract investment aligned with local priorities to support development of key growth sectors.
-  Maintaining the countywide benefits of an integrated, well established economy, totalling £25.167 billion in 2023.
-  Offering a single strategic voice for Warwickshire into the strategic authority, strengthening the ability to negotiate, secure and deliver on local priorities, and leveraging the power of one voice to bring investment into the county.
-  The whole of Warwickshire being part of a strategic authority, in line with the Government's principle of 'alignment' between devolution and public sector boundaries.
-  Strengthening Warwickshire's strategic presence and voice in national and regional decision-making.
-  Preserving the strong identity of Warwickshire with sufficient proximity for residents to engage with the strategic authority and hold it to account.

Warwickshire alone does not meet the minimum population size set by Government of 1.5m for a strategic authority. To align with the Government's principles for devolution agreements, it is anticipated that, regardless of the number of unitary councils, the whole of Warwickshire would need to be covered by the same strategic authority.

Warwickshire shares a border with six other counties and the WMCA area (Coventry, Solihull and Birmingham). The only strategic authority in the region is the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) which is an Established Mayoral Strategic Authority with a trailblazer Devolution deal (powers and resources).

There is strong alignment between Warwickshire and Coventry given the strong functional economic geography. However, Coventry City Council is a full constituent member of the WMCA and is not seeking to leave the WMCA to form another arrangement.

There are multiple potential configurations for joining or creating a strategic authority and an initial assessment of options against Government criteria and economic factors shows the WMCA to be the best option for Warwickshire and the region.

**A strategic authority should:**

- Connect clearly to Warwickshire's identity and needs.
- Be close enough for residents to engage with it and hold it accountable.
- Preserve the fundamental importance of the Coventry and Warwickshire functional economic geography.
- Align with the existing public service delivery footprint.

**On 14 October 2025 Warwickshire County Council agreed the following:**

*'The Council accepts that full constituent membership of the WMCA would be the best arrangement for any new council or councils in Warwickshire to meet the Government's requirement of full devolution.'*

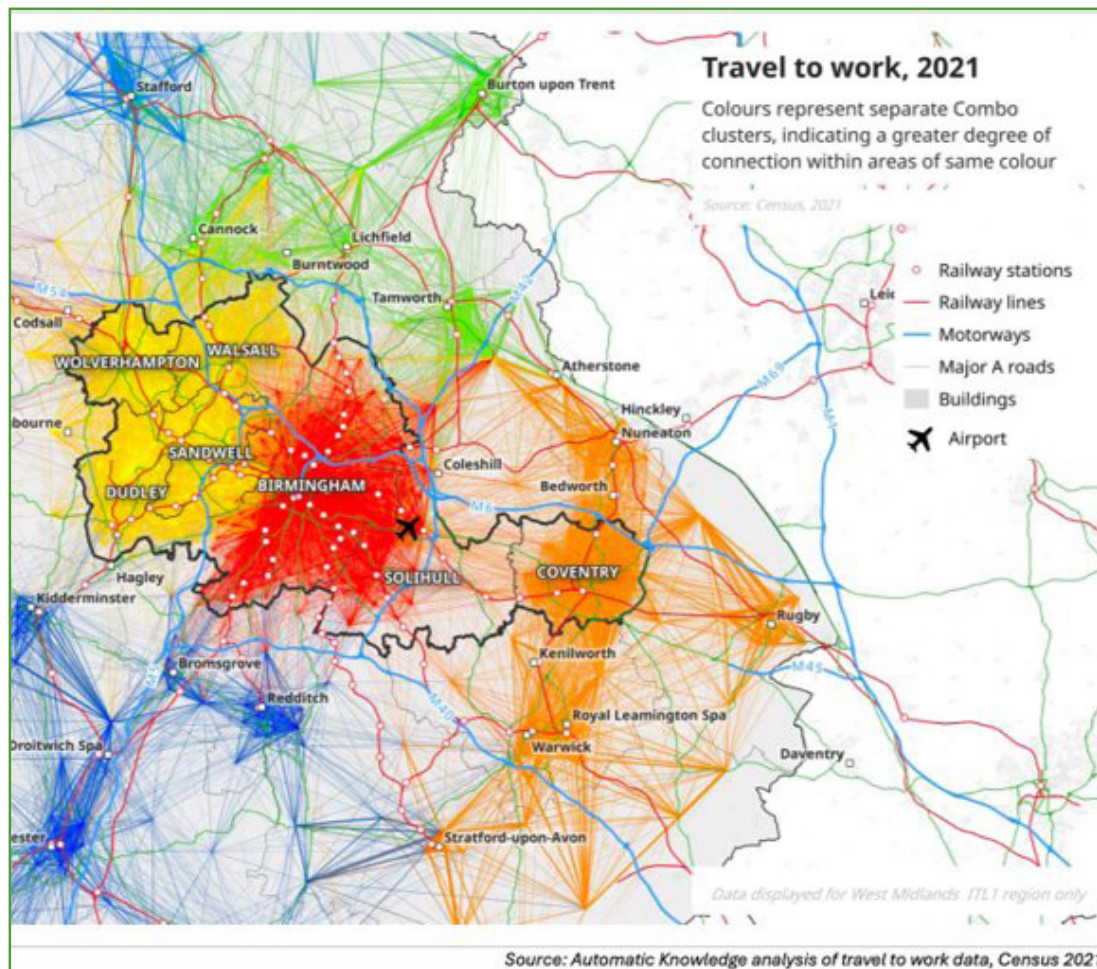
**Warwickshire borders six counties and has multiple options for strategic authority configuration. Below is an initial assessment of strategic authority options to meet the Government's devolution principles and requirement of full devolution, which identifies WMCA full constituent membership as the best arrangement.**

