

Uniting Derbyshire



Derbyshire County Council

Local Government Reorganisation Submission

28 November 2025

Foreword

As a long-term resident of Derbyshire and a local council leader, I know how proud people are of our county - from the hills and dales of the Peak District to the manufacturing heritage of Chesterfield, the bustling market towns, the manufacturing giants of Rolls Royce and Toyota, and the vibrant city of Derby. Wherever we live, we share a strong connection to our communities and a common desire for local services that truly work for us.

Derbyshire has always looked to the future. From the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution in the Derwent Valley to today's world-class hubs of engineering, manufacturing, and innovation, ours is a county built on ambition, resilience, and community pride. Modernisation is a key part of our proud legacy and our government has now asked us to restructure the way our local government operates.

The current structure is too complex, too costly, and increasingly out of date. With multiple councils, overlapping responsibilities, and inefficient systems, residents are left frustrated, and too much money is wasted on bureaucracy instead of frontline services.

Meanwhile, the pressures we face are growing. Our Adult Care and Children's services are facing increased demand and complexity. The need for affordable, suitable housing continues to rise, while some areas struggle to meet demand. At the same time, budgets are tighter than ever.

We owe it to our residents, who work hard, pay their taxes, and rightly expect value for money, to deliver a simpler, more effective system. Wherever you live in Derbyshire, Derby City, the High Peak, Chesterfield, or South Derbyshire, you deserve services that are responsive, efficient, and focused on what really matters.



Figure 1 - Glossop housing estate, High Peak

Creating a single, **unified council for Derbyshire and Derby City** is the right move to secure our financial future. This isn't about erasing local identity, it's about cutting unnecessary red tape, saving millions in duplicated costs, and reinvesting those savings into the services people rely on and value the most: adult social care, children's services, roads, schools, and community safety.

Our financial case for change is clear: uniting Derbyshire and Derby City together under one council would save around **£144 million over the first six years, and £45 million every year after that.** These savings will be redirected to strengthen essential services and support those most in need.

This change would bring clearer accountability, better value, and stronger partnerships. **One council. One budget. One point of responsibility.** It will allow us to work more effectively with our health, police, and voluntary sector partners, and to plan long-term solutions that meet the needs of residents across the county and city.

It will also give Derbyshire and Derby City one voice within the **East Midlands Combined County Authority** and at a national level, helping to attract investment, create jobs, and drive regeneration across our city, towns and villages.

We already have strong foundations to build on. This proposal builds on that spirit of partnership and brings together the strengths of our existing councils to serve all communities, from Glossop to Swadlincote, Bakewell to Bolsover, more effectively.

Economic growth will be a key focus. A single, unified council will help us better connect housing with transport, business with skills, and health with social care, reflecting how people live, work, and move across the region. With a unified approach, we can unlock investment, support job creation, and promote Derbyshire's unique character on both the national and international stage.

Change of this scale is never easy, but it is necessary. We will continue to maintain, improve and evolve what works, learn from others, and

manage the transition carefully and collaboratively. Above all, we will work with our staff, councillors, partners, and communities to ensure we get it right.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver a **simpler, stronger, and fairer future** for Derbyshire and Derby City - one that puts residents first, delivers better value, and lays the foundations for long-term success. Our proposals are grounded in robust evidence, shaped by local engagement, and aligned with the Government's criteria.

Let's seize this opportunity - for our communities, our economy, and every resident across our proud and forward-looking county.



Councillor Alan Graves

Leader of the Council

Cabinet Member for Strategic Leadership



Contents

Foreword	1
Executive Summary	5
Proposal	25
1. Introduction	26
1.1 What is Local Government Reorganisation and what it means for Derbyshire	26
1.1.1 Wider Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) picture	26
1.1.2 Where Derbyshire sits in the national and regional LGR picture	27
1.2 Derbyshire's local context and history	27
1.2.1 – Derbyshire's current structure of local government	27
1.2.2 – Historical context of Derby and Derbyshire's local government	29
1.2.3 – Derbyshire's People and Places: Demographic and Socio-economic indicators	30
1.2.4 – Public Sector Partnerships within Derby and Derbyshire	34
1.3 Case for Change	35
1.3.1 – Why Derby and Derbyshire	35
1.3.2 – Case for change in service delivery	35
2. Our approach for testing and assessing LGR Options for Derby and Derbyshire	42
2.1 The options available and our approach to assessing them ..	42
2.1.1 – The four proposed options for testing and assessing	43
2.1.2 – Outline of approach to the appraisal	47

2.2 Financial Analysis	49
2.2.1 – The objectives of Financial Analysis	49
2.2.2 – High-level financial comparison of the unitary options	49
2.2.3 – Balance sheet analysis	50
2.2.4 – Conclusion of Financial Analysis	50
2.3 Resident and Stakeholder Engagement	51
2.3.1 – Our approach to engagement	51
2.3.2 – Summary of resident engagement	51
2.3.3 – Summary of stakeholder engagement	52
2.4 Options Appraisal	53
2.4.1 – Scoring used to assess against criterion	53
2.5 Conclusion of Options Appraisal and Financial Analysis	60
3. Our Uniting Derbyshire Proposal	62
3.1 Vision	62
3.1.1 – Long-term vision for Derbyshire	62
3.1.2 – How Uniting Derbyshire will build on existing strengths	64
3.2 How socio-economic and demand challenges will be addressed by Uniting Derbyshire	69
3.3 Opportunities provided by LGR for high-cost county-wide services	71
3.3.1 – Adult Social Care	72
3.3.2 – Children's Services	73

3.3.3 - Place	75
3.3.4 - Public Health	76
3.4 Financial Analysis	79
3.5 Representation and Local Voice	80
3.5.1 – Proposed democratic structure in Derbyshire	80
3.5.2 - Strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership	81
3.5.3 - Relationship with our Strategic Authority (EMCCA)	81
3.5.4 - Neighbourhood Governance and Town/Parish Councils	82
3.5.5 - Maintaining Civic and Ceremonial Arrangements	83
3.6 Our Operating Model: People, Places and Systems.....	83
3.6.1 Operating Model Principles	84

3.7 One Council avoids the challenges of disaggregation	85
3.7.1 - Adult Social Care	85
3.7.2 - Children's Services	86
3.7.3 - Place	86
3.7.4 - Public Health	87
3.8 Implementation	87
3.8.1 – High-level plan.....	87
3.8.2 – Roadmap 2025-2028.....	88
3.8.3 – Managing Risks	95
4. Conclusion	97
4.1 Government Checklist	97
4.2 Why one Council is the best option for Derbyshire	99



Executive Summary

Uniting Derbyshire

One Council, One Voice, One Future

Derbyshire has been formally invited by Government to submit a proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) as part of a national programme to simplify two-tier Council areas and create stronger, more resilient local authorities.

This document sets out Derbyshire County Council's preferred option for a future geography and structure for local government across the Derby and Derbyshire area and demonstrates how this preferred option meets the assessment criteria set to us by Government.

LGR provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to vastly reduce the number of Councils which operate across the area into a more streamlined and efficient system. Services are currently divided between ten different organisations, leading to duplication, inconsistent standards, and confusion for residents over who is responsible for what.

Over the last six months we have carefully tested and assessed the possible local government reorganisation options contained within this proposal. This work has been thorough, evidence-based, transparent and will stand up to scrutiny.

We are confident that our proposal for a single unitary model across the Derby and Derbyshire area performs the strongest across the Government's set criteria because it provides the clearest, most sustainable financial model of local government going forward.

Key

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

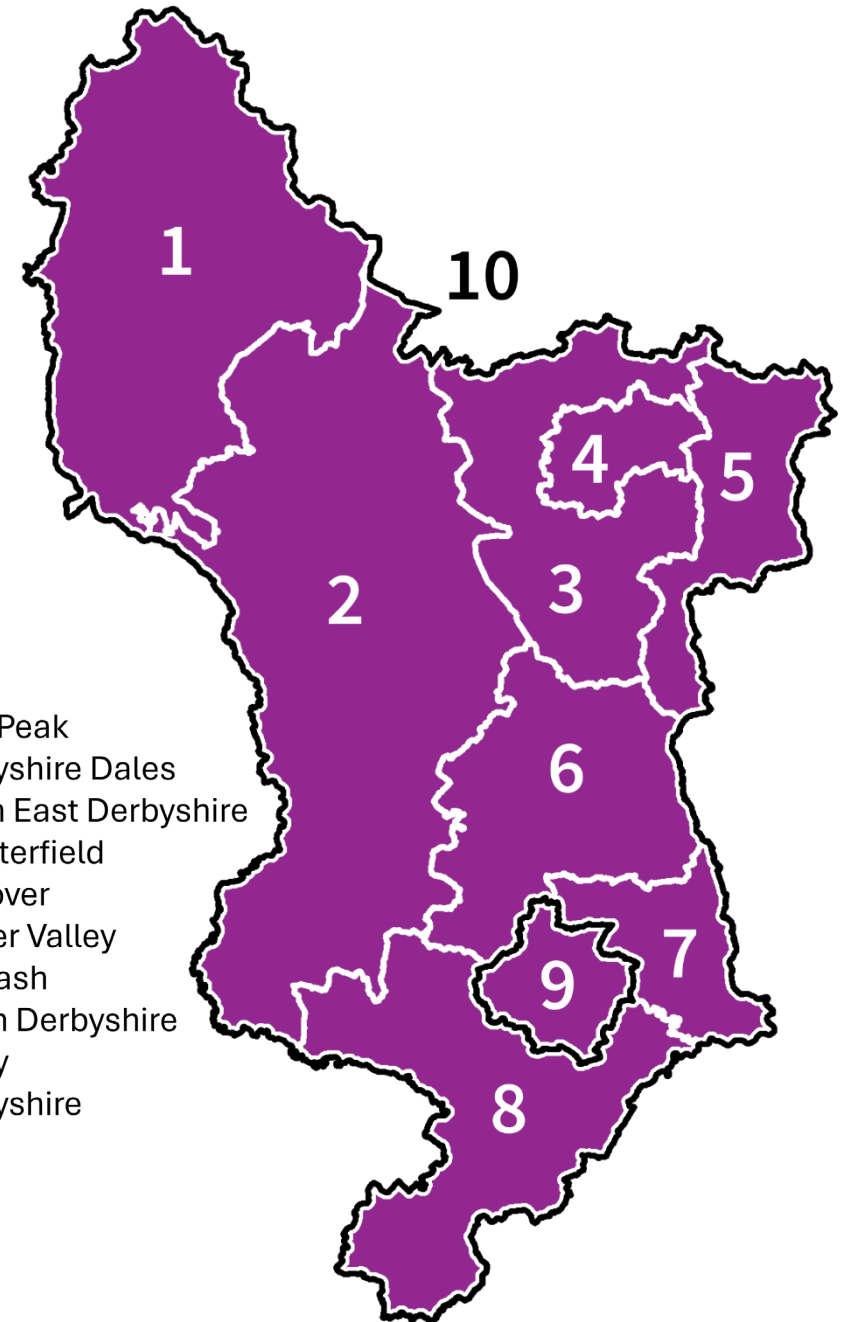


Figure 3 - Map of Derbyshire, highlighting the 8 Districts/Boroughs, City Council and County Council

1 - Vision and Rationale

- Derbyshire and Derby City share a proud identity, strong communities, and a forward-looking spirit.
- Current local government arrangements are too complex, costly, and outdated, with overlapping responsibilities and inefficient systems.
- A single, unified council will simplify local government, improve accountability, and deliver better value for residents.
- The aim is to strengthen local identity whilst cutting bureaucracy, saving money, and protecting frontline services.

3 - Boosting the Local Economy

- A unified council will give Derbyshire and Derby City a stronger regional and national voice, including within the East Midlands Combined County Authority.
- Supports economic growth by linking housing, transport, skills, and business needs.
- Enhances ability to attract investment, jobs, and regeneration across all areas.
- Builds on Derbyshire's strengths in innovation, engineering, and advanced manufacturing.

5 - Better Results for Everyone

- Our People: Everyone in Derbyshire can live healthy, safe, independent lives with fair access to support and opportunities.
- Our Place: Derbyshire will be a great place to live, work, visit, and invest — with strong infrastructure, good homes, and a vibrant economy rooted in natural beauty and heritage.
- Our Council: A simpler, stronger, more efficient authority that puts residents first, delivers better value, and is ambitious for the future.

2 - Saving Money and Working Better

- Estimated savings of £144 million over six years and £45 million annually thereafter.
- Savings will support the sustainability of essential services — adult social care, children's services, roads, schools, and community safety.
- A single council means one budget, one point of responsibility, and clearer accountability.
- Greater efficiency will strengthen partnerships with health, police, the regional mayor, and voluntary organisations.

4 - What This Means for Residents

- Simpler, fairer, and more responsive services across city and county.
- Local teams based in neighbourhoods and towns to ensure services remain visible and accessible.
- Focus on what matters most: better roads, safer streets, affordable homes, and support for families and older people.
- Reinforced commitment to listening to communities and protecting local identity during transition.
- A single unitary authority carries the lowest delivery risk. A single unitary avoids splitting high-cost, high-risk services (Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care) across two authorities.

6 - How we'll make the change

- Change will be carefully managed, collaborative, and transparent.
- Builds on existing partnerships and shared ambition across councils.
- Ensures continuity of essential services while achieving long-term financial sustainability.
- Represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure a fairer, stronger, and more effective future for all Derbyshire residents.

Our Priorities for Change

Our priorities for Derbyshire's new unitary council have been shaped through wide engagement with residents, local councillors, our staff and partners across the county and city.

We have listened to:

- Cabinet members and councillors who considered Derbyshire's future direction and what strong local leadership should look like
- Residents, businesses and community groups who shared their own experiences of local services and the changes they would like to see
- Public sector partners such as the NHS, police, fire and rescue, education providers, East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and voluntary organisations that described how they want to work more closely with the new council(s)
- Our own workforce who described the challenges with the current system and the possible LGR opportunities for better service delivery if we get this right

Across all these discussions, the messages were clear and consistent.



People want a simple, joined-up council that is easy to deal with, delivers good value for money and keeps services close to the communities they serve.

This feedback has directly shaped the vision that follows - one built on prosperity, pride and community, and driven by a shared ambition to create:

One Derbyshire: one council, one voice, one future.

Our residents told us they want:

'Services that are easy to access, with one point of contact and clear accountability, consistent and fair approaches so everyone receives the same quality of service wherever they live.'

Our partners said they want to:

'Work with a strong, stable organisation that can plan for the long-term, protect essential services and speak with one voice for Derbyshire. They see real benefit in a single council able to bring together health, care, housing and community safety around shared goals.'

Our staff said they want to:

'Deliver local services through a consistent, coordinated, joined up and effective local government system which is streamlined and efficient and can build on all the different councils' individual strengths.'

Our Vision for Uniting Derbyshire

One Council, One Voice, One Future

By uniting as a single council, we can make things simpler, cut duplication, and provide value for money, helping to improve everyday life for everyone who lives and works here.

We will do this with openness, honesty and integrity – putting people first and keeping Derbyshire’s communities at the heart of everything we do, with every effort to protect and improve resident-facing services.

This is about building a council that people can trust to put local people first, to listen and focus on what really matters to them; safety, health, and the quality of everyday life. That means delivering better roads, safer and cleaner streets, lower running costs and more joined up local services that are easier to use and quicker to respond. It also means having more visible council services in our towns and neighbourhoods, so people feel supported and connected.

We want people to be clear who's responsible for what, and confident that every pound is spent in a way that delivers real value. By working together and with partners, we can improve services for children and families, support people as they age, encourage healthier lifestyles and make sure help is there when it's needed. We will make it easy for residents to contact the right team first time and to see how decisions are made.

We are ambitious for Derbyshire and for the next generation. We will drive prosperity and opportunity for all, which means investing in better jobs, more affordable homes, strong local businesses and good schools. We want our young children to have reasons to stay, build their lives here, and be proud of where they come from.

Derbyshire is rich in history, culture, countryside and potential. Proud of our past and confident in our future, we'll protect what makes our county special while attracting more visitors, supporting small businesses and growing our local economy. At the same time, we'll champion our reputation for innovation and world-class excellence in advanced manufacturing, helping to drive growth and create opportunities across Derbyshire

Together, as One Derbyshire, we will build a safer, fairer and more prosperous county with better quality of life. Proud of where we live, proud of what we share:

One Derbyshire: One Council, One voice, One future

Our Outcomes for Uniting Derbyshire

Derbyshire will be a great place to live, work, visit and invest - with a strong economy, good homes, and protected natural beauty.

- Towns and neighbourhoods feel well-connected and full of opportunity
- Good transport, better digital access, more affordable homes and well-maintained parks and green spaces
- Local businesses grow, can attract new jobs and visitors
- Make the most of Derbyshire's countryside, heritage, and culture
- Protect what makes the county special while preparing for the future
- A hub for innovation and advanced manufacturing, attracting investment and showcasing our strength as a world-class place for business and growth.

People in Derbyshire will live well - with better support, better opportunities and brighter futures.

- Children get the best start
- Families feel supported
- Older people live well in their own homes and communities
- Services are easier to access, fairer across the county, and shaped around the needs of local people
- Everyone, whatever their background, can thrive.



Derbyshire will have a simpler, stronger council that puts people first and provides better services and better value.

- A simple more joined-up council that works efficiently
- Makes better use of public money
- Services are easy to find and quicker to respond, with greater presence in local areas
- People feel listened to and confident that their council is working in their best interests, focused on what matters and ambitious for the county's future.

Our Options for LGR in the Derby and Derbyshire area

There are many potential options regarding new Council geographies when looking at the Government's criteria and at our ten current local councils in the area.

Following analysis of geography, identity, population balance and service delivery, four viable options for local government in Derbyshire have been developed.

These options evolved through joint work between council members, partners and our residents, to ensure any future Council geography is practical, fair and deliverable, while meeting Government expectations for scale, simplicity and sustainability.

Together, we believe they present a full range of credible choices, from a county-wide authority uniting Derbyshire under one council, to balanced north/south configurations for genuine comparison.

These options are assessed and compared later in this summary document.



Option A

Proposes two unitary authorities with Amber Valley in the North
(respective populations are North 591,000 / South 506,000)



Option B

Proposes two unitary authorities with Amber Valley in the South
(respective populations are North 460,000 / South 636,000)



Option C

Retains a two-unitary model but redraws boundaries across Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales (achieves more balanced populations of around 550,000 each)



Option D

Creates a single unitary authority for the whole of Derbyshire
(1.1 million people)

Our approach to identifying the best option for Derby and Derbyshire

We have looked at the benefits, opportunities, costs and risks of options A-D. We have completed a detailed study, bringing together different types of information and evidence, as follows:



Stakeholder engagement

Over 5,000 residents, staff, councillors and partners were engaged through surveys, briefings, and workshops. Consultation results and the LGR Stakeholder Engagement Report provided a local evidence base on what residents value most: protecting local identity, reducing duplication, and improving accountability.



Data analysis

Financial data collection and modelling to understand the benefits and costs associated with each proposed option. Geographical, cultural, social and economic data analysis of the area was also used to understand how people live their lives, travel around, and access services.



Service delivery dialogue

We engaged with a significant number of the workforce and our partners who have extensive experience in service delivery, to understand the real practical implications of implementing each proposed option and the potential impact on the delivery of high-quality services going forward.

Taken together, this approach means we are confident all viable options have been considered and that our assessment represents a balanced, transparent, and evidence-based response to Government's invitation.

We are confident that our preferred option is the most optimum for Derby and Derbyshire, reflecting both the realities of delivery and the ambition to create a stronger, simpler and more sustainable council for the area.

Financial Analysis of Unitary Options for Derbyshire

Data analysis in relation to the four options has suggested that a single unitary option provides the greatest financial benefits for Derbyshire, putting the Council on the best financial footing.

Gross annual benefit:	£45.1m
Annual disaggregation costs:	£0m
One-off transition costs:	£47.7m
Payback period:	2.6 years

A single unitary council places the organisation in a better position for undertaking additional transformation activities following the reorganisation. Transformation activities are steps taken beyond purely reorganising the authorities.

Table 1 - Options financial analysis comparison

	One Unitary	Two Unitary Options		
	Option D	Option A	Option B	Option C
Net benefit after 1 year	£-23.9m	£-32.9m	£-34.8m	£-34.8m
Net benefit after 6 years	£143.9m	£43.6m	£32.4m	£37.7m
Time needed to pay back costs (years)	2.6	4.3	4.6	4.5
Annual savings after 2031/32	£45.1m	£25.3m	£23.4m	£24.7m

A One Unitary option is the most financially advantageous option, with the steady state annual benefit from reorganisation (i.e. accessed every year from 2031/32 onwards, once transition costs are paid) being £20m higher annually, when compared against the two unitary options.

Key headlines from the financial analysis include:

- A One Unitary option **delivers £20m more in reorganisation savings every year**, when compared to the two unitary options (£45m compared to c.£25m).
- A One Unitary option contains **no costs associated with splitting services between different authorities**, since services across Derbyshire are only being brought together. In comparison, the **two unitary options have annual costs associated with splitting services between different authorities ranging between £8-10m**.
- **Transition costs for a One Unitary option are c.£2-5m lower** (including redundancy costs) than the two unitary options, due to a more straightforward transition process to a single Authority.

Our Uniting Derbyshire option is preferable for the following key reasons:



There are greater opportunities for financial savings

With One Unitary all council teams are consolidated into one. Similarly, spend with third parties can be brought together, as a single Authority can, for example, buy in bulk.



There are lower programme transition costs

Moving to One Unitary is simpler and requires less activity. This means that spend on communications, programme management and implementation are reduced.



There are no disaggregation costs

Since all councils are being combined into one, there are no costs or inefficiencies from disaggregation.



Figure 4 - Silk Mill Museum of Making, Derby

Assessment of Options

Each of the four shortlisted options has been assessed against the Government's six criteria to identify which unitary model would best deliver effective and sustainable local government for Derby and Derbyshire.

The table below summarises the **Red**, **Amber** and **Green** (RAG) assessment rating against the criteria. The assessments have also had a weighting applied to the scores to better compare performance across all options.

The results clearly show that while all four meet the minimum government tests, the single unitary option performs strongest overall, offering the greatest financial sustainability, the simplest governance model, and the clearest accountability for residents.

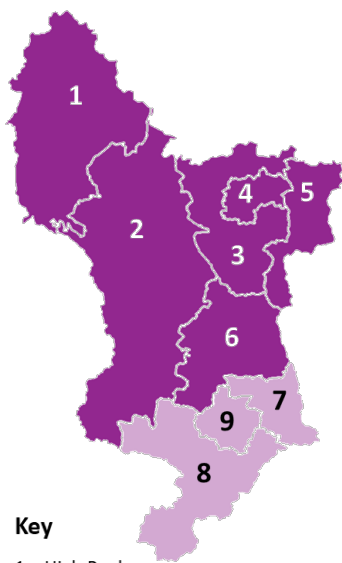
Table 2 - Options Appraisal

Criterion	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
1. Simple, sensible council structure	High	Medium	Low	Very high
2. Right size for Derbyshire	Medium	Low	Low	Very high
3. Good, reliable services	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
4. Meets local needs	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium
5. Helps with devolution	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
6. Involves and empowers local people	High	High	High	Medium
Total Weighted Score	39	34	30	50



Figure 5 - Markham Vale, Chesterfield

Option A – Amber Valley in the North



Key

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

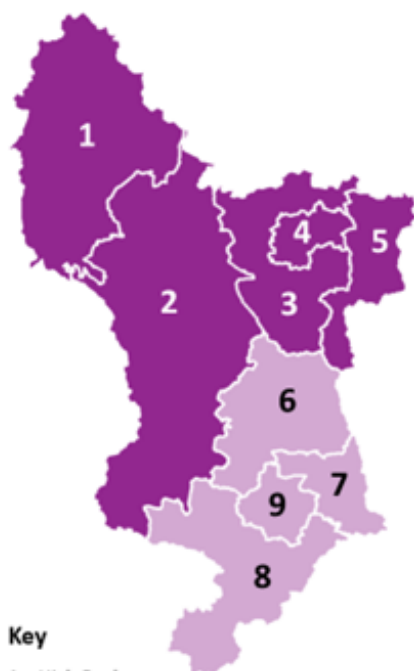
Strengths

- Brings **all councils across Derbyshire** into two new authorities, each covering a substantial and balanced geography.
- **Includes every district, borough, the county, and the city**, ensuring a full, county-wide reorganisation.
- **Meets Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries, providing viable structures.
- Has **broadly similar GVA** across the two authorities.
- Loosely reflects **some existing operational boundaries** and **travel-to-work areas**.
- Creates **more parity** in geographic size between the two new authorities, reducing perceptions of dominance.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Delivers **modest efficiencies** through rationalised management and back-office functions.
- Allows for **pooling of resources** and reduction in duplication.
- Produces a **diverse tax base** and a more balanced socio-economic profile across both areas, though some variation would remain.
- Could give **Derby greater flexibility** to meet housing demand by accessing a wider land supply in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).

Weaknesses

- The **geography is unfamiliar** to residents and partners and **does not have public support**.
- **Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley** do not fit naturally into a simple north-south split.
- Risks **fragmenting existing relationships** and creating **two unsustainable, less resilient authorities**.
- May **dilute Derby City's identity** and reduce its delivery expertise.
- Offers only **modest financial savings** and would be **costly and complex to implement**, with around a four-year payback period.
- Requires **full disaggregation of county services** and re-aggregation into two new structures.
- Could **reduce flexibility** to meet housing targets in the north.

Option B – Amber Valley in the South



Key

- 1 = High Peak
- 2 = Derbyshire Dales
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- 4 = Chesterfield
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- 6 = Amber Valley
- 7 = Erewash
- 8 = South Derbyshire
- 9 = Derby

Strengths



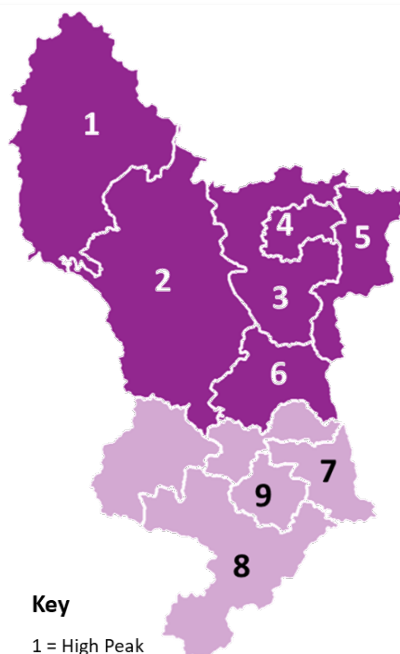
- **Includes all councils** within the Derbyshire area, ensuring full coverage of the county.
- **Loosely aligns** with some existing operational and service boundaries.
- **Reflects how people travel to work and access services**, with broad functional ties across Derby and South Derbyshire.
- Creates **more parity in geographic size** between the two unitaries than the status quo, although imbalances in population and GVA remain across the county.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Allows for **pooling of resources** and reduction in duplication.
- Produces a **more balanced socio-economic profile** than the current structure, though some variation would remain.
- Provides **greater flexibility for Derby** in meeting future housing demand, with stronger growth capacity in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).



Weaknesses

- Represents an **unfamiliar geographical split** that lacks public support or recognition.
- **Does not meet Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries.
- **Savings are minimal**, with limited financial return compared to implementation costs with around a four-year payback.
- Requires **full disaggregation of county services** and re-aggregation into two new structures.
- **Creates difficult boundaries for Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley**, which do not divide cleanly north/south.
- Risks **diluting Derby City's identity** and undermining its delivery expertise.
- Could lead to **two unsustainable, less resilient unitaries**, particularly in the north where resources and tax base are weaker.
- **Reduces flexibility** to meet housing needs in the north, constraining development opportunities.
- Would be **complex and disruptive to implement**, requiring major structural change and service reconfiguration.
- **Does not reflect the functional urban area** shared between Derby and Nottingham, weakening strategic coherence.
- **Transport connectivity challenges** would persist in the southern part of Derbyshire Dales, limiting service access.

Option C – Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales split



Key

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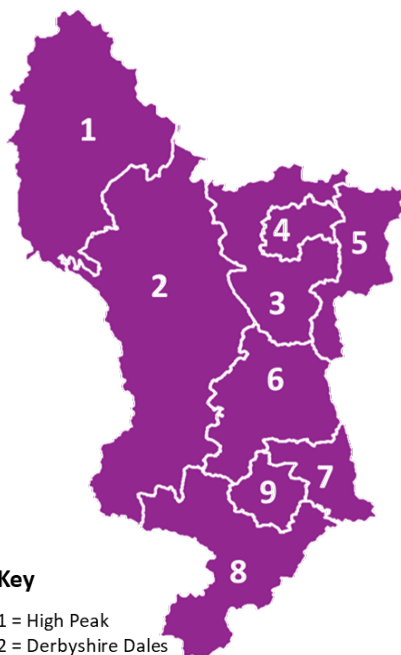
Strengths

- **Includes all councils** within the Derbyshire area, ensuring full county coverage.
- **Meets Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries, providing viable structures.
- **Loosely reflects** travel-to-work areas.
- Creates **more parity in geographic size** between the two unitaries, reducing imbalance across the county.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Creates a **more balanced socio-economic profile** across both unitaries than the current two-tier system, though with some variation.
- Offers **greater flexibility for Derby** in meeting housing demand through expanded growth opportunities in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).

Weaknesses

- Proposes an **unfamiliar and unpopular geography**, generating significant public opposition.
- **Savings are minimal**, with limited financial return compared to implementation costs with around a four-year payback.
- **Splitting Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales** would create substantial administrative and operational challenges, requiring a **formal boundary review**.
- **Service disaggregation** would become more complicated, as current delivery structures and partnerships would be divided across two new authorities with disaggregation required across the County Council but also functions delivered by Amber Valley District Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council.
- Risks **undermining Derby City's identity** and weakening its delivery expertise.
- Would **reduce flexibility** in meeting housing targets in the north, constraining future growth.
- The **transition process would be complex and disruptive**, with significant short-term delivery risk.
- Does **not reflect the functional urban area** shared by Derby and Nottingham, limiting strategic and economic coherence.

Option D – Single whole county/city unitary



Key

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

Strengths

- **Includes all councils** across Derbyshire within one new authority, covering the entire county and the city.
- **Makes changes to the Derby City border**, creating a single coherent geography for service delivery.
- **Meets Government criteria** for minimum population size, ensuring scale and financial sustainability.
- **Protects the history and identity** of Derbyshire as a single place, uniting urban, market town, and rural communities.
- **Delivers the greatest financial savings** of all options, providing long-term value for money.
- **Lowest cost to implement**, with fewer transition risks and less duplication.
- Creates the **broadest socio-economic balance and tax base**, bringing strength, resilience, and flexibility.
- Offers **maximum adaptability** in meeting housing needs, supporting travel-to-work patterns, and improving access to services.
- **Aligns most closely** with existing administrative and public service boundaries across Derbyshire.
- Reflects the county's **varied topography and transport connectivity**, linking urban centres to rural areas.
- **Consolidates democratic representation** with a single, accountable body overseeing all local government spending.
- Would cause **least disruption to residents** as it **avoids disaggregation of county council functions**.

Weaknesses

- Requires **horizontal aggregation** of existing upper-tier services, merging systems and processes across all authorities.
- Covers a **large geography**, requiring a **greater number of elected members** to ensure full representation.
- Could be **perceived as reducing local voices**, with concerns about decision-making feeling more distant from communities.
- Necessitates **changes to EMCCA governance** as there would no longer be 2 constituent councils representing the area.

While all options are technically deliverable and have individual strengths, the evidence clearly shows that a single unitary authority offers the most coherent and future-proof solution. It provides the scale, simplicity and financial strength needed to meet Derbyshire's challenges, while retaining a strong local voice through community-based delivery.

By contrast, the two-unitary models (Options A, B and C) would require splitting high-cost and high-risk services such as children's and adults' social care, fragmenting statutory responsibilities and creating duplication across governance, staffing and systems.

Taken together, this assessment shows that only the single unitary model offers the simplicity, stability, and scale to meet Government tests while protecting the local voice through strong community arrangements.



Figure 6 - Ilkeston High Street, Erewash

Why our Uniting Derbyshire option is the clear favourite

Our preferred option of uniting Derbyshire under a single unitary is the model that most clearly meets Government criteria and offers the strongest and most sustainable future for local government in the county.

1

Sensible single tier of local government

It creates one council that covers all existing authorities and reflects Derbyshire's connected geographies. Covering a diverse area means it is the most balanced and financially resilient structure - fully aligned to existing public-service boundaries. Operations across one administrative area better match how people live, travel and access services. Uniting Derbyshire offers a simpler, stronger, and more sustainable local government model.

2

'Right sized' local government

It comfortably meets population guidance, creating one Council of sufficient scale to deliver efficiencies and long-term financial resilience. It would generate a net benefit of £144 million within six years, achieving payback in just 2.6 years, with annual recurring savings of over £45 million. The more councils are merged the greater the savings. A Unified Derbyshire delivers the best value for money and with the strongest financial foundations.

3

High-quality, sustainable services

It brings together all existing councils into a single organisation, avoiding the disruption and cost of splitting county services. It brings together capacity, experience and expertise across the area to enable a more consistent and efficient service offer. Through require careful phasing, Uniting Derbyshire offers the scale and capability for large-scale transformation of frontline and core services.

4

Meets local needs

It directly responds to what residents and partners told us through engagement. Creating one council demonstrates that we have listened to those views and used them to shape our proposal accordingly. Uniting Derbyshire aligns most closely with the footprints of key public services such as health, police and fire, ensuring joined-up planning and delivery.

5

Supports devolution arrangements

It creates a one Council with clear leadership and a shared vision for Derbyshire's place within the East Midlands region. It reduces the number of constituent authorities in the county to one, strengthening Derbyshire's collective voice and making collaborative working easier. It enables a clearer, stronger, and more coordinated approach to delivering regional growth, alongside simpler and faster decision-making – creating a platform for future devolution.

6

Local engagement & empowerment

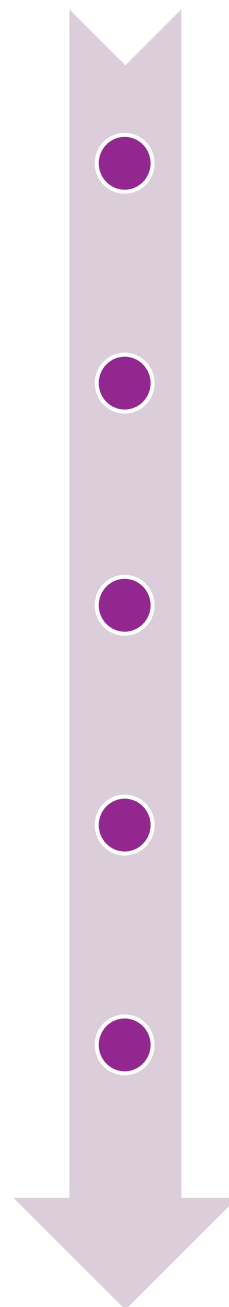
It requires updated councillor warding arrangements and a council size of around 112 members, reflecting the size of other large unitaries operating at scale. A Unified Derbyshire would remove district boundaries, creating a clear distinction between strategic decision-making and the work of town and parish councils, helping them to define their own local identity. By design, it would require the new council to embed stronger, more deliberate approaches to community engagement.

Implementation Planning

Delivering Local Government Reorganisation safely and on time needs a single, coordinated implementation programme that brings all councils together under one plan. The programme will focus on keeping services stable while building the foundations of the new organisation.

Derbyshire's transition to a single unitary council will follow a clear five-phase roadmap designed to deliver safe change by April 2028 while maintaining service continuity and public confidence.

This roadmap provides a single, credible pathway to implementation, combining safe transition, clear accountability and the foundations for long-term transformation across Derbyshire.



Proposal submission (2025) – our current position

Finalise and submit the full proposal to Government, supported by engagement with residents, MPs, and partners. This establishes the preferred model, financial case and early service design.

Interim governance (2025-26)

Create joint political and officer leadership with a central Programme Management Office to coordinate delivery during transition.