Options	Devolution White Paper Criteria							
	Feasibility	Population	Sensible economic geography	Contiguity	No devolution island	Delivery	Alignment	Identity
1 Join the existing West Midlands Combined Authority as a full (constituent) member	✓	High	High	✓	✓	High	High	High
2 Join a new strategic authority including Warwickshire and Worcestershire which could also include Herefordshire	✓	High	Medium	✓	✓	Medium	Medium	Medium
3 Join a new strategic authority including Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire	✓	High	Medium	✓	✓	Medium	Low	Medium
4 Join a new strategic authority including Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland	✗	High	Medium	✓	✓	Medium	Low	Medium
5 Join a new strategic authority including Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire	✗	High	Medium	✓	✓	Medium	Low	Medium
6 Join a new strategic authority including Warwickshire, North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire	✗	High	Low	✓	✓	Medium	Low	Medium
7 Join a new strategic authority including Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire	✗	High	Low	✓	✓	Low	Low	Low

## Alignment with West Midlands Combined Authority

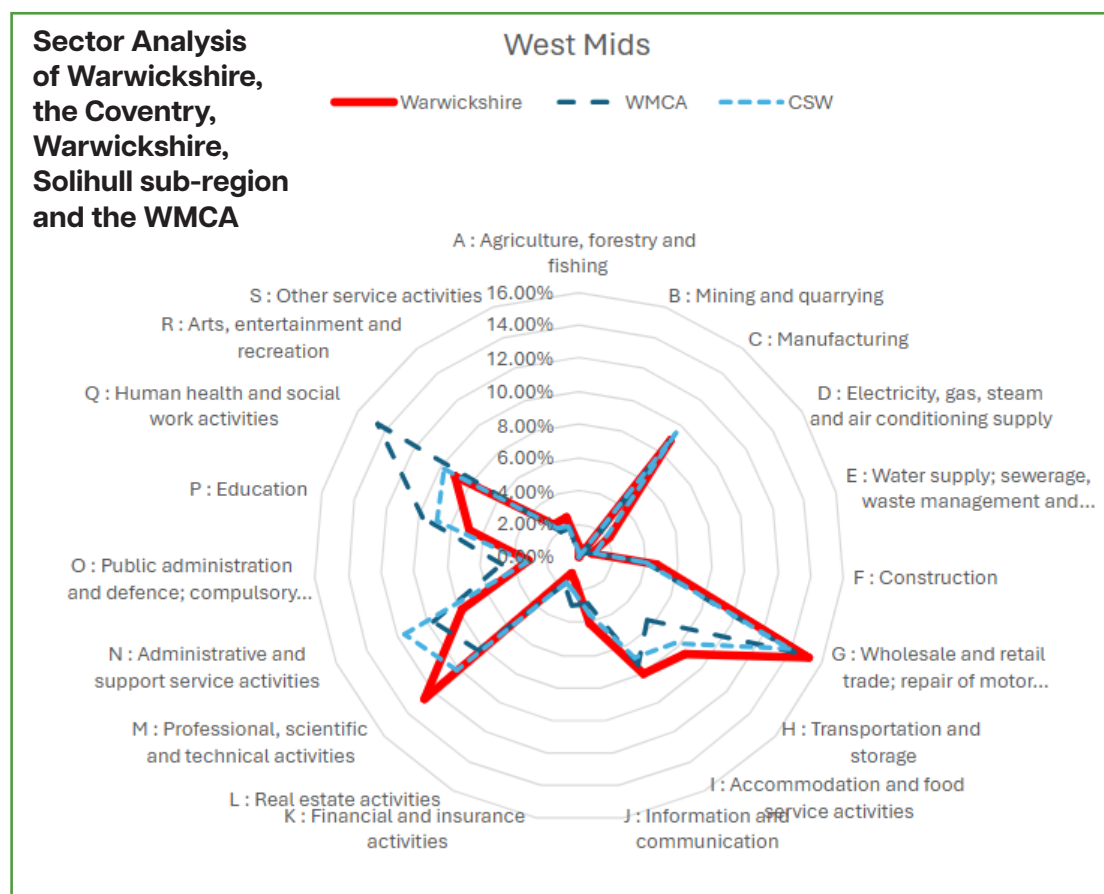
The WMCA was formed in 2016 on the footprint of the three [then] Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) – Birmingham and Solihull, the Black Country, and Coventry and Warwickshire. All six Warwickshire councils are non-constituent members of the WMCA.