Decision and transition planning (2026)

Respond to Government's decision, support legislation and finalise detailed transition plans covering finance, ICT, workforce, estates and service continuity.

Shadow authority (2027)

Hold elections, appoint senior leadership, agree budgets and constitutions, and prepare the first policies and service frameworks ahead of vesting.

Vesting and beyond (2028)

Launch the new council on 1 April 2028 with all core systems and statutory officers in place. Delivery of a safe and legal council on day one will be followed by phased transformation of services, workforce and technology to realise savings and strengthen local delivery.

O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M
2025			2026												2027												2028				
Business Case Submission			Interim Governance						Decision and Transition Planning						Shadow Authority												Vesting and Beyond				
Oct 2025 Member approval secured across all councils 28 Nov 2025 Final business case submitted to Government			Jan - May 2026 Government consultation on Derbyshire proposal Dec 2025 - Feb 2026 Interim governance arrangements established Feb 2026 - June 2026 Early transition planning and baseline service mapping initiated						June - July 2026 Government decision Sep 2026 Structural change order laid before Parliament Sep - Oct 2026 Detailed transition plan and Day 1 readiness framework agreed						6 May 2027 Elections to shadow authorities, with shadow cabinets and committees established July - August 2027 Chief Executives and statutory officers appointed Sep - Dec 2027 First budgets and council tax proposals for 2028/29 prepared												1 Apr 2028 Vesting Day - new unitary structure assumes full powers with transfer of staff, assets and systems completed				

Implementation will be managed through a central and joint Programme Management Office (PMO), bringing together experienced change and transformation staff from across Derbyshire, supported where necessary by specialist expertise.

It will be organised around a number of core workstreams. Each will have clear ownership, timelines and reporting through the County Council's Programme Management Office, ensuring that every aspect of transition is planned, sequenced and resourced to deliver a safe and successful vesting day in April 2028.

Workstreams:

- Democracy and Governance
- People and Culture
- Service Design and Continuity
- Finance and Council Tax
- Technology and Data
- Property and Estates
- Contracts and Commercial
- Community and Locality

Conclusion

On the balance of evidence our findings are that on our extensive evidence and insight, creating one unitary for the Derby and Derbyshire area would offer the greatest opportunity to simultaneously deliver financial savings to the whole area whilst reorganising the local government landscape in a way that better meets the needs of Derbyshire residents now and in the future.

Our Uniting Derbyshire preferred option can deliver the following benefits:



Scale

Substantial size and mix of rural and urban areas to offer equivalence, parity and competition to other local areas.



Simplicity

'Council mergers' is the least complex option to implement and therefore represents the lowest risk.



Established delivery geography

Is most aligned with the administrative public service map in Derbyshire and means minimum changes to the delivery geography for services.



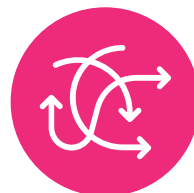
Savings

Reorganisation on a whole county boundary creates the largest savings potential and lowest transitional cost.



Sustainability

A county unitary would support a larger and more diverse population, spread across urban and rural areas with financial resilience.



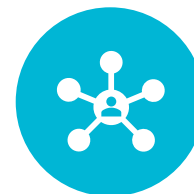
Disruption

Lowest levels of disruption for residents and most service users as service fragmentation is limited. It is also the least disruptive for everyone.



Identity

A whole county unitary council provides for the most common or dominant identity for Derbyshire and protects the historic County border.



Wider public sector

A county unitary provides the most effective, efficient and convenient model, coterminous with other public sector agencies.

Uniting Derbyshire



Proposal

1. Introduction

1.1 What is Local Government Reorganisation and what it means for Derbyshire

In 1972 a major reform of English local government established a two-tier system throughout the country. In ‘two-tier’ areas local government responsibilities are shared between a larger county council and smaller district/borough councils.

Since then, Government legislation has allowed ‘unitary’ councils to replace the two-tier system in some areas over time. In ‘single-tier’ or ‘unitary’ councils, one authority is responsible for every function of local government in an area.

There are currently 62 unitary authorities in England and 21 two-tier areas.

In some counties like Derbyshire there is a complicated mix of both unitary (often urban) council/s and two-tier arrangements. Derby City Council provides all services in the city while the County and district/borough councils share service delivery over the rest of the ceremonial county area.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is the legal process that merges the structures and responsibilities of existing local government arrangements to bring together different types of councils into new local authorities for an area.

1.1.1 Wider Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) picture

On 16 December 2024, Government published the English Devolution White Paper¹, which sets out the Government’s plans to move away from the current two-tier system of district, borough and county councils.

This means replacing existing ‘two-tier’ Councils with new bigger unitary Councils with populations of 500,000 or more, delivering all local government services within their area.

The White Paper makes clear that the Government intends to implement this change quickly, with new authorities due to be in place by April 2028. The two-tier structure exists only in England. Scotland and Wales already use a fully unitary system.

The Government wants to simplify complex council structures and put local government on a more efficient and sustainable footing. The government expects LGR to tackle duplication, strengthen financial resilience, and create new councils with the scale to deliver modern services.

The White Paper highlights the following reasons for this approach:

- Making councils more sustainable by saving money through economies of scale and reduced administrative costs
- Creating more efficient, sustainable and responsive services through service transformation opportunities
- Reducing workforce pressures and local competition for staff, with fewer leadership roles
- Increasing local accountability for service delivery and local decision making, requiring fewer councillors and local elections
- Enabling new and innovative community level and partnership working.

Local government across England has faced years of reduced funding, rising inflation, and growing demand for services. Many councils have needed exceptional financial support, and more are expected to face financial pressures in the coming years.

Reorganisation of council services is intended to remove bureaucracy, simplify processes, and make local government easier to understand. By reducing the costs of running multiple councils, the Government also anticipates that savings can support the current and projected financial pressures on frontline (resident-facing) services and allow Councils to address local priorities.

Larger unitary council(s) are also expected to have greater capacity to withstand financial shocks, negotiate better contracts, invest in service redesign, and coordinate service delivery. Simpler structures should allow quicker decision-making and better planning across whole geographies, meaning that councils can play a stronger role in supporting national priorities such as housing growth, economic development, and social care.

On 5 February 2025, Government issued statutory invitations to all leaders and chief executives in two-tier areas, including Derbyshire and Derby City, to submit reorganisation proposals by 28 November 2025.

1.1.2 Where Derbyshire sits in the national and regional LGR picture

All the 21 two-tier county areas received the Secretary of State's statutory invitation, including Derbyshire, and are now undergoing reorganisation. These areas include other counties similar to Derbyshire in terms of rurality and demographic challenges such as Surrey, Norfolk, Hampshire and other neighbouring counties such as Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire.

Government has been clear that LGR is also being used to support English Devolution. This means that some areas are negotiating devolution deals with Government alongside LGR. Derbyshire is already part of an existing devolution arrangement, securing a combined county authority devolution deal and establishing the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) in March 2024. EMCCA currently works across four local authority areas: Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derby City Council and Nottingham City Council.

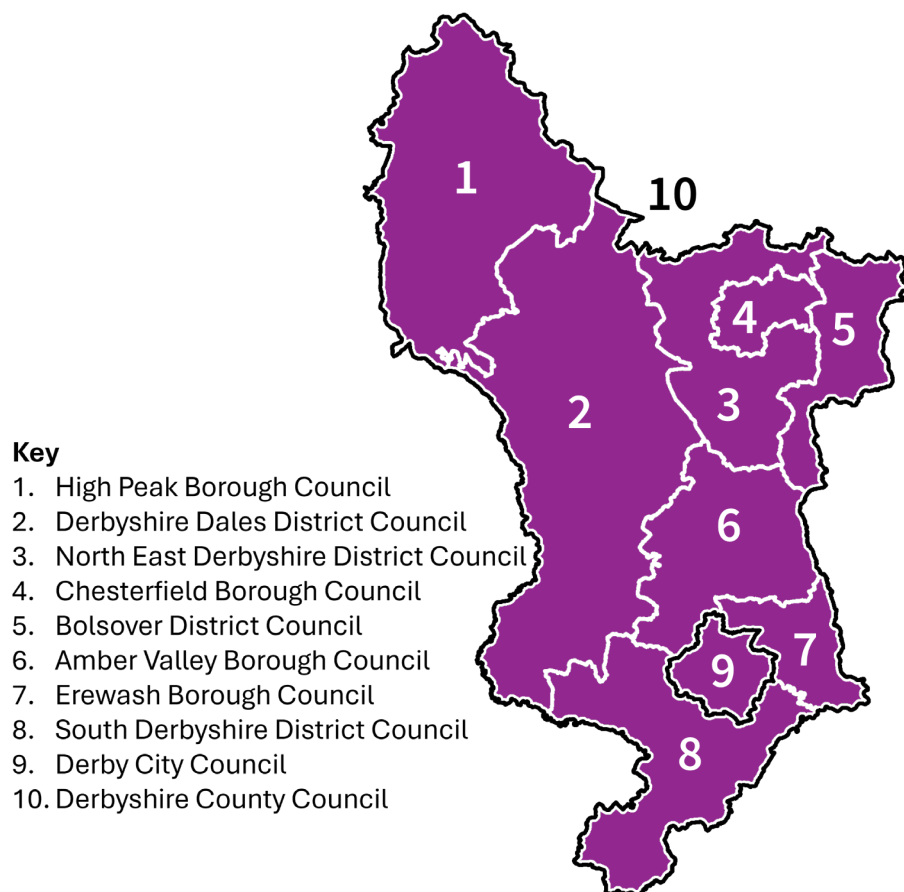
Whilst the region already benefits from devolution, it is important to Government that LGR plans outline how new councils will continue to work with EMCCA to help better shape and improve the delivery of transformational change across the region through investment in transport, skills and adult education, housing and land, net-zero and economic development.

1.2 Derbyshire's local context and history

1.2.1 – Derbyshire's current structure of local government

There are three types of council structures among ten local authorities in Derby and Derbyshire: eight district/borough councils (Amber Valley, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, Erewash, High Peak, North East Derbyshire, and South Derbyshire), one unitary authority (Derby City Council), and one county council (Derbyshire County Council).

Figure 7 - Map of Derbyshire, highlighting the eight Districts/Boroughs, City Council and County Council

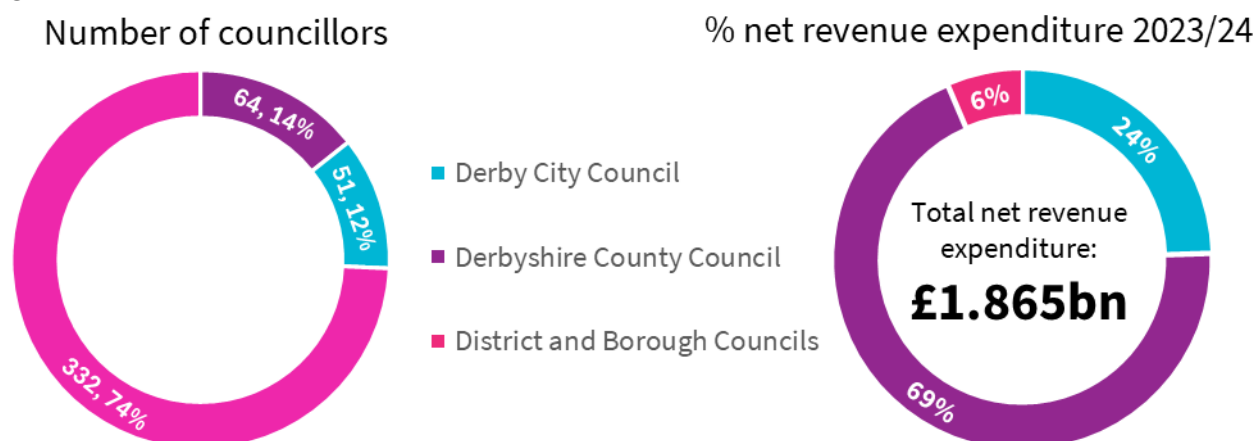


A full list of current responsibilities sitting in district/borough, city and county councils in Derbyshire is contained within Appendix A (Section A).

The current democratic process within Derbyshire has the following characteristics and breakdowns between councils:

- Total electorate: 812,045²
- Derbyshire County Council: 64 Councillors across 64 divisions (ratio 1:9,826)
- Derby City: 51 Councillors across 18 wards (ratio 1:3,591)
- District and Borough Councils (average): 42 Councillors over 22 wards (1:1,894)

Figure 8 - Imbalanced democratic system within Derbyshire



Source: 2023/24 Revenue Outturn Summary, LG Inform, July 2025

Currently 74% of the Councillors representing Derbyshire residents (at the lower tier level) manage 6% of current spend, whereas 14% of Councillors operate at the upper tier level where 69% of the budget is held. Derby City, as a current city unitary authority in the area, has 12% of the Councillors managing 24% of the total local government spend in the area.

In the current system, Derbyshire electors are asked to vote for a District/Borough Councillor to represent their views on lower tier services, a County Councillor to represent upper tier matters and now a regional Mayor regarding devolved budgets. Some Derbyshire electors may also cast a vote in local Town and Parish Council elections, where these exist. All electors can take part in the parliamentary general election. In Derby, the picture is simpler with both tiers of functions covered by one Councillor.

1.2.2 – Historical context of Derby and Derbyshire’s local government

The ceremonial county of Derbyshire has existed, with its outer borders largely unchanged, since 1086. Governance within the county, however, has seen several major reforms, particularly over the last 50 years, with Derbyshire consistently adapting to national changes.

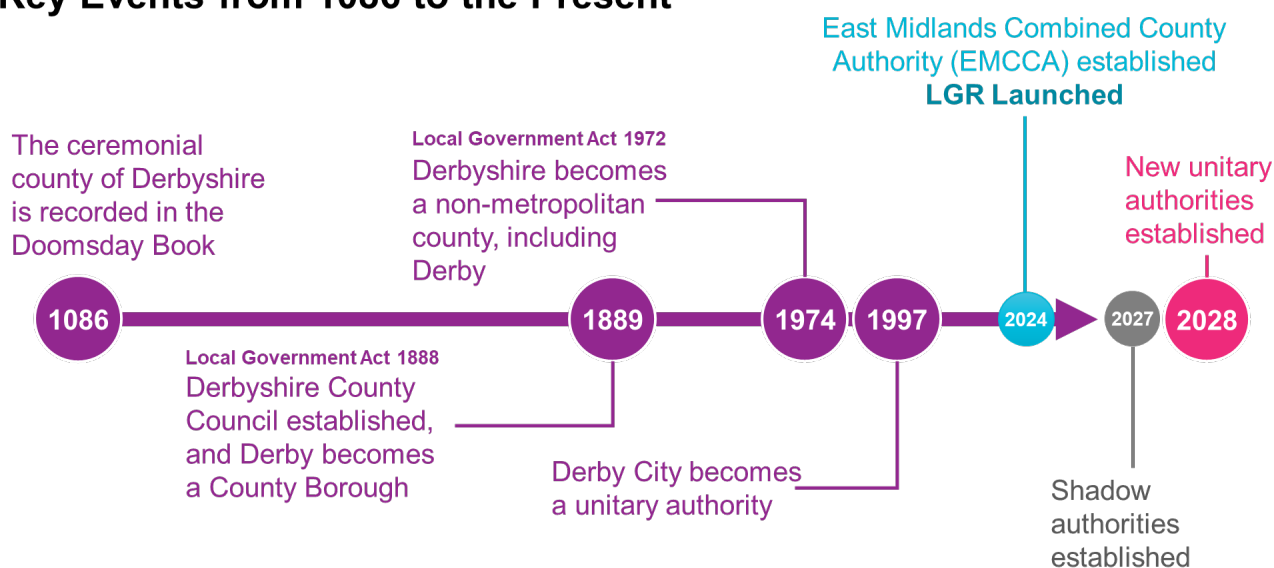
Derbyshire County Council was first created in 1889 following the Local Government Act 1888. This Act established Derbyshire County Council, the County Borough of Derby, and a number of urban and rural district councils. These arrangements remained in place for almost a century, with both the county council and the city borough council acting as upper-tier authorities for their residents.

The next major reform came with the Local Government Act 1972, implemented in 1974. Derbyshire was reconstituted as a non-metropolitan county, and eight district and borough councils were created within its borders. At the same time, Derby became a borough of the county, with Derbyshire County Council taking responsibility for services in the city for the first time.

Derby remained a borough of the county for nearly 25 years until 1997, when it regained upper-tier status as Derby City Council, a unitary authority. From this point, Derby once again took responsibility for all local services, independent of the county council.

The creation of EMCCA in 2024 represents the most recent shift in governance, with the first mayor elected in 2024 to lead the new combined county authority and oversee its work.

Key Events from 1086 to the Present



1.2.3 – Derbyshire’s People and Places: Demographic and Socio-economic indicators

Derbyshire is in a central position within the East Midlands, bordered by seven counties.

The City and County are home to just over one million people³. The county is well known for its mix of rich, diverse heritage and spectacular natural landscapes.

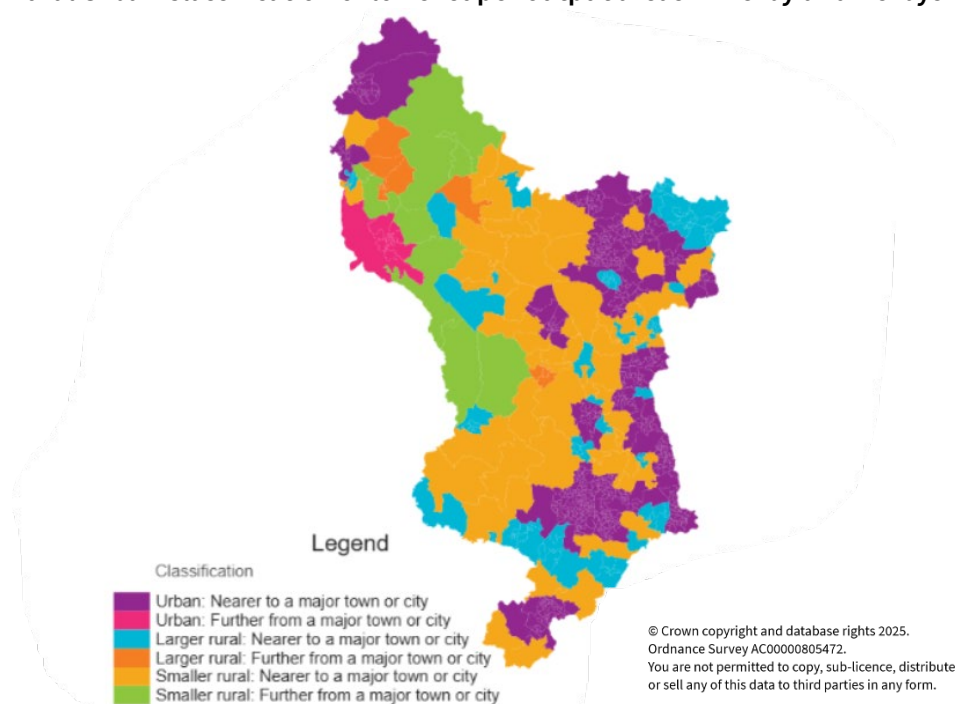
Its large rural areas in the north of the county include areas of natural beauty such as the Peak District National Park with its dramatic moorlands, gritstone edges, limestone dales and Kinder Scout, the highest point in Derbyshire. In the South of the county, the landscape is characterised by natural assets such as the National Forest and lowland wetland habitats, such as the Trent Valley, alongside more urban areas. As well as amazing landscapes, Derbyshire has diverse and enriching heritage, from historic monuments and grand stately homes to industrial landmarks. Attractions include the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, Chatsworth House, Bolsover Castle and Calke Abbey. These natural and heritage attributes make the county a special place to live, work and visit.

The vibrant and diverse cathedral city of Derby sits within the south of the county on Derbyshire’s longest river, the Derwent. It was once at the forefront of engineering and textile industry developments. Today the City is home to more than 270,000⁴ people and is an important national centre for engineering and advanced transport manufacturing with companies such as Rolls-Royce and Alstom (formerly Bombardier Transportation) having production facilities and headquarters in the City and Toyota in Burnaston in South Derbyshire being a major attraction for employment. The University of Derby is currently home to thousands of students and plays an important role in communities in Derby and Derbyshire.

This rich and diverse heritage, shaped by its varied geography and an emphasis on industry, has long defined Derbyshire’s identity.

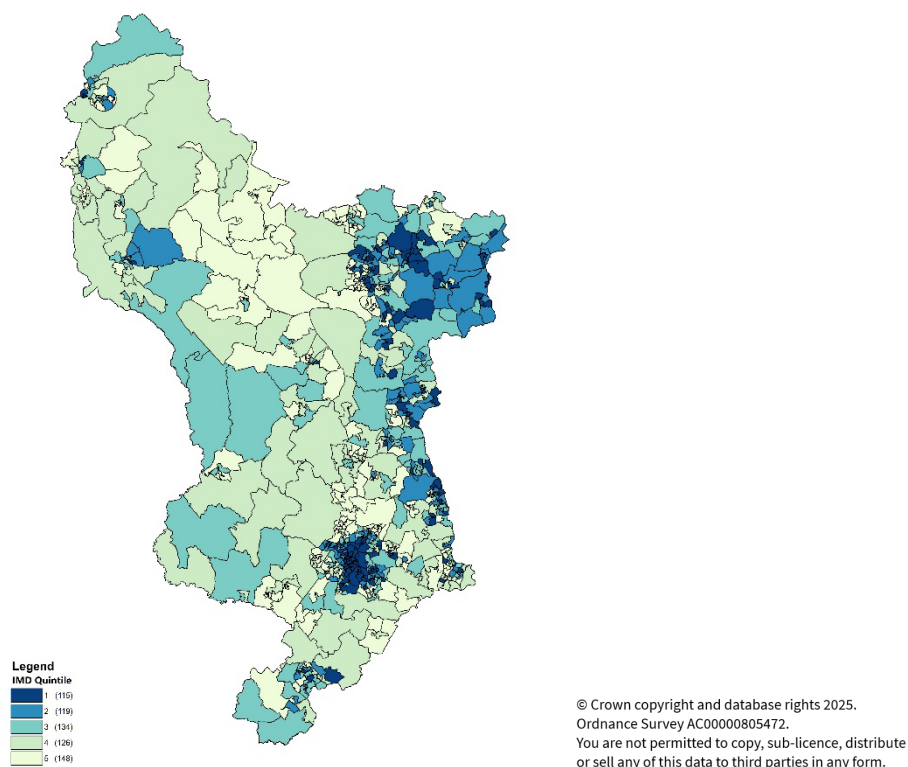
While most residents (75.2%) live in urban areas, a significant proportion, over 264,000 people, live in rural localities⁵.

Figure 9 - 2021 Rural Urban Classification of lower super output areas in Derby and Derbyshire



Derbyshire displays clear differences in deprivation, with 18.4%⁶ of people living in the most deprived areas nationally, health and education being particular issues, e.g. parts of Ilkeston in Erewash. The areas of deprivation are predominantly found in the east of the county and within the city. The rural west, though more affluent overall, faces challenges including high housing costs, fuel poverty, and limited access to transport and services.

Figure 10 - Index of Multiple Deprivation by lower super output areas in Derby and Derbyshire



The older age dependency ratio⁷ for Derby and Derbyshire is high, with 34⁸ older adults for every 100 people of working age compared with 30 nationally, meaning a greater proportion of the population rely on working adults to fund and deliver services. The fastest-growing group will be older residents, particularly those aged 85 and over, while the number of children is projected to decline. These changes will place increasing pressure on social care, health services and the local workforce.

Housing affordability varies significantly across the county. High Peak and Derbyshire Dales have the greatest affordability challenges, with Derbyshire Dales the only area above the national ratio at 7.8⁹. By contrast, Bolsover has the lowest ratio (5.3), and major housing developments in North East and South Derbyshire are helping to keep prices more stable and attract younger households.

Skills levels vary widely between areas. Bolsover (12.2%¹⁰) and Derby (7.1%) have higher proportions of adults without qualifications, while Chesterfield (76.2%) and Derbyshire Dales (76.4%) have the highest proportion of residents qualified to Level 3 or above.

Employment levels and economic activity also vary across Derbyshire. Unemployment stands at 3.3%¹¹, below the England average of 4%, but Derby's rate is higher at 5.1%. Economic activity among working-age adults is 79.4%¹², marginally above the national rate (78.8%). However, there are local contrasts: Derbyshire Dales (66.5%) and Derby (74.9%) are below average, while Erewash (85.5%) and Chesterfield (85.1%) are the highest locally.

1.2.3.1 – Economic strengths and industries within Derby and Derbyshire

Derby and Derbyshire's economy reflects its industrial heritage and its growing mix of modern, higher value sectors.

Manufacturing continues to shape Derby and Derbyshire's identity and economic performance employing more than 70,000¹³ people. The sector covers a wide range of specialisms, from aerospace and transport to advanced materials, food production and engineering e.g. advanced transport sector (Rolls-Royce, Toyota and Alstom) and engineering and chemicals (Vaillant and Lubrizol).

Construction is the largest sector by number of businesses, employing more than 20,000¹⁴ across the county. Alongside this, tourism is one of Derbyshire county's most distinctive strengths attracting millions of visitors each year, and accommodation, hospitality and food services provide a large proportion of the employment. The arts, entertainment and recreation sector is expected to see significant growth in economic output in the coming years, building on Derby and Derbyshire's reputation for heritage, creativity and environmental tourism, and will play an increasing role in the wider East Midlands cultural economy.

Derbyshire's minerals industry remains of national importance, and energy generation and clean technology are also growing priorities. The East Midlands Investment Zone includes two Derbyshire sites, Hartington and Infinity Park, focusing on advanced rail manufacturing and clean energy.

1.2.3.2 – Key statistics across Derby and Derbyshire's districts, boroughs and the city

Each district, borough and Derby City has its own profile, shaped by differences in population, age, economy, housing and levels of deprivation. The statistics below, e.g. GVA (Gross Value Added), dependency ratios etc. show Derbyshire as a county of contrasts. This variation is central to understanding the people and places of Derbyshire and how different local authorities must respond to local differences while delivering fairness and consistency across the whole county.

Table 3 - Socio-economic indicators (part 1)

Local Authority	Population ¹⁵	Growth 2022-2047 (%) ¹⁶	Area (Hectares) ¹⁷	Density (People/Ha) ¹⁸	Median Age ¹⁹	All Age Dependency Ratio ²⁰	GVA (£m) ²¹
Amber Valley	130,451	14.0	26,544	4.9	45.9	65.4	3,456
Bolsover	83,773	17.8	16,033	5.2	43.1	60.4	2,481
Chesterfield	106,045	7.4	6,604	16.1	44.5	63.8	3,074
Derby (City)	274,149	6.4	7,803	35.1	37.4	56.9	9,226
Derbyshire Dales	71,757	11.2	79,242	0.9	53.2	76.7	1,953
Erewash	114,253	4.4	10,963	10.4	43.5	61.3	2,084
High Peak	91,959	10.4	53,914	1.7	46.9	65.1	1,796
North East Derbyshire	106,646	16.4	27,562	3.9	46.6	70.6	1,745
South Derbyshire	117,493	37.8	33,813	3.5	41.6	59.8	3,112

Table 4 - Socio-economic indicators (part 2)

Local Authority	% in Most Deprived 20% ²²	% Children in Low-Income Families ²³	% Dwellings Band D+ ²⁴	% Population in Rural Areas ²⁵
Amber Valley	10.3	21.3	23.2	26.5
Bolsover	21.6	27.9	11.9	50.1
Chesterfield	29.3	25.6	13.7	0.0
Derby (City)	36.2	31.7	14.7	0.0
Derbyshire Dales	2.3	14.8	46.9	78.0
Erewash	14.4	20.9	16.9	15.8
High Peak	6.2	18.0	28.0	33.1
North East Derbyshire	9.7	21.0	23.6	35.8
South Derbyshire	5.3	17.6	34.4	43.6

The district profiles highlight the very different pressures and opportunities facing different parts of Derbyshire:



Population growth is uneven. South Derbyshire is projected to grow rapidly by 37.8% to 2047, while Derby will see just 6.4% growth and Erewash only 4.4%. This uneven growth creates very different pressures on housing, infrastructure and services.



Age and dependency vary widely. Derbyshire Dales has the oldest median age at 53.2 and the highest all age dependency ratio at 76.7. Derby, by contrast, has the youngest median age at 37.4 and the lowest all age dependency ratio (non-working age adults relative to working age adults).



Economic output is concentrated. Derby produces £9.2bn in GVA, more than double any other local authority. The next highest is Amber Valley at £3.5bn. By contrast, North East Derbyshire has the lowest GVA at £1.7bn.



Deprivation and child poverty are not evenly spread. Chesterfield, Bolsover and Derby have the highest deprivation and child poverty levels, while Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire report much lower levels.



Housing wealth is skewed. Higher tax-banded properties are most common in Derbyshire Dales (46.9% in Band D or above), while Bolsover has the fewest (11.9%).



Urban and rural differences are stark. Derby and Chesterfield are entirely urban, whereas Derbyshire Dales is mostly rural. Bolsover and South Derbyshire also have significant rural populations, while Erewash is largely urban.

1.2.4 – Public Sector Partnerships within Derby and Derbyshire

Partnership working is central to service delivery in Derby and Derbyshire. Councils work with health bodies, schools, police, fire, voluntary groups, and businesses to improve outcomes for residents. These partnerships bring together statutory duties, shared priorities, and joint investment, helping services connect better and respond more directly to local needs.

Across the county, more than 140 partnerships operate across children's services, adult care, health, place, community safety, and economic development.

Children's services in Derbyshire are supported by a strong set of statutory and strategic partnerships spanning the County Council, Derby City Council, and the eight district and borough councils. Core partnerships include the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Improvement and Assurance Board, and the Early Years Strategic Board, each linking the County and City Councils with NHS and education partners. These partnerships provide the foundations for protecting children, supporting families, and ensuring consistent standards across Derbyshire.

Derbyshire's adult care partnerships coordinate protection, commissioning, and integrated support across councils, health, and emergency services. Specialist groups such as the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Delivery Board and MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) focus on complex needs and public protection, and Derbyshire engages in regional ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) networks to align commissioning, workforce, and reform activity with neighbouring authorities.

The Health and Wellbeing Board sets system priorities through the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment), supported by eight District and Borough Health and Wellbeing Partnerships that target local needs and wider determinants of health. Joined Up Care Derbyshire unites councils, the ICB (Integrated Care Board), NHS providers, and the voluntary sector to coordinate health and care delivery, while cross-cutting groups such as the Derby and Derby Road Safety Partnership and the Derbyshire Resilience Partnership bring agencies together on prevention, safety, and emergency planning.

Derbyshire's economic partnerships link the County and City councils, district and borough councils, business leaders, education providers, and regional bodies, with members shaping transport, housing, skills, and net zero priorities. Local growth partnerships such as the Chesterfield Skills and Employment Partnership and Town Deal Boards in Clay Cross and Long Eaton link councils, colleges, and employers to align training with business needs. Strategic schemes like Markham Vale and the South Derbyshire Growth Zone drive large-scale regeneration/change, while networks such as Business Peak District and the Minerals and Aggregates MOU support sustainable industry. Councils also collaborate on transport and infrastructure through the Enhanced Partnership Board and EMCCA workstreams. Economic partnerships give Derbyshire the capacity to deliver growth, regeneration, and skills opportunities.

Together, these partnerships highlight the scale of collaboration that already exists between County, City, and district/borough councils and their partners. They show how Derbyshire has built a culture of joint working that strengthens community safety, supports vulnerable residents, and prepares the county for future challenges. Further detail of partnerships and their importance in LGR can be found in Appendix A (Section B).

1.3 Case for Change

1.3.1 – Why Derby and Derbyshire

Local government reorganisation provides a unique opportunity for the Derby and Derbyshire area. By moving to a larger unitary structure, the county can achieve the scale and capacity needed to manage financial pressures, deliver high-quality public services, respond to local needs, and act as strong partners within the East Midlands Combined County Authority.

Both Derby and Derbyshire have a strong and recognisable identity. The landscape, history and people make it one of the most distinctive county areas in England. But there is room for improvement within the area's local government structure.

At present, our story is told through multiple different councils, each with its own boundaries, priorities and ways of working. This limits the area's ability to act as one; to plan strategically, to promote itself nationally, and to invest in the right things for residents and businesses. LGR provides a chance to change that.

Implementing a single local government structure for the area would allow for:

- **Stronger local identity** by allowing Derby and Derbyshire to speak with a more unified voice on the national stage
- **Balanced growth** by linking Derby, Chesterfield and the 27 market towns more closely to rural communities and other areas in the East Midlands
- **Joined-up investment** by aligning transport, housing, skills and business planning to the county's geography
- **Protected local character** by using local area committees and partnerships to keep decision-making close to communities while ensuring consistency in services and standards.

Moving away from a two-tier system would help Derbyshire celebrate what makes it unique while tackling the issues that hold it back, from uneven economic growth to unequal access to services.

1.3.2 – Case for change in service delivery

Local government in Derby and Derbyshire is currently delivered through a complex mix of county, district, borough, and city structures. Derbyshire County Council is responsible for strategic, countywide services such as education, highways, adult and children's social care, and waste disposal within the county. Eight district and borough councils deliver local services including housing, planning, environmental health, and waste collection within the county. Alongside these, Derby City Council operates as a standalone unitary authority, providing the full range of both upper- and lower-tier services within its boundary.

LGR provides an opportunity to simplify how services work together. Through establishing a single local government structure for the area, Derby and Derbyshire could move from the current two-tier system to a clearer and more joined-up structure, where residents deal with one organisation for local services, like residents do in Derby City currently.

This would bring greater accountability, reduce duplication, and make it easier to plan and deliver services that meet needs in modern society. It also creates an obligation to join up housing, health

and care more effectively, while keeping local voice and identity strong through active councillors, town and parish councils, and new forms of community governance.

1.3.2.1 – Case for change: Challenges in the current system

The current two-tier system causes inefficiencies and risks for both residents and councils, mainly because tasks are often repeated and responsibilities are spread across different councils in ways that don't always fit together well or make sense to local people.



Confusion for residents

- Residents face multiple websites, phone lines, and access points depending on whether a service is delivered by the county, a district/borough, or the city.
- Residents consistently tell us that the system “doesn’t make sense,” with many unsure whether to approach their district council or the county council for issues like housing support, waste, or social care.
- This complexity risks holding services to account, as residents are often unclear who to contact regarding service quality and often feel like they just get passed around with no-one taking responsibility for their issue.
- People who live, work or study in and around Derby City often cross council boundaries daily. They experience different service standards and points of contact between the city and county, which add to the sense of confusion.



Duplication of roles and effort

- Each of the ten councils, including Derby City, maintain separate management teams, back-office support etc. They share some services and functions, but this is piecemeal. This creates unnecessary overheads and reduces resources that could otherwise be directed to frontline (resident-facing) services.
- Procurement, HR, finance, and IT functions are all repeated across councils, limiting the benefits of scale and buying power.
- In areas such as planning, both the county (minerals and waste) and districts (local planning) hold responsibilities, requiring a joint approach but often causing delays and inefficiencies.



Fragmentation of services

- Services that are closely linked are often delivered by different councils. For example, in Derbyshire County:
 - Housing and homelessness support (district-led) is split from adult social care (county-led), even though the same households may need both services.
 - Waste collection (district-led) and waste disposal (county-led) operate under different authorities, which can result in duplication of contracts, misaligned investments, and inconsistent policies across the county.

- These separations create additional complications for staff, who must navigate across different council arrangements, and for residents, who face inconsistent service experiences depending on where they live.
- Similar divides exist between the city and county in areas like delivering social care and public health services, where NHS services and other community partners cover bigger populations over wider geographies, creating unnecessary complexity for making decisions on service provision.



Cost pressures and inefficiency

- Running ten councils with separate structures is wasteful. The costs of senior management, estates, assets, and IT are multiplied across organisations.
- Different councils run separate contracts for similar services, most notably Derby City and the County Council, missing opportunities for joint purchasing power and shared resources.
- Separate systems across councils duplicate software, staff training, and licensing costs while preventing integrated planning and efficient data use.