Travel to work data emphasises strongest connectivity following existing transport links and highlights strength of connection with Coventry and to a lesser extent Birmingham and Solihull. More detailed analysis of commuting and other trips undertaken highlights a strong concentration within the Coventry and Warwickshire area.





Given the interconnected nature of the Coventry and Warwickshire economy it is unsurprising that the Warwickshire economy aligns closely and has a strong connection with the wider West Midlands. The diagram below shows the sector analysis of Warwickshire, the Coventry, Solihull, Warwickshire sub-region and the WMCA. They share key strengths in advanced manufacturing, especially automotive and engineering and in digital and creative industries, with Warwickshire's gaming cluster complementing WMCA's wider tech base. Both areas have strong professional and financial services sectors and play an important role in logistics thanks to excellent transport links.



In 2023, the Gross Value Added (GVA) of the West Midlands region was £175bn, of which Warwickshire contributed £25bn or 14.4% while only having 10% of the region's population. Warwickshire's GVA per hour worked is around 17.5% above the regional average.

Becoming a full constituent member of the WMCA aligns with the existing Coventry and Warwickshire functional economic geography and the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System boundaries.

The assessment of strategic authority options against Government criteria and economic factors show the WMCA to be the best option for Warwickshire and the region.

Joining the WMCA, an Established Mayoral Strategic Authority, builds on the existing WMCA membership, preserves the Investment Zone and also accelerates and provides access to the highest level of devolved funding and powers for Warwickshire. In contrast, creating a new Mayoral Strategic Authority with neighbouring counties with a wider geographical footprint would not reflect the same strong functional economic relationship.



## Stronger Places: Delivering for Warwickshire

The table below shows the potential, combined impact and stretch of Local Government Reorganisation, Public Service Reform and devolution on outcomes for Warwickshire's residents, aligned to the national outcomes framework.

Meeting the Government outcomes	Local Government Reorganisation	Public Service Reform	Devolution
<b>Economic prosperity and regeneration</b>	Countywide approach to support economic growth and investment, with an integrated business support offer and all levers of economic growth in a single tier of council.	Building on powers over adult skills funding, working with public sector partners to align workforce planning and improve job opportunities.	Devolved powers to join up youth and adult skills provision with employment support and regional labour needs.
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	Health partnerships extending to all elements of local government services, enabling place-based interventions and holistic wellbeing, embedding Health in all Policies to reduce inequalities.	Focus on addressing wider determinants of health and commitment to early intervention and prevention, to achieve shared priorities to improve healthy life expectancy and people's wellbeing.	Statutory health duty; integration of health priorities with regional growth agenda and Anchor Alliance organisations.
<b>Homelessness and housing</b>	Integrated housing and social care services to better support temporary care, a focus on care at home and accommodation with care and to develop end-to-end solutions for children, adults and families.	Joined up, system wide solutions across health, police and local government, to ensure good quality housing and preventing homelessness.	Devolved powers and funding to accelerate housing delivery; ability to lead pilot schemes testing new approaches addressing homelessness and increasing affordable housing.

Meeting the Government outcomes	Local Government Reorganisation	Public Service Reform	Devolution
<b>Adult social care: quality, independence and neighbourhoods</b>	Maintaining a countywide service with the required scale for effective commissioning. Tailored local delivery options meet need in different places, maximising healthy, independent living.	Embedding neighbourhood models for integrated health and care, ensuring all residents have access to the services they need to live healthily, happily and independently.	Statutory health duties, regional strategic partnerships with health bodies and powers to shape regional adult care strategies.
<b>Every child achieving and thriving</b>	Placing the child at the centre of service provision across ages and key stages, with joined-up data sharing.	Full partnership solutions to SEND and other long-term challenges, to reduce educational inequalities, improve attainment and maximise inclusion.	Connecting learning pathways to post-16 skills opportunities and local labour needs for complete 0-18 educational journeys.
<b>Best start in life, child safety and child poverty</b>	Improved early years coordination across health, education, housing and social care, building on Families First Pathfinder to develop a local offer and ensure no child falls between the gaps.	Embedding a system wide approach to prevention through early intervention and collaboration, reducing child poverty and improving outcomes in children's crucial early years.	Regional data sharing and access to regional early years pilots, building on lessons learnt from neighbouring authorities and local successes.
<b>Multiple disadvantage</b>	Building on existing work to develop a consistent and targeted approach to supporting residents facing multiple disadvantages in the most deprived communities.	Joined up, preventative approaches with partners from health, police, VCSE to develop a holistic response, reduce crisis intervention and improve long-term outcomes.	Access to regional pilots and integrated settlement for targeted interventions to reduce inequalities across the county.

Meeting the Government outcomes	Local Government Reorganisation	Public Service Reform	Devolution
<b>Transport, local infrastructure and planning</b>	Rapid improvement of transport links. Joined-up planning, better connections across the county and integrated transport programmes. A reformed, holistic approach to planning with streamlined governance and decision-making with a single council accelerating delivery of housing and infrastructure.	Integration of strategic and local planning transforms the planning system in Warwickshire, delivering quicker housing and infrastructure and reducing costs.	<p>Opportunities for devolved powers relating to highways and public transport e.g. bus franchising, trains, regional cross-ticketing and consolidation of transport funding.</p> <p>Devolved funding for regeneration; powers to raise additional funding for strategic infrastructure; strategic partnership with Homes England.</p>
<b>Environment</b>	Bringing together waste collection, disposal and recycling to enable better route and schedule optimisation. Coordinated approach to protecting accessible green spaces.	System wide approach to support access to green spaces and engage with community-led environmental initiatives.	Devolved powers for local area energy planning, heat network zoning and funding for retrofit schemes.
<b>Neighbourhoods and community safety</b>	Community safety partnership with unified leadership and streamlined links to partners enables a county wide strategic approach to be tailored locally.	Collective use of data with partners, community engagement and developing a system-wide approach to reducing crime and reducing fear of crime, optimised by Warwickshire Police operating on the same county footprint.	New partnerships across Police, community safety using unlocked funding to implement new approaches for Violence Against Women and Girls and serious violence prevention.

Transformational change in Warwickshire requires a programme approach for transition that reflects the opportunities and ambition of the new council. To ensure best outcomes for residents an implementation plan has been developed ensuring smooth transition to a new council with capacity to build a stronger future for communities, business and residents alike across the county.

## Case Study

### **Families First Pathfinder**

Warwickshire County Council is in the second wave of the Department for Education's Families First Pathfinder. This is a national test and learn initiative to rebalance children's social care away from costly crisis intervention to more meaningful and effective early support. The pathfinder offers new delivery models for family help, child protection, family networks and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements ahead of national transformation.

The Warwickshire Families First approach strengthens connection to people and communities through locality working and building strong partnerships with local services, bringing together partners from children's services, health, police, education and wider services into integrated, multi-disciplinary teams so the whole family is supported.

Public Service Reform provides an opportunity to extend this approach more widely. By embedding integrated neighbourhood teams the new council can simplify access to support, reduce reliance on crisis interventions and deliver more consistent outcomes. Working in partnership across sectors enables earlier, preventative responses that are rooted in place and tailored to local needs, making services easier to navigate, more accessible and responsive for residents.

## Section 4: **Implementation**

**This section sets out the headline approach to implementation.**

### **4. Implementation**

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Implementation planning

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Programme view

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Headline benefits

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Critical path

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Risk management

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**1. Vision,  
opportunity and  
outcomes**

**2. Options  
appraisal**

**3. Transforming  
lives in  
Warwickshire**

**4.  
Implementation**

## Local Government Reorganisation: Implementation planning

To successfully move to a new Warwickshire Council, it is important to have a clear and effective plan so residents can benefit from the changes. A clear plan for the transition has been created, which outlines the key steps, timeline, expected benefits and an early overview of the programme.