Risks to service quality and resilience

- Smaller councils often struggle to recruit and retain specialist staff, leading to reliance on temporary or external resources and driving up costs.
- In Adult Social Care alone, different pay scales and job grading between Derbyshire County and Derby City risk staff migration between authorities, creating instability and increasing recruitment costs.
- Fragmented IT systems and data storage limit ability to share information across services, which reduces the insight available to improve outcomes.
- Partnerships with health, police, and the voluntary sector are harder to coordinate, as organisations must engage with multiple councils across different geographies - a challenge repeatedly raised by NHS, EMCCA, and city-based partners.



Inconsistent policies and standards

- The districts and boroughs, and city council apply different policies on licensing, planning, and housing, leading to uneven provision across the county for residents and businesses.
- Residents in neighbouring districts often receive different levels of service or face different charges for similar services, creating perceptions of unfairness and inequality.
- Residents tell us through our consultation that they are often frustrated at the lack of consistency in how services are delivered across Derbyshire.

1.3.2.2 – Case for change: Opportunities provided by LGR through service aggregation

Aggregation (joining-up) of services offers Derbyshire a chance to bring together functions currently divided between county, district, borough, and city councils into a larger unitary structure.

The process of local government reorganisation, with the platform of a unitary authority(s), creates the opportunity for delivering consistency, strengthening local delivery, and providing better value for money across every part of the county.

It also gives Derby and Derbyshire a shared platform to plan services that reflect how people actually live, work and travel across the city-county boundary. The potential opportunities on a service-by-service basis are outlined below.



Housing and homelessness

- Housing and homelessness services are currently divided between district councils, which lead on housing strategy, prevention and adaptations, and the county/city councils, which lead on adult social care and public health. LGR offers the chance to bring these responsibilities together within a joined-up housing and wellbeing system. This would allow Derbyshire to plan and deliver homes, health and care in a more coordinated way, applying consistent standards and investing where it is needed most.
- This would:
 - ✔ Create a single pathway linking housing, health and care, helping people move from hospital to home more quickly and live independently for longer.
 - ✔ Bring together funds for housing investment, supporting coordinated development across towns, villages and rural areas.
 - ✔ Strengthen homelessness prevention by building on existing joint work, such as the Derbyshire Homelessness Officers Group, within one accountable structure for prevention and support. This would allow Derby City's learning on rapid rehousing and prevention partnerships to be applied across the county, improving consistency and impact.



Waste and environmental services

- Waste and environmental services are currently separated between councils, with districts responsible for collection and the county managing disposal. This separation leads to different contracts, varied recycling approaches and duplicated costs. LGR allows the whole waste system to be brought together, creating a collective approach to managing resources and protecting the environment.
- This would:
 - ✔ Enable countywide contracts for waste and recycling, delivering better value through joint procurement and shared assets. In practice, Derby City already shares landfill and recycling infrastructure with parts of the county, showing how LGR could reduce duplication and costs.

- ✔ Simplify fleets, depots and logistics, and provide consistent recycling targets, communications and education across Derbyshire.
- ✔ Support the move to a greener, low-carbon model by linking recycling and reuse with wider environmental priorities and a circular economy.
- ✔ Make full use of existing assets such as Clover Nook and the household waste recycling centres, which already serve overlapping populations and could be managed more efficiently as part of one coordinated system.



Planning and economic development

- At present, within Derbyshire County, districts are the Local Planning Authority and manage local planning, while the county oversees transport, minerals, and strategic development. This separation creates gaps between where homes are built, where jobs are located, and how people travel. Bringing these functions together with larger planning and growth framework(s), would allow Derbyshire to plan together.
- This would:
 - ✔ Join up planning, transport, and infrastructure within local plans, aligning housing growth with employment land and transport investment.
 - ✔ Strengthen delivery against the EMCCA Spatial Vision and Growth Corridors, ensuring major sites such as Markham Vale, Infinity Park, and the South Derbyshire Growth Zone are planned as part of a larger investment strategy.
 - ✔ Allow more effective collaboration with EMCCA on joint commissions (for instance, large transport projects or skills programmes), something multiple smaller councils would struggle to do.
 - ✔ Create a stronger economic story for Derbyshire, giving Derby and Derbyshire a clear and consistent voice when working with Government, investors, and regional partners.



Commercial Strategy and Procurement

- LGR offers the opportunity to bring all commercial, procurement and commissioning activity together within larger strategic framework(s). At present, councils across Derbyshire manage their own supplier contracts and commissioning approaches, leading to variation in cost, contract terms and quality standards. A larger commercial function would provide the scale and leverage needed to strengthen supplier relationships, and secure better long-term value for money.
- This would:
 - ✔ Create a single approach to managing major contracts, such as highways, waste, and facilities management, many of which have separate city and county contracts, allowing reviews of existing arrangements to improve value, consistency, and performance.

- ✓ Establish one commissioning and procurement framework for all local services, replacing multiple systems with a consistent set of standards that promotes transparency, social value, and environmental responsibility.
- ✓ Combine the purchasing power of all councils within the structure to secure more competitive prices, support local suppliers, and embed fair employment and sustainability principles throughout supply chains.



Public health and community wellbeing

- LGR provides the chance to embed public health principles into every local service, rather than keeping them separate within a county function. Bringing these responsibilities together would enable a more coordinated approach to improving health and wellbeing across Derbyshire. This scale of aggregation could ensure that every part of Derbyshire benefits from consistent standards, coordinated action, and a shared commitment to improving population health.
- LGR could enable the resultant council or councils to:
 - ✓ Develop wellbeing strategies that connect housing quality, air quality, green spaces, and leisure services, creating healthier places to live.
 - ✓ Apply consistent environmental health and licensing standards, replacing separate systems for residents and businesses.
 - ✓ Use shared data to target prevention more effectively in areas with the greatest need, such as Chesterfield, Bolsover, and Erewash, tackling the root causes of health inequality.



Leisure, culture, and community services

- LGR would bring Derbyshire's cultural assets, libraries, museums, theatres, and sports facilities, under coordinated framework(s). Managing these services together allows culture, heritage, and leisure to be planned to support both local communities and the wider visitor economy.
- This would:
 - ✓ Connect flagship destinations with local museums, libraries, and leisure centres.
 - ✓ Enable shared branding, marketing, and joint ticketing, increasing visitor numbers, attracting external investment, and generating additional income for reinvestment in local facilities, and promoting Derby and Derbyshire together as a visitor destination.



Revenues, benefits, and customer contact

- Currently, each district runs its own revenues and benefits system. LGR would bring these together into one or two unified customer platforms, creating a single point of contact for residents and a more efficient way to manage financial transactions.

- The opportunity is to:
 - ✔ Create consolidated council tax and benefits systems, removing duplication and simplifying administration.
 - ✔ Establish a customer relationship management (CRM) system and contact centre, ensuring residents receive simple, consistent and accessible support online, by phone, and in person.
 - ✔ Apply data analytics to anticipate demand and target support, using the learning from Derby City's digital transformation to deliver proactive and personalised services.



Regulatory and public protection services

- LGR would bring trading standards, licensing, and environmental health together under one governance structure. This would create a simpler, more coordinated approach to both regulation and enforcement.
- This would:
 - ✔ Simplify enforcement by removing duplication and ensuring clearer responsibilities and faster responses.
 - ✔ Strengthen regulation and support businesses through a single point of contact, reducing confusion and improving compliance.



Education, skills, and children's support

- LGR would allow for greater education, skills, and children's social care planning, alongside economic growth and spatial development. Bringing these functions together would make it possible to design a simpler system that supports young people from early years through to employment.
- It would:
 - ✔ Align school place planning with housing growth, ensuring that new developments are matched with the right education provision and that rural and urban areas both benefit from long-term planning.
 - ✔ Build on Derby City's "outstanding" Ofsted performance, embedding best practice and consistent standards across Derbyshire.

2. Our approach for testing and assessing LGR Options for Derby and Derbyshire

2.1 The options available and our approach to assessing them

The following section sets out the options for LGR in Derby and Derbyshire. These options were developed and guided by Government criteria, informed by local circumstances and reflect resident/stakeholder engagement.

While many potential LGR configurations were discussed, only four options are considered viable to take forward for full assessment. Each reflects different balances of scale, identity, and deliverability across Derbyshire.

The appraisal that follows assesses their relative strengths and weaknesses in meeting the Government's six criteria for LGR, alongside laying out the financial implications of each option for Derbyshire, and how the options maximise and/or optimise the case-for-change benefits outlined in the previous section of this proposal.

The key considerations that went into developing a shortlist of options was as follows:

Government guidance:

- Drawing on the statutory invitation - applied to local circumstances.
- Sifting criteria: Options were assessed against a core set of principles, including:
- Meeting Government expectations on population size (500,000 minimum).
- Ensuring balanced councils of broadly similar scale.
- Considering the interests and impacts on community identity.
- Reflecting the geography of partner organisations such as the NHS and police.

Local views:

- Reflecting that councils within the Derby and Derbyshire area had expressed views on their potential preferred options for LGR and it was important that those options were also considered.

Government feedback:

- Following the interim proposal submission, the Government confirmed that proposals must cover both Derby and Derbyshire in their entirety, not partial geographies.

Public and Key Stakeholder and Engagement:

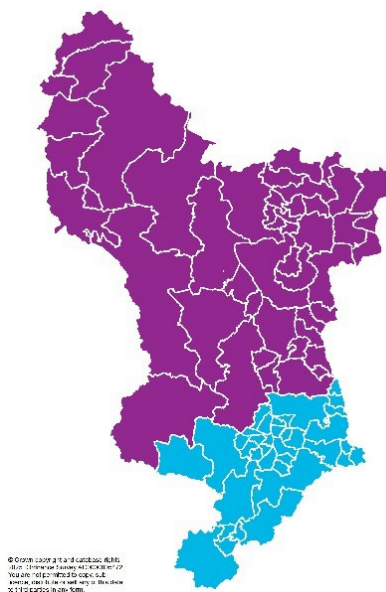
- Reflecting this feedback to understand views on options and priorities for change.

These factors ultimately shortlisted four options, two district-boundary variants (Amber Valley in the North or South), with one adjusted-boundary variant to meet the population benchmark and balance more closely, and a single unitary model for Derby and Derbyshire.

2.1.1 – The four proposed options for testing and assessing

Option A - Two Unitary Authorities with Amber Valley in the North

Figure 11 - Visualisation of Option A within Derbyshire



In this option, Derbyshire would be reorganised into two new unitary councils, with Amber Valley forming part of the northern authority. The northern council would consist of High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire, and Amber Valley. The southern council would be made up of Derby City, South Derbyshire, and Erewash.

Table 5 - Option A Socio-economic indicators

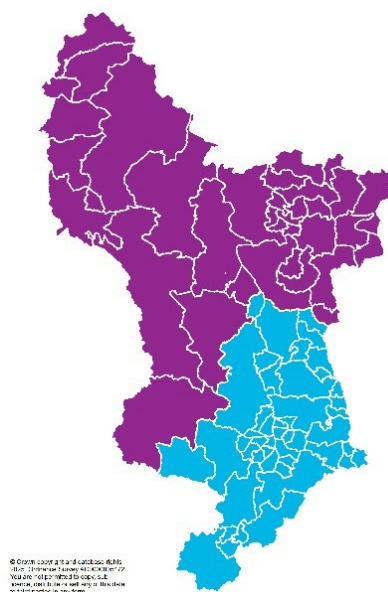
Option A	Northern Derbyshire	Southern Derbyshire
Population	591k ²⁶	506k
GVA (Gross Value Added)	£13.7bn ²⁷	£13.1bn
Tax base (%) [*]	77.5% ²⁸	75.8%
Projected change in population aged 0 – 15 2022-2047	-5.8% ²⁹	-9.6%
Projected change in population aged 65+ 2022-2047	33.6% ³⁰	39.8%

* calculated using % of working age (aged 16-64) population that is economically active

This option produces a larger and more rural northern council and a smaller but more urbanised southern council. The north would inherit responsibility for large swathes of rural Derbyshire, and the former coalfield areas, alongside Chesterfield as a key urban centre. The south would be more compact but centred on Derby City and the surrounding growth corridors. This layout supports a balance between rural and urban priorities, but the difference in population and financial profiles between the two councils would be a notable feature of this option.

Option B - Two Unitary Authorities with Amber Valley in the South

Figure 12 - Visualisation of Option B within Derbyshire



In this configuration, Derbyshire would again be reorganised into two unitary councils, but Amber Valley would form part of the southern authority. The northern council would consist of High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, Chesterfield, Bolsover, and North East Derbyshire. The southern council would include Derby City, South Derbyshire, Erewash, and Amber Valley.

Table 6 - Option B Socio-economic indicators

Option B	Northern Derbyshire	Southern Derbyshire
Population	460k	636k
GVA	£10.6bn	£16.3bn
Tax base (%) *	77.2 %	76.3 %
Projected change in population aged 0 – 15 2022-2047	-5.7%	-8.9%
Projected change in population aged 65+ 2022-2047	33.2%	38.6%

* calculated using % of working age population that is economically active

This option creates a smaller northern authority with a smaller population base and a much larger southern authority centred on Derby City. The north would remain heavily rural, stretching from the High Peak down to the former industrial towns of Bolsover and Chesterfield. The south would combine the major urban centre of Derby with the commuter towns of Erewash, the growth area of South Derbyshire, and the market towns of Amber Valley. This arrangement may strengthen the economic weight of the southern authority, but it leaves the north below the Government's population benchmark of 500,000 and potentially less resilient in the long-term and less able to withstand financial shocks.

Option C - Two Unitary Authorities with Adjusted Boundaries

Figure 13 - Visualisation of Option C within Derbyshire



The third option retains a two-unitary structure but redraws boundaries across Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales to create a more balanced distribution of population between the two authorities. An indicative line has been built up from parish boundaries to illustrate where a boundary could potentially go. The intention is to overcome the imbalances seen in Options A and B by equalising population size and creating two broadly similar councils.

Table 7 - Option C Socio-economic indicators

Option C	Northern Derbyshire	Southern Derbyshire
Population	548k	548k
GVA	£12.7bn	£14.1bn
Tax base (%) *	77.3 %	76.0 %
Projected change in population aged 0 – 15 2022-2047	-5.7%	-9.4%
Projected change in population aged 65+ 2022-2047	33.5%	39.3%

* calculated using % of working age population that is economically active

By producing two councils of almost equal size, this option strengthens the long-term resilience of both. Each authority would have a comparable population, tax base, and economic strength, giving them similar capacity to deliver services, manage financial pressures, and represent their residents effectively within EMCCA. The Northern Council would still reflect the geography of the Peak District and market towns, while the Southern Council would remain centred around Derby City and its commuter hinterland, but the adjustment would remove the sharp differences seen in the previous two options.

The trade-off is that this option departs from existing district boundaries, which would complicate delivery and add short-term complexity through transition, which Government has actively discouraged. However, it directly addresses concerns about uneven population size and creates a more balanced governance model for the future.

Option D - One Unitary Authority uniting all of Derbyshire

Figure 14 - Visualisation of Option D within Derbyshire



In this configuration, all ten existing councils, Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, and the eight district and borough councils, would be combined into a single unitary authority responsible for the whole county. This would create a single council covering a population of just under 1.1 million people.

Table 8 - Option D Socio-economic indicators

Option D	Whole Derbyshire
Population	1.1m
GVA	£26.9
Tax base (%) *	76.7 %
Projected change in population aged 0 – 15 2022-2047	-7.7%
Projected change in population aged 65+ 2022-2047	36.1%

* calculated using % of working age population that is economically active

This option removes the separation of responsibilities between county, district, borough, and city councils, replacing them with one council delivering all services across the current Derby and Derbyshire area. It eliminates the need to disaggregate (divide) county services, which is unavoidable in all two-unitary options. The geography of the authority would encompass parts of the Peak District and all rural dales, former coalfield and market towns, Derby City as the urban and economic hub, and the fast-growing areas of South Derbyshire. The option would provide a single voice for Derbyshire in regional and national decision-making.

2.1.2 – Outline of approach to the appraisal

The testing and assessment of options for Derby and Derbyshire has been carried out in a structured and transparent way, drawing on both national guidance and local circumstances.

The process has been designed to provide Government, councils, and local stakeholders with a clear understanding of the relative advantages of each model.

A comprehensive series of evidence-led data analysis has been undertaken, to enable the assessment of options against the Government criteria with no assumed outcome.

This analysis was undertaken through a mix of skills, knowledge and experience, both internally and from credible and independent external specialists and professionals, to ensure that options could be considered from a variety of viewpoints.

The Government criteria, alongside the sub-criteria, is outlined below:

Table 9 - Government Criteria

Criteria	Sub-criteria
1	
Sensible single tier of local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes a single tier of local government for the whole of the area concerned Sensible economic breakdown: with a tax base which does not create inequalities Sensible geographic breakdown: which will help increase housing supply and meet local needs
2	
‘Right-sized’ local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A population of 500,000 or more (unless specific scenarios make this unreasonable) Supports efficiencies and value for money for council taxpayers Improves capacity and supports the council to withstand financial shocks Manageable transition costs
3	
High quality, sustainable services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves local government & service delivery, avoiding unnecessary service fragmentation Opportunity for public service reform including where this will lead to improved value for money Improves delivery of, or mitigates risks to negative impact on, crucial services

4	Meets local needs	Meets local needs and is informed by local views
		Improves / migrates risk to issues of local identity, cultural and historic importance
		Addresses local concerns
5	Supports devolution arrangements'	Helps to support devolution arrangements / unlock devolution
		Sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority
6	Local engagement and empowerment	Enables stronger community engagement
		Delivers genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment

The evidence base for the appraisal has been broad and robust. It draws on:

- **Socio-economic analysis**, including population size, distribution, and projected growth, with particular attention to urban–rural differences, along with GVA, employment sectors, housing growth, and deprivation profiles.
- **Financial analysis**, covering transition costs, indicative savings, and longer-term budget resilience.
- **Public and Stakeholder engagement**, incorporating the views of residents, voluntary and community sector organisations, businesses, and public sector partners gathered through surveys, and stakeholder discussions.
- **Workforce engagement**, incorporating the views of service delivery lead experts to understand the opportunities and challenges with the practical application on each option and their merits.

This combined approach will ensure that the appraisal both measures financial sustainability and takes full account of the identity of local places, the needs of Derbyshire's communities, the future role of local councils within the East Midlands Combined County Authority, and the priorities of the Mayor of the East Midlands (which can be found in Appendix A (Section C).

2.2 Financial Analysis

2.2.1 – The objectives of Financial Analysis

Financial analysis of LGR informs the options appraisal and assesses the costs, savings, and overall financial resilience of the potential options for LGR in Derbyshire. It sets out how each option performs over time and the scale of financial opportunity available.

2.2.2 – High-level financial comparison of the unitary options

The financial analysis has involved analysing three various scenarios, reflecting different levels of ambition for change:

- **Reorganisation Only** - this scenario captures the direct efficiencies achieved through structural change alone. It reflects savings from consolidating management, governance, and back-office functions, reducing duplication, and removing the costs of operating multiple organisations.
- **Reorganisation and Transformation (Base Case)** - this scenario assumes that, in addition to the structural efficiencies achieved through reorganisation, further savings will arise from moderate service redesign, process standardisation, and digital modernisation across the new council or councils.
- **Reorganisation and Transformation (Stretch Case)** - this scenario models the higher-end potential of transformation over time. It assumes that the new council or councils will effectively use their scale, unified systems, and capacity to integrate services more deeply, modernise delivery models, and achieve larger and longer-term efficiencies through whole-system reform and innovation.

Reorganisation Only is the more conservative scenario, in respect of likely financial benefits and the analysis in this proposal has focussed on assessing the likely costs and benefits of all four options in a “Reorganisation Only” scenario. Cumulatively the financial analysis demonstrates how financial performance could evolve as the new council or councils mature, testing affordability, resilience, and the capacity to invest in future transformation.

2.2.2.1 – Reorganisation financial comparison

Table 10 - Reorganisation financial comparison

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
Net financial impact after 6 years £000's (after year 0)	£ 43,612	£ 32,373	£ 37,675	£ 143,903
Time period required for costs to be 'paid back' - years	4.3	4.6	4.5	2.6
Steady state annual net savings £000's (2031/32 onwards)	£ 25,303	£ 23,430	£ 24,729	£ 45,089

Option D is preferable for the following key reasons:

- **There are greater opportunities for financial savings:** One council means greater opportunities for consolidation.

- **There are no disaggregation (splitting-up) costs:** Services are brought together rather than split up, which means disaggregation costs are avoided.
- **The payback period is shorter:** One council can make cashable savings earlier than in other models.

By bringing Derby and Derbyshire into a single unitary authority, the Council is put in the best financial position and would be able to run most efficiently.

2.2.3 - Balance sheet analysis

Analysis of the financial sustainability of the future authorities has centred around current levels of reserves, assets and liabilities, and particularly the ability to afford the transition costs of LGR. Analysis was based on 2023/24 numbers, uplifted by inflation.

Table 11 - The consolidated reserves positions for each of the potential authorities

	Option A		Option B		Option C		Option D
	North	South	North	South	North	South	One Unitary
General Fund Reserves (£000's)	£45,020	£50,048	£30,635	£64,433	£40,463	£54,605	£95,068
LGR one-off transition costs (£000's)	£50,149		£50,149		£52,637		£47,726

Our findings are that the current reserves position is sufficient to meet transition costs in a reorganisation scenario, assuming that none of the existing councils plan to run down reserves before reorganisation. There are also potential risks regarding unexpected shocks, or changes resulting from the Fair Funding Review that cannot be accounted for presently. However, in summary, the current reserves position provides adequate room to be able to afford reorganisation.

2.2.4 – Conclusion of Financial Analysis

Overall, the case for the One Unitary option is clear from our analysis of benefits and costs. One council provides the greatest opportunities for consolidation, achieving economies of scale and realising efficiencies. This therefore improves the financial sustainability and ability to withstand financial shocks across local government in Derbyshire. Further detail regarding the financial analysis and how we arrived at figures and conclusions can be found in Appendix B.

Details around council tax harmonisation under LGR in Derbyshire, modelling the potential pathways for aligning council tax rates across authorities, can be found in Appendix B.

2.3 Resident and Stakeholder Engagement

2.3.1 – Our approach to engagement

Our LGR engagement programme combined two strands: a public survey and targeted stakeholder engagement. Its purpose was to gather views on new unitary models, focusing on residents' priorities, local identity, and the implications for service delivery and partnership working.

All feedback was analysed to provide an evidence base for Derbyshire's final proposal and inform the options appraisal, ensuring it reflected both community sentiment and the perspectives of key institutions affected by LGR. It's important to note that the one council option was not a part of this engagement at the time, but the feedback from residents and stakeholders was still able to be applied to assess the four options against their needs.

2.3.2 – Summary of resident engagement

The engagement findings show residents want a simpler, more efficient local government system but also a council that is fair, inclusive, and rooted in local identity. Residents want the benefits of scale, which are financial strength, consistency, and joined-up services, while retaining local access and representation.

They are open to changing council structures if it means clearer accountability, better value for money, and improved outcomes.

Summary:

- The priorities for LGR should focus on delivering high-quality services, being efficient, and providing value for money.
- Many expressed frustration with the current two-tier system and welcomed the idea of a single council responsible for all services.
- Residents value being close to how decisions are made and for local services to be visible. They stated the need to maintain strong community presence through local offices, service hubs, and area committees.
- The role of parish and town councils was highlighted as important in maintaining local identity. Many residents were interested in a future system that supports these councils and local community groups to play a stronger role in shaping services at neighbourhood level, alongside how the new Council operates.
- There was also public concern at the risk of LGR dividing communities and weakening local identity. Many respondents said they valued a 'One Derbyshire' identity and were proud of the historic county.

There were also concerns raised about:

- A risk that services could become harder to access.
- The potential loss of local accountability to residents if smaller councils were merged.
- The need for transparency and being open about costs and savings.
- Worries about how quickly councils were being asked to change and the ability for councils to manage the transition.

2.3.3 – Summary of stakeholder engagement

Alongside the resident survey, a formal stakeholder engagement process was carried out seeking the views of Derbyshire's most significant partner organisations responsible for delivering or supporting public services across the county, along with businesses. The aim was to test the practicality of different reorganisation options and to see how structural change could best support stronger local partnerships, better service integration, and financial resilience.

Summary:

- Stakeholders generally agreed that Derbyshire's current two-tier system is complex and makes joint working harder than it should be. Partners from health, policing, and business sectors noted that duplication of responsibilities and divided decision-making can slow things down and make things complicated. There was widespread recognition that a simpler structure would improve how organisations work together, especially in areas such as health and social care, economic development, and emergency planning.
- Education and skills providers, including the University of Derby and Chesterfield College, supported simpler decision-making that could deliver a clearer plan for skills, training, and employment. They noted that having multiple councils risks inconsistent local priorities and duplicated partnerships with EMCCA.
- The Police and Fire Services stressed the importance of having similar boundaries with local government, noting that one council would make coordination, information sharing, and resilience planning simpler and more efficient.
- The majority of respondents preferred case-for-change outcomes that matched with Option D, wanting the most practical, functional and sustainable approach option to improve working practices and take decisions together. Partners stressed that maintaining a countywide footprint would protect Derbyshire's identity, reduce complexity, and enable better planning with EMCCA, health, education, and emergency services.
- Stakeholders emphasised that critical services and frontline staff must be protected as new councils are formed. Partners were hopeful that the savings generated from LGR could be reinvested directly into priority areas such as health, education, infrastructure, and community support.
- Stakeholders repeatedly emphasised that geography and leadership will be key to delivering on the wider devolution deal.
- Voluntary and community sector representatives called for closer partnership working and simplified ways to access funding. They believed a single council could provide consistency and strengthen relationships with local communities, and it was important to keep local engagement strong.
- The EMCCA Mayor provided feedback on their priorities for LGR but did not express views on specific options.

Further detail about resident and stakeholder engagement and how the exercise has shaped this proposal can be found in Appendix A (Section D). Alongside this, the full report on resident and stakeholder engagement can be found in Appendix C.

2.4 Options Appraisal

Government has provided Councils with a significant number of criteria (shown above in 2.1.2) which will be used to assess proposals. It is important that the Council devises a method for determining, against the criteria, which option should be preferred. To achieve this, the following methodology has been used for assessing each option proposed.

2.4.1 – Scoring used to assess against criterion

2.4.1.1 – Red, Amber and Green (RAG) rating against criterion

For each option, each of the six government criteria for LGR has been assessed as follows, as a measurement of how well that option meets the criteria:

- **Very High** (dark green) - significantly meets the government criteria and is highly likely to deliver significant benefits.
- **High** (green) – meets the government criteria and is likely to deliver significant benefits.
- **Medium** (amber) – meets the government criteria or may deliver significant benefits.
- **Low** (red) – may not meet the government criteria or weakens the benefits of local government reorganisation.
- **Very Low** (dark red) – does not meet the government criteria or significantly weakens the benefits of local government reorganisation.

These assessments have then been assigned a numerical value based on that assessment measure:

Table 12 - Options Appraisal Assessment and Score

Assessment	Score
Very High	5
High	4
Medium	3
Low	2
Very Low	1

2.4.1.2 - Weighting of scores

Whilst it is important that any successful proposal addresses the government criteria, it is equally critical to understand what assessment criteria should be prioritised. To ensure that the options which meet the most important criteria are sufficiently valued, it is proposed that the most important criteria are weighted. The weighting and justification are as follows:

Criteria 1: Simple structures over a sensible geography

It is critical that the administrative geography/s of any new authorities for the area cover a sensible and substantial geographical area. Our research shows that getting the geography right for any unitary proposal is a critical success factor for any new authority. Administrative reorganisation of local government is a once in a generation event and makes a significant impact in the ability for the new authority/s and their partners to deliver benefits across the rest of the criteria over time. For these reasons it is suggested that this criterion is given a mid-sized weighting.

Criteria 2: Right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

The financial challenges facing local government are well known. Reduced public sector funding, increased inflation, increased demand for services driven by demographics and long-standing social, health and economic pressures mean that councils continue to face significant challenges in providing the services that local people need and want with available resources. Many Councils across the country are already receiving exceptional financial support and over 75% of upper-tier Councils report that they are at risk of bankruptcy by 2027. It is vital any new proposed unitary authorities can maximise efficiencies and cost savings to combat this perilous financial situation, creating new Councils which are financially resilient in the short, medium and long-term. Engagement with key stakeholders identified that saving money and efficient services were the second and fifth most important factors regarding LGR. For these reasons it is suggested that this criterion is given a higher weighting as it is the most critical factor when considering the Council's preferred option.

Criteria 3: Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Delivering high quality and sustainable public services is what a Council is here to do. Through the transition and then into implementation of the new single tier of local government for the area, the Council(s) should maintain and look to improve their offer to local people. This means that everyone benefits from reorganisation, and that this can happen at the earliest opportunity. Reorganisation can bring several councils together to increase expertise, capacity, join best practice, and harmonise the service offer 'up' across the area. It is also critical that the direction of travel for local government reflects that of the wider public sector and is coterminous with our partners to improve delivery and enable further collaboration and reform in the future. But reorganisation can also be a distraction at a time when social care services are already under significant pressure and face rising demand and costs. Providing certainty and minimising disruption for residents is important through any transition period, especially for those who are vulnerable. For these reasons it is suggested that this criterion is also given a higher weighting.

Criteria 4: Meets local needs and is informed by local views

It is important that local key stakeholders have been meaningfully engaged with their priorities regarding the available reorganisation options and can therefore constructively influence the Council's preferred option. Local people and service users will want to understand how different proposals may affect them and will wish to give a view on what option makes most sense. Other key stakeholders are also important, such as other public sector bodies, if proposals impact on their working practices - both strategically and operationally. This criterion is therefore given a mid-sized weight to ensure that local views can influence the assessment of options going forward.

Criteria 5: Support devolution arrangements

The Council has already demonstrated its commitment to the devolution agenda by making rapid progress to successfully create the first Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA). It is important that reorganisation continues to support EMCCA to open new devolution opportunities for the area, strengthening our current deal, widening public sector reform, and streamlining our delivery platform, and therefore leading to better value for money and bringing about greater opportunity for growth and prosperity for the area. However, as the region already has a MCCA and a devolution deal, it does not require LGR to unlock devolution (unlike other areas) and therefore this criterion is weighted lower than others.

Criteria 6: Enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

Making a deliberate and authentic commitment to local decision making across Derbyshire, ensuring that communities and their diverse voices are built into the fabric of any new organisation, is vital to ensure that new unitary councils engage and empower local communities. However, how organisations do this is more influenced by the culture and design and operations of an organisation as opposed to fundamentally concerned or affected by administrative boundaries and size of the authority in question, at this time. Therefore, this criterion is weighted lower than others.

Table 13 - Criteria weighting

Criteria	Weight
Sensible geography	2
Efficiencies and financial resilience	3
High quality local services	3
Meets local needs / views	2
Supports devolution	1
Strong community engagement	1

The score for each of the six criteria will then be multiplied by the weighting factor to give a weighted score. The option with the highest total (weighted) score when all values are added together within an option, is the one that overall, most meets the Governments criteria.

An overall summary of the qualitative appraisal conducted is provided below:

Option A – Amber Valley in the North

Strengths

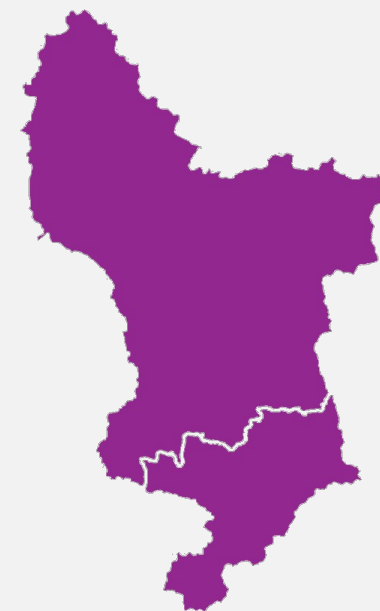


- Brings **all councils across Derbyshire** into two new authorities, each covering a substantial and balanced geography.
- Includes **every district, borough, the county, and the city**, ensuring a full, county-wide reorganisation.
- Meets **Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries, providing viable structures.
- Has **broadly similar GVA** across the two authorities.
- Loosely reflects **some existing operational boundaries and travel-to-work areas**.
- Creates **more parity** in geographic size between the two new authorities, reducing perceptions of dominance.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Delivers **modest efficiencies** through rationalised management and back-office functions.
- Allows for **pooling of resources** and reduction in duplication.
- Produces a **diverse tax base** and a more balanced socio-economic profile across both areas though some variation would remain.
- Could give **Derby greater flexibility** to meet housing demand by accessing a wider land supply in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).

Weaknesses



- The **geography is unfamiliar** to residents and partners and **does not have public support**.
- Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley** do not fit naturally into a simple north-south split.
- Risks **fragmenting existing relationships** and creating **two unsustainable, less resilient authorities**.
- May **dilute Derby City's identity** and reduce its delivery expertise.
- Offers only **modest financial savings** and would be **costly and complex to implement**, with around a 4 year payback period.
- Requires **full disaggregation of county services** and re-aggregation into two new structures.
- Could **reduce flexibility** to meet housing targets in the north.



North Derbyshire Unitary (AV)

Population:	590,631
Electorate:	456,834
Hectares:	209,900
Council size:	92

South Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	505,895
Electorate:	355,211
Hectares:	52,579
Council size:	69

Option B – Amber Valley in the South

Strengths

- **Includes all councils** within the Derbyshire area, ensuring full coverage of the county.
- **Loosely aligns** with some existing operational and service boundaries.
- **Reflects how people travel to work and access services**, with broad functional ties across Derby and South Derbyshire.
- Creates **more parity in geographic size** between the two unitaries, reducing imbalance across the county.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Allows for **pooling of resources** and reduction in duplication.
- Produces a **more balanced socio-economic profile** than the current structure, though some variation would remain.
- Provides **greater flexibility for Derby** in meeting future housing demand, with stronger growth capacity in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).

Weaknesses

- Represents an **unfamiliar geographical split** that lacks public support or recognition.
- **Does not meet Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries.
- **Savings are minimal**, with limited financial return compared to implementation costs with around a 4 year payback period.
- **Requires full disaggregation of county services** and re-aggregation into two new structures.
- **Creates difficult boundaries** for **Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley**, which do not divide cleanly north-south.
- **Risks diluting Derby City's identity** and undermining its delivery expertise.
- Could **lead to two unsustainable, less resilient unitaries**, particularly in the north where resources and tax base are weaker.
- **Reduces flexibility** to meet housing needs in the north, constraining development opportunities.
- Would be **complex and disruptive to implement**, requiring major structural change and service reconfiguration.
- **Does not reflect the functional urban area** shared between Derby and Nottingham, weakening strategic coherence.
- **Transport connectivity challenges** would persist in the southern part of Derbyshire Dales, limiting service access.



North Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	460,180
Electorate:	355,488
Hectares:	183,356
Council size:	72

South Derbyshire Unitary (AV)

Population:	636,346
Electorate:	456,557
Hectares:	79,123
Council size:	89

Option C – Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales split

Strengths



- **Includes all councils** within the Derbyshire area, ensuring full county coverage.
- **Meets Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries, providing viable structures.
- **Loosely reflects** travel-to-work areas.
- Creates **more parity in geographic size** between the two unitaries, reducing imbalance across the county.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Creates a **more balanced socio-economic profile** across both unitaries than the current two-tier system, though with some variation.
- Offers **greater flexibility for Derby** in meeting housing demand through expanded growth opportunities in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).

Weaknesses



- Proposes an **unfamiliar and unpopular geography**, generating significant public opposition.
- Would **deliver minimal financial savings**, offering little value relative to the costs of implementation with around a 4 year payback period.
- **Splitting Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales** would create substantial administrative and operational challenges, requiring a formal boundary review.
- **Service disaggregation** would become more complicated, as current delivery structures and partnerships would be divided across two new authorities with disaggregation required across the County Council but also functions delivered by Amber Valley District Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council.
- Risks **undermining Derby City's identity** and weakening its delivery expertise.
- Would **reduce flexibility** in meeting housing targets in the north, constraining future growth.
- The **transition process would be complex and disruptive**, with significant short-term delivery risk.
- Does **not reflect the functional urban area** shared by Derby and Nottingham, limiting strategic and economic coherence.



North Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	548,302
Electorate:	423,244
Hectares:	181,099
Council size:	85

South Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	548,224
Electorate:	388,801
Hectares:	80,954
Council size:	76

Option D – Single whole county/city unitary

Strengths



- **Includes all councils** across Derbyshire within one authority, covering the entire county and the city.
- **Makes changes to the Derby City border**, creating a single coherent geography for service delivery.
- **Meets Government criteria** for minimum population size, ensuring scale and financial sustainability.
- **Protects the history and identity** of Derbyshire as a single place, uniting urban, market town, and rural communities.
- **Delivers the greatest financial savings** of all options, providing long-term value for money, with a payback period under 3 years.
- **Lowest cost to implement**, with fewer transition risks and less duplication.
- Creates the **broadest socio-economic balance and tax base**, bringing strength, resilience, and flexibility.
- Offers **maximum adaptability** in meeting housing needs, supporting travel-to-work patterns, and improving access to services.
- **Aligns most closely** with existing administrative and public service boundaries across Derbyshire.
- Reflects the county's **varied topography and transport connectivity**, linking urban centres to rural areas.
- **Consolidates democratic representation** with a single, accountable body overseeing all local government spending.
- **Avoids disaggregation of county council functions** and re-aggregation into two new structures.
- Would cause **least disruption to residents** compared with a two-unitary model, maintaining service continuity.



Weaknesses

- Requires **horizontal aggregation** of existing upper-tier services, merging systems and processes across all authorities.
- Covers a **large geography**, requiring a **greater number of elected members** to ensure full representation.
- Could be **perceived as reducing local voices**, with concerns about decision-making feeling more distant from communities.
- Necessitates **changes to EMCCA governance** as there would no longer be 2 constituent councils representing the area.



Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	1,096,526
Electorate:	812,045
Hectares:	262,479
Council size:	112

2.5 Conclusion of Options Appraisal and Financial Analysis

The table below brings together the results of the qualitative assessment of each option, and the financial analysis, against the six Government criteria for LGR.

It provides a high-level comparison of performance, using RAG ratings to indicate the extent to which each option is judged to meet the criteria, along with summarised commentary on strengths and weaknesses of each option. A full appraisal of each LGR option is provided in Appendix D, which provides detailed analysis of each option against each of the Government criteria, showing that minimum requirements are at least met by all.

Table 14 - Assessed and weighted scoring against Government criteria

Criteria	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
1	8	6	4	10
2	9	6	6	15
3	9	9	9	12
4	6	6	4	6
5	3	3	3	4
6	4	4	4	3
Total	39	34	30	50
Rank	2	3	4	1

Our findings show that on our evidence and insight, creating one unitary for the whole county and City area would offer the greatest opportunity to simultaneously deliver financial savings to the whole area whilst reorganising the local government landscape in a way that better meets the needs of Derbyshire residents now and in the future.

One council for Derbyshire, has key benefits including:

Option D (One Unitary Authority) aligns best with the Government's criteria

One council provides the simplest structure over a sensible geography, covering all of Derbyshire's communities while retaining clear accountability and identity. It meets the "right size" test with a population of over one million, giving the capacity and resilience required to deliver high-quality services and withstand future financial shocks.

It also supports the Government's aim of efficient, joined-up public services by aligning with existing footprints for health, police, and education partners. A single council avoids creating divisions across the county, ensuring that local government reform strengthens rather than splits the public sector. A whole county unitary council provides lower levels of disruption/risk for residents and most service users as service fragmentation (break-up) is limited. This option has most alignment with the administrative public service map in Derbyshire and may mean minimum changes to the delivery geography for services in the short term.

Option D delivers the strongest financial case

Based on detailed financial analysis, a one council model is the most favourable financial model for Derbyshire:

- It delivers £20 million more in annual reorganisation savings than any two-unitary model (£45m compared with c.£25m).
- It incurs no disaggregation (break-up) costs, as services are only being brought together rather than split apart, while the two-unitary models face recurring annual disaggregation costs between £8-10 million.
- One council therefore offers the greatest return on investment and the shortest payback period (period in which the costs are offset by savings), with savings realised more quickly and reinvested into services that residents depend on. It would have the lowest transition costs of the four options.
- Is the most financially sustainable option and would be most financially resilient and able to withstand financial shocks.

Option D reflects what residents and partners told us, in principle, they want

Residents favour a simpler system that removes confusion about who does what and gives them a single point of contact. They want services that are efficient, high quality and good value for money - priorities best delivered by one unified council.

Partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors echoed this view. Health, education, police and business leaders stressed the need for one clear voice for Derbyshire - a council with the scale and credibility to work effectively across systems and with the East Midlands Combined County Authority.

Option D offers the safest transition – organisationally and operationally

Beyond finance, the one council model provides the most stable and least risky path to reorganisation. It avoids the need to disaggregate (break-up) complex county-wide services, which would otherwise be divided between multiple new authorities.

By bringing together existing district and borough functions under one leadership, Derbyshire can ensure continuity of service, protect frontline (resident-facing) delivery, and maintain public confidence through transition. One council offers the scale, stability and resilience needed to protect vital services, attract investment, and speak with one voice for the county.

One council is the safest and strongest choice for Derbyshire's future - financially, operationally, and democratically.

3. Our Uniting Derbyshire Proposal

3.1 Vision

What we do in local government matters. It shapes people's lives, underpins local growth, and defines the character of the places we call home. Across Derbyshire, councils deliver essential services that protect, educate, and support more than a million residents every day.

LGR presents the opportunity to build a simpler, more effective system of local government that strengthens our communities and gives Derbyshire the capacity to meet the challenges ahead. But it also carries complexity and risk, and the decision must be grounded in evidence. Our approach, appraisal and proposal does this, with our recommendation being evidence-based, and shaped by what residents, partners and staff have told us.

LGR is not only about structural reform or ensuring safe and legal services on Vesting Day. It is about creating a new model for local government that turns ambition into action, aligns local services with shared priorities, and builds a council capable of delivering better services and outcomes for the long term.

3.1.1 – Long-term vision for Derbyshire

Our priorities for change

Our priorities for Derbyshire's new unitary council have been shaped through wide engagement with residents, local councillors, our staff and partners across the county and city.

We have listened to:

- Cabinet members and councillors who considered Derbyshire's future direction and what strong local leadership should look like
- Residents, businesses and community groups who shared their own experiences of local services and the changes they would like to see
- Public sector partners such as the NHS, police, fire and rescue, education providers, EMCCA and voluntary organisations that described how they want to work more closely with the new council(s)
- Our own workforce who described the challenges with the current system and the possible LGR opportunities for better service delivery if we get this right.

Across all these discussions, the messages were clear and consistent. People want a simple, joined-up council that is easy to deal with, delivers good value for money and keeps services close to the communities they serve.

Our residents told us they want services that are easy to access, with one point of contact and clear accountability, consistent and fair approaches so everyone receives the same quality of service wherever they live.

Our partners said they want to work with a strong, stable organisation that can plan for the long-term, protect essential services and speak with one voice for Derbyshire. They see real benefit in a single council able to bring together health, care, housing and community safety around shared goals.

Our staff said they want to deliver local services through a consistent, coordinated, joined up and effective local government system which is streamlined and efficient and can build on all the different councils' individual strengths.

Comments received during engagement also indicated significant concern about splitting the county into multiple authorities.

This feedback has directly shaped the vision that follows - one built on prosperity, pride and community, and driven by a shared ambition to create One Derbyshire: one council, one voice, one future.

Our Vision for Uniting Derbyshire: One council, One voice, One future

By uniting as a single council, we can make things simpler, cut duplication, and provide value for money, helping to improve everyday life for everyone who lives and works here.

We will do this with openness, honesty and integrity – putting people first and keeping Derbyshire's communities at the heart of everything we do, with every effort to protect and improve resident-facing services.

This is about building a council that people can trust to put local people first, to listen and focus on what really matters to them; safety, health, and the quality of everyday life. That means delivering better roads, safer and cleaner streets, lower running costs and more joined up local services that are easier to use and quicker to respond. It also means having more visible council services in our towns and neighbourhoods, so people feel supported and connected.

We want people to be clear who's responsible for what, and confident that every pound is spent in a way that delivers real value. By working together and with partners, we can improve services for children and families, support people as they age, encourage healthier lifestyles and make sure help is there when it's needed. We will make it easy for residents to contact the right team first time and to see how decisions are made.

We are ambitious for Derbyshire and for the next generation. We will drive prosperity and opportunity for all, which means investing in better jobs, more affordable homes, strong local businesses and good schools. We want our young children to have reasons to stay, build their lives here, and be proud of where they come from.

Derbyshire is rich in history, culture, countryside and potential. Proud of our past and confident in our future, we'll protect what makes our county special while attracting more visitors, supporting small businesses and growing our local economy. At the same time, we'll champion our reputation for innovation and world-class excellence in advanced manufacturing, helping to drive growth and create opportunities across Derbyshire.

Together, as One Derbyshire, we will build a safer, fairer and more prosperous county with better quality of life. Proud of where we live, proud of what we share – One Derbyshire: one council, one voice, one future.

Outcomes from the creation of One Derbyshire



Our People

People in Derbyshire will live well - with better support, better opportunities and brighter futures.

- ✓ Children get the best start
- ✓ Families feel supported
- ✓ Older people to live well in their own homes and communities
- ✓ Services are easier to access, fairer across the county, and shaped around the needs of local people
- ✓ Everyone, whatever their background, can thrive.



Our Place

Derbyshire will be a great place to live, work, visit and invest - with a strong economy, good homes, and protected natural beauty.

- ✓ Towns and neighbourhoods feel well-connected and full of opportunity
- ✓ Good transport, better roads, reliable waste collection, better digital access, more affordable homes and well-maintained parks and green spaces
- ✓ Local businesses grow, can attract new jobs and visitors
- ✓ Make the most of Derbyshire's countryside, heritage, and culture
- ✓ Protect what makes the county special while preparing for the future
- ✓ A hub for innovation and advanced manufacturing, attracting investment and showcasing our strength as a world-class place for business and growth.



Our Council

Derbyshire will have a simpler, stronger council that puts people first and provides better services and better value.

- ✓ A simple more joined-up council that works efficiently
- ✓ Makes better use of public money
- ✓ Services will be easy to find and quicker to respond, with greater presence in local areas
- ✓ People will feel listened to and confident that their council is working in their best interests, focused on what matters and ambitious for the county's future.

3.1.2 – How Uniting Derbyshire will build on existing strengths

Uniting Derbyshire will give us the scale, focus and stability to deliver the things that matter most to local people - better services for families, healthier communities, more jobs and training, and a safer county for everyone.

By bringing all councils together, we will turn the vision of *one council, one voice, one vision* into action. The following shows how one council will deliver for Derbyshire and achieve our vision.

Children and Families

We will put children and families at the heart of Uniting Derbyshire. One council will promote a consistent approach to supporting families through children's social care, education and early help.

We will make Derbyshire a safe and supportive place for every child to grow up. Working with schools, health visitors and community groups, we will focus on early help so that issues are spotted and solved sooner. One council means one clear safeguarding system and stronger links between health, housing and family support, keeping children safe and improving their everyday lives.

Case Study

Derbyshire Children's Partnership

The Derbyshire Children's Partnership is an example of the County bringing together partners including the CCG, Police and Crime Commissioner, 3rd Sector and Youth Council to supporting a series of locality children's partnerships covering: Amber Valley; Erewash; South Derbyshire and South Dales; Chesterfield; North East Derbyshire and Bolsover; High Peak and North Dales; and a 7th County-wide locality partnership focused on provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Why this matters for Derbyshire's vision:

The Derbyshire Children's Partnership demonstrates how joined-up leadership within Derbyshire can enable support for children and families to be more consistent, local, targeted and preventative. By bringing councils together with key actors from the health, police, and the voluntary sector around shared priorities, it tackles issues such as safeguarding, education, and inclusion at the community level. This collaborative approach reflects Derbyshire's wider vision of giving every child the best start in life and ensuring services work together around families.

Uniting Derbyshire's future potential:

The partnerships approach is less likely to be disrupted than alternative options for disaggregation. This model also achieves clearer accountability with a single line of leadership for children's services across the county/city area. This will make planning, commissioning, and early intervention simpler, ensuring that support made available in localities is consistent and well-resourced.

One council offers greater geographical scale and scope for taking a view, with our partners, of the challenges in the Children's policy and service delivery arena and for flexing resources accordingly.

Health and Wellbeing

We will bring health, care and public health together so people receive joined-up support focused on prevention. One council will work hand-in-hand with the NHS, voluntary organisations and community groups to tackle the causes of poor health and reduce inequalities between places.

We will make it easier for people to live well for longer. Services such as housing, leisure, transport, adult social care and public health will work together to help people stay independent in their own homes and connected to their communities. We will invest in healthy neighbourhoods that encourage active lifestyles.

We will focus resources where they make the biggest difference - supporting healthier lifestyles, early intervention, and local wellbeing programmes. One council will make prevention a shared mission across all services, so every resident can live a healthier, safer and more fulfilling life.

Case Study

Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board

The Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board, chaired by the County Council Cabinet Member for Health and Communities, is responsible for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which sets priorities and ensures partners work together to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities across Derbyshire. The Board co-ordinates eight Health and Wellbeing Partnerships at district and borough level, which facilitate the involvement of local partners and communities in the design and delivery to improve local health outcomes.

Why this matters for Derbyshire's vision:

The Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board demonstrates how collective leadership within Derbyshire can improve residents' lives through shared priorities and coordinated action. By linking councils, health bodies, and community partners through the JSNA, it enables a whole-system approach to tackling health inequalities, supporting prevention, and promoting wellbeing in every community. This collaboration embodies Derbyshire's ambition for joined-up services that strengthen resilience and reduce differences in health outcomes.

Uniting Derbyshire's future potential:

Our ambition is that, with a single council, health and wellbeing work will be delivered through one clear framework, aligning public health, housing, social care, leisure and local delivery teams more closely. Skills, insight and data will be shared, streamlining decision-making, simplifying partnership working, and giving communities a stronger voice in shaping health priorities.

One council offers greater geographical scale and scope for approaching challenges in the Health and Wellbeing policy and service delivery arena, and for flexing resources accordingly.

Skills and Opportunity

We will connect education, skills, business support and economic development into one plan for growth. This will make it easier for residents to find training and for employers to find the skills they need. Joined-up planning between schools, colleges and local employers will create clear routes from learning to work.

We will grow Derbyshire's economy through partnerships with the East Midlands Combined County Authority. By linking housing, transport and employment together, we will create the conditions for good jobs and strong local businesses. Young people will see Derbyshire as a place of opportunity, not somewhere they have to leave to succeed.

We will help people of all ages to learn and progress. One council will use its scale to expand adult education and retraining programmes, supporting people into better work and reducing inequality between areas. We will make sure prosperity reaches every community.

Case Study

Chesterfield Skills and Employment Partnership

Chesterfield Skills and Employment Partnership is a partnership that Chesterfield Borough Council leads with the County involved along with East Midlands Chamber, Chesterfield College, University of Derby, Independent Training Provider Representatives, Chesterfield & Bolsover Learning Community Area Head Teachers Forum and EMCCA and the DWP to improve the collaboration of organisations involved in the skills and employment landscape in Chesterfield to improve outcomes for local people.

Why this matters for Derbyshire's vision:

The Chesterfield Skills and Employment Partnership shows how collaboration between education, business, and public services within Derbyshire on a county-wide level can strengthen local opportunity and economic inclusion. By aligning training with employer demand and supporting pathways into work, the partnership helps people develop the skills needed for Derbyshire's key sectors, from advanced manufacturing to health and care. It reflects the county's wider vision of creating thriving, skilled communities where everyone can access good jobs close to home.

Uniting Derbyshire's future potential:

The new authority influences and shapes EMCCA plans at the regional level, informed by relationships at the local level including colleges, universities, training providers, investors, employers and businesses, ensuring residents benefit from a joined-up approach to workforce development that supports inclusive growth and the wider ambitions of EMCCA.

One council will enable stronger countywide coordination of skills and employment programmes, building on Chesterfield's success to align planning, investment, and engagement with employers across Derbyshire.

Community Safety and Stronger Places

We will work with local people to keep neighbourhoods safe, clean and welcoming. By bringing trading standards, environmental health, licensing, housing and community safety under Uniting Derbyshire, we will respond faster and more consistently to the issues that affect the daily lives of residents.

We will make Derbyshire's towns and villages places people continue to feel proud to call home. Joined-up enforcement, better street maintenance and a visible local presence will keep communities safe and attractive. Local hubs and councillors will act as a bridge between residents and the new council.

We will lead with openness, honesty and integrity - building trust through clear communication and visible action. Every community will know who to contact, how decisions are made, and how to get involved. One council will listen, act and deliver a safer, fairer and more prosperous county for all.

Case Study

Derbyshire Community Safety Board

'Safer Derbyshire' otherwise known as the Derbyshire Community Safety Board is a multi-agency partnership convened by Derbyshire County Council bringing together Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Probation Service, the local Criminal Justice Board and community safety partnerships based in district and borough areas (such as the South Derbyshire Community Safety Partnership). It aims to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime in Derbyshire by providing support, advice and leadership to partners and communities.

Why this matters for Derbyshire's vision:

'Safer Derbyshire' demonstrates how strong local partnerships across Derbyshire can make communities safer and more confident. By uniting the police, fire and rescue, probation, and local councils, it coordinates prevention, enforcement, and community engagement to reduce crime, antisocial behaviour, and the fear of crime. This shared approach reflects Derbyshire's vision of working together to build safe and resilient communities where people feel protected and supported.

Uniting Derbyshire's future potential:

Unified governance will simplify coordination with the police and justice agencies, strengthen prevention and early intervention, and give communities a clearer route to raise concerns, shape safety initiatives, and enforce issues arising.

One council will allow community safety work to be planned and delivered through one framework, linking local priorities with countywide strategy and resources.

3.2 How socio-economic and demand challenges will be addressed by Uniting Derbyshire

Derbyshire's economy and communities are distinct, between the industrial east and rural west, between areas of prosperity and those facing deprivation, and between an increasingly growing elderly population in some areas and a decreasing workforce in others. The specific socio-economic challenges associated with the solutions in each of the sections below can be found in Appendix A (Section E). LGR provides the whole county with the chance to face these challenges together and improve experiences for people and communities, using its scale and diversity as a strength.

1. Unlocking inclusive growth

One council achieved through LGR, alongside EMCCA, would allow Derbyshire to act as a single economic area, aligning investment, skills and infrastructure to drive inclusive growth:

- One county-wide economic strategy would align industrial strengths in Derby, Chesterfield and the M1 corridor with rural enterprise and tourism in the Dales and High Peak.
- County-wide skills and employment planning would address long-standing labour shortages using shared data and workforce planning.
- Stronger collaboration with EMCCA through a single voice would give Derbyshire greater influence over devolved transport, housing and business funding.
- Unified planning for land and housing would support major development in growth areas like South Derbyshire, while helping more constrained rural districts meet housing targets.

For people and communities, a single economic vision for Derbyshire would mean more consistent access to good jobs across all parts of the county. By joining up planning for skills, business and infrastructure, people in rural and former industrial areas would have greater chances to train locally and find stable work without leaving their communities.

2. Tackling inequality and deprivation

One council would enable a single, joined-up approach to prevention, social care and economic inclusion, allowing for the following benefits:

- Targeted place-based investment would combine housing, employment and health initiatives across multiple agencies, focusing on areas with higher deprivation.
- A unified data and insight model would allow tracking of inequalities in real time and deploy resources consistently.
- Integrated public health and social care planning would improve early intervention and reduce long-term costs by addressing root causes such as poor housing, unemployment and isolation.
- Pooling budgets would give Derbyshire the financial resilience to protect frontline (resident-facing) services during national economic shocks.

For people and communities, this would mean that support becomes fairer, more consistent and easier to access wherever they live. Residents told us that they wanted a system that protects the most vulnerable, tackles health inequalities and delivers services based on need.

3. Planning for an ageing and changing population

Uniting Derbyshire would provide larger scale and improved simplicity needed to plan for population pressures:

- Unified workforce and training programmes would connect adult social care and health recruitment to local colleges and employers, addressing both labour shortages and career opportunities for young people.
- Strategic planning across the whole county would enable housing growth in areas like South Derbyshire and Amber Valley that supports the right mix of family homes, affordable housing and extra-care provision.
- Prevention and wellbeing programmes would be delivered consistently across all communities, helping older people remain active and independent.

Residents told us during engagement that they worry about access to care, local jobs for young people and the strain on stretched services as Derbyshire's population ages. One council would plan health, housing and employment together, so that older residents can stay independent in their own homes, while younger people can find training and work close by.

4. Connecting communities and improving infrastructure

Uniting Derbyshire would enable it to address issues around connectivity and travel times through a single joined-up plan:

- County-wide transport plans and digital strategies would prioritise investment based on need rather than district boundaries.
- Better integration between transport, housing and employment planning would link new housing growth to accessible jobs and services.
- Unified procurement and planning would bring together county and district responsibilities for highways, parking, regeneration and digital infrastructure, reducing duplication and speeding up delivery.
- A single county voice would strengthen bids for national transport funding and digital investment, ensuring Derbyshire can compete with larger urban areas.

Residents told us through the engagement that poor transport and patchy digital access isolate rural areas and make it harder to reach jobs, colleges and health services. One council would focus investment where it is most needed, giving villages reliable buses, safer walking and cycling routes, and faster broadband that supports home working and online learning.

5. Building a resilient and sustainable county

One council would allow for a coordinated county-wide approach to sustainability:

- A single net-zero and climate adaptation plan would align planning, energy, transport and waste strategies to reduce emissions and improve resilience.

- Joint investment in green infrastructure and flood prevention would help protect vulnerable communities and safeguard Derbyshire's natural assets.
- Partnerships with local universities and employers would accelerate the transition to low-carbon manufacturing and logistics, securing jobs while meeting environmental goals.

Residents stressed the importance of protecting the county's natural environment and tackling flooding, while also supporting jobs in key industries. A single council could plan for both, making it easier to invest in renewable energy, improve recycling and safeguard homes and businesses from extreme weather.

Derbyshire has all the ingredients of a thriving, confident county, with a strong identity, a world-class landscape, a proud industrial heritage and communities that care deeply about their places. Yet the current system divides these strengths between separate councils, limiting the county's ability to plan strategically or act at scale. LGR would bring Derbyshire together behind one vision, uniting its economy, its services and its communities.

3.3 Opportunities provided by LGR for high-cost county-wide services

LGR creates the opportunity to redesign the local government system, which can improve the efficiency, quality and sustainability of Derbyshire's high-cost countywide services. These opportunities, formed from detailed discussions with our workforce, highlight how Uniting Derbyshire will support local government to plan and deliver key public services better across the city and county in the future.

At present these services are delivered by the County Council, often alongside related functions managed separately by district and borough councils. They are also delivered separately to the City Council. This can lead to overlaps, gaps in coordination, and missed opportunities to join up prevention, housing, and community support.

But across the ten councils there are also excellent services, high quality offers and innovative transformational approaches to local government which can be utilised, pooled and harnessed. LGR provides the platform for reorganisation to strengthen and transform services for the long-term.

It allows a Uniting Derbyshire approach to:

- Bring together linked services under a larger accountable authority.
- Plan investment and workforce development on a larger, more resilient scale.
- Pool expertise and bring the workforce together.
- Reduce duplication between organisations.
- Design prevention and early-intervention approaches that cut across traditional boundaries.

For each of these services, reorganisation would not mean taking local delivery into the centre. It would mean building on existing local strengths while removing structural barriers that make coordination of delivery of services harder. It creates a scale at which a financially sustainable and resilient Council can protect the most vulnerable residents, improve value for money, and deliver consistent quality of care and support across areas.

3.3.1 - Adult Social Care

Adult social care (ASC) is one of Derbyshire's most critical and high-cost services, supporting thousands of older and vulnerable residents every day. At present, the system depends on close working between the County Council, eight district and borough councils, and health partners, and the City Council. This can make it harder to plan housing, prevention, and community support in a consistent way.

The process of LGR, with the platform of one council, provides the opportunity to simplify Derbyshire's complex care system. By bringing together social care, housing, public health and community wellbeing within unified structures, care can become easier to access, fairer for residents, and more sustainable for the future.

Services and outcomes

- Stronger links with housing for accommodation strategy, specialist housing, homelessness prevention, hospital discharge and safeguarding.
- A simpler and more consistent experience for residents, with one organisation responsible for all aspects of care and housing support, reducing duplication and confusion.
- Better understanding of local needs through shared data and planning, leading to improved equity of access and stronger prevention outcomes.
- Ability to align strategies, delivery plans and the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model across all areas to drive consistent quality and performance.

Technology and property

- The combined estate of local authorities offers a stronger physical footprint for care delivery, improving access for local teams and outreach services.
- Some ASC services already use district premises, such as Bolsover, showing how a unified estate plan could improve efficiency.
- Opportunity to learn from Derby City's AI-enabled contact centre, accelerating collective use of digital tools to predict demand, improve customer outcomes and support staff.

People and workforce

- Wider and more varied career routes for staff, with the ability to move between housing, social care, public health and community roles.
- Greater flexibility for redeployment and skills development, reducing reliance on agency workers and improving retention.
- Shared training and development across one organisation will strengthen leadership and promote consistent standards of care.

Organisation and governance

- The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process could be streamlined, with assessment and delivery managed within a unified structure.

- Potential to combine contracts, such as catering or facilities management for care homes and day centres, to gain volume-purchase savings.
- Closer engagement between planning and adult care teams would improve market management and commissioning decisions.

Interaction and collaboration

- Easier partnership working with University Hospitals of Derby and Burton (UHDB), the Integrated Care Board and voluntary sector partners.
- Administration of wellbeing and prevention grants could be streamlined as many are currently split between county and district teams.
- Stronger and more equal partnership with the voluntary and community sector due to a simplified infrastructure and shared priorities.
- Opportunity to align provider fees and contractual rates, reducing market risk and improving value for money.
- Supports neighbourhood working and NHS place-based planning, embedding prevention and community support at the heart of ASC delivery.

Why this matters

Residents and partners have consistently said they want adult care to be more straightforward, joined-up and focused on prevention. Through One Council, Derbyshire can create clearer routes for residents to access help, a consistent system for providers to engage with, and a shared platform to invest in independence and community-based support. It would mean fewer hand-offs, stronger partnerships and a care system designed around people, not organisational boundaries.

3.3.2 - Children's Services

Children's services sit at the heart of Derbyshire's public service system. The system safeguards vulnerable children, supports families, and provides the foundation for future opportunity. The process of LGR, with the platform of a one council, provides the opportunity to strengthen quality, consistency and early help across all communities. It also enables closer alignment between children's services, education, health, housing and community partners so that no child's outcomes are shaped by where they live.

Services and outcomes

- One council would create clearer safeguarding arrangements and a consistent offer for children and families across Derbyshire. Families would benefit from more coherent accountability for social care, SEND and safeguarding.
- Early help, social care and education support could be integrated more effectively, reducing duplication and improving pathways between universal and targeted services.
- Shared data and a shared case management system would allow quicker identification of children at risk and more coordinated responses.

- The continuity of leadership, quality standards and inspection frameworks would drive improvement, raising performance in areas where outcomes are currently more variable.
- LGR provides the opportunity to harmonise thresholds, referral pathways and support packages, reducing confusion for schools, GPs and voluntary providers.
- Larger scale enables a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention, supported by links to housing and family hubs.

Technology and property

- A common electronic recording and performance platform would improve data accuracy, efficiency and continuity of case management.
- Aligning IT and case management systems provides better continuity of case histories and more efficient service oversight.
- Rationalising estates and office space used by social care, early help and education services would allow modernised, multi-agency children's hubs.
- Capital investment could be targeted at those localities with the greatest need rather than divided between multiple councils.

People and workforce

- Bringing children's services together enables stronger career pathways for social workers, educational psychologists and SEND specialists.
- Shared training and professional development would reduce reliance on costly agency staff and improve consistency of practice standards.
- Mobility between localities and service areas would improve deployment of expertise and help maintain resilience during periods of high demand.
- Aligning pay, conditions and recruitment approaches across Derbyshire would promote fairness and strengthen retention.

Organisation and governance

- Unified leadership and streamlined governance would provide clear accountability and a strong strategic voice for Derbyshire's children.
- Safeguarding boards, children's trusts and multi-agency arrangements could be streamlined, reducing duplication and confusion.
- Coordinated commissioning of placements, fostering and SEND transport would achieve efficiencies and greater market influence.

Interaction and collaboration

- A unified structure would make collaboration with health, police, schools and voluntary partners more consistent and effective.
- Partnership working with education ensures a coherent local voice on inclusion, SEND and early years.

- Integration with housing and “place” services enables a whole-family, whole-place approach to support.
- Stronger alignment with public health could enhance early years and youth health programmes.

Why this matters

Children’s services affect every community in Derbyshire. Through Uniting Derbyshire councils can create a more coherent and efficient system, reduce duplication, and strengthen the ability to keep children safe and help them thrive. It offers clearer accountability for families, simpler access to support, and better use of Derbyshire’s shared resources to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

3.3.3 - Place

Place functions shape daily life: planning, housing, transport, waste, and the public realm. The process of LGR, with the platform of one council, provides the opportunity to bring these together, so residents experience a clearer, more visible front line and faster, joined-up decisions that reflect the needs of each community.

By combining resources and expertise, Derbyshire could plan and deliver strategically at a larger scale while keeping delivery responsive to local priorities. This would mean cleaner, better-connected and more resilient communities, and a simpler, more visible local service that residents recognise as “their council” rather than multiple tiers working separately.

Services and outcomes

- Joined up responsibility so residents, parishes, and town councils have one clear route for all place issues, with integrated local “place-based teams” covering street scene, highways, environmental enforcement, and housing.
- Align Local Plans to the needs of different areas and link transport planning to regeneration, tying bus, cycle, and road investment directly to new homes and jobs.
- Shape housing allocations and homelessness services around local pressures, with planning committees that reflect market town and parish geographies.
- Move to a single-tier planning process so developers and residents deal with one organisation and one set of processes, simplifying and speeding up decisions.
- Strengthen emergency planning and climate/flood resilience by linking Local Plans, transport strategies, and flood schemes across a single footprint, backed by access to national funding streams.

Technology and property

- Standardise collection systems and routes, recognisable depots, and make better use of fleets to improve reliability in waste and environmental services.
- Create single waste disposal and recycling contracts to simplify operations and support a stronger position in recycling and re-use markets.

- Use shared data and processes across planning, housing, and transport so investment decisions line up with regeneration priorities.

People and workforce

- Build visible, multi-disciplinary local teams that bring together enforcement, street scene, highways maintenance, and housing officers, improving responsiveness in both rural and urban settings.
- Clarify roles and accountability at the front line so staff can solve problems end-to-end rather than pass issues between organisations.

Organisation and governance

- Align housing growth with economic and skills planning, with integrated strategies that link regeneration projects to further/higher education and major employers.
- Sharpen regeneration bids to national funders by presenting locally specific cases, rather than compromises across multiple organisations.
- Use larger bargaining power and common standards to drive quality and reduce cost in waste and environmental contracts.
- Support civic identity through distinct branding and place strategies that help attract tourism, investment, and cultural activity.

Interaction and collaboration

- Make engagement simpler for residents, businesses, developers, utilities, and the voluntary sector by bringing strategies and officer relationships together.
- Coordinate housing, transport, skills, and regeneration partners behind a single set of priorities.

Why this matters

A joined-up approach to Place functions enables Derbyshire to deliver cleaner, greener and more liveable communities. It ensures that regeneration, transport, housing and environmental improvement work in the same direction rather than competing for attention or funding. For residents, it offers one recognisable access point and consistent standards; for businesses and developers, it provides simpler processes, clearer decision-making, faster approvals and stronger partnerships under a unified approach to local growth and investment.

3.3.4 - Public Health

The process of LGR, with the platform of a one council, provides the opportunity to integrate public health, prevention and wellbeing into a more coherent system. By reducing fragmentation between existing organisations, Derbyshire can strengthen its focus on tackling health inequalities and embedding prevention as a central principle in planning and service delivery.

Services and Outcomes

- One council can embed prevention and reduce health inequalities as shared priorities across all council functions, ensuring that public health principles are reflected in every local plan and decision.
- Working with a smaller, defined population under a single structure can strengthen population health intelligence, providing more precise data for JSNA and targeted interventions.
- A unified structure simplifies the delivery of statutory and commissioned services (e.g. sexual health, substance misuse, 0–19 services) by aligning specifications and reducing variation across the county and city.
- Public health currently leads multiple countywide partnerships (housing, air quality, homelessness, planning). Under a unitary structure, these can be streamlined into fewer, more effective structures, supporting place-based prevention.
- Through the Health and Wellbeing Board and new neighbourhood governance, prevention and wellbeing initiatives can become genuinely community-led.

Technology and Property

- Consolidating systems creates a single source of population data and simplifies contract management for commissioned services.
- The move allows better coordination of health and wellbeing spaces, e.g. family hubs, libraries, and community centres, into a locality-based public health offer.
- Standardising data sharing agreements across all partners (health, police, voluntary sector) improves consistency in tracking outcomes and planning future investment.

People and Workforce

- A unified structure creates greater development opportunities, shared learning, and stronger career pathways across the public health workforce.
- Combining management and specialist roles lowers duplication and allows clearer lines of responsibility for health improvement functions.
- The Departmental Workforce Development Group can develop consistent competency and progression frameworks (PH skills, UKPHR competencies, NIHR-funded training) across the unitary structure.
- The statutory Director of Public Health role would have a more streamlined line of accountability for grant assurance, funding and outcomes.

Organisation and Governance

- A unified structure reduces the number of partnerships and meetings, making it easier for the NHS, ICB, Police, and EMCCA to engage with local government.
- The statutory Director of Public Health role would have a more streamlined line of accountability for grant assurance, funding and outcomes.

- Consolidating management and grant assurance avoids inefficiencies from separate city and county allocations, ensuring resources are directed where need is greatest.
- A reorganised structure would align more closely with the Mayoral Combined County Authority's health improvement duty, supporting integrated regional planning and delivery.

Interaction and Collaboration

- Simplified arrangements would provide partners such as the NHS, Fire Service and voluntary sector with a single, coordinated route into local government, strengthening collaboration.
- The unitary structure can build on strong existing relationships with districts and boroughs by formalising them into streamlined multi-agency frameworks for housing, community safety, and wellbeing.

Why this matters

Reorganisation offers the chance to bring public health to the centre of local decision-making. It would create a joined-up system linking prevention, housing, transport and planning to address the wider causes of poor health. By reducing duplication and strengthening leadership, Derbyshire can sustain statutory functions, protect prevention budgets and respond faster to health inequalities. Residents would benefit from clearer accountability, consistent services and improved population health outcomes across all communities.

3.4 Financial Analysis

One Council provides the greatest financial benefits for Derbyshire, putting the resultant Council on the best financial footing and enabling better delivery of public services. In a reorganisation scenario, there are higher gross benefits, lower annual costs and a shorter period after which the LGR investment costs are paid back:

- Annual savings: £45.1m
- Annual disaggregation costs: £0m
- One-off transition costs: £47.7m
- Payback period: 2.6 years

The table below shows the year-by-year Reorganisation view for our preferred option. It shows a cumulative benefit of £144m over 6 years, with a payback period of 2.6 years. From Year 4 onwards, the annual savings are £45.1m.