Further detailed programme planning will follow as reorganisation progresses. Challenges to delivery are expected, particularly in maintaining business-as-usual service delivery while resourcing a substantial programme of work to implement the new council. Risk identification and management will be critical to mitigate these challenges, ensuring a smooth transition to the new council.

**A comprehensive implementation plan provides the structure, clarity and coordination needed to manage a complex and significant transition. It will play a critical role in:**

- Protecting Warwickshire's most vulnerable residents.
- Safeguarding the continuity of statutory service delivery.
- Establishing the foundations for long-term transformation and innovation.
- Supporting staff and organisational readiness to ensuring a safe and successful vesting day and maintaining service and business continuity.
- Enabling effective communication and engagement, building trust and transparency through structured engagement.
- Aligning and enabling coordination of resources and responsibilities across existing authorities.

**Considerations for implementation planning:**

- Strong leadership unifying citizens, partners and staff through the transition to a new council.
- All partners collaborate to create a clear identity, vision and values for the new council, one that delivers for all communities.
- Early and continuous engagement with stakeholders to build trust in the new council.
- Early planning from all organisations involved will be required to ensure sufficient skilled resources to support the transition to a new organisation in a timely way.

The proposed structure of the programme is based on six key workstreams which are commonly used across the sector for local government reorganisation implementation:

- People and culture
- Finance, commercial and assets
- Legal, community and governance
- Customer, data, digital and Artificial Intelligence
- Service delivery, continuity and resilience
- Communication and engagement

The diagram below sets out the key phases and milestones to achieve a single unitary council in Warwickshire.

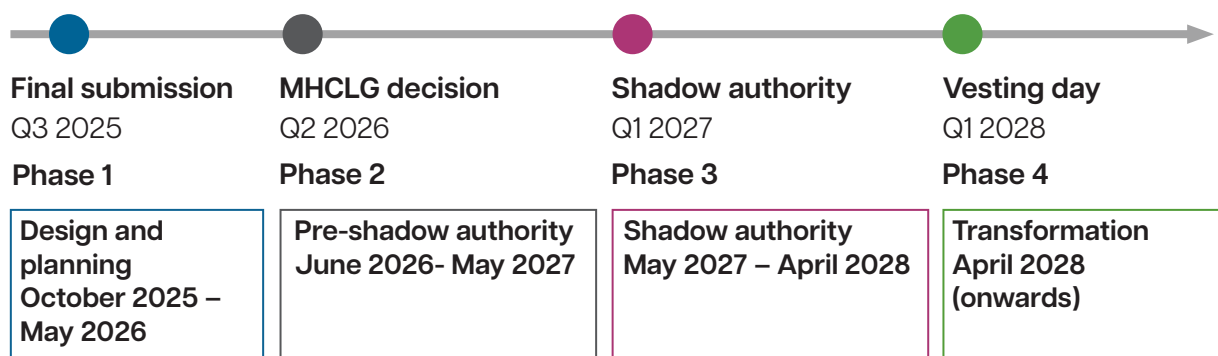
The focus during the first three phases will be on ensuring the safe and legal creation of the new council, with significant transformational activity to follow in line with an agreed transformation programme.

### Timeline and key dates





## Local Government Reorganisation: Programme view



### Design and planning October 2025 – May 2026

An implementation plan will be developed and a LGR Portfolio Management Office established to manage the programme. Engagement across all six councils will be a priority to build learning and share best practice.

To deliver Public Service Reform (PSR) and ensure that its benefits are realised, PSR must begin immediately and be embedded throughout every stage of developing a new model of local government. PSR principles will be integral to implementation, particularly during phase two: pre-shadow authority and phase three: shadow authority.

#### Collaboration

- Shared working principles and formal data-sharing agreements are being developed to support a unified evidence base across all tiers of local government in Warwickshire, including county, district, borough, town and parish councils.

#### Implementation plan development

- Initial research and analysis initiated to provide a comprehensive overview of current arrangements, identifying key challenges, risks and opportunities across all relevant services and operational areas.

#### Engagement

- Plans will be put in place to maintain engagement with residents, communities, VCSE, sector partners and businesses and ensure that they have meaningful opportunities to shape the final operating model. This ensures that local voices are embedded in the design of the future council.