Table 15 - Reorganisation profiling

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Yearly Benefit (£000's)	0	22,545	33,817	45,089	45,089	45,089
Yearly Cost (£000's)	23,863	11,932	11,932	0	0	0
Annual Net Benefit (£000's)	-23,863	10,613	21,885	45,089	45,089	45,089
Total <u>Cumulative</u> Net Benefit (£000's)	-23,863	-13,250	8,635	53,725	98,814	143,903
Payback period			2.6 years			

One council would create a stronger and more resilient financial position that directly meets the Government's tests for sustainability. The new council would have the scale to manage future pressures and withstand financial shocks, such as rising service costs, reductions in national funding, and increases in demand for high-cost services. One council would also deliver ongoing savings that improve value for money and reduce the risk of financial failure, thus increasing resilience and efficiency across Derbyshire, ensuring Derbyshire can maintain high-quality services and plan confidently for the long-term.

Council Tax Harmonisation is also an important component in assessing financial sustainability. The new authorities are required to bring Council Tax rates (which currently vary across districts), to a single uniform rate. The decision on the chosen level of taxation will have financial implications for the future authorities. Initially it is assumed that there would be harmonisation over a three-year period, to the average rate across Derbyshire. For one council, the output of this analysis suggests that harmonisation to an average position over 3 years does not significantly alter the broader financial position of the new unitary authority.

3.5 Representation and Local Voice

3.5.1 – Proposed democratic structure in Derbyshire

A council size of 112 councillors is proposed for the new Derbyshire council as well as a ‘leader and cabinet/executive’ model.

We recognise that the current 21 county areas invited to undertake reorganisation will potentially create a trend of larger unitary authorities, which may look different and require different democratic structures (including strengthened neighbourhood governance arrangements). Our preference would therefore be to negotiate for as many Councillors as possible in the new unitary to support local representation and to acknowledge elected members’ workload. However, our proposal also recognises that the Council must be as streamlined and functional as possible. Therefore the 112 councillors that we propose, should be understood as a minimum, with 164 as a preferred maximum.

Whilst there will be fewer Councillors than currently, there will be greater clarity for both Councillors and residents. Each will deal directly with one organisation rather than operating within a two-tier system in Derbyshire, with a separate city unitary. It will not be necessary for residents to concern themselves with whether their issue should be raised with their district or county councillor. A simplified committee system, plus the structured introduction of area/neighbourhood committees will bring about greater clarity regarding decision-making and more opportunities for participation and influence.

The proposals reconfigure the system, maintaining a similar number of Councillors to those that currently support the greatest spend and scale across the existing councils. There are currently 115 county or city council Councillors providing democratic representation against 93% of net expenditure. Many county Councillors also represent their local areas at both the upper and lower tier level. The new council will therefore adequately cover the business of the new council, maintaining the current upper tier and city unitary functions, alongside taking on the responsibilities of the current lower tier authorities.

In the new council, the ability to deal with services under one roof will be an advantage and improvement for all. This proposal ensures Councillors are in control of all the resources, with proportionate influence over service delivery, policy and strategy. Councillors can undertake a much wider role at scale, being accountable for all council services provided and decisions made across the new geographies. This makes the Councillor role more attractive and influential.

Whilst Derby and Derbyshire have undertaken recent Boundary Reviews (2023 and 2024), several District and Borough Council areas have not been reviewed for some time. A future Boundary Review will provide an ideal opportunity to re-assess the entire footprint, with the ability (as one council) to shift local boundaries without the current geographic constraints. The current proposal is fit for purpose for interim arrangements, in creating a shadow council in 2027 to develop the new authority.

To create the best practical interim solution for Derbyshire, district and borough, ward and parish boundaries have been used to create electoral balance and acceptable variance within simpler, stronger, guidelines. Whilst this means that initially there will be several multi-member wards, it is anticipated that this will be addressed post Boundary Review. Full proposals for the proposed democratic structure, plus a summary across several different options is presented in Appendix E.

3.5.2 - Strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership

With a simplified role, Councillors will have a much clearer remit and processes to support their activity within the structures of the new authority. The reduction in duplication for ‘twin-hatters’, in attending two organisations’ internal council, cabinet and committee meetings and a general inefficiency in duplicated representation, will free up a significant amount of Councillor time.

This enables the new proposal to set out a stronger structured community leadership role, alongside strategic leadership and accountability elements.

One council:

- Consolidates 10 current leader and executive systems into one
- One set of local elections means residents only vote once for their local representatives, making elections simpler, cheaper, more efficient, and easier to understand
- Creates a powerful strategic planning committee to consider and influence major developments
- Streamlines regulatory area planning, reducing administrative bureaucracy and aligning with natural spatial development zones
- Provides structured, consistent and transparent local representation arrangements and networking opportunities for Councillors
- Reduces duplicated governance structures and public sector representation on key partnerships and external bodies
- Dissolves the democratic confusion of the current two-tier system and associated workload for councillors who will now only need to deal with one organisation.

3.5.3 - Relationship with our Strategic Authority (EMCCA)

This is a unique opportunity to consider how the governance of the new unitary authority can provide a unified voice for Derbyshire within EMCCA, but also recognising the need to amend the regulations to ensure Derbyshire retains equity with the new council(s) across Nottinghamshire.

There is great potential to:

- Increase authority, responsibility and accountability from those nominated into the committee structure
- Align strategic and local planning with EMCCA ambitions for spatial planning
- Share strategic and local insight and intelligence to aid decision making
- Provide structured and equal opportunities to consult and engage with Derbyshire residents
- Offer ‘One voice’ and democratic representation balancing diverse rural and urban priorities.

3.5.4 - Neighbourhood Governance and Town/Parish Councils

In line with the English Devolution and Community Empowerment (EDCE) Bill 2025, one council will establish a structured system of area committees. These may include the following potential features:

- **Chair** - by a Councillor from the unitary authority
- **Membership** – active roles for all Councillors and representation from local services/ partners, voluntary and community sector groups, town and parish councils, schools, housing associations, residents and resident action groups
- **Area profiles** – developed to provide data, insight and intelligence to understand need
- **Action plans** – prioritising collective local goals, linked to strategic Council Plan ambitions
- **Devolved budget** – for delivering local priorities and supporting community-led projects
- **Small grant pot** – with delegated powers to distribute
- **Community engagement activity** – local gatherings and online opportunities to share plans, create collective responses and develop ideas
- **Devolved powers** – scope for services to provide discretionary funding and officer support to operate some local services, e.g. local highways schemes, youth and older people grants (this may also form part of the forthcoming EDCE Bill regulations, set out by the Secretary of State).

Elements of the area committees will be structured and managed with consistent centralised processes, whilst each can also act flexibly according to local circumstances.

Derbyshire County, Derby City and the District and Borough Councils have historically operated different approaches to local authority-led neighbourhood governance. One council will utilise good practice and lessons learned from locality arrangements to design the new structures. It is anticipated that there will be a phased introduction of the various features of any approach. Areas with stronger existing resources and capacity could lead pilot schemes using ‘test and learn’ approaches, which can be subsequently scaled.

Whilst consideration has been given to the best way to design neighbourhood arrangements, the current proposals are indicative and subject to review and change pending the outcome of the Government’s Neighbourhood Governance Review (further details in Appendix E).

There are currently 204 Town and Parish Councils (local councils) serving Derbyshire residents, with some areas unparished. Local councils provide a chance for residents to engage with civic life at the very local level.

In the new unitary authority, Parish and Town Councils will continue to play a significant role representing the views of residents in their area, and/ or in the provision of local services, where possible and/or appropriate. Parish and Town Councils will be encouraged to participate fully in area committees.

In addition, there will be potential for local councils to be created in areas which are currently unparished. Town and Parish Councils will remain independent bodies, with the choice to take on the delivery of a variety of local services where there is a desire to do so.

3.5.5 - Maintaining Civic and Ceremonial Arrangements

As part of the reorganisation, provisions are requested to be put in place by the Secretary of State to formally create charter trustees that ensure the continuation of town and city charters, following the abolition of areas with city or borough status. This will ensure a legacy that protects historic traditions and shared local identities, which people have told us is important to them. During the transition it will be important to protect mayoral roles, duties and ceremonial arrangements that contribute to civic life across Derbyshire.

3.6 Our Operating Model: People, Places and Systems

The process of LGR, with the platform of one council, provides the opportunity to:

- Build a workforce and culture fit for the future
- Rethink how land and buildings are used across the local government estate
- Builds a single, modern, connected digital environment.

People, places and systems are the backbone of how the new one council will work. This means:

- **Our people** – Uniting Derbyshire will be built around a single, capable, and motivated workforce. Bringing together staff from across existing organisations offers the chance to build a single, modern workforce with shared values, clear purpose and stronger connection to the communities we serve. They will carry their knowledge, skills and relationships into the new structure. Through careful workforce planning, we will harmonise terms and conditions over time, and support cultural integration so that staff feel valued and motivated.
- **Our places** - the buildings, depots and community hubs where services are delivered. On Day 1, residents will continue to use familiar locations, whether that's a local office, library, or neighbourhood service point. Over time, the council will align and modernise their estate, investing in local access points while reducing the cost of maintaining surplus space.
- **Our systems** - the technology and processes that keep services running. Payroll, HR, finance, customer contact and safeguarding systems must all be ready from the outset. This will give staff the tools they need and ensure residents experience no break in service. Over time, legacy systems will be replaced with modern, integrated platforms that improve efficiency and make services easier to access.

As the council beds in, residents should notice things becoming simpler, more consistent and easier to navigate. There will be one point of accountability, fewer layers of management, and a clearer pathway when they need help. For staff, the change will bring new opportunities for career progression, skills development and digital ways of working. For communities, it will mean services are more locally visible and responsive.

This approach balances safety and stability on Day 1 with a clear ambition for modernisation and improvement. It provides reassurance that frontline (resident-facing) services will continue without disruption, while also showing how the council will evolve into an organisation that is simpler, stronger, and more connected to the people it serves. Please see Appendix A (Section F) for more detail about our planned approach and vision for our people, places and systems.

3.6.1 Operating Model Principles

It is crucial that the new council operating model is clearly defined, and at the earliest opportunity, so those making decisions concerning the organisational workings of the new council understand what outcomes need to be achieved through the process.

Across the ten councils there will be a number of different approaches to both day-to-day and strategic operations that need to be merged and aligned into a coherent whole.

For this to be achieved an operational blueprint is needed to set clear foundations to guide how the new Council will work from day one. These operating model principles set out the framework for how services, people and systems will come together under a one council. They describe the practical choices that will shape daily operations, from how services are organised and accessed, to how decisions are made and partnerships are built.

The principles ensure that Uniting Derbyshire operates as one team with shared values, providing services that are simple, consistent and close to communities. They will help the new council stay safe, legal and financially stable, while creating space for improvement and innovation.

Together, they form the foundation for delivering the vision: a council that is open, efficient and trusted, working with residents and partners to build a safer, fairer and more prosperous Derbyshire.

Table 16 - Operating model principles

1	<p>Services that are safe, trusted, and continuous from Day 1</p> <p>Vital services, such as social care, education, waste, housing, and public health, will continue without disruption. From the first day of the new council, systems for payroll, ICT, safeguarding, and customer access will be in place and working. Essential services will remain safe, legal and responsive so people feel supported and secure.</p>
2	<p>Run specialist and statutory functions once, at the centre</p> <p>Specialist areas like, finance, HR, ICT, business support, commissioning, safeguarding, and legal, will operate as one team for One Derbyshire, ensuring reliability, consistency, and value for money.</p>
3	<p>Keep everyday services visible, local and easy to reach</p> <p>Residents should see and feel the council in their communities. Services such as waste, housing, planning, leisure and libraries will remain close to where people live, supported by local hubs, outreach teams and accessible online services. Local delivery will be built around trust, visibility and pride of place.</p>
4	<p>Combine central direction with local delivery where it works best</p> <p>Some services are best delivered through a shared county-wide strategy, others through local action shaped by communities. Examples include planning (strategic plan with local decisions), public health (county strategy with neighbourhood prevention), and waste (central disposal, local collection). This model reflects One Derbyshire working together - strong central leadership, locally led delivery.</p>

5

Local voice at the heart of decision-making

Councillors will be empowered as community leaders, working alongside residents and parish and town councils. New area committees and community networks will give people formal and visible ways to shape local priorities. We will lead with openness, honesty and integrity, ensuring local voices influence decisions that affect daily life.

6

Design for the future, not just for Day 1

LGR is an opportunity to modernise and look ahead - promoting efficiency, investing in digital and building one workforce with shared values. The new council will be agile, fair and financially sustainable, ready to meet future needs in care, housing, climate, and skills. One Derbyshire will plan for the long-term, not just the short-term.

7

Work in partnership to deliver better outcomes

We will strengthen partnerships across EMCCA, the NHS, police, fire, education, and the voluntary sector, building on Derbyshire's tradition of collaboration. Together we will join up services around people and places, supporting prevention, tackling inequalities, and helping every community to prosper and thrive.

As the council develops its detailed structures and service plans, these foundations will stay constant: safe and reliable services from day one, clear local voice in decision-making, and a long-term focus on prevention, partnership and prosperity.

Together, they will make the new council a single, trusted organisation that works with every community to build a better future for all.

3.7 One Council avoids the challenges of disaggregation

Derbyshire's high-cost, countywide services, such as adult social care, children's social care, highways and transport, public health, and waste disposal, account for the majority of local government spending and touch the lives of almost every resident. These services carry the highest statutory responsibilities and are central to the safety and wellbeing of communities.

Although the Council is clear that the Uniting Derbyshire proposal is the way forward, the implications of splitting up existing county services into North and South unitaries must be considered and highlighted even if two unitary options are not favoured. The potential risks and challenges associated with disaggregation (splitting up) of existing county services are outlined below:

3.7.1 - Adult Social Care

Splitting up Derbyshire's adult social care (ASC) system would risk fracturing one of the most complex public service networks in the county. Adult social care relies on close coordination between health, housing, and community partners, supported by shared workforce arrangements, case management systems, and commissioning frameworks. Any move to separate these functions across multiple authorities would raise challenges for service continuity and existing partnerships.

Under a disaggregated model, the separation of Section 75 agreements and the Better Care Fund would disrupt the integrated commissioning that currently underpins health and social care collaboration.

Disaggregation would also require the redesign of governance arrangements, team structures, and frameworks across two councils. Every contract with care providers would need to be reviewed or renegotiated. This process carries risk of inequity or interruption to service delivery.

Responsibilities under the Mental Health Act, including cases affected by the Worcester Judgement, would need to be reassessed and potentially transferred, adding further complexity and cost.

Voluntary and community sector partners would also feel the impact of disaggregation. Many are already under financial pressure, and splitting existing funding and governance arrangements could impact sustainability. Networks such as those in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales would face duplicated relationships and split-up funding, weakening their ability to support prevention and early help. Local integration through the Better Care Fund and Disabled Facilities Grant would become more complex, requiring renegotiation with multiple partners.

3.7.2 - Children's Services

Dividing statutory children's services across multiple authorities would introduce disruption into an already pressured system. Any separation of responsibilities would affect how safeguarding, early help and specialist support work, with potential implications for children, families and the workforce.

Breaking up Derbyshire's current children's services arrangements could risk disruption to the safeguarding and support structures that protect vulnerable children. Splitting referral pathways, safeguarding boards and case management systems could create uncertainty in accountability and slow down critical referrals during transition.

Separate authorities would also need to establish their own social work, fostering and placement arrangements, potentially competing for staff and carers. This could drive up costs and reduce opportunities for collaboration. Maintaining a coordinated approach provides stronger capacity, consistent standards and equal access to specialist services across Derbyshire.

Disaggregation would also make it harder to deliver improvements and efficiencies at scale. Dividing markets for placements, fostering and SEND transport would reduce buying power and could increase costs. Staff would have fewer opportunities to progress within a single structure, reducing the overall attractiveness of Derbyshire as an employer and increasing reliance on agency staff.

Splitting assets and responsibilities between authorities would risk uneven access to services. Children's homes, family hubs and youth centres are not evenly distributed across the county, so dividing them could leave some areas with weaker support. Specialist teams such as adoption services and child exploitation units might be split or duplicated, weakening expertise and increasing cost through overheads or family hub development, and could also lead to inconsistent provision between areas.

3.7.3 - Place

Splitting up functions for spatial planning, housing, waste, environment, and infrastructure would create challenges across Derbyshire. These services depend on joined-up systems, shared

expertise, and collaboration across boundaries. Any division of responsibilities would risk disrupting the planning, housing, and environmental frameworks that currently support economic growth and community wellbeing.

In the longer term, dividing Derbyshire's place-based functions could deepen existing geographic inequalities. The north of the county faces weaker land values, older housing stock, and lower developer interest, while the south experiences stronger market conditions and faster growth. Without shared planning and investment strategies, these disparities could widen, reducing housing delivery and limiting employment land availability in the north. Health partners have also noted that older populations in the north are likely to increase demand for supported housing and community-based interventions, which are more effectively managed through coordinated planning.

Residents have expressed concern about the impact of boundary changes on local identity and ceremonial links. Maintaining cross-county coordination will be important to balance growth, regeneration, and environmental priorities so that all areas of Derbyshire benefit equally from housing, infrastructure, and investment.

3.7.4 - Public Health

Splitting up public health in Derbyshire would create risks to the continuity, equity and effectiveness of essential health functions. Public health operates as an interconnected system, linking health protection, health improvement and healthcare public health, and depends on joint commissioning, shared data platforms and cross-agency partnerships.

Financial disparity between Derby City and Derbyshire adds further complexity. The two areas currently receive different public health grant allocations (£90.86 per head in the city compared with £60.58 per head in the county). Without national equalisation, separating responsibilities may increase inequalities, leaving the more deprived northern districts with lower investment despite potentially greater health needs. This could undermine efforts to tackle longstanding inequalities and limit capacity for preventative investment.

Operationally, disaggregation (splitting up services) would be complex. Migrating data from existing systems would carry the risk of loss or delayed access to critical health intelligence. Data-sharing agreements with NHS, police, and voluntary sector partners would all need to be renegotiated, creating potential delays in response and coordination.

Commissioned services could also be disrupted. Many current contracts, such as those for sexual health, substance misuse and public health nursing, are co-commissioned or delivered by shared providers across both the county and city. Dividing these arrangements mid-contract would risk service interruption, loss of economies of scale, and additional administrative costs.

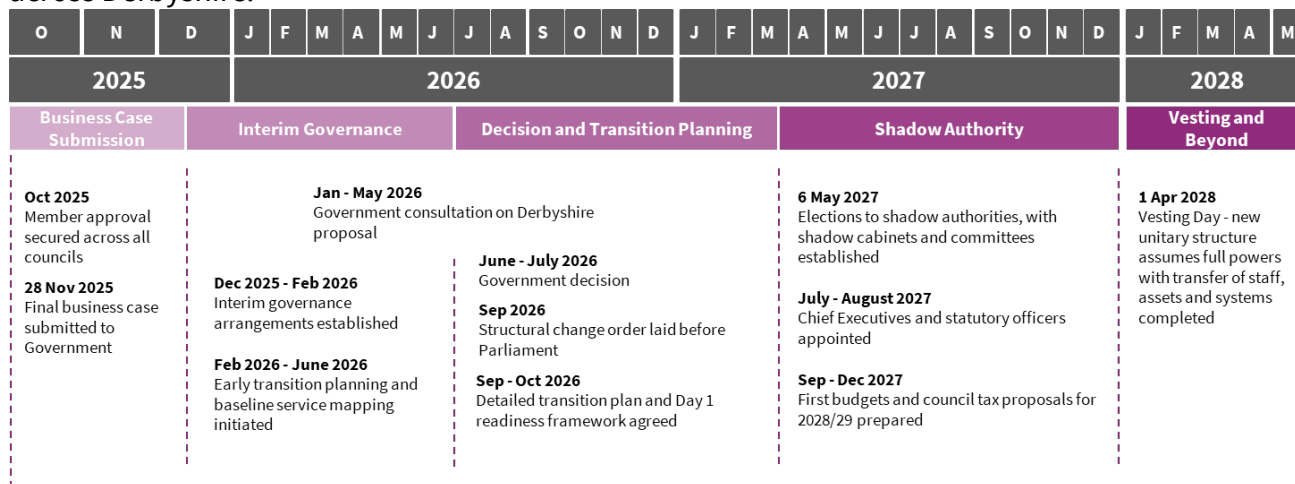
3.8 Implementation

3.8.1 – High-level plan

LGR doesn't just happen and whilst the process of LGR, with the platform of one council, provides the opportunity to realise a significant number of benefits already outlined in this proposal, getting implementation right is critical for those benefits to be delivered in full and on time.

By managing transition well, Derbyshire can start its new structure from a position of strength, protecting frontline (resident-facing) services, maintaining financial stability, and creating the foundations for long-term transformation.

The diagram below sets out the key phases and milestones for LGR and establishing one council across Derbyshire.



3.8.2 – Roadmap 2025-2028

Derbyshire's reorganisation will follow the national timetable set by the Government.

Proposal will be submitted in 2025, with a joint committee / interim governance put in place following this, and consultation and decisions will take place in 2026. A shadow council will be elected in 2027, and the new unitary council will take full powers in April 2028.

This is the stage where early decisions about leadership, data, technology, and workforce integration will shape how quickly the benefits of LGR are delivered. The work will involve both the County Council, the City Council and the district and borough councils, drawing on the existing capacity, expertise, and programme management disciplines already established through Derbyshire's transformation and digital programmes, but not dismissing the potential need for external support in the future structure.

The County Council's established PMO and technical resources may continue to underpin this work throughout 2026-27, ensuring consistent management and risk control during the handover period.

To deliver this journey safely and credibly, a roadmap for delivering the change has been developed. The roadmap is organised into five sections:

1. **Proposal Submission (2025)** - completing the full proposal and engaging with residents, MPs, partners, and EMCCA.
2. **Interim Governance (2025-2026)** - putting in place a joint leadership and programme structure across the council to oversee transition, hold accountability, and give Government confidence.
3. **Decision and Transition Planning (2026)** - responding to Government's decision, preparing legislation, and finalising transition plans.

4. **Shadow Authority Phase (2027)** - elections for the new council, recruitment of senior leadership, and preparation of budgets and policies.
5. **Vesting and Beyond (2028)** - safe transfer of services on Day 1 and the start of longer-term transformation.

Each section below describes the focus of activity, the milestones to be achieved, and the outcomes that will be in place by the end of each phase.

1. Proposal submission (2025) - Current Position

The priority to date has been the completion and submission of Derbyshire's full LGR proposal to the Government. This submission sets out Derbyshire's preferred model, the financial case, the approach to the aggregation of services, and the implementation roadmap.

The proposal has been informed by:

- **Options appraisal** - a comparison of the shortlisted models against the six Government criteria and Derbyshire's own local tests.
- **Engagement findings** - reflecting the views of residents, MPs, parish and town councils, businesses, and voluntary and community groups.
- **Financial analysis** - detailing transition costs, expected savings, council tax harmonisation options, and the long-term sustainability of the new council.
- **Service planning** - early work on how key county functions (such as ASC, CSC (Children's Social Care), waste, and ICT) will function.
- **Alignment with EMCCA** - showing how the new council will work with the Combined County Authority to deliver growth, transport, housing, and net-zero ambitions.

Alongside the drafting of the proposal, the council has completed a programme of engagement and communications. This has given residents and partners a clear voice in shaping the preferred option.

2. Discovery and Interim Governance (2025 – 2026)

Following submission of the proposal and prior to government's decision, Derbyshire will put in place interim governance arrangements to guide the transition. These arrangements will provide a framework for collective leadership and accountability preparing for the new unitary authority.

This structure will bring together political, managerial, and technical leadership:

- **Leaders' Board** - bringing together council leaders to provide political direction, resolve issues collectively, and maintain clear accountability.
- **Chief Executives' Group** - coordinating officer leadership across all councils, committing resources, and steering delivery of the transition programme. Supported by a Strategy Team.
- **Programme Management Office (PMO)** - a central team monitoring milestones, managing interdependencies, and ensuring progress is tracked across all workstreams.
- **Transformation Team** - specialists from across councils working on service design, finance, ICT, estates, and workforce planning.

- **Communications and Engagement Team** - coordinating communications with residents, partners, and staff, ensuring consistency and transparency.

This discovery phase will enable Councils to discuss their respective positions on proposals for reorganisation and start to build the capacity, capability and shared, open book, understanding of the current state-of-play. This will ensure the implementation and transition phases can start on the best footing possible.

3. Decision and Transition Planning (2026)

From Summer 2026, there will be focus on Government's decision on Derbyshire's reorganisation and preparing the detailed plans needed for transition. Once the decision is made, attention will move quickly to legislation, transition design, and readiness planning.

During this phase, Derbyshire councils will:

- **Engage with Government consultation** – providing evidence, responding to questions, and ensuring local voices are represented in the national process.
- **Prepare for legislation** – supporting the drafting of the structural change order (SCO) in Parliament, including agreements on geography, governance, and transitional arrangements.
- **Strengthen programme design** – refining the workstreams (finance, legal, ICT, workforce, estates, contracts, service design) and confirming resources needed for transition.
- **Establish shadow governance principles** – creating a joint committee to set out the constitution, code of conduct, and forming the Implementation Team as well as developing leadership structures, and democratic arrangements that will be required once the shadow council is elected in 2027.
- **Begin recruitment planning** – preparing to identify statutory officers and senior leadership roles for the shadow authority structure, ensuring early clarity on roles and responsibilities.
- **Advance corporate and service transition planning** – align corporate plans, finalising any aggregation (joint-up) models for services, confirming which areas will transfer on Day 1 and which may need phased approaches.

By the end of 2026, Derbyshire will have a clear timetable, a fully defined transition programme, and agreed governance principles for the coming shadow authority structure. This will create certainty for residents, staff, and partners while maintaining momentum towards vesting day.

LGR Joint Committee

Before the Structural Change Order becomes law, the Constituent Councils will need to undertake various actions and make key decisions. To ensure these decisions are made collectively, efficiently, and in a timely way, a collaborative and democratic governance framework is essential. The LGR Joint Committee will play a central role in providing transparent, democratic oversight of these actions and decisions. It will also demonstrate a proactive response to Government expectations for early establishment of collaborative arrangements in any LGR implementation programme.

The membership of a Local Government Reorganisation joint committee should be guided by principles of fair representation from all involved authorities and appropriate seniority of members.

Key Principles

- **Representation:** Membership of the joint committee should reflect, in numbers, the depth and breadth of their services and the budget of their local authority to ensure their Council's interests are fairly and appropriately represented, whilst ensuring that the committee can reflect the perspectives of all types of councils involved in the reorganisation process.
- **Appropriate Seniority:** Membership should comprise of senior elected members, to ensure that members have the authority to make significant decisions and provide strategic direction for the transition.
- **Accountability:** Members are expected to operate in the best interest of the joint committee's objectives for the new authority, while still adhering to their constituent council's Code of Conduct and their statutory duties.
- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** The terms of reference for the joint committee clearly define the roles, duties, and responsibilities of its members and officers, as well as the reporting structures and schemes of delegation.
- **Transparency and Openness:** Joint committee meetings should be open to the public and press (unless confidential information is being discussed), with agendas, reports, and minutes made publicly available. This ensures the public can scrutinise the process and that decisions are made in the public interest.
- **Governance and the Rule of Law:** Membership and procedures must operate within the established legal framework, including the Local Government Act 1972 and 2000, and ensure high standards of financial and general governance.
- **Objectivity:** Members and officers are expected to provide impartial, professionally grounded advice to ensure informed decision-making that supports the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the new unitary council.

These principles will collectively aim to ensure that the LGR process is managed effectively, transparently, and with the necessary political leadership to deliver a successful and sustainable new local government structure.

4. Shadow Authority Phase (2027)

Derbyshire will then prepare for the handover of powers to the new council. Elections to the shadow authority will take place in **May 2027**, creating a new democratic body with responsibility for preparing the council to go live in April 2028.

The shadow authority will not yet deliver services, but it will ensure the one council is safe and legal and set the framework for how the new council will operate. During this phase, the focus will be on:

- **Elections and democratic mandate** – electing councillors for the shadow authority structure, ensuring representation across all communities, and creating clarity for residents about who speaks for their area.

- **Constitution and governance** – adopting constitutions, agreeing leadership models, and establishing committees and scrutiny arrangements.
- **Budget setting and financial planning** – during the transition period the shadow authority is the billing authority for the area and responsible for discharging the finance functions for the new authority's first financial year: preparing the first Medium-Term Financial Strategies (MTFS), setting budgets, and making council tax decisions for 2028/29.
- **Recruitment of senior leadership into the new council** – appointing the Chief Executive and statutory officers (Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Directors of ASC and CSC), followed by the wider senior management structure for the council after Vesting Day and designation of statutory officers.
- **Workforce transition** – confirming transfer arrangements, consulting with staff and trade unions, and preparing for consolidation of terms and conditions over time.
- **Policy and service frameworks** – preparing and adopting the first wave of corporate plans, strategies, policies and service frameworks as required in Transitional Regulations or otherwise considered necessary, including council plan, civil contingencies, safeguarding, housing, waste, ICT, and locality arrangements.
- **Liaising with existing councils** to ensure continuity of services post vesting day.
- **Engagement and visibility** – ensuring residents and partners understand the role of the shadow authority, building trust in the new structure before vesting day.
- **IT Transition** - preparing IT systems changes in advance of go-live and data migration where appropriate.

The shadow phase will act as the bridge between planning and delivery. It will allow time to test systems, confirm budgets, and provide leadership ahead of vesting day.

5. Vesting and Beyond (2028)

On **1 April 2028**, Derbyshire's new unitary council will assume full powers and responsibilities. This will be vesting day - the point at which existing councils formally close, and the new authorities take over.

The focus for this phase will be twofold:

1. **Day 1 continuity** - ensuring that all critical services operate without disruption.
2. **Longer-term transformation** - beginning the process of redesigning services and governance for the future.

Day 1 continuity will be underpinned by minimum operating requirements across core functions.

- **Statutory officers** (Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Directors of ASC and CSC) in post and accountable.
- **Finance systems live** to set council tax, collect revenues, and manage budgets.
- **HR and payroll systems operational** to pay staff and manage transfers.

- **ICT systems functional** for customer contact, safeguarding, and service continuity.
- **Customer access points active** (websites, contact centres, local hubs) open and fully aligned to the new councils.
- **Critical services** such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, waste, and housing operating seamlessly from day one.

Beyond vesting day, attention will shift to transformation and harmonisation:

- **Service redesign** – using the scale of the new council to streamline services, remove duplication, and improve integration with health, housing, and community partners.
- **Workforce harmonisation** – engaging with staff and unions to align terms and conditions over time, while building a single organisational culture.
- **Estate rationalisation** – reducing the number of offices and depots where appropriate, while maintaining a strong network of local access points.
- **Digital transformation** – phasing out legacy systems and developing unified ICT platforms to improve efficiency and service access.
- **Community empowerment** – rolling out area committees, strengthening parish and town councils, and embedding neighbourhood governance within the new structure.
- **Financial sustainability** – delivering savings from consolidation (bringing systems and services together) and transformation to support balanced budgets and reinvestment in services.

By combining safe Day 1 delivery with a longer-term programme of transformation, Derbyshire's new council will move from stability to improvement, and from improvement to innovation.

It's key to note that effective transition management is critical to the success of LGR within Derbyshire, with the importance of effective transition and how one council achieves this found in Appendix A (Section H, I and J). The core workstreams are set out below and will guide implementation activity through to vesting day in April 2028.



1. Democracy and governance

This workstream will design the democratic and constitutional framework for the shadow authority and new council. It will coordinate the creation of the shadow authority, establish interim governance, and prepare for elections in May 2027.

Responsibilities will include drafting the constitutions, codes of conduct, and governance schemes; confirming councillor numbers; preparing Members Allowances Schemes; working with the Local Government Boundary Commission on warding and electoral arrangements; and developing proposals for scrutiny and committee structures. It will also oversee legal orders and transitional activities needed to establish the new unitary council. This will also include branding and any communications for the new council, alongside designing the local democratic architecture of the new council, including area committees and other locality decision-making structures.



2. People and culture

This workstream will manage all workforce-related activity, focusing on continuity, engagement, and the creation of a single organisational culture.

It will oversee staff transfers, harmonisation of pay and terms, trade-union engagement, and staff consultation. The team will lead organisational design and workforce planning, ensuring that every employee transferring to the new council understands their role and reporting line from Day 1.



3. Service design and continuity

This workstream will promote front-line, resident-facing delivery while shaping how services will operate within the new structure.

The focus will be on maintaining statutory performance, safeguarding, and customer access throughout transition. The team will review current good practice and identify efficiencies, design future operating models, and ensure all business-critical functions are ready for vesting day.



4. Finance and council tax

This workstream will lead financial planning for the new authority, including the development of a shadow Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), budget setting, and reserves management.

It will lead on pensions and payroll transition, and financial system migration. It will oversee the deployment of implementation costs and the planning/implementation of council tax harmonisation. The team will also oversee the production of statutory accounts, financial governance frameworks, and audit arrangements, ensuring the new council is financially sustainable from day one.



5. Technology and data

The technology and data workstream will plan and deliver all ICT, digital, and data-integration activity required for transition. Its initial focus will be defining a minimum set of essential systems to be operational by vesting day.

It will lead data migration, cyber-security assurance, data protection compliance and integration planning, as well as future digital design for the new council. This workstream will also define long-term opportunities for digital transformation and automation.



6. Property and estates

This workstream will manage the physical estate of all existing councils, ensuring that office, depot, and frontline (resident-facing) facilities remain operational during transition and are ready for transfer.

It will identify opportunities for consolidation of the property portfolio post-vesting, balancing savings with the need to retain strong local access through community hubs. The team will handle all statutory, health and safety, and asset-transfer responsibilities associated with vesting day.



7. Contracts and commercial

The contracts and commercial workstream will coordinate the transfer and management of all existing supplier arrangements. This will include reviewing contract portfolios and designing a new procurement and commissioning framework for the new council.

The team will identify high-value and high-risk contracts, ensuring service continuity through transition. This will also include intellectual property transfer and licensing from the existing councils.



8. Community and locality

This workstream will design how the new council will engage and work with communities. Its focus will be on practical, locality-based working rather than formal decision-making structures.

It will work within the framework set for Area Committees, local boards, and parish and town council relationships. It will operate within the bounds of neighbourhood governance in the new structure, ensuring local voice and accountability are strengthened. The team will also work closely with partners in the voluntary and community sector to maintain and grow local engagement and participation.

3.8.3 – Managing Risks

Change on this scale brings both opportunity and risk. LGR will reshape how services are led, managed and delivered, but it can only succeed if the transition is carefully planned and well-resourced. The following section sets out the key risks identified through Derbyshire's service leads, national learning from other reorganisation areas, and early work with partners. For each risk, there are mitigations that would be put in place.

A full list of further risks and mitigations surrounding LGR can be found in Appendix A (Section K).

Risks

Critical frontline services such as adult social care, children's safeguarding, waste and public health could be disrupted during transition.

Mitigations

- **Establish a Service Continuity Taskforce**
- **Retain current delivery arrangements to vesting day**
- **Sequence all service changes only after readiness checks**

Workforce uncertainty and differing pay and terms could lead to staff loss, low morale and recruitment challenges in essential roles.

- Launch an early engagement plan with a single staff charter
- Clear staff transfer process
- Retention incentives for critical roles

Transition and harmonisation costs could exceed forecasts, delaying savings and creating uneven financial resilience across areas.

- Define clear financial objectives
- Develop a clear benefits realisation approach
- Implement regular monitoring to assess progress

Integrating multiple IT and data systems could cause data loss, downtime or cyber breaches that affect service delivery.

- Use a “lift-and-shift” approach for Day 1 systems
- Dual-run key platforms
- Implement one cyber and data protection framework

Partners such as the NHS, EMCCA, police and the voluntary sector could face confusion or duplication across new structures.

- Continue existing partnership boards through transition
- Maintain a single Derbyshire voice in regional forums

Residents may feel loss of local identity or see variation in service standards between areas.

- Implement a locality model with area committees and community hubs
- Publish service standards to keep delivery close to residents

Unpreparedness around capacity and capability of staff within the new authority to implement changes.

- Conduct a skills assessment to identify skills and capabilities required to implement the changes
- Invest in external advice where required

4. Conclusion

4.1 Government Checklist

Below we have the six Government criteria and the associated references to sections within our proposal that align to these criteria and sub-criteria.

Table 17 - Government Checklist

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Evidence
1 Sensible single tier of local government	Establishes a single tier of local government for the whole of the area concerned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Derbyshire • Case for change • Options layout • Representation and local voice
	Sensible economic breakdown: with a tax base which does not create inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derbyshire's People and Places • Options layout • Financial Analysis in section 2 • Conclusion of OA and Financial analysis • Financial analysis in section 3
	Sensible geographic breakdown: which will help increase housing supply and meet local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derbyshire's People and Places • Why Derbyshire • Case for Change in Service Delivery • Options layout • How Socio-economic and Demand Challenges will be Addressed by Uniting Derbyshire • Place
2 'Right-sized' local government	A population of 500,000 or more (unless specific scenarios make this unreasonable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options layout • Conclusion of Options Appraisal
	Supports efficiencies and value for money for council taxpayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Analysis in section 2 and 3 • Opportunities provided by LGR • Managing Risks
	Improves capacity and supports the council to withstand financial shocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Analysis in section 2 and 3 • Conclusion of Financial Analysis • Managing Risks
	Manageable transition costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Analysis in section 2 and 3 • Roadmap • Managing Risks
3 High quality, sustainable services	Improves local government & service delivery, avoiding unnecessary service fragmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case for change in service delivery • Opportunities provided by LGR • People, Places and Systems • One council avoids the challenges of disaggregation

		Opportunity for public service reform including where this will lead to improved value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case for change in service delivery • Options layout • Opportunities provided by LGR for high-cost county-wide services • Our Operating Model • One council avoids the challenges of disaggregation • Roadmap
		Improves delivery of, or mitigates risks to negative impact on, crucial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities provided by LGR for high-cost county-wide services • One council avoids the challenges of disaggregation • Roadmap • Risks
4	Meets local needs	Meets local needs and is informed by local views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Sector Partnerships within Derby and Derbyshire • Why Derbyshire • Resident and Stakeholder Engagement • Vision • Opportunities provided by LGR for high-cost county-wide services • Operating Model
		Improves / migrates risk to issues of local identity, cultural and historic importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident Engagement • Representation and Local Voice • Managing Risks • Conclusion
		Addresses local concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident and Stakeholder Engagement • Representation and Local Voice • Managing Risks
5	Supports devolution arrangements	Helps to support devolution arrangements / unlock devolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derbyshire's local context and history • Why Derbyshire • Relationship with our Strategic Authority (EMCCA) • High-level plan
		Sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Derbyshire • Options layout • Proposed democratic structure in Derbyshire
6	Local engagement and empowerment	Enables stronger community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident and Stakeholder Engagement • Representation and Local Voice • Our Operating Model • Implementation Workstreams • Managing Risks
		Delivers genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation and Local Voice • Our Operating Model • Implementation Workstreams

4.2 Why one Council is the best option for Derbyshire

Derbyshire stands at a turning point. Local government faces rising demand, financial strain and public expectation. But this also brings opportunity, the chance to create a simpler, stronger council that delivers better value and better services for everyone. We have invested time to explore viable options, seek views and analyse data, and this work has concluded that the one council model (Option D) is the most viable option for Derbyshire and Derby City.

This option is:



Evidence-led and resident-backed

The options appraisal tested every viable model for Derbyshire's future. The evidence is clear: **Uniting Derbyshire into one council is the best option to meet Government criteria.** It creates one clear structure over a sensible geography, aligning with how people live and how partners already work together. Residents and partners have told us they want clarity, efficiency and accountability. One council delivers exactly that.



Financially strong and sustainable

A single council saves £20 million more each year than any two-unitary model in a reorganisation scenario, avoids £8–10 million in annual disaggregation costs, and is the only option to pay back within three years. It creates one budget and one leadership team, giving Derbyshire the resilience to invest in prevention, innovation and frontline (resident-facing) services.



Safe, simple transition

One council offers the smoothest and safest transition. It avoids dividing vital services such as social care and highways and maintains seamless delivery for residents. It builds on Derbyshire's existing strengths rather than starting from scratch.



Delivering a stronger future

One council brings together Derbyshire's people, assets and ambition. It strengthens our voice when interacting with businesses at a local and national level, and allows county-wide transport, housing and economic development planning to create and implement a coherent and unified plan for the future.

One Derbyshire: One council, One voice, One future

End Notes

- ¹ English Devolution White Paper, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), 16 December 2024.
- ² October 2025 electorate based on the electoral registers of each district and borough.
- ³ Mid-year population estimates, 2024, Office for National Statistics (ONS) (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ⁴ Mid-year population estimates, 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ⁵ 2021 Rural Urban Classification of lower super output areas in Derby and Derbyshire, ONS © Crown Copyright.
- ⁶ English Indices of Deprivation, 2019, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government © Crown Copyright.
- ⁷ The number of people aged 65+ per 100 people of working age (16-64).
- ⁸ Mid-year population estimates, 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ⁹ House Price Statistics for Small Areas and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings), 2024, ONS, © Crown Copyright.
- ¹⁰ Annual Population Survey, December - January 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ¹¹ Claimant count (by sex and age), July 2025, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ¹² Annual Population Survey, April 2024-March 2025, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ¹³ Business Register and Employment Survey, 2023, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ¹⁴ UK Business Counts, 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ¹⁵ Mid-year population estimates, 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ¹⁶ 2022-based Subnational Population Projections, 2022-47, ONS © Crown Copyright.
- ¹⁷ Census 2021, TS006 (Population density), ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ¹⁸ Census 2021, TS006 (Population density), ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ¹⁹ Mid-year population estimates, 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ²⁰ Mid-year population estimates, 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ²¹ Regional gross value added (balanced and current price), 2023, ONS © Crown Copyright.
- ²² English Indices of Deprivation, 2019, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government © Crown Copyright.
- ²³ Children in Low Income Families (aged 0-19 relative low income), 2023-24, Department for Work and Pensions, via Stat-Xplore, and Mid-year population estimates, 2023, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ²⁴ Council Tax: Stock of Properties, 2024 (October 2024 update), Valuation Office Agency © Crown Copyright.
- ²⁵ 2021 Rural Urban Classification (output area level) and Mid-year population estimates (small areas), 2022, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ²⁶ Mid-year population estimates, 2024, and mid-year population estimates (small areas), 2022, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright. The 2022 data has been used for option C, specifically to estimate the 2024 population of the northern and southern parts of Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, with 2022 based splits used for this and applied to 2024 data. This is because more recent small area population data was not available when the proposal was being developed.
- ²⁷ UK small area GVA estimates (current price), 2022, ONS © Crown Copyright. Note, 2022 GVA data has been used for each option as small area data is required and at the time of proposal development this was the latest data.
- ²⁸ Census 2021, RM024 (Economic activity status by sex by age), ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
- ²⁹ 2022-based Subnational Population Projections, 2022-47, ONS © Crown Copyright.
- ³⁰ 2022-based Subnational Population Projections, 2022-47, ONS © Crown Copyright.

Uniting Derbyshire



Appendix A: **LGR Proposal additional information**

Contents

A. Current structure of government within Derbyshire	3
B. Existing Partnerships.....	4
C. Local Government Reorganisation priorities for the East Midlands	6
D. Resident and Stakeholder Engagement.....	7
E. Socio-economic and demand challenges that can be tackled by Uniting Derbyshire	11
F. Our People, Places and Systems	12
G. Derbyshire Pension Fund	15
H. Importance of managing the transition effectively	16
I. A single unitary provides the most seamless transition	17
J. Operational requirements.....	18
K. Risks.....	22
L. Glossary	26
End Notes.....	29

A. Current structure of government within Derbyshire

Below we outline the existing structure of local government across Derbyshire, describing the roles, responsibilities and boundaries of the current councils.

County Council (upper-tier functions):

The County Council delivers the majority of large-scale, strategic services that cover the whole of the Derbyshire county area. These include:

- Children's services, including safeguarding, fostering, and adoption.
- Adult social care and community care, supporting older people and vulnerable residents.
- Education and schools, including special educational needs, adult learning, and early years.
- Highways and transport planning, street lighting, and traffic management.
- Waste disposal and minerals and waste planning.
- Public health responsibilities, such as health improvement and prevention.
- Libraries, trading standards, consumer protection, and emergency planning.
- Concessionary travel, passenger transport, and wider community safety.

District and Borough Councils (lower-tier functions):

District and borough councils are responsible for more localised, community-facing services. These include:

- Housing, homelessness prevention, and council tax and business rates collection.
- Planning, building regulations, and environmental health.
- Licensing, markets, fairs, and public conveniences.
- Leisure services, such as sports centres, recreation grounds, and parks.
- Street cleaning, waste collection and recycling.
- Local arts, recreation, and community events.

Derby City Council (unitary functions):

- Derby City Council operates differently. As a unitary authority, it provides both upper- and lower-tier services within the city boundary. This means residents in Derby access all of the functions listed above, ranging from social care to waste collection, from a single council.

Shared or overlapping responsibilities:

Some functions cut across the county and district level. These include:

- Arts, museums, tourism, and parking are delivered by both county and district councils.
- Economic development is a shared responsibility, with both tiers leading projects in different ways.
- Planning responsibilities are divided, with the county leading on minerals and waste planning and districts handling local development and building control.

B. Existing Partnerships

Below we have further detail of Partnerships that operate across Derbyshire. This demonstrates how existing partnership arrangements provide a strong foundation for joined-up working and benefits from shared priorities.

Children's services

Children's services in Derbyshire are supported by a strong set of statutory and strategic partnerships spanning the County Council, Derby City Council, and the eight district and borough councils. Derbyshire's partnership network brings together councils, health, education, and police to coordinate children's services and safeguarding.

Core partnerships include the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, the SEND Improvement and Assurance Board, and the Early Years Strategic Board, each linking the County and City Councils with NHS and education partners. Alongside these, the Corporate Parenting and Youth Justice Boards oversee care and justice responsibilities, with Derbyshire also contributing to regional collaboration through forums such as the D2N2 Fostering Board.

These partnerships provide the foundations for protecting children, supporting families and ensuring consistent standards across Derbyshire, which must be safeguarded and strengthened through reorganisation.

Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care in Derbyshire is delivered through a wide network of partnerships involving the County Council, Derby City Council, the eight district and borough councils, the NHS, and the voluntary and community sector. Derbyshire's adult care partnerships coordinate protection, commissioning, and integrated support across councils, health, and emergency services.

The Better Care Fund Board leads joint planning and funding between the County Council, the ICB, and districts, while the Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board oversees statutory safeguarding with police, health, housing, and fire partners. Specialist groups such as the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Delivery Board and MAPPA focus on complex needs and public protection, and Derbyshire engages in regional ADASS networks to align commissioning, workforce, and reform activity with neighbouring authorities.

These partnerships are essential for safeguarding, joint commissioning, and integration with health. The new structure must protect these arrangements while using reorganisation to strengthen collaboration and consistency across Derbyshire.

Public Health

Health partnerships in Derbyshire are extensive, involving the County and City councils, district and borough councils, the NHS, and the voluntary and community sector.

Derbyshire's health partnerships link councils, the NHS, and community organisations to improve population wellbeing and integrate services. The Health and Wellbeing Board sets system priorities through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), supported by eight District and Borough Health and Wellbeing Partnerships that target local needs and wider determinants of health.

Joined Up Care Derbyshire unites councils, the ICB, NHS providers, and the voluntary sector to coordinate health and care delivery, while cross-cutting groups such as the Derby and Derby Road Safety Partnership and the Derbyshire Resilience Partnership bring agencies together on prevention, safety, and emergency planning. Health partnerships already provide strong integration between councils, the NHS, and communities.

Reorganisation must safeguard these arrangements while giving the new structure the scale to strengthen prevention, reduce inequalities, and support resilience across Derbyshire.

Economy and economic regeneration

Derbyshire's economic partnerships link the County and City councils, district and borough councils, business leaders, education providers, and regional bodies.

The East Midlands Combined County Authority is the main regional body, with the County and City councils as members shaping transport, housing, skills, and net zero priorities. Local growth partnerships such as the Chesterfield Skills and Employment Partnership and Town Deal Boards in Clay Cross and Long Eaton link councils, colleges, and employers to align training with business needs.

Strategic schemes like Markham Vale and the South Derbyshire Growth Zone drive large-scale regeneration, while networks such as Business Peak District and the Minerals and Aggregates MOU support sustainable industry. Councils also collaborate on transport and infrastructure through the Enhanced Partnership Board, EMCCA workstreams, and the D2N2 Real Time Information Group.

Economic partnerships give Derbyshire the capacity to deliver growth, regeneration, and skills opportunities.

C. Local Government Reorganisation priorities for the East Midlands

Further to the statutory criteria for LGR and the supplementary Government guidance, the Mayor of the East Midlands considers the following matters as important and relevant for areas developing final proposals for LGR this November.

1. Proposals should be in the best interests of the region as a whole and put people and communities first. Best interests include both how the new authorities relate to place and culture and how they enable a strong foundation for good public services and future reform. To achieve this, we welcome engagement by local authorities with the public and local stakeholders to inform the development of proposals.
2. The number of constituent councils, which is currently four, two from each area, once new principal authorities are established should stay the same to enable a smooth transition to new arrangements and balance between the two areas. As per MHCLG feedback, new unitary authorities must support devolution arrangements and should interact effectively with EMCCA as the Strategic Authority. Authorities should prioritise coherent new unitary authorities, that support the long-term development of the success of the East Midlands.
3. The current planned timeframe for the establishment of new principal authorities, who will be constituent councils of EMCCA, should not be delayed beyond the shadow elections in April 2027 and full establishment from April 2028. Authorities in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire should work towards the same timetable that enables a smooth transition for the region together. Proposals that involve splitting building blocks of existing councils should have a clear plan for meeting this timetable.
4. Proposals should meet the sensible geography criteria and support housing delivery and wider spatial development across the region, and the planning and delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens. Authorities should explain how proposals for new authorities will provide for these, including with regards to EMCCA's Growth Strategy Areas and the sustainable expansion of current city boundaries. This is a once in a generation opportunity to establish new, coherent boundaries that support the long-term development of the region.

The text above is a direct copy of a letter received by all Councils in the EMCCA area, on behalf of EMCCA and the Mayor of the East Midlands, received on 28 October 2025.

D. Resident and Stakeholder Engagement

The section highlights the key themes, priorities and concerns raised during engagement, showing how these views have informed the development of the Council's LGR proposal. A detailed report of the engagement process and headline results is available at Appendix C.

It is important to note that the one council option was not a part of this engagement at the time, but the feedback from residents and stakeholders was still able to be applied to assess the four options against their needs.

Participation and Scope

More than 50 partner organisations and MP's were formally invited to contribute through letters, written submissions, and meetings. Responses were received from a wide range of statutory, voluntary, and regional partners, including, but not limited to:

- The East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and the Office of the Mayor
- Derbyshire district and borough councils and Derby City Council
- Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Derbyshire Constabulary, and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service
- NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and local hospital trusts etc.

This engagement captured a broad cross-section of perspectives from organisations that collectively shape Derbyshire's economy, services, and community wellbeing.

Resident Engagement Findings

The engagement programme was central to understanding how local people view the future of local government in Derbyshire, alongside stakeholders.

Reach and Representation

The survey received 4,532 responses, with 87% identifying as local residents. The remainder included council employees, local business owners, parish councillors, community organisations, and people working in Derbyshire but living elsewhere. Responses came from all districts, with particularly high participation from Derbyshire Dales (29%) and Amber Valley (20%). This overrepresentation was intentional, as communications were boosted in these districts given the greater potential impact of boundary changes under reorganisation proposals.

Demographic data shows a wide cross-section of participation. Just over half of respondents were female (52%), and 35% identified as disabled, ensuring good representation of people with lived experience of using council services. Around 5% identified as being from Black or minority ethnic backgrounds, slightly below the county average.

Identity and Sense of Place

Derbyshire's identity emerged as one of the most powerful themes in the engagement. When asked how they identified with the county, 56% of respondents described themselves as part of the North, 16% as part of the South, and 22% as belonging to the whole county. Comments show that most residents see Derbyshire as a county of strong local identities but with a deep shared heritage that should be protected. People described pride in Derbyshire's landscapes, market towns, and villages and a belief that "*Derbyshire works best together.*"

Concerns were widespread about proposals that could divide the county or split existing districts, particularly in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales. Many feared that disaggregation would weaken

their sense of belonging and lead to uneven treatment of communities. In contrast, there was strong support for retaining Derbyshire as a single entity, with one council responsible for all areas. This view aligns with the emerging public preference for a unified approach that strengthens local identity rather than fragments it.

What Residents Value about Their Area

When asked what they valued most about their local area, residents consistently mentioned:

- Access to the Peak District and natural environment;
- The friendliness and community spirit of local towns and villages;
- Strong volunteering and parish networks; and
- A safe, family-oriented environment with good access to schools and health services.

These responses underline the importance of protecting what makes Derbyshire distinctive while ensuring fair access to quality services in both urban and rural communities. Residents expressed a desire for councils to “*keep things local but work together across the county.*”

Priorities for Future Local Government

Across all districts, the top three priorities identified by residents when thinking about the future of local government were:

- Delivering high-quality services that work well for everyone (20%);
- Providing efficient services that reduce duplication (14%); and
- Maintaining or improving local services (14%).

Residents repeatedly said that they wanted councils to focus on value for money, transparency, and practical improvements rather than new bureaucracy. Many described frustration with the current two-tier system, where responsibility for services such as waste, planning, and highways is unclear. People emphasised that simplifying structures would make it easier to know “*who does what*” and to hold decision-makers accountable.

A recurring theme was the importance of protecting frontline services. While some were concerned about the cost and disruption of reorganisation, most felt that savings from reducing duplication should be reinvested into essential services like social care, road maintenance, and community safety.

Attitudes to Service Delivery and Access

Residents said that the local government should remain visible and accessible. While many supported a more efficient structure, they also wanted reassurance that local offices, contact centres, and online access points would remain available in their communities. Several respondents called for improved customer service, better use of digital technology, and clearer routes to report issues.

The findings also highlight the role of parish and town councils in maintaining local identity and responsiveness. Many residents favoured a future model that empowers these councils and local community groups to play a stronger role in shaping services at neighbourhood level.

Concerns Raised by Residents

While there was broad recognition that change is needed, several concerns were raised:

- Services could become too centralised or harder to access for rural residents

- The potential loss of local accountability if smaller councils were merged
- The need for transparency about costs and savings
- Worries about the pace of change and the capacity of councils to manage the transition.

Many residents said that communication will be key to maintaining confidence. They want to be kept informed about how reorganisation will affect them and to see visible improvements in how services are delivered.

Engagement outputs regarding Options A-C

Feedback from residents and stakeholders showed limited support for Options A–C, with all three two-unitary models viewed as failing to meet key Government criteria on geography, service quality, and local identity. Quantitative results showed that Option A (Amber Valley in the North) attracted only marginal support, with 41 percent agreement and 43 percent disagreement, while Option B (Amber Valley in the South) and Option C (Redrawn Boundaries) were firmly rejected, recording 49 percent and 53 percent disagreement respectively.

Open comments in the survey revealed widespread concern that Options C would split existing districts such as Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, weakening local identity and making service delivery more confusing. Many residents expressed unease about losing the coherence of the historic county and about new boundary lines creating unfairness between areas. Stakeholders shared these views, warning that the boundary changes in Option C would cut across existing health, education, policing and economic networks, undermining established partnerships and making joint planning harder. Options A and B also had concerns around population and geographic distribution.

Taken together, the engagement evidence suggests that Options A–C were not suitable because they didn't perform adequately across multiple Government criteria, most notably on simplicity, sustainability, and preserving Derbyshire's identity.

Resident and Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Engagement with residents, partners, and key stakeholders has given a clear picture of Derbyshire's local priorities, values, and expectations for reorganisation. Over 4,500 residents and 50 partner organisations participated. Their feedback reveals important concerns that will be addressed through the preferred one unitary authority (1UA) model.

Theme	Concerns / Focus Areas	How a United Derbyshire addresses this
Confusion and Fragmentation of Local Services	Residents described the current two-tier system as confusing and inefficient. Many said they were unsure which council to contact for help with housing, waste, or social care, leading to delays and frustration.	A single council removes duplication and creates one accountable body for all services. Residents have one website, one phone line, and one elected group representing them. Integration of planning, housing, transport, and care improves everyday experiences and ensures joined-up service delivery across Derbyshire.
Loss of Local Identity and Representation	Feedback from residents, especially in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, showed deep attachment to local identity. Many opposed models that would split or	A single council maintains Derbyshire's historic and ceremonial identity, keeping the county whole and recognisable. It introduces a locality-based structure with area boards and parish partnerships, so

	merge familiar district areas and feared losing their community voice.	decisions remain close to communities, and protects local pride while creating a unified voice for Derbyshire, nationally and within the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA).
Service Disruption and Inequality During Transition	Stakeholders including the NHS, police, and voluntary sector warned that dividing services could disrupt critical care and increase inequality between areas.	A single unitary delivers continuity and stability by keeping all statutory services under one system. It enables shared data, planning, and resources across health, education, social care, and emergency services. It ensures equal access to high-quality services countywide, reducing the risk of postcode inequalities.
Financial Efficiency and Value for Money	Residents ranked value for money and efficiency as top priorities. Partners stressed that fragmentation would increase costs and drain capacity.	A single unitary reduces senior management, back-office duplication and property costs, releasing tens of millions of pounds annually to reinvest in frontline services. It creates a financially resilient organisation able to withstand shocks, protect services, and avoid council tax disparities between areas. It aligns with the Government's efficiency goals and Devolution White Paper emphasis on sustainable single-tier government.
Partnership Complexity	Public sector partners said that working with multiple councils adds administrative burdens, slows decision-making, and complicates joint projects such as health integration and regional growth.	One council provides one strategic partner for EMCCA, the NHS, and emergency services. It simplifies collaboration, reduces bureaucracy, and supports joint investment in health, skills, housing, and climate programmes. It strengthens Derbyshire's influence in regional and national negotiations.
Public Understanding and Engagement	Residents and community groups raised concerns that smaller or remote areas could be overlooked in future service delivery. They wanted reassurance that rural Derbyshire, with its transport and digital challenges, would receive the same focus as larger towns and the city.	A single council can plan services across the full geography of Derbyshire, ensuring consistent standards and fair access for both urban and rural communities. Countywide investment plans will target areas with poorer connectivity, health outcomes, or social infrastructure, helping to close long-standing inequalities. By pooling resources and using data at scale, the 1UA can prioritise rural transport, digital coverage, and local service hubs, making services accessible wherever people live.

E. Socio-economic and demand challenges that can be tackled by Uniting Derbyshire

Below are the socio-economic and demand challenges that Derbyshire currently faces. These have the opportunity to be addressed through Uniting Derbyshire, as expanded upon in the main proposal.

1. Unlocking inclusive growth

Economic output and job creation in Derbyshire have consistently lagged behind the national average, with growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) being 7.2%¹ compared to 17.7% nationally, while employment has grown by just 8.5%² compared to 14.3%. Wages are around 5%³ below the national average, whilst productivity remains around 10%⁴ lower than England on average.

2. Tackling inequality and deprivation

Derbyshire is prosperous, but unequal. It contains some of England's most affluent areas, like Duffield in Amber Valley, but also communities facing deep and persistent deprivation in parts of Erewash, Bolsover and Chesterfield. 19.7%⁵ of residents live with a limiting illness or disability, above the national average of 17.3%, and the county's rate of child poverty⁶ and fuel poverty⁷ both exceed England's.

3. Planning for an ageing and changing population

The characteristics of Derbyshire's population are changing significantly and quickly. Overall, it has an older age profile than the national average, with particularly high levels of older adults (aged 65+)⁸ in Derbyshire Dales and North East Derbyshire. The 85+ population is projected to rise by 99.1%⁹ over the next 25 years, while the number of young people will fall by 7.7%.

4. Connecting communities and improving infrastructure

While Derbyshire is well positioned between multiple major cities, the connections between areas in the county are uneven. Travel times to get to jobs and services are long in rural areas, with three districts ranking in the bottom 25% nationally for access to employment by road (North-East Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales and Bolsover)¹⁰. Digital connectivity also lags behind, with High Peak and rural Derbyshire Dales among the poorest areas in England for high-speed internet¹¹ and mobile coverage.

5. Building a resilient and sustainable county

Derbyshire's economy is shaped by industries that are both vital and carbon-intensive e.g. manufacturing, quarrying, construction and heavy transport. The county also faces increasing risks from flooding and extreme weather, which threatens homes, infrastructure and businesses. At present, climate action and environmental planning are handled separately by multiple councils, leading to split responses.

F. Our People, Places and Systems

This section provides a more detailed overview of the key enablers of our one council proposal from a people, systems and place perspective. It expands on the summary provided in the main document regarding the future ambitions for our workforce, our assets and our IT infrastructure.

Our People:

People will define the success of Derbyshire's new council. Bringing together staff from across existing organisations offers the chance to build a single, modern workforce with shared values, clear purpose and stronger connection to the communities we serve. The transition will follow principles of fairness, transparency and respect. Staff will transfer legally with open engagement and collaboration with trade unions throughout the process. This is about shaping a workforce ready for the future. The new council will focus on stability during transition while developing the leadership, skills and culture needed to deliver better services, support career growth and attract new talent.

The transfer of staff to the new councils will be managed with care and consistency. The aim is to maintain service continuity, and give employees clarity and confidence throughout the process. Early appointment of senior leaders will provide direction and stability during transition, with oversight of one workforce under a single unitary. Open engagement with recognised trade unions and staff networks will remain central. Regular briefings, FAQs and feedback routes will help staff understand what the change means for them and enable two-way dialogue. Pay and grading differences between councils will be addressed fairly over time. A harmonisation plan will be developed following transfer, supported by equality impact assessments and consultation with staff representatives. The new council will also introduce a single workforce information system to align HR processes, improve transparency, and support workforce planning.

The new council will be built around a single, capable, and motivated workforce. Workforce planning will identify the appropriate leadership, technical and professional skills needed for the next decade. Training and development programmes will support staff to grow, adapt and progress, building capacity for digital transformation, customer service and local decision-making. A new leadership framework will encourage collaboration across all levels, empowering managers to innovate and staff to take ownership of improvement. The council will invest in apprenticeships, graduate pathways and internal development to create clear routes for progression and attract new talent. Values and behaviours co-designed with staff will underpin this change, promoting teamwork, fairness and accountability. Together, these steps will create a confident, skilled and adaptable workforce - one that delivers better outcomes for residents and helps shape the culture of the new council from day one.

A strong, shared culture will define the new council. It will bring together the best of Derbyshire's existing councils into one organisation built on trust, inclusion and collaboration. Leaders will set the tone - visible, open and accountable - creating a workplace where people feel valued and supported to do their best work. Staff will help shape a set of values and behaviours that reflect Derbyshire's communities and guide how the council works, makes decisions and serves residents. The culture will be reinforced through everyday practice: clear communication, fair policies, and consistent recognition of achievement. Wellbeing, equality and diversity will sit at the heart of this approach, ensuring all staff feel respected and able to contribute fully. Regular staff engagement, listening sessions and surveys will keep the organisation connected and responsive. The goal is a single team with a shared purpose, allowing for one council, many voices, focused on delivering positive change for Derbyshire.

One council gives Derbyshire the chance to build a workforce and culture fit for the future. By managing transfer with care, investing in people, and shaping an open, values-driven organisation, the new council will start from a position of strength. Staff will feel proud to belong to a single team serving Derbyshire's communities, confident in their role, and ready to deliver the high-quality, resident-focused services that will define the new era of local government in the county.

Our Places:

Property is the second most important resource for councils after people. LGR gives us a powerful chance to rethink how land and buildings are used across Derbyshire. By managing the public estate as a single system, the new council will be able to reduce duplication, reduce costs, and release land and buildings that are no longer needed. Surplus sites can be used for new housing, community facilities, or commercial development, creating value for local residents and businesses.

This approach is known as Strategic Asset Management (SAM), and it will sit at the heart of the new council. It means using property to support wider priorities, not just as an overhead to be managed. Land and buildings will be aligned with the needs of local people and the ambitions of the councils, helping deliver better outcomes and long-term resilience.

SAM can directly support a wide range of strategic priorities:

- Delivering more affordable housing, supported by national funding programmes and partnerships with Homes England.
- Attracting inward investment by presenting a clear, investable estate strategy.
- Supporting placemaking by linking redevelopment with local identity and ambition.
- Providing neighbourhood hubs that bring together multiple services in one place.
- Strengthening the visitor economy by improving public realm and destination assets.
- Tackling climate change and sustainability through decarbonisation projects and green infrastructure.
- Improving health and wellbeing with co-located health and care services and spaces that promote active travel.
- Creating education and skills opportunities through training centres and digital inclusion hubs.
- Empowering communities with asset transfers and the creation of inclusive public spaces.
- Driving economic growth and regeneration through enterprise zones and the use of commercial assets.
- Ensuring resilience and emergency preparedness by adapting buildings for crisis response.
- Supporting digital transformation with smart estate management and flexible working spaces.
- Strengthening financial sustainability by reducing running costs, generating income, and targeting investment.

A clear example of what this means in practice is the redevelopment of Smedley's Hydro in Matlock. This scheme will transform the historic site into a mixed-use development. The south block will be restored as a hotel, reviving its original purpose and boosting the visitor economy. The north block will be converted into new homes and commercial space to meet local housing demand and support small businesses. The Winter Gardens will be refurbished to protect heritage and create new community event space. A new low-energy council headquarters will also be built, reducing long-term operating costs and avoiding significant capital liabilities. This single project is expected to attract over £100 million in private investment, create jobs, support local supply chains, and boost the local economy.

Beyond Smedley's Hydro, reorganisation creates wider opportunities across the estate. By consolidating and repurposing offices, depots and service buildings, the new council can rationalise the estate while protecting local access. Surplus or underused sites can be released for redevelopment, while frontline services can be co-located in shared hubs. Co-location brings multiple benefits: residents will find it easier to access different services in one place, services can integrate more effectively across housing, health and care, councils can reduce duplication and costs, and staff will benefit from modern working environments that encourage collaboration.

These ambitions will be supported by access to national funding programmes. The Affordable Homes Programme and the new Social Housing Programme (2026–2036) will enable the councils to deliver social rent, shared ownership, supported housing and regeneration schemes. A Bridge Fund will ensure continuity of housing projects as programmes change. The Local Regeneration Fund will bring together multiple capital programmes, such as Levelling Up and Town Deals, into one flexible fund that the council can use to back local priorities. The Plan for Neighbourhoods will give up to £20 million over ten years to selected towns, with Chesterfield already chosen to use this funding to revitalise its town centre and strengthen local services. Finally, the One Public Estate programme will support the council to work with partners across the public sector to unlock land for housing, co-locate services, and transform local service delivery.

The overall ambition is clear: property will no longer be seen as a cost on the balance sheet, but as a resource that can deliver better outcomes for residents. By embedding Strategic Asset Management into the new council from day one, Derbyshire will be able to make better use of land and buildings, strengthen collaboration across sectors, empower communities, and shape inclusive and sustainable places for the future. With systems and expertise already in place, this change can happen quickly, unlocking value from the outset and supporting the wider ambition for a unified council that is resilient, responsive and rooted in its communities.

Our Systems

A single, modern digital foundation will be essential to how Derbyshire's new council will work. It will make sure services continue without disruption from Day 1, support staff with the right tools, and give residents and businesses easier, safer access to council services online, all delivered through a 2-phase approach. There are several key phases proposed to the IT transition:

Phase 1 - Continuity and Connection

The first phase focuses on service continuity and resilience while systems are brought together.

- Maintain uninterrupted access to critical applications for staff, residents and partners from Day 1.
- Use a “lift and shift” approach to move existing systems safely into cloud environments with minimal change.
- Apply the IT Cloud Strategy and Roadmap to provide a secure, scalable and cloud-first hosting model that supports resilience and disaster recovery.
- Follow the Digital Architectural Framework and Application and Business Capability Model to re-host existing systems in a way that supports future integration.
- Continue shared oversight through the Architectural Review Board and Digital Procurement Governance to keep standards, licensing and contracts consistent across authorities.

This phase ensures operational stability and a safe foundation for service transformation.

Phase 2 - Integration, Modernisation and Inclusion

- Once stability is achieved, the second phase builds a single, modern, connected digital environment.
- Use the Digital Strategy and Operating Model (2025) to redesign services around enterprise architecture principles, creating shared, cloud-based platforms and standardised processes.
- Embed the Data Management Strategy to deliver unified data governance, interoperability and shared insight across all services.
- Introduce agile infrastructure, shared applications and automation to eliminate duplication and support flexible working.
- Strengthen digital inclusion through the Derbyshire Public Health Digital Inclusion Strategy, working with Citizens Online, D2N2, and community partners to improve connectivity, skills and access for residents most at risk of digital exclusion.
- Adopt emerging technologies where they improve value, accessibility and sustainability, aligning investment with the Cloud Strategy and Roadmap.

When both phases are complete, Derbyshire's new council will run on a single, secure and modern digital foundation. A shared Data Management Strategy will create one trusted source of data, enabling faster, evidence-based decisions and consistent insight across all services.

Staff will work through cloud-based, standardised platforms that reduce duplication and support flexible, collaborative working. Residents will benefit from easier online access, improved responsiveness and greater choice in how they interact with services.

The result will be a unified, data-driven, and digitally inclusive council, efficient to run, simple to navigate, and designed around the needs of Derbyshire's people and places.

G. Derbyshire Pension Fund

The Derbyshire Pension Fund (DPF) is one of the largest and most stable Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds in England, providing pensions for over 100,000 members and beneficiaries across more than 400 employers. The County Council currently administers the £7.2bn Derbyshire Pension Fund. As part of LGR, careful consideration will need to be given to the governance of how the fund will operate in the new local government landscape across Derbyshire.

It is proposed that the new single Derbyshire Unitary Council will be designated as the administering authority. This approach preserves a single, countywide fund, ensuring long-term financial stability, administrative efficiency, and continued confidence among members and employers.

The Fund will continue to serve all employers and staff who are members of the LGPS across Derbyshire, including schools, academies, and other admitted bodies. No member benefits or entitlements will change because of this administrative transfer.

H. Importance of managing the transition effectively

LGR offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a stronger, more sustainable local council for Derbyshire, but its success will depend on how well the transition is managed. A well-planned and carefully delivered transition will determine whether the new council can begin life with confidence, stability, and public trust.

Effective transition management is not just about structural change. It is about continuity of essential services, the safeguarding of residents, and the preservation of Derbyshire's strong partnerships across health, education, and community safety. By managing transition well, Derbyshire can start its new structure from a position of strength, protecting frontline services, maintaining financial stability, and creating the foundations for long-term transformation.

By bringing people, data, and delivery under one structure effectively, Derbyshire will be able to:

- **Provide seamless services from day one**

Residents will have a single council to contact, a clear route to support, and equal access to high-quality services regardless of where they live.

- **Support vulnerable residents**

Care for children, families, and older people will continue without disruption, supported by clear leadership, stable teams, and consistent safeguarding arrangements.

- **Build stronger local relationships**

The transition will allow local offices, hubs, and parish partnerships to stay connected, helping services remain close to communities and responsive to local needs.

- **Strengthen financial resilience**

Unified budgets will make it easier to manage resources, plan investment, and respond to economic or social pressures.

- **Retain and develop skilled staff**

A well-managed change will give employees clarity, purpose, and the chance to shape the new organisation together, embedding a shared culture from the start.

- **Accelerate transformation**

Once systems are stable and reliable, focus can move quickly to modernising how services are delivered, using digital tools, shared data, and new ways of working to improve outcomes.

The result will be a council ready to serve its residents from day one - a single organisation with the scale to deliver for the whole county and the flexibility to meet the needs of every community. Good transition management will give Derbyshire the best start possible, turning the challenges of reorganisation into a platform for long-term success.