Following the Government's decision, there will be an initial pause to agree joint planning and working arrangements with the five district and borough councils to support the delivery of the new council.

As part of this phase, consideration will be given to the future structure of Warwickshire Council. Initial outlines and frameworks for the new operating model will be developed, including governance arrangements.

It is anticipated that some activities, such as the gathering of baseline data, will continue during this period. Preparations will also begin for the 2027 shadow elections and formal engagement with unions will commence.

From a programme perspective, the number and scope of projects required within each workstream will be established and the programme team will be expanded.

- Pause post Government decision to agree joint planning and working arrangements with district and borough councils to deliver the new council.
- Development of key financial products underway, including a council tax harmonisation model. Supported by a comprehensive review of assets, property holdings, and contractual arrangements to ensuring smooth transition.
- Work begins on the design of the new council's digital architecture, ensuring systems are aligned, secure and capable of supporting integrated service delivery.
- New target operating model developed shaping the new council's structure and informing recruitment strategies, with a particular focus on leadership and critical roles.
- New governance frameworks are being designed to support effective decision-making and strengthen partnership working across sectors and geographies.
- Baseline assessments of legal and governance responsibilities are being completed to ensure compliance and operational readiness.
- Detailed benefits framework, benefits tracker and performance framework developed.
- Detailed preparations are underway for the 2027 shadow elections, including electoral arrangements and transitional governance protocols.

## Shadow authority May 2027 – April 2028

Elections will be held and the new shadow authority will be created to oversee further preparatory work and progress implementation activities. Appointments to the Chief Executive and senior leadership roles will be made to begin work within the shadow authority.

Detailed planning will be undertaken to support the transition of services to Warwickshire Council. Communication and engagement will remain a constant throughout the journey to establishing the new council.

Elections to be held in May 2027 to establish the new shadow authority, providing democratic legitimacy and leadership ahead of vesting day.

Shadow authority oversees preparatory work, shaping the final governance arrangements and ensuring a smooth transition to the new council structure and alignment with the direction towards a strategic authority.

### **Workstream delivery will be in full progress and will include:**

- People and culture
- Finance, commercial and assets
- Legal, community and governance
- Customer, data, digital and Artificial Intelligence
- Service delivery, continuity and resilience
- Communication and engagement

## Transformation April 2028 (onwards)

Once the new council is in place and has had time to settle, a continuous improvement approach will be adopted.

- Teams and services will adapt to new ways of working, ensuring systems and processes are functioning effectively and that any early issues are identified and resolved promptly.
- The new infrastructure will be subject to continuous review and refinement, with a focus on delivering the operational and financial benefits set out in the full proposal.
- As the new council becomes established, focus will shift to long-term strategic planning. A continuous improvement approach will be adopted, using testing and learning to refine services, drive reform and deliver the anticipated efficiencies of a single unitary council.
- By the end of this phase, technology, workforce and service delivery functions should be operating smoothly and consistently across the new council.
- This phase does not have a fixed end date. It marks the beginning of the new council's journey, underpinned by a sustained commitment to empowering communities, delivering efficient services and effective local government for Warwickshire's residents, businesses, communities and for its workforce.

## Public Service Reform

To deliver Public Service Reform and ensure benefits are realised, work needs to start now and be embedded at every stage of creating a new model of local government.

**Public Service Reform principles need to be a part of implementation especially across phase two: pre-shadow authority and phase three: shadow authority.**

**For example:**

- Developing the target operating model.
- Partnership working model.
- Organisational structure.
- Operational people and culture model.
- Council plan and MTFS development.
- Implementation of consistent and integrated front doors.
- Locality working.

# Local Government Reorganisation: Headline benefits

## Benefit headlines to be included within the benefits framework (to be created in pre-shadow year)



### Warwickshire places (Devolution)

**Strategic planning** – delivering data led integrated planning and delivery

**Community impact** – tailored to local needs

**Economic growth** – the right jobs with the right investment in the right place.

**Better infrastructure** – great transport links, suitable housing and access to local skills development.

**Example measures:**

- Gross disposable household income.
- Inactivity 25-49.
- Job growth.
- Business feedback on availability of skills locally.



### Warwickshire communities (Community Powered, Public Sector Reform)

**Improved service delivery** – joined-up service delivery shaped around local needs and outcomes.

**Stronger collaboration** – across health, education, housing and policing.

**Community impact** – preventative services focused on local need improving community wellbeing.

**Governance and accountability** – community involvement in shaping local services.

**Example measures:**

- Community feedback.
- Service demand.