I. A single unitary provides the most seamless transition

Option	Deliverability Feasibility
Option A (2UA w/ AV in the North)	Option A presents a more complex and resource-intensive transition. It would require the complete disaggregation of county-wide services and the creation of two new authorities with independent statutory responsibilities, systems, and governance arrangements. This carries substantial cost and risk, especially in high-demand services like adult and children's social care, where fragmentation could disrupt delivery. Implementation would also demand new leadership structures and organisational capacity within both councils, stretching existing resources and lengthening the time required for stability.
Option B (2UA w/ AV in the South)	Option B faces similar challenges to Option A. It involves dividing county functions and assets between two new authorities, establishing separate management, IT, and workforce arrangements. The differing population sizes between the two areas would add to the complexity, as the smaller northern authority could face early capacity and resilience pressures. While this model could eventually achieve moderate efficiencies, its transition risks are high, and the time and cost needed to reach operational maturity would be considerably greater than under a single unitary model.
Option C (2UA w/ altered boundaries)	Option C is the most difficult and risky configuration to deliver. In addition to disaggregating county services, it would require statutory boundary reviews to split Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, alongside the redistribution of assets, contracts, and staff. This process would introduce significant administrative uncertainty and legal complexity, delaying implementation and increasing costs. The need to redraw boundaries would also disrupt local identity and partnership arrangements, making service continuity harder to maintain.
Option D (1UA)	Option D is the most straightforward and feasible model to deliver. By merging all existing councils into a single organisation, it avoids the costly and disruptive process of disaggregating county services or creating new administrative boundaries. Existing systems, contracts, and service structures, particularly in social care, highways, waste, and education, can largely be retained, ensuring continuity for residents and staff. While the transition would require significant organisational change, it could be managed within a single programme, providing a clearer pathway to implementation, lower risk, and faster realisation of benefits. This model allows Derbyshire to focus on transforming services and achieving efficiencies from day one, rather than rebuilding fragmented structures.

J. Operational requirements

Operational requirements set out the essential capabilities that must be in place for Derbyshire's new unitary council to be safe, legal, and fully functional from Day 1.

Derbyshire's preparatory work therefore defines a clear "Day 1 minimum standard": the core set of legal, financial, and operational capabilities that must be guaranteed from vesting day (April 2028) to ensure the new council delivers uninterrupted, lawful, and responsive services across all communities. Throughout the preparatory period for the transition, there will be a focus on putting in place all of these critical enablers.

1) Legal and democratic readiness

- The new council will have its statutory officers in post, including a Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, and Directors for Adult Social Care and Children's Services, with delegated powers live from vesting day.
- A constitution, scheme of delegation, financial regulations and contract rules will have been agreed and adopted reflecting the scale and diversity of Derbyshire's communities, from large urban centres such as Derby and Chesterfield to rural areas in the Dales and High Peak, allowing lawful decisions and spending from Day 1.
- Arrangements for council tax and business rate billing will be operational, with systems tested and new billing accounts issued for the 2028/29 financial year. This is particularly important given the wide variation in tax bases and housing growth across the county.
- Insurance, audit, and complaints systems will be in place to ensure full legal continuity.

2) Adult Social Care (ASC) - continuous care and safeguarding

- A single 24/7 contact point will be live to respond immediately to safeguarding concerns, urgent care needs, and hospital discharges, ensuring that no resident is left without support - a critical requirement given Derbyshire's ageing population.
- All case management systems and records will be migrated and accessible to frontline staff, maintaining the continuity of care plans and financial assessments.
- Contracts with home care, residential care, day services, and supported living providers will be live and payments up to date. These arrangements will cover both large urban providers and smaller rural operators in areas such as Derbyshire Dales and High Peak, where travel time and workforce availability already present challenges.
- Hospital discharge and joint working with NHS partners will continue under renewed Section 75 and Better Care Fund agreements, with discharge hubs and community reablement teams maintaining integrated pathways across the county's hospitals.
- Safeguarding boards and partnership arrangements will transfer smoothly into the new governance model.

3) Children's Services (CSC) - safe continuity

- The Derbyshire Children's Front Door (MASH) will remain live and fully staffed, ensuring that referrals, risk assessments, and safeguarding responses continue seamlessly.
- All children in care and child protection cases will remain open and allocated with no change to case responsibility.

- Payments to foster carers, children's homes, and commissioned providers will continue on schedule through the new financial platform.
- Education and SEND functions will operate as normal under the new authority. These arrangements are particularly important in Derbyshire, where rural geography and growing pressures on specialist provision demand reliable coordination across schools and transport routes
- All statutory partnerships, including the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Corporate Parenting Board, will transfer intact to the new governance structure, retaining legal status and recognition by the NHS, Police, and education partners.

4) Finance and revenue operations

- From Day 1, the new Derbyshire Council will operate on a tested financial management system covering the full ledger, payments, budgeting, and reporting cycle.
- Payroll will be tested and ready to pay all employees on the first pay run after vesting day.
- Supplier and care provider payments will continue to be processed to contract terms to avoid any interruption to critical delivery, including home care contracts, waste collection, and housing repairs.
- A shadow Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and balanced 2028/29 budget will be in place, ensuring the new authority can operate lawfully and deliver on its statutory duties from vesting.
- Treasury management, banking and pension fund arrangements will be confirmed and transferred.

5) People and workforce

- All employees from the county, districts, boroughs, and Derby City will transfer to the new council, with continuous service, pay, and pension rights protected.
- Formal engagement with trade unions will continue throughout transition, building on Derbyshire's strong record of partnership working.
- Core HR policies, covering pay, leave, performance, equality, and health and safety, will be lifted into the new system to preserve continuity.
- Comprehensive workforce planning will be completed in advance to ensure the new council has the capacity and skills to deliver critical services from vesting day. This will include modelling workforce requirements in high-pressure areas such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, waste, and environmental health, where Derbyshire already faces national recruitment challenges.

6) Technology and data

- Core business systems, including finance, HR and payroll, customer contact, and Adult and Children's Social Care case management, will be operational from Day 1.
- Websites, customer portals, and contact centres will work seamlessly, with automatic redirects from legacy council sites and numbers to prevent confusion, resulting in clear digital routes to access services, supported by local phone and in-person options for areas with limited broadband or mobile coverage.

- Staff logins, devices and network access will be ready for use on Day 1.
- Cyber security protections will be embedded from the outset, with updated protocols covering user authentication, threat monitoring, and incident response. Data sharing agreements with the NHS, Police, and EMCCA will be updated to reflect the new legal entity, ensuring lawful and secure exchange of information for safeguarding, public health, and community safety.

7) Customer access and local presence

- From Day 1, every resident in Derbyshire will be able to contact the new council easily by phone, online, or face-to-face.
- Local service points, libraries, and community offices will remain open under the new council, providing continuity for residents in both urban and rural areas. This will be particularly important for communities in Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, and Bolsover, where digital and transport access are more limited.
- Updated branding, signage, and public communications will clearly explain the move to a single council, including changes to service contact details and online addresses.
- Customer service staff will be fully trained and equipped to handle enquiries across all service areas, from waste and housing to social care and registrars.

8) Contracts and commissioning

- All existing contracts will either be novated or assigned to the new council to ensure services such as waste collection, highways maintenance, ICT and care delivery continue uninterrupted.
- A single procurement and commissioning framework will be adopted, combining the existing systems used by the County, Derby City, and the eight district and borough councils. This will allow all suppliers and delivery partners to trade from vesting day without the need for retendering or interim contracts.
- High-value and safety-critical suppliers will have been engaged in advance to confirm readiness for transition, particularly in the areas of adult social care placements, waste disposal, and highways engineering.

9) Property and resilience

- All operational buildings, depots, and public-facing sites will be open, safe, and staffed from Day 1. Facilities management, security, and statutory health and safety checks will transfer seamlessly to the new Derbyshire Council.
- The council's fleet and asset management systems will be fully operational to guarantee the availability of essential vehicles and equipment for waste collection, winter gritting, highways maintenance, and social care visits.
- Emergency planning and civil protection functions will continue without interruption. Existing multi-agency plans and on-call arrangements will transfer directly into the new structure, maintaining full participation in the Derbyshire Resilience Partnership and the Local Resilience Forum.

10) Partnerships and system working

- Derbyshire's strong partnership landscape will carry forward unchanged on vesting day, with all joint boards, collaborations, and statutory arrangements refreshed to name the new

council as a formal partner. This will include the Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Partnership, the Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board, the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, and the Community Safety Board.

- Partnerships with the voluntary, community, and faith sectors will also be maintained and supported through the transition. These organisations play a vital role in local service delivery, especially in rural areas and communities facing disadvantage.

K. Risks

Below are further risks and challenges surrounding LGR that must be understood and mitigated across all options:

Risk Group	Risk	Mitigation
1. Transitional & Implementation	Disruption to critical services (ASC, CSC, Public Health, Housing, Waste, Planning) during transition and migration of systems.	Adopt a “lift, shift and rationalise” model to preserve service continuity; maintain current operations until vesting; establish a Transition PMO with statutory directors overseeing continuity.
	Insufficient capacity, funding, or expertise to manage the complexity of reorganisation across 10 councils.	Resource a dedicated PMO; ring-fence transition funding; deploy secondees and external support; maintain strong joint governance with a shadow authority.
	Misalignment or delay in establishing shadow governance, elections, and leadership could slow decisions.	Establish a balanced Political Leadership Board; confirm interim constitution and delegated powers; maintain regular reporting.
	Data and IT system migration (e.g. Mosaic, Theseus, housing systems) could result in data loss, duplication, or cyber incidents.	Implement dual-running of core systems, robust migration protocols, and unified cyber-security framework; audit data sharing agreements.
2. Service Delivery & Safeguarding	Splitting adult or children’s social care functions could cause gaps in safeguarding and statutory compliance.	Keep joint safeguarding frameworks under a single DASS and DCS until vesting; reconstitute Safeguarding Boards early; maintain shared practice standards.
	Commissioned care markets (residential, fostering, SEND transport) may destabilise, increasing costs or reducing availability.	Maintain joint commissioning and framework contracts through transition; pool budgets for placements and SEND transport; engage providers early.
	Public Health statutory duties (e.g. outbreak management, sexual health) could lapse during transition.	Retain unified PH governance with DPH oversight; protect all mandated services; maintain shared health protection functions across Derbyshire.
	Homelessness, housing enforcement, or waste	Retain current local plans and waste contracts to Day 1; phase harmonisation;

Risk Group	Risk	Mitigation
	functions could fragment, creating inconsistent standards and public confusion.	share expertise (e.g. waste engineering, housing viability) across areas.
3. Financial & Resource	Transition and harmonisation costs may exceed forecasts, reducing short-term savings.	Maintain transition reserve; independent financial assurance; phase savings over two years.
	Legacy differences in council tax, PH grant (£60.58 vs £90.86 p/head), and ASC demand could unbalance resources.	Secure clarity from Government on grant equalisation; phase council tax harmonisation; create unified MTFP to absorb variation.
	Inflation, pay pressures, or high-cost placements could erode financial resilience.	Quarterly financial risk reviews; scenario modelling; early-warning system for demand pressures.
4. Workforce, Culture & Governance	Staff uncertainty and differing pay/conditions could drive turnover and morale issues.	Communicate early on TUPE, pay protection and progression; publish a single staff charter; implement retention and engagement plans.
	Cultural integration between county and districts may falter, weakening collaboration.	Co-design new values and behaviours with staff; run joint workshops and induction programmes.
	Leadership gaps or loss of experienced managers during transition could reduce accountability.	Maintain interim senior appointments through vesting; succession plans for critical posts.
	Inconsistent grading structures and pay gaps between different Council staff could create inequity.	Harmonise HR policies in phases; introduce pay parity review post-vesting.
5. Community, Partnership & Reputation	Loss of local identity or visibility may reduce public trust in the new council.	Establish locality boards and one-stop community hubs; communicate benefits clearly; retain civic traditions and local branding.

Risk Group	Risk	Mitigation
	Partners (NHS, Police, EMCCA, VCS) may face uncertainty	Maintain current joint boards through transition; align future governance with EMCCA and ICB structures; produce one Derbyshire partnership framework.
	Weak public communication or consultation could fuel resistance.	Deliver regular, transparent communication with residents and stakeholders; use citizen panels to shape priorities.
6. Assets, Digital & Infrastructure	Failure to maintain or rationalise properties could delay service delivery post-vesting.	Complete asset register early; identify priority operational sites for Day 1; phase property rationalisation.
	Fragmented contracts (waste, fleet, highways) could disrupt frontline operations.	Phase contract novation; retain shared service arrangements until new procurement complete.
	Insufficient digital infrastructure or data integration may reduce service quality.	Continue current systems until unified platforms procured; implement single CRM and case-management roadmap.
7. Adult Social Care (ASC)-Specific	Disaggregation could interrupt high-risk care packages and weaken market stability.	Maintain existing provider frameworks; DASS to lead joint risk oversight; communicate with care providers on continuity plans.
	Workforce shortages in the care sector could worsen under structural change.	Joint recruitment campaigns; retention incentives; partnership with training providers; phased reorganisation of teams.
	Integration with NHS and EMCCA reforms may stall.	Establish joint ASC-NHS Transformation Board; align delivery footprints.
8. Children's Services (CSC)-Specific	Safeguarding and case management may fragment during system migration.	Bridge IT systems; retain joint LSCPs; clear escalation routes; audit case continuity.
	Differences in thresholds or policies (SEND, fostering, early help) could confuse families and partners.	Agree harmonised core standards pre-vesting; maintain shared improvement frameworks.

Risk Group	Risk	Mitigation
	Specialist provision (residential, secure, SEND schools) may not be distributed evenly.	Keep county-wide commissioning; joint placement board to oversee sufficiency and funding.
9. Public Health-Specific	Public Health grant inequity could embed funding gaps between localities.	Negotiate national equalisation; maintain joint oversight by the Director of Public Health until resolved.
	Loss of analytical capacity (JSNA, surveillance) if functions split.	Retain shared Derbyshire Intelligence Hub; pool analysts across localities.
	Risk to statutory assurance if DPH role unclear in new structure.	Embed DPH in senior leadership and statutory scheme; codify accountability in constitution.
10. Place & Environment-Specific	Divergent waste, planning, or enforcement standards could create confusion and cost.	Harmonise policies gradually; share contracts where feasible; maintain unified communications to residents.
	Regional influence could weaken if Derbyshire's priorities diverge internally.	Coordinate infrastructure and housing strategy through EMCCA; single county voice in regional bids.
	Unequal regeneration investment could widen north-south disparities.	Apply balanced investment frameworks using deprivation and need data; transparent monitoring.
11. Strategic & Political	Differing political priorities or leadership disputes could delay key decisions.	Establish Political Leadership Board with cross-party membership; use independent facilitation for consensus.
	Failure to align with EMCCA devolution or regional reforms could isolate Derbyshire.	Shadow authority to maintain direct engagement with EMCCA and MHCLG
	Poor transition planning could erode national confidence and funding support.	Regular liaison with MHCLG; publish milestones and delivery reports.

L. Glossary

A

Term	Definition
1UA (Single Unitary Authority)	A single-tier model where one new council delivers all local government services for Derbyshire, replacing both the County, City and District Councils.
2UA (Two Unitary Authorities)	A model proposing two new councils (e.g. North/South or East/West Derbyshire) that would each deliver all services within their area.
Aggregation	The process of bringing together county and district services into one organisation under a new unitary council.

B

Term	Definition
Balance Analysis	The review of population, geography, and financial indicators to assess whether the new council would be viable and balanced in scale.
Baseline Analysis	The data used to describe Derbyshire's current structure, demographics, and economy before reorganisation.

C

Term	Definition
Cabinet / CMT (Corporate Management Team)	The senior political and officer leadership group overseeing the LGR programme.
Council Tax Harmonisation (CTH)	The process of aligning different council tax levels across existing districts into a single, consistent rate within the new unitary authority.
County Deal / Devolution Deal	The agreement between local government and national government transferring powers and funding to a Combined County Authority, such as EMCCA.
Critical Day 1 Activities	Essential operational actions required to ensure services continue without disruption when the new unitary council comes into effect.

D

Term	Definition
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Devolution	The transfer of powers, funding and decision-making from central government to local areas.
Disaggregation	The division of existing county-wide services between two or more new authorities, as would be required under a 2UA model.
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – the Government department responsible for assessing LGR proposals.
District Councils	The eight lower-tier authorities currently delivering local services such as housing, planning, and waste collection in Derbyshire.

E-G

Term	Definition
EMCCA (East Midlands Combined County Authority)	The Mayoral Combined County Authority covering Derbyshire, Derby City, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City.
Engagement	The process of gathering views from residents, councillors, partners, and stakeholders to inform the LGR proposal.
Financial Analysis	The modelling of savings, costs, and payback periods for each proposed LGR option.
Functional Economic Area	A geography based on real patterns of work, travel, and housing markets - used to define “sensible boundaries” for new councils.

H-L

Term	Definition
High-Cost Services	Services with large budgets and demand pressures, such as Adult Social Care, Children’s Services and Public Health.
Implementation Plan	The roadmap for how reorganisation will be delivered, including governance, staffing, property and ICT changes.
Interim Plan	The initial submission to Government outlining Derbyshire’s early work and initial assessment of LGR options.
LGR (Local Government Reorganisation)	The process of replacing the current two-tier system with one or more single-tier unitary councils.
Local Identity	The sense of belonging and recognition of place which LGR proposals must protect and reflect.
Locality / Place Model	The approach for ensuring new councils remain locally responsive through area boards or locality hubs.

M-P

Term	Definition
MHCLG Criteria	The six Government tests used to assess LGR proposals, covering geography, efficiency, service quality, community engagement, and devolution alignment.
Neighbourhood Empowerment	Enabling residents, parishes, and community groups to influence decisions and shape local services.
Options Appraisal	The comparison of all potential reorganisation models (1UA vs 2UA) against the MHCLG criteria
Payback Period	The time required for savings from LGR to exceed the initial one-off transition costs.
Preferred Option	The model suggested as the most suitable for Derbyshire - a Single Unitary Authority (1UA).
Public Services	Core statutory services such as education, social care, waste management, and highways.

R-T

Term	Definition
RAG Rating	A Red-Amber-Green scoring method used to show how well each LGR option meets national and local criteria.
Reorganisation Savings	The financial efficiencies achieved through streamlining management, reducing duplication, and joining up services.
Shadow Authority	A temporary body formed to prepare for the launch of the new council before Vesting Day.
Sensible Geography	A new council area that reflects natural community, economic and transport links with a population close to 500,000.
Service Continuity	Maintaining uninterrupted service delivery throughout transition.
Stakeholders	Residents, staff, MPs, public sector partners, voluntary groups, and businesses with an interest in the reorganisation.
Statutory Services	Services that councils must provide by law, such as social care, education, and waste disposal.
Transformation Programme	The long-term redesign of services, culture, and systems following LGR to improve outcomes and efficiency.
Transition Costs	One-off costs associated with implementing LGR, including ICT, property, HR and communications.

U-Z

Term	Definition
UA (Unitary Authority)	A single-tier council responsible for all local government functions within its area.
Value for Money	Ensuring efficient use of public resources to achieve the best outcomes for taxpayers.
Vesting Day	The date on which the new unitary council officially takes on all powers, duties, and assets of the existing councils.

End Notes

¹ Regional gross value added (balanced and chained volume), 2013-2023, ONS © Crown Copyright.

² Business Register and Employment Survey, 2013-2023, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.

³ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.

⁴ Subregional Productivity, 2023, ONS © Crown Copyright. Note the figure for Derby and Derbyshire is built up using the Regional gross value added series (balanced and current price) and Subregional Productivity (Supporting Jobs and Hours data), 2023, based on guidance from ONS. This is because productivity data is not available for Derby and Derbyshire combined.

⁵ Census 2021, TS038 (Disability), ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.

⁶ Children in Low Income Families (aged 0-19 relative low income), 2023/24, Department for Work and Pensions, via Stat-Xplore, and Mid-year population estimates, 2023, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.

⁷ Subregional Fuel Poverty in England, 2023, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, © Crown Copyright.

⁸ Mid-year population estimates, 2024, ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.

⁹ 2022-based Subnational Population Projections, 2022-47, ONS © Crown Copyright.

¹⁰ Travel time, destination and origin indicators for employment centres by mode of travel and local authority, England, 2019, Department for Transport © Crown Copyright.

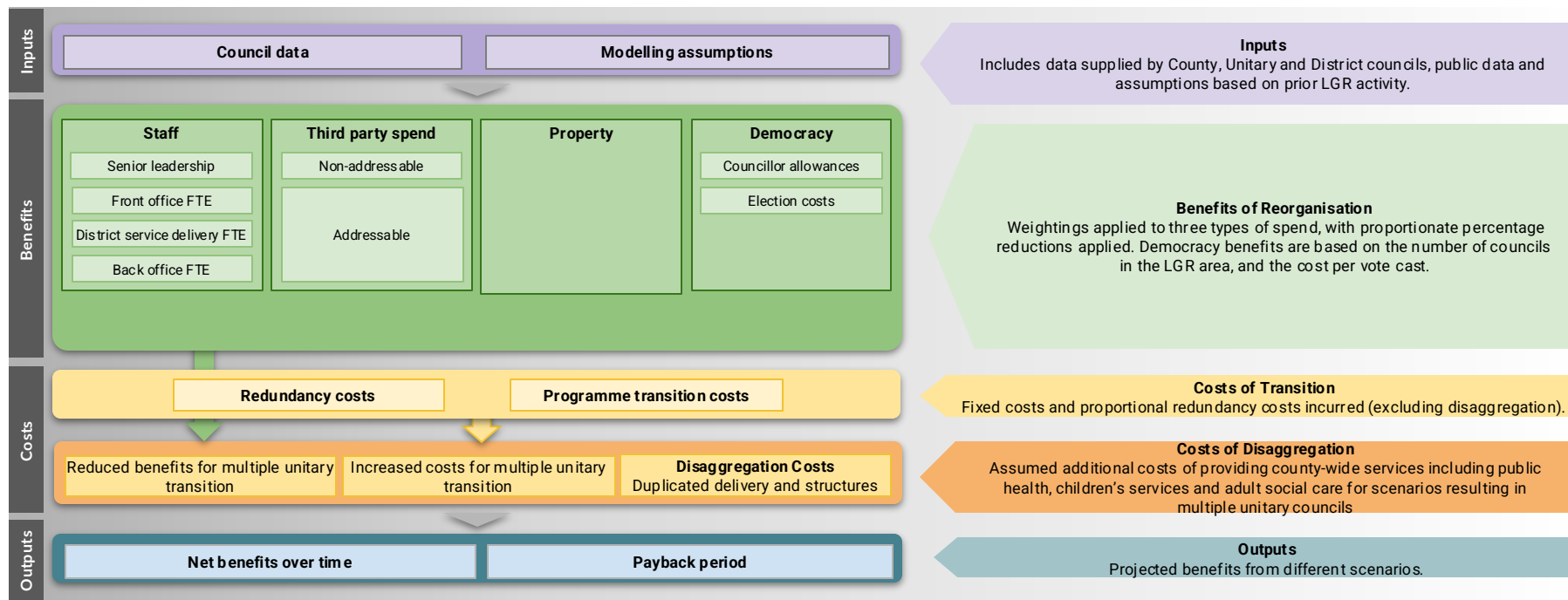
¹¹ Fixed coverage - output areas (gigabit availability), 2024, Ofcom © Crown Copyright.

Local Government Reorganisation: Financial Analysis Appendix B

November 2025

Financial Analysis Approach

Financial analysis has been undertaken for each LGR option under consideration, in order to gauge the potential costs and benefits. The approach is outlined below and this section details the baseline data, assumptions, and calculations underpinning cost and benefit calculations. Wherever possible, actual figures from local or public sources are used.



Financial Analysis: Overview of Options

Based on the geography of Derbyshire and MHCLG guidance, four reorganisation options have been assessed.

Option	Geography	Population
A Two unitary authorities: Amber Valley in the North	North: Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire	591,000
	South: Derby City, South Derbyshire, Erewash	506,000
B Two unitary authorities: Amber Valley in the South	North: Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire	460,000
	South: Amber Valley, Derby City, South Derbyshire, Erewash	636,000
C Two unitary authorities	North/South boundary redrawn to adjust Amber Valley and/or Derbyshire Dales between the two councils.	~ 550,000 each
D One unitary authority	One council across Derbyshire	1,100,000

Financial Analysis: Summary

This section outlines the savings that could be achieved through unitarisation in Derbyshire and the potential costs. Three main scenarios have been analysed for Options A-D: Reorganisation only, Base Transformation and Stretch Transformation. "Reorganisation only" constitutes the more conservative financial scenario **and so the analysis in this LGR proposal is focussed on this scenario**. As reorganisation progresses, analysis has suggested that there may be additional opportunities to use reorganisation as a platform for further service transformation, with an even larger scale of financial benefits and costs.

Local government services in Derbyshire are currently delivered by 10 authorities (inclusive of Derbyshire County Council, Derby City and 8 districts/boroughs).

There is an opportunity through Local Government Reorganisation to make Derbyshire's model of local government more efficient by reducing fragmentation of service delivery.

Reorganisation Only

Bringing together Councils across Derbyshire to **reduce duplication of management, drive consistency in service delivery, and leverage economies of scale to reduce operating costs**. This harmonises without fundamentally transforming ways of working.

Base Transformation

The lowest expected costs and benefits from **transforming internal council processes, changing the way services operate, and redefining service offers**, whilst unitarising and carrying out the reorganisation activity outlined above.

Stretch Transformation

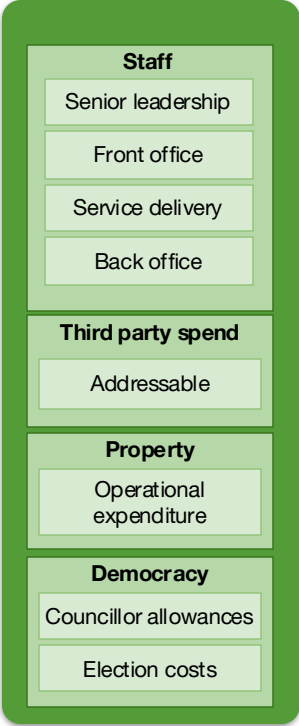
An ambitious case for significant transformational change in line with public sector reform, working internally and externally with public sector partners, e.g. significant technology investment, considering radical alternative delivery models etc., whilst unitarising and carrying out the reorganisation activity outlined above.

Analysis has been completed for one and two unitary options. The analysis suggests that the **one unitary option could create greater financial benefit:**

- A One Council option is estimated to **deliver c.£20m more in net reorganisation savings (when costs have been netted off the gross annual benefit) every year**, when compared to the two unitary options (£45m compared to c.£25m annually).
- A One Council option could deliver reorganisation benefits that are at least **£100m higher over 6 years**, when compared to two council options.
- A One Council option does not incur **disaggregation costs**, since services are only being aggregated. In comparison, the **two council options have annual disaggregation costs ranging between £8-10m**.

Benefits of Reorganisation

Reorganisation during LGR is likely to deliver financial savings. The financial analysis is based on several assumptions regarding savings across staff, third party spend, property and democratic spend. See below for the approach taken to estimating savings across each area.



Staff savings across Front Office, Service Delivery, and Back Office primarily result from the reduction in staff. Reorganisation can lead to increased staffing efficiencies: specialist teams can form, merging staff who previously handled disparate tasks across services. This specialisation process reduces time spent re-learning tasks. A unified management and staff will enhance knowledge sharing of good practice processes and optimise IT systems, creating significant expenditure-saving opportunities. The savings in front office, service delivery and back office will vary depending on the number of authorities. In one council, duplicated activity will be removed across District, Borough, City and County Councils, whereas a two council model will not benefit from the same economies of scale and will require more staff FTE for disaggregated services.

Senior leadership savings are calculated separately. Under one council, the significant cost reductions are achieved through the consolidation of senior management roles across the County, District and Boroughs and City. Under a two council scenario, net senior management savings will be lower, due to the need for an additional senior leadership team in the second council.

The savings in **third party spend** are gained from revising third-party contracts: bringing single streamlined contracts across the consolidated Councils, gaining economies of scale from purchasing a contract across a larger geographical domain, consistently negotiating better value contracts/specifications and managing these in a more consistent manner. Contracts where new arrangements might be explored could include waste contracts. Under a two council scenario, there will be fewer opportunities to leverage economies of scale and thus lower benefits. **Addressable** third party spend refers to the portion of third party spend that is assumed to be in scope for savings; we assume that this is 75%, to exclude spend that is not relevant to reorganisation, such as direct payments.

Savings in **property expenditure** relate to the reduction in operational costs of maintaining and operating the premises from which council services are delivered. These benefits would be accrued thanks to the reduction in staff and consolidation of lower and upper tier authorities' services, allowing the closing or repurposing of underutilised properties and adopting flexible working models to minimise expenses. Merging District/Borough and County/City property portfolios would enable the creation of single shared service hubs on a place basis, offering consolidated local contact points for all services. Under the two council models, there would be less savings owing to the higher number of staff remaining in the resultant authorities and a reduced requirement/ability to consolidate corporate office buildings for each service, including Head Offices.

Democratic savings stem from the benefits gained through the removal of elections and Member costs for district and borough councils - there would be fewer elections and councillors required if there are fewer councils. Additional councillors required for the new unitary authorities act as a reduction to the saving here. In a two council scenario, Special Responsibility Allowance costs and base allowances will be higher, given the increased councillor requirements compared to one council.

Benefits of Reorganisation

Having appraised the financial benefits and costs of all options, analysis has concluded that a single unitary council offers an opportunity for greater annual savings via reorganisation. This is because there are likely to be greater economies of scale from bringing together contracts and teams, compared with a two council scenario.

One council offers higher benefits of reorganisation - benefits include:

Benefits of reorganisation (recurring)

Saving category	Approach	% Reduction to baseline		Gross Annual Saving (£000's)	
		One Council	Two Councils	One Council	Two Councils
Front office	Percentage reduction applied to front office staff effort.	5%	4%	£4,537	£3,646
Service delivery	Percentage reduction applied to service delivery staff effort, emerging from aggregation of legacy District/Borough services.	3.5%	1.5%	£368	£168
Back office	Percentage reduction applied to back office staff effort.	4%	3%	£3,979	£2,998
Senior management	Reduction applied to senior management, across County, District, and Boroughs, and where appropriate, the legacy city council.	See right		£12,396	£10,812
Third party spend	Percentage reduction applied to addressable third-party spend. It has been assumed that 75% of third party spend is addressable, and the percentage reduction to spend is applied to this addressable amount.	2.5%	1.5%	£16,573	£9,944
Property	Percentage reduction applied to property spend.	15%	12.5%	£3,424	£2,853
Democracy	Combined savings from elections, average costs for District/Borough councillors, and changes in base and Special Responsibility Allowance costs.	See right		£3,812	£2,755
Annual benefit (gross)				£45,089	£33,176

The analysis shows that a one council model could deliver **c.£12m higher gross annual benefit of reorganisation** in comparison to a two council model. This is primarily driven by a single council option offering greater opportunities for consolidating teams and spend into a single organisation and allowing for greater efficiencies.

Benefits of Reorganisation for all options | Staff

The comparative savings for the one council and multiple two council options are described below:

Area of Saving	Scope for savings	Saving for one council option (Option D)	Saving for all two council options (Options A-C)
Senior management	Senior management costs overall will be reduced by LGR, since legacy councils will no longer exist.	8 districts: Average senior management spend equivalent to £1.35m for each area to be saved + proportion of legacy Derby City management costs to be saved	8 districts: Average senior management spend equivalent to £1.35m for each area to be saved
	We focus on the removal of salaries for a Chief Executive, and a portion of Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service.	Saving of £12.4m	Saving of £10.8m
Informed by an HR analysis conducted by DCC, we have assumed the following staffing savings:			
Front Office staffing - FTE	Front office refers to staff receiving enquiries, simple data processing and solving non-specialist enquiries.	Assumption of front office reorganisation saving: 5% of staff spend across all councils.	Assumption of front office reorganisation saving: 4% of staff spend across all councils.
	With existing councils no longer in existence, teams will be consolidated with existing upper tier and unitary teams which will create efficiencies.	Saving of £4.5m	Saving of £3.6m
Service Delivery staffing - FTE	Service delivery refers to frontline staff delivering specialist services, such as waste collection staff. Unitarisation will enable teams to be consolidated across legacy services.	Assumption of service delivery reorganisation saving: 3.5% of staff spend across district and borough councils only.	Assumption of service delivery reorganisation saving: 1.5% of staff spend across district and borough councils only.
		Saving of £368,000	Saving of £168,000
Back Office staffing - FTE	Back office refers to supporting and enabling activities that are internal-facing, such as Finance, IT and HR. Unitarisation will enable teams to be consolidated across legacy services.	Assumption of back office reorganisation saving: 4% of staff spend across all councils.	Assumption of back office reorganisation saving: 3% of staff spend across all councils.
		Saving of £4m	Saving of £3m

Benefits of Reorganisation for all options | Electoral

The comparative savings for the one council and multiple two council options are described below:

Area of Saving	Scope for savings	Saving for one council option (Option D)	Saving for all two council options (Options A-C)
Councillor allowances	<p>There will be a saving on councillor allowances as councillor numbers decrease.</p> <p>Members will be added into the new Unitary Authorities, adding cost back in.</p>	<p>8 district councils with an average base and Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) cost of £400k + amount equivalent to Derby City SRA costs of £420k</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Disestablishment of current Council roles and establishment of 112 new councillor roles (upper tier costs broadly unchanged from current 115 Councillors across Derbyshire CC and Derby City)</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Net saving of £3.6m</p>	<p>8 district councils with an average base and SRA cost of £400k</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Disestablishment of current Council roles and establishment of 161 new councillor roles: added upper tier cost of approximately £660k compared to the current upper-tier Member costs</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Net saving of £2.5m</p>
Elections	<p>Since lower tier elections will be reduced in number, there will be a saving on the election administration costs.</p>	<div> <div>Estimated 296,000 district votes, with elections held every 4 years</div> <div>We assume that there is a cost per vote of £3.</div> <div>Annualised saving of £222,000, or £887,000 over 4 years.</div> </div>	

Benefits of Reorganisation for all options | Supplier Spend

The comparative savings for the one council and multiple two council options are described below:

Area of Saving	Scope for savings	Saving for one council option (Option D)	Saving for all two council options (Options A-C)
Third Party Spend	With a consolidation of councils, there will be an opportunity for economies of scale and greater purchasing power across the resultant unitary council/s.	<p>Assumption of third party spend saving: 2.5% of addressable third party spend across all councils.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Saving of £16.6m</p>	<p>Assumption of third party spend saving: 1.5% of addressable third party spend across all councils.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Saving of £9.9m</p>
Property Spend	<p>With a consolidation of councils, there will be an opportunity to reduce the size of the property estates.</p> <p>Duplicated office and depot assets could be repurposed for community use, local service delivery, or where no longer required, realised to offset costs of LGR.</p>	<p>Assumption of property spend saving: 15% of property spend across all councils.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Saving of £3.4m</p>	<p>Assumption of property spend saving: 12.5% of property spend across all councils.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Saving of £2.9m</p>

Costs associated with transition and disaggregation

The financial analysis relies on several assumptions regarding one-off and disaggregation costs required when creating new unitary authorities. See below for the approach taken to estimating costs across each area.

Disaggregation costs (only 2 council options)

Role duplication

Corporate overhead
friction

Stranded overheads

Disaggregation Costs are incurred when services are **divided across two councils**, and represent the ongoing additional cost of duplicating management and operations by 'splitting' services which would otherwise be delivered across Derbyshire. Disaggregation costs accrue annually in the **two council scenarios only, and will include:**

Role duplication: Some current efficiencies in service delivery are lost, as staff will be transferred from the legacy Derbyshire County Council geographical areas to a new southern Unitary.

Corporate overhead friction: The management of third party spend and property becomes slightly less efficient as services across DCC's legacy geographical areas lose some scale.

Stranded overheads: While staff may be transferred across the two new councils, some costs cannot be removed (such as fixed IT costs). This creates stranded overheads.

Transition costs

Redundancy costs

Programme transition
costs

Redundancy costs are directly proportional to staff savings. It is assumed that redundancy costs, including pension strain, are a proportion of the salary for each staff member. Redundancy costs are higher in the single council scenario owing to an assumption that there would be a greater volume of redundancies.