### Warwickshire Council (Local Government Reorganisation)

**Financial efficiency** - removing duplication.

**Governance and accountability** - simpler, clearer access.

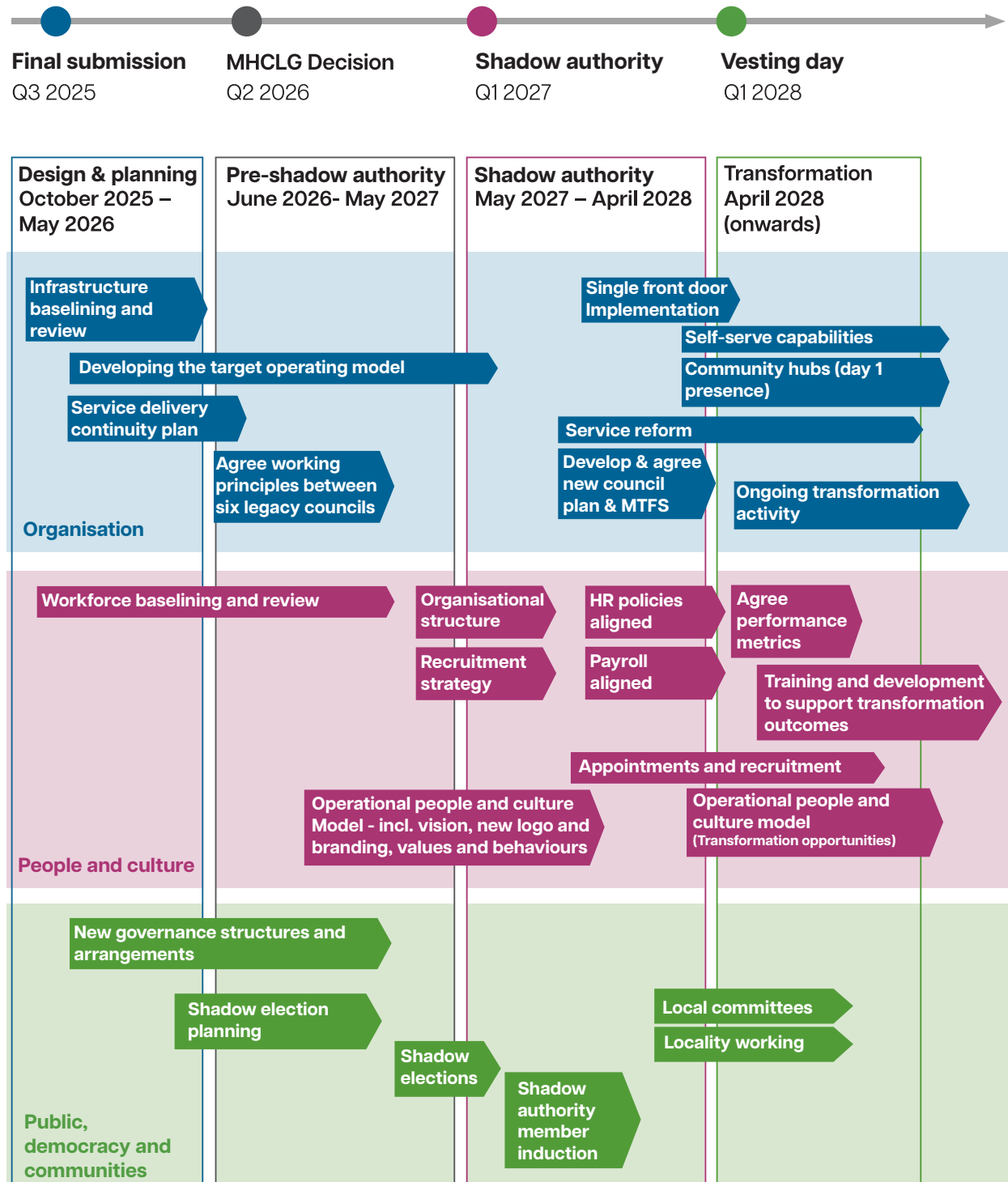
**Improved service delivery** - faster responses.

**Strategic planning** - system wide integration.

**Example measures:**

- Cost savings.
- Return on investment from transformation.
- Budget alignment.
- Response times.

# Local Government Reorganisation: Critical path



# Local Government Reorganisation: Risk management

There will be a range of strategic and operational risks associated with implementation which will all need to be effectively managed during the transition to new unitary arrangements. Below is a high-level assessment of strategic risks which will be supported by operational risk management plans when the model for local government for Warwickshire has been decided.

Risk	Mitigation
<b>Stakeholder support:</b> There are a range of stakeholders who may have an interest in the shaping of the new council/s, given the sensitivities involved. These stakeholders may have differing goals and priorities, and if they're not informed and engaged, any new council/s may lack support and ambition from its stakeholders.	There is a strong commitment to wide engagement across local communities, workforce, partners and other stakeholders. A communications strategy will be established to enable stakeholders to play a role in shaping new operating arrangements and keeping them informed about key decisions/ approaches during the transition phase.
<b>Service continuity:</b> The existing councils deliver many vital services, often to vulnerable people. It is critical that disruption is minimised to ensure continuous, effective delivery of services and protect public confidence in the new council(s).	In the case of a single unitary, countywide services will not be disaggregated, especially for the most vulnerable. However, there will remain a focus on maintaining high-quality service delivery regardless of the model decided by Government and this will be a key part of the implementation plan.
<b>Scale, complexity and pace of change:</b> There is a short time frame between the Government decision on unitary government for Warwickshire and the vesting day in 2028. If preparation and/or programme management are insufficient, there will be a detrimental impact on transition and there may be an increase in time, costs and increased risk of service disruption.	The proposal shows that there are clear foundations to accelerate into transition and transformation from day one as soon as a decision has been made. Robust programme management arrangements are in place and ready to be enhanced, informed by the organisation's existing capabilities and capacity to deliver in a timely and cost-effective manner.



**Workforce capacity and morale:**

LGR will lead to significant changes for the workforce across the existing six councils. While the future offers opportunities, it is important to recognise that if change is not managed effectively, this may cause anxiety, lower morale and higher levels of staff turnover.

The workforce across all existing six councils will be involved in informing and designing the future arrangements from the outset. While recognising differences, it is critical that staff from across the six Warwickshire councils contribute to shaping the purpose, identity and culture of the new council. A dedicated people and culture workstream will ensure consistent messages, that organisational development is prioritised and that there is an active plan for recruitment where staff turnover results in additional skills and experience being required.

**Effective leadership:**

Clear leadership and communication will be required across the six councils, minimising uncertainty as far as possible and ensuring stakeholders and colleagues are informed, engaged and retain confidence in the council's ability to maintain day-to-day service delivery.

There is an established Leaders and Chief Executive Officer Group which will continue to meet to ensure open and transparent communication with both stakeholders and staff and to co-ordinate implementation activity. A joint (implementation) committee with a clear remit will be established as part of the shadow arrangements to oversee transition pending shadow executive arrangements being put in place.

**Finance:**

While a budget has been allocated for the implementation of LGR, there is a risk that it may prove insufficient, particularly if unforeseen costs arise.

Costs associated with LGR implementation will be closely monitored to promptly identify any potential shortfalls and/or funding gaps and to develop plans to mitigate any financial risks.

**Statutory Duties:**

Non-compliance with statutory duties and failure to meet statutory obligations could result in the new council not being safe and legally compliant on vesting day. This could impact implementation and cause legal and reputational consequences.

Robust governance structures and programme management arrangements will be put in place, maintaining compliance checks, capacity reviews and ensuring early engagement of legal advisors.

**Data Quality:**

Inconsistent and/or inaccurate data may lead to incorrect baseline assumptions, flawed planning, and uninformed decision-making. This could increase costs and delay delivery of benefits.

There will be a strong approach to data centred around clear data ownership, data cleansing and a robust validation process.

# Supporting evidence for Government

This section summarises the key information and insights that have informed the development of the final proposal. The evidence is supporting information and methodologies where relevant to the overall strategic case. The final submission to Government includes a suite of documents comprising the final proposal and the evidence listed below. A checklist for Government is included within the final proposal to demonstrate how the proposal meets Government criteria and responds to interim plan feedback.

## **Financial analysis:**

- Financial case for Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire
- Warwickshire Newton Final Report
- Difference between WCC and Deloitte analysis

## **Supporting Data:**

- Demographics
- Service demand and delivery
- Warwickshire and the West Midlands
- State of Warwickshire report
- Impact of Disaggregation

## **Public and partner engagement:**

- Voice of Warwickshire survey report
- Public survey report
- Town and parish council survey report
- Letters of support

## **Community governance:**

- Community Powered Warwickshire report

## **Government checklist:**

- Meeting the criteria
- Interim plan feedback letter
- Interim plan feedback response