Transition costs include one-off spending relating to creating, marketing, and programme managing transition to a new council or multiple councils. **Costs such as the creation of new councils, marketing, ICT, and consultation** are increased proportionately where two councils are formed, owing to the requirement for several parts of the new councils to be designed separately/twice.

Key:  Recurring benefits  Recurring disaggregation costs  Non-recurring costs

One-off transition costs for reorganisation

One-off transition costs have been profiled to be incurred over the first four years after Vesting Day for the purposes of this financial analysis. Analysis has shown that transition costs are lowest for a one council option, due to a simpler transition process. For several of the costs below, the costs would only need to be incurred once in a single council scenario, but there is an added cost for conducting design work for two new authorities in a two council scenario. Additionally, where appropriate, transition costs for Option C have been uplifted by 12.5% compared with other two council options, to account for anticipated additional complications and design work in setting up new unitary authorities while disrupting existing district boundaries in Option C specifically.

One-off transition costs include redundancy costs and a number of transition-related elements such as IT costs:

Cost category	Approach	One-off cost amount (£000's)		
		One council (Option D)	Two councils (Options A, B)	Two councils (Option C)
Redundancy costs	In line with historical data from Derbyshire, we have assumed a 40% direct redundancy cost and 80% for pension strain, as a proportion of annual salary. This means that overall redundancy costs are 120% of annual salaries. The cost for one council is higher since there are greater staff savings.	(£25,536)	(£21,149)	(£21,149)
External Comms, Rebranding & implementation	Promoting changes to the public, developing a new local authority brand and implementing new signage and logos.	(£366)	(£549)	(£618)
External transition, design and implementation support costs	Costs for external support to ensure effective transformation: change management, benefits realisation, business and technology design authority, process redesign and consolidation, and a review of shared services for each authority.	(£4,270)	(£6,405)	(£7,205)
Internal programme management	Costs incurred for internal programme management and support and enabling services input.	(£2,379)	(£3,569)	(£4,015)
Creating the new council	Includes legal costs, developing the constitution, contract novation, setting budgets, and carrying out 'business as usual' in existing councils. This is largely associated with the administrative costs of making sure the new councils are set up legally and financially e.g. drafting documentation which has to go to parliament, setting up new accounts etc. Two council scenario is double the cost owing to two new entities being created.	(£610)	(£1,220)	(£1,373)

One-off transition costs for reorganisation

One-off transition costs include redundancy costs and a number of transition-related elements such as IT costs:

Cost category	Approach	One-off cost amount (£000's)		
		One council (Option D)	Two councils (Options A, B)	Two councils (Option C)
Contingency (IT-related – 40% of total contingency)	Provision for extra expenses incurred through reorganisation e.g. relating to property disposals or where estimated costs are found to be underestimated. There is, for example, known risk in relation to transitioning IT and data to new unitary arrangements, and the precise cost of this will only be confirmed once more detailed systems analysis is completed, during the transition to the new unitary arrangements.	(£6,296)	(£8,168)	(£9,189)
Contingency (non-IT – 60% of total contingency)				
Organisation closedown	Costs involved with financially closing down councils and creating sound budgetary control systems, estimated through averages of similar costs for other councils. e.g. making sure liabilities are transferred correctly, creating sound budgetary control systems, transfer of functions, tax assessments etc.	(£183)	(£305)	
Public consultation	Assuming costs for adverts in local media and surveys to consult public on proposed changes. Whilst funding sources for public consultation are being confirmed, an amount has been conservatively set aside to cover the costs of this consultation.	(£275)	(£412)	
ICT costs	Assuming costs for changed reporting requirements, system licenses, storage capacity, and data cleansing / migration. Costs largely associated with migration and infrastructure set up in the new structure e.g. for changed reporting requirements, security, storage capacity, and data cleansing/migration. These do <u>NOT</u> account for any run costs of the future council/s e.g. additional licensing or systems costs. This would require further detailed work as part of detailed implementation planning. Additional costs are incurred within the two council options, to allow for disaggregation of IT systems.	(£7,500)	(£7,750)	
Shadow Chief Exec / member costs	Costs for a year of interim advisory board roles from Chief Executives per authority (assumed £195k salary with on-costs) and six members per unitary with additional responsibilities, each receiving £20k in Special Responsibility Allowance.	(£311)	(£622)	
Total		(£47,726)	(£50,149)	(£52,637)

Disaggregation costs (recurring in two council scenarios only)

In a two council model, there are additional recurring costs, as there would be a need to disaggregate major services such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Public Health, Education and Highways, as well as back office services across two unitary areas. This means that there would be additional costs incurred for two council models.

A two council model creates a recurring additional cost, compared with a single council - shown below:

<i>Disaggregation cost type</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Role duplication	Some current efficiencies in service delivery are lost, as staff will be transferred from the legacy Derbyshire County Council geographical areas to a new southern Unitary.
Corporate overhead friction	The management of third party spend and property becomes slightly less efficient as services across DCC's legacy geographical areas lose some scale.
Stranded overheads	While staff may be transferred across the two unitaries, some costs cannot be removed (such as fixed IT costs). This creates stranded overheads.

Costs	1 council (Option D)	Option A	Option B	Option C
Staff Duplication (£000's)	£0	(£2,217)	(£3,489)	(£2,605)
Corporate overhead friction (£000's)	£0	(£2,317)	(£3,647)	(£2,723)
Stranded overheads (£000's)	£0	(£3,339)	(£2,611)	(£3,119)
Total (£000's)	£0	(£7,873)	(£9,746)	(£8,448)

Disaggregating County services would create **£7.9-9.7m** of additional recurrent annual costs in a two council model. This is because there are diseconomies of scale when separating service provision across two unitaries. A one council option does not separate any services, and hence there are no disaggregation costs in Option D. This means that there is a significant annual saving for Option D by avoiding these disaggregation costs.

Disaggregation costs (recurring in two council scenarios only)

Disaggregation element of the model

Any future North Derbyshire Council will cover a smaller geographical area than the current County Council. There will be costs of disaggregation, where teams and services will need to be split across two unitary areas in two council models. These disaggregation costs will be incurred uniquely in two council scenarios.

Disaggregation cost type	Explanation	Costs – approach undertaken			
Role duplication	Some current efficiencies in service delivery are lost, as staff will be transferred from the legacy Derbyshire County Council geographical areas to a new southern council.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate the amount of spend that would be transferred from North to South. We used the moving population as an indicator. We estimate that there will be the following additional costs applied to the moving expenditure: <div> <div>1.5% added cost on front office staffing</div> <div>4.5% added cost on service delivery staffing</div> <div>1% added cost on back office staffing</div> </div> 			
		Costs	Option A	Option B	Option C
		Staff Duplication	(£2,217)	(£3,489)	(£2,605)
Corporate overhead friction	The management of third party spend and property becomes slightly less efficient as transferring services lose some scale.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> As above, estimate the amount of spend that would be transferred from North to South. We used the moving population as an indicator. We estimate that there will be the following additional costs applied to the moving expenditure: <div> <div>1.5% added cost on property</div> <div>1.5% added cost on addressable spend with third parties</div> </div> 			
		Costs	Option A	Option B	Option C
		Corporate friction	(£2,317)	(£3,647)	(£2,723)

Disaggregation costs (recurring in two council scenarios only)

Disaggregation element of the model

Any future North Derbyshire Council will cover a smaller geographical area than the current County Council. There will be costs of disaggregation, where teams and services will need to be split across two unitary areas in two council models. These disaggregation costs will be incurred uniquely in two council scenarios.

Cost type	Explanation	Costs – approach undertaken			
Stranded overheads	While staff may be transferred across the two Unitaries, some costs cannot be removed (such as fixed IT costs). This creates stranded overheads.	1 The new Northern authority won't be able to shed all costs when transferring spend from the legacy Derbyshire County Council to the Southern Unitary. There will be some overheads that are stranded :			
		0.5% overheads cost applied to legacy DCC spend within the Northern Unitary			
		Costs	Option A	Option B	Option C
		Stranded overheads	(£3,339)	(£2,611)	(£3,119)

Profiling of benefits and costs

Benefits and costs are phased across multiple years, due to the adjustment process that will happen for the new council or councils. The tables below show the profiles for benefits and costs:

Year	Reorganisation: Benefit Realisation
1	0%
2	50%
3	75%
4	100%
5	100%
6	100%
7	100%
8	100%
9	100%
10	100%

For benefits, we conservatively assume that no benefits are realised in Year 1 (2028/29). Reorganisation benefits are then staged over the next three years, with full annual benefits realised from Year 4 onwards.

Year	Reorganisation: One-off transition costs
1	50%
2	25%
3	25%
4	0%
5	0%
6	0%
7	0%
8	0%
9	0%
10	0%

For costs, transition costs are staged over the initial years, recognising that investment is required upfront to achieve reorganisation. Reorganisation costs are staged over the first three years.

Disaggregation (splitting-up) costs are assumed to occur from Vesting Day onwards (and hence start from Year 1 in full). These will be recurrent.

Summary of Reorganisation Benefits | Options Comparison

The one council option is likely to be most financially beneficial due to greater savings, lower transition costs and no disaggregation costs. Overall Option D (one council) option would deliver £45m in net recurring, steady-state annual savings, compared with up to £25 million in a two council scenario.

Elements	D (one council)	A	B	C
Annual Front Office FTE Savings (£)	4,537	3,646	3,646	3,646
Annual Service Delivery FTE Savings (£)	368	168	168	168
Annual Back Office FTE Savings (£)	3,979	2,998	2,998	2,998
Annual Senior Management FTE Savings (£)	12,396	10,812	10,812	10,812
Annual Third Party Spend Savings (£)	16,573	9,944	9,944	9,944
Annual Property Savings (£)	3,424	2,853	2,853	2,853
Annual Democratic Savings (£)	3,812	2,755	2,755	2,755
Total annual benefit from reorganisation (gross)	45,089	33,176	33,176	33,176
Total one-off transition costs of reorganisation	(47,726)	(50,149)	(50,149)	(52,637)
Total recurring annual cost of disaggregation	0	(7,873)	(9,746)	(8,448)
Full effect of net annual benefit (2031/32 onwards)	45,089	25,303	23,430	24,729

Profiling: Reorganisation Only

Option D (one council): Reorganisation Only

The table below shows the year-by-year view of costs and benefits for Option D. It shows a cumulative benefit of £143.9m over 6 years, with a payback period of 2.6 years. It is assumed that Vesting Day for the new arrangement would be at the start of Year One.

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Yearly Benefit (£)	0	22,545	33,817	45,089	45,089	45,089
Yearly Cost (£)	(23,863)	(11,932)	(11,932)	0	0	0
Total <u>Cumulative</u> Net Benefit (£)	(23,863)	(13,250)	8,635	53,725	98,814	143,903
Payback period			2.6 years			

Option A (two councils): Reorganisation Only

The table below shows the year-by-year view of costs and benefits for Option A. This shows a net benefit of £43.6m over 6 years, with a payback period of 4.3 years. This suggests a lower net benefit and longer payback period for two unitary options. It is assumed that Vesting Day for the new arrangement would be at the start of Year One.

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Yearly Benefit (£)	0	16,588	24,882	33,176	33,176	33,176
Yearly Cost (£)	(32,948)	(20,410)	(20,410)	(7,873)	(7,873)	(7,873)
Total <u>Cumulative</u> Net Benefit (£)	(32,948)	(36,770)	(32,298)	(6,995)	18,308	43,612
Payback period					4.3 years	

Profiling: Reorganisation Only

Option B (two councils): Reorganisation Only

The table below shows the year-by-year view of costs and benefits for Option B. It shows a cumulative benefit of £32.4m over 6 years, with a payback period of 4.6 years. It is assumed that Vesting Day for the new arrangement would be at the start of Year One.

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Yearly Benefit (£)	0	16,588	24,882	33,176	33,176	33,176
Yearly Cost (£)	(34,821)	(22,283)	(22,283)	(9,746)	(9,746)	(9,746)
Total <u>Cumulative</u> Net Benefit (£)	(34,821)	(40,516)	(37,917)	(14,487)	8,943	32,373
Payback period					4.6 years	

Option C (two councils): Reorganisation Only

The table below shows the year-by-year view of costs and benefits for Option C. It shows a cumulative benefit of £37.7m over 6 years, with a payback period of 4.5 years. It is assumed that Vesting Day for the new arrangement would be at the start of Year One.

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Yearly Benefit (£)	0	16,588	24,882	33,176	33,176	33,176
Yearly Cost (£)	(34,767)	(21,607)	(21,607)	(8,448)	(8,448)	(8,448)
Total <u>Cumulative</u> Net Benefit (£)	(34,767)	(39,786)	(36,511)	(11,782)	12,946	37,675
Payback period					4.5 years	

Council Tax Harmonisation Implications

Council Tax Harmonisation: Introduction

Council tax harmonisation is a requirement under Local Government Reorganisation; currently, areas across Derbyshire and Derby City have different tax rates, and when they are brought together under one or multiple unitary authorities, these rates will need to be converged. Councils have a maximum of 7 years to harmonise, and Council Tax rates within unitary councils can increase by a maximum of 4.99% annually. The Council tax analysis within this section does not alter the overall savings analysis; however it is an important consideration prior to Vesting Day.

There are two key decisions to be made around Council Tax Harmonisation over the coming years, and various options have been modelled to reflect this:

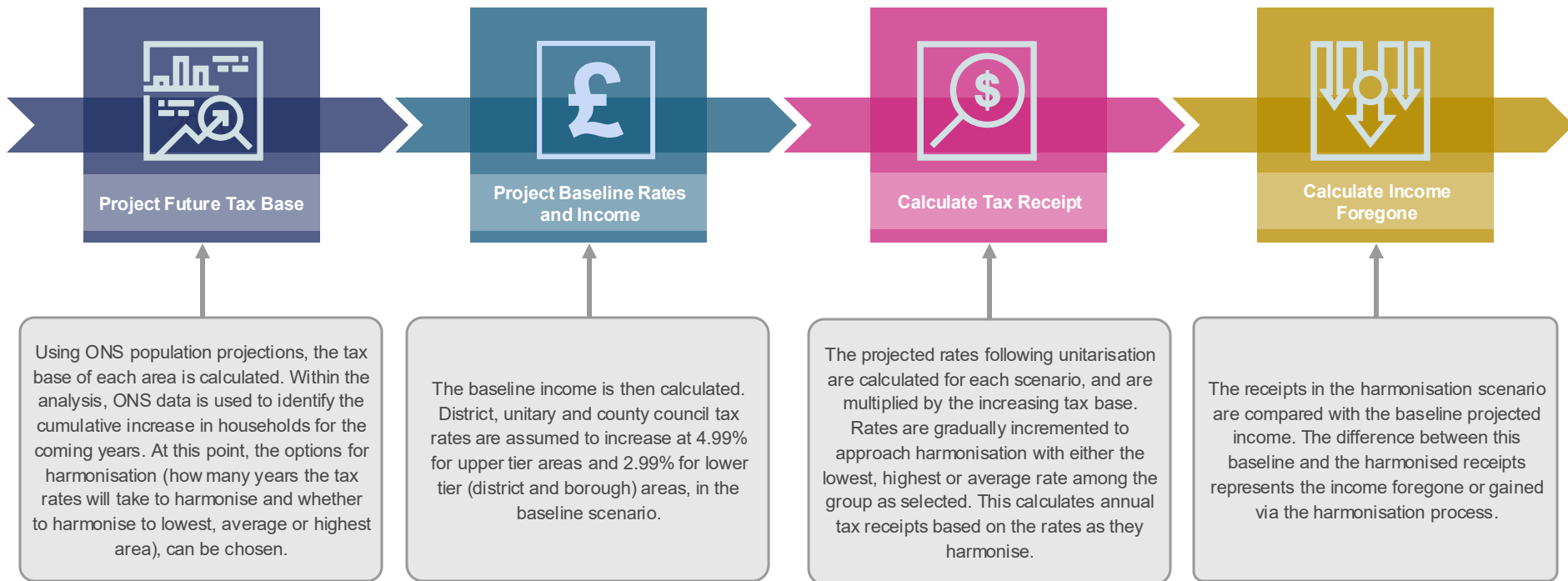
- 1 The harmonisation period:** Since authorities have up to 7 years to harmonise, 1-, 3-, 5- and 7-year harmonisation periods for council tax have been analysed.
- 2 The harmonisation rate target:** For each council, we have analysed the financial impacts of three possible tax rates that could be targeted. These are informed by the lowest rate among the district/borough/city authorities, the average rate, and the highest rate.

To project the financial costs or benefits from council tax harmonisation, the following key assumptions have been made:

- **The Band D equivalent taxbase** (after allowances for Council Tax Relief and excluding precepts for Parish and Town Councils) has been used to shape the analysis. This means that the population paying various Council Tax Band rates across Derbyshire and Derby City have been converted into a Band D 'equivalent' population. This approach ensures uniformity for comparison.
- **The taxbase has been adjusted each year** in line with ONS population projections.
- Until Vesting Day, 4.99% annual uplifts to council tax are assumed to be applied to upper-tier authorities, inclusive of the Social Care precept, and 2.99% uplifts are assumed to be applied for district authorities. The Fire Precept is not included in calculations.
- **All options are compared against a theoretical baseline, which assumes that 4.99% council tax uplifts would be applied to upper tier authorities and 2.99% uplifts to district and borough authorities during the in-scope timeframe.** The resultant analysis shows whether income would be increased or foregone, when compared against this baseline over a 5 year timeframe. This baseline is theoretical and no formal decision has been made about council tax uplifts at this stage, either leading up to unitarisation or after Vesting Day. A final decision about Council tax rates after Vesting Day will be made by the Shadow Authority in 2027.

Council Tax Harmonisation: Principles

The approach used to predict the impacts of Council Tax Harmonisation on income considers the growing population, expected council tax uplifts in the various scenarios and the timeframe for harmonisation. The process undertaken to conduct the analysis is described below.



Council Tax Harmonisation: Taxbase Calculations

The taxbase for each area has been converted into Band D equivalents, as per ONS data.

Council	2024 Taxbase (Band D equivalents)
Derby City UA	73,997
Amber Valley Borough	42,300
Bolsover District	23,621
Chesterfield Borough	31,106
Derbyshire Dales District	30,910
Erewash Borough	34,777
High Peak Borough	32,644
North East Derbyshire District	33,979
South Derbyshire District	39,145

The taxbase for each area has been forecasted each year in line with [population projections](#) from the ONS. The table below shows the percentage increases in taxbases for each area:

Council	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
Derby City UA	0.58%	0.40%	0.44%	0.62%	0.60%	0.65%	0.65%	0.65%	0.59%	0.54%	0.50%	0.49%
Amber Valley Borough	0.89%	0.87%	0.89%	0.87%	0.85%	0.87%	0.86%	0.81%	0.80%	0.73%	0.69%	0.70%
Bolsover District	1.13%	1.02%	1.02%	1.05%	1.00%	0.99%	1.02%	0.99%	0.95%	0.86%	0.85%	0.86%
Chesterfield Borough	0.48%	0.49%	0.52%	0.61%	0.59%	0.57%	0.65%	0.63%	0.58%	0.56%	0.49%	0.50%
Derbyshire Dales District	0.69%	0.67%	0.65%	0.70%	0.67%	0.69%	0.69%	0.67%	0.64%	0.61%	0.61%	0.58%
Erewash Borough	0.35%	0.36%	0.34%	0.46%	0.46%	0.50%	0.53%	0.52%	0.48%	0.46%	0.44%	0.44%
High Peak Borough	0.66%	0.66%	0.69%	0.71%	0.69%	0.70%	0.69%	0.69%	0.62%	0.59%	0.60%	0.58%
North East Derbyshire District	0.85%	0.86%	0.86%	0.87%	0.84%	0.87%	0.86%	0.86%	0.77%	0.76%	0.72%	0.71%
South Derbyshire District	2.23%	2.15%	2.06%	1.96%	1.84%	1.79%	1.73%	1.67%	1.59%	1.49%	1.46%	1.39%

Council Tax Harmonisation: 3 Year Harmonisation

Various harmonisation options have been explored, with a 3-year harmonisation initially assumed after Vesting Day. The table below outlines the 5 year income implications if council tax is harmonised over 3 years, in a one unitary scenario. After the first 3 years, it is assumed that council tax would increase by 4.99% annually for the purposes of this projection.

Scenario: Option D (1UA)	Weighted average increase to council tax rates for first 3 years (increases below are annual for each of the three years)	Total Tax Income Implication over 5 years	
Low	4.42%	(£33,816)	foregone
Average	4.86%	£8,541	increased
High	5.45%	£66,110	increased

Assuming that council tax harmonisation takes place over 3 years, the analysis suggests that the Average and High scenarios increase income when compared against the baseline Council Tax increases. The Average and Low scenarios also stay within national referendum requirements (which stipulate that a maximum 4.99% annual increase to council tax is permissible without recourse to a referendum).

Harmonising to the Average rate has been assumed at this stage, which would result in an **£8.5m increase in council tax income over 5 years**, compared with the baseline scenario. Individual uplifts to council tax within legacy district and borough, unitary and county areas will vary until the harmonisation point – however the weighted average increases are displayed above.

Within the Shadow Authority stage (in 2027), a decision will need to be made about the final preferred council tax harmonisation option. **Note: this analysis has been conducted separately from the cost and benefit analysis for all options.**

Council Tax Harmonisation: Low Scenario

The table below outlines the council tax rates for a band D household in each area under the Low Scenario for harmonisation over 3 years. Rates are harmonised in Year 3 (at £2,293) and thereon rise by 4.99%.

Low	Initial Rate (2027/28)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Amber Valley Borough	£2,006	£2,097	£2,193	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527
Bolsover District	£2,017	£2,105	£2,197	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527
Chesterfield Borough	£2,004	£2,096	£2,192	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527
Derbyshire Dales District	£2,055	£2,131	£2,211	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527
Erewash Borough	£2,029	£2,114	£2,201	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527
High Peak Borough	£2,034	£2,117	£2,203	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527
North East Derbyshire District	£2,026	£2,111	£2,200	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527
South Derbyshire District	£1,992	£2,088	£2,188	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527
Derby City UA	£1,994	£2,089	£2,189	£2,293	£2,407	£2,527

Council Tax Harmonisation: Average Scenario

The table below outlines the council tax rates for a band D household in each area under the Average Scenario for harmonisation over 3 years, which is the assumed scenario to be taken forward. Rates are harmonised in Year 3 (at £2,322) and thereon rise by 4.99%.

Average	Initial Rate (2027/28)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Amber Valley Borough	£2,006	£2,106	£2,211	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559
Bolsover District	£2,017	£2,114	£2,216	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559
Chesterfield Borough	£2,004	£2,105	£2,211	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559
Derbyshire Dales District	£2,055	£2,140	£2,229	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559
Erewash Borough	£2,029	£2,123	£2,220	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559
High Peak Borough	£2,034	£2,125	£2,221	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559
North East Derbyshire District	£2,026	£2,120	£2,219	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559
South Derbyshire District	£1,992	£2,097	£2,206	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559
Derby City UA	£1,994	£2,098	£2,207	£2,322	£2,438	£2,559

Council Tax Harmonisation: High Scenario

The table below outlines the council tax rates for a band D household in each area under the High Scenario for harmonisation over 3 years. Rates are harmonised in Year 3 (at £2,361), and thereon rise by 4.99%.

High	Initial Rate (2027/28)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Amber Valley Borough	£2,006	£2,118	£2,236	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603
Bolsover District	£2,017	£2,126	£2,240	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603
Chesterfield Borough	£2,004	£2,117	£2,236	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603
Derbyshire Dales District	£2,055	£2,152	£2,254	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603
Erewash Borough	£2,029	£2,134	£2,245	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603
High Peak Borough	£2,034	£2,137	£2,246	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603
North East Derbyshire District	£2,026	£2,132	£2,244	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603
South Derbyshire District	£1,992	£2,108	£2,231	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603
Derby City UA	£1,994	£2,109	£2,232	£2,361	£2,479	£2,603

Balance Sheet Analysis

Assets and Liabilities: Current State

The table below outlines the assets and liabilities for each current local authority in Derbyshire; this information has been collected from the Districts, Boroughs, Derby City and Derbyshire, on 21/07/2025, for 2023/24 figures. The numbers below have therefore been uplifted by the CPI rate of inflation of 3.8%. Key items that have been investigated are reserves, fixed assets, borrowing, HRA and DSG.

Category	Derbyshire County Council	Derby City	Amber Valley	Bolsover	Chesterfield	Derbyshire Dales	Erewash	High Peak	North East Derbyshire	South Derbyshire
Assets (£000's)										
General Fund Reserves (£000's)	41,711	9,238	9,424	2,077	1,557	4,596	2,697	2,659	2,076	19,033
Earmarked Reserves (£000's)	212,963	75,103	15,125	27,997	26,308	16,571	3,379	9,556	24,542	10,986
Fixed Assets (£000's)	2,149,194	1,677,836	76,410	331,185	648,770	89,821	44,827	292,467	568,432	213,831
Liabilities (£000's)										
Long Term Borrowing (£000's)	(291,650)	(419,519)	0	(81,794)	(128,456)	(5,657)	0	(61,066)	(141,895)	(38,845)
Short Term Borrowing (£000's)	(153,444)	(9,456)	0	(10,224)	(13,089)	(6)	0	(5,617)	(16,006)	(92)
HRA (£000's)		(41,977)		(1,706)				(13,681)	(34,457)	(8,145)
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit Forecast* (£000's)	(81,749)	(25,356)								

* DSG figures are forecasts for March 2026; these have therefore been deflated by the forecast rate of inflation of 2.6%, to bring in-line with other figures used. Derbyshire County Council figures are as per the Q1 Monitoring Report, forecasting for March 2026. Derby City figures are as per a Schools Forum paper in February 2025, forecasting for March 2026.

Reserves Position: Options Split

The table below focuses on the General Fund reserves and the affordability of reorganisation. The legacy Derbyshire County Council reserves were split according to population. **The one-off transition costs of reorganisation, mentioned below, are likely to be sufficiently covered by current General Fund reserves.**

In using existing figures, we assume that there are not currently plans to run down reserves before reorganisation occurs. There are also potential risks regarding unexpected shocks, and changes resulting from the Fair Funding Review that cannot be accounted for presently. **Overall, analysis shows that General Fund reserves total £95m, while one-off transition costs are a maximum of £52.6m. Levels of reserves will require careful monitoring during reorganisation, to ensure that they remain sufficient to support the transition costs.**

	Option A		Option B		Option C		Option D
Category	UA1 - North Derbyshire Council	UA2 - South Derbyshire	UA1 - North Derbyshire Council	UA2 - South Derbyshire	UA1 - North Derbyshire Council	UA2 - South Derbyshire	One council
General Fund Reserves (£000's)	£45,020	£50,048	£30,635	£64,433	£40,463	£54,605	£95,068
One-off transition costs of reorganisation (£000's)	(£50,149)		(£50,149)		(£52,637)		(£47,726)

Uniting Derbyshire



Derbyshire County Council

Local Government Reorganisation – Appendix C Stakeholder Engagement June to September 2025

30 September 2025

Contents

Introduction	2	Government Criteria	16
Key findings.....	4	Views from targeted communities	21
Preferred Option	4	Priorities	21
Government Outcomes.....	4	Council Services	22
Assessment against Government Criteria	4	Impact on services	23
Respondents Priorities.....	5	What respondents value about their local area	23
Key Partner and Stakeholder Perspectives	5	A sense of belonging with their local area	24
Overarching Insight	5	Involvement in decision making	24
Part One – Resident engagement	6	1.5 Survey Awareness	26
1.1 Purpose and Aims	6	Social Media Feedback.....	26
1.2 Methodology	6	Part Two – Key Stakeholder Engagement	27
1.3 Respondents.....	8	2.1 Purpose and Aims	27
Respondents by location	8	2.2 Methodology.....	27
Respondents by age band	9	2.3 Stakeholders	28
County identity	10	2.4 Results	28
Understanding of LGR.....	11	Conclusion.....	35
1.4 Results	12	Appendix A: Questionnaire	36
Overall views on the three options	12	Appendix B: Demographics	42
Respondents' views by district	13	Appendix C: Parishes within Amber Valley and	
Views from targeted communities	15	Derbyshire Dales	45
Further feedback on local government reorganisation	16		

Introduction

Derbyshire (excluding Derby city) has two levels of local government: a county council which delivers large scale strategic services including education, adults and children's social care, waste disposal and highways across the county and eight district or borough councils which focus on more localised services including social housing, homelessness, leisure and waste collections. Derby City Council is a unitary council and delivers all services within the city.

On 16 December 2024, the government announced significant structural changes for local councils through the English Devolution White Paper¹, requiring all areas to move to a single-tier unitary council system, where one council will deliver all services. Parish and town councils are not affected by these changes.

On 5 February 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) sent a letter to all Derbyshire council leaders outlining plans for streamlined and sustainable local government, requesting collaboration on a reorganisation proposal. Six criteria for forming new unitary structures were provided. These are:

- 1 – Simple structures over a credible geography
- 2 – Right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

- 3 – Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services
- 4 – 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

To develop the proposals, local leaders are expected to engage and consult with residents, and key stakeholders including public sector organisations, higher and further education providers, and the voluntary and third sectors.

We need councils that can meet current and future challenges and support the area to grow and prosper, working closely with the East Midlands Combined County Authority.

We are committed to submitting a 'preferred option' to Government aiming to reflect these criteria and serve local Derbyshire residents and businesses effectively, provide value for taxpayers, maintains the county's strong identity, ensure quality service delivery, and avoid undue advantage or disadvantage to any specific area.

¹ [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(MHCLG\) - English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/devolution-white-paper-2024)

Following the County Council elections in May 2025, all proposed options were assessed against the Government's criteria, with attention to community identity and operational efficiency.

In July, after review by the Full Council, it was proposed to create two new unitary councils with one serving the north and the other the south of the county. Three options were identified:

Option A: Two councils with Amber Valley in the north

Option B: Two councils with Amber Valley in the south

Option C: Two councils with a new boundary

Both new councils would implement revised organisational structures and reduced administrative layers, with the intent to improve service delivery for businesses and residents.

- **Simpler for residents** – one point of contact for north and south
- **Clearer accountability** – less confusion over who is responsible for what
- **Better value for money** – less bureaucracy means saving money
- **More local focus** – two councils to maintain truly local representation.

A comprehensive public engagement plan was carried out to collect feedback from residents, businesses, the community and voluntary sector, local council employees, and other stakeholders regarding the three proposed unitary council options. Particular emphasis was placed on reaching residents from Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, as these areas are most directly affected by the potential changes. The feedback received, along with identified priorities, perceived advantages, and possible impacts, are explored in Part One of this report.

Formal invitations and correspondence were also sent to principal partners—such as the EMCCA Mayor, Derbyshire MPs, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, further and higher education institutions, and various stakeholder groups—to request input on the proposed options and their implications for services and partnerships. The outcomes of this stakeholder engagement are analysed in Part Two of this report.

“Derbyshire residents deserve a modern, efficient and effective system of local government.”

Key findings

Preferred Option

Across the three options overall, more respondents disagreed, rather than agreed with what was proposed. However, of the options presented Option A emerged as the overall preferred choice for local government reorganisation among respondents, with particularly strong support in Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, and from those outside Derbyshire. Despite this, Option C was most favoured in several districts and boroughs, highlighting a complex picture of local preferences. Option C also attracted the highest level of disagreement, especially in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales.

Concerns about the impact local government reorganisation would have on the loss of local identity and its impact on the provision of services were the issue raised most by respondents. With additional comments raising concerns about the expansion of Derby City and losing local and rural voice. In addition, some respondents expressed a lack of information about the options presented with not enough financial details available to provide an informed response.

Government Outcomes

When asked which options would best deliver against Government outcomes results show that overall respondents favour Option C.

However, views differ when comparing results by district and borough (including Derby City and outside Derbyshire)

with respondents from Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales and outside Derbyshire preferring Option A.

Results for those respondents within southern Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales show that they also believe Option A would best deliver on all government outcomes, with Option C the least supported.

Assessment against Government Criteria

- **Local Leadership & Accountability:** Concerns were strongly voiced about the need for transparency and robust representation, reflecting a desire for governance structures that are both accountable and responsive to community input.
- **Value for Money:** While not measured directly, efficiency and safeguarding of public services were recurring themes, underlining their importance to public trust.
- **Service Integration & Sustainability:** Respondents worried that reorganisation could dilute service quality or accessibility, reinforcing the need for seamless, sustainable local service delivery.
- **Strategic Capacity:** Diverging preferences point to the challenge of balancing local needs with broader strategic ambitions for Derbyshire.
- **Local Identity:** There is widespread apprehension about potential losses to local identity and representation, especially in Amber Valley and

Derbyshire Dales, emphasizing the importance of preserving community heritage and inclusivity.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Criticism of both the engagement process and the options presented highlights an urgent need for greater transparency and ongoing dialogue in future stages.

Respondents Priorities

With no real difference in the findings comparing district and borough areas (including Deby City and outside of Derbyshire) respondents top three priorities when considering local government reorganisation were:

- High quality services that work really well (20%)
- Efficient services (14%)
- Maintaining or improving local services (14%)

Key Partner and Stakeholder Perspectives

Key partners and stakeholders offered a range of views, with some backing Option A, others seeing Option B as best aligned with their organisational priorities, and a smaller

group endorsing Option C. Some stakeholder groups which gave feedback, offered no preference.

The views of key partners and statutory partners, whose work and service delivery may be directly affected by local government reorganisation, is crucial in informing the decision-making process to develop a final proposal for submission to Government.

Overarching Insight

The final preferred option for Derbyshire County Council must deliver efficiency while safeguarding local democracy and identity. The findings underscore the need for a governance structure that truly reflects and serves the diversity of Derbyshire's communities, with lessons learned shaping future decision-making.

These findings are complemented by demographic insights into respondents, detailed in Appendix B, which outline representation by location, age, sex, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and armed forces service.



Part One – Resident engagement

1.1 Purpose and Aims

The Council launched the ‘Fewer Councils Better Value Stronger Communities Engagement’ to gather the views of residents, businesses, community groups and other various stakeholders on the three proposed unitary council options for Derbyshire.

The survey took place from 23 July to 19 August 2025 and received 4,532 responses.

1.2 Methodology

To understand the public view of the three options, 23 survey questions covered proposed changes, local identity, council services, priorities for government reorganisation, and outcomes. The online survey, available in Appendix A, was promoted via the Council’s website and social media, with additional information describing the options and highlighting some of the benefits and drawbacks for each.

Alongside support for two new unitary authorities, the survey collected views on valued services and local priorities. Demographic data included postcode, age, sex, gender, disability, ethnic group, and respondents’ roles (available in Appendix B).

Whilst no quotas were set as this survey was open to all aged 16 years and over, the social media communications campaign was boosted in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales to understand resident and stakeholder views on the three options. These two areas, particularly Amber Valley, are more likely to be affected by local government reorganisation, particularly if Option C is selected as this effectively splits the two areas across the middle with the southern areas moving to the new unitary in the south of the county and the remainder to the north.

Analysis has been conducted on comparing those from the southern parts of Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales compared with the remaining residents as these residents are the most affected by the three options.

To maximise engagement, a comprehensive communications strategy was implemented to support and promote the survey via established channels:

- A series of proactive media releases
- A video message from the Council Leader shared through social media
- Features in Derbyshire Now, the residents' e-newsletter with 45,000 subscribers
- Distribution via the Community News e-newsletter to 4,500 community and voluntary organisations and parish councils
- Organic advertisements on social media platforms including Facebook, X, Nextdoor, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat

- Paid targeted Facebook and Snapchat advertising directed both broadly across Derbyshire and specifically at the areas most impacted by the proposed unitary options (Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales)
- Prominent main and secondary banners on the Council website
- Letters sent to 50 key stakeholders and partners

As a result, the survey achieved over 4,500 responses, exceeding participation levels in any previous online consultation or engagement conducted by the Council in recent years and the responses from younger age-bands were also slightly boosted due to the use of TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram.

1.3 Respondents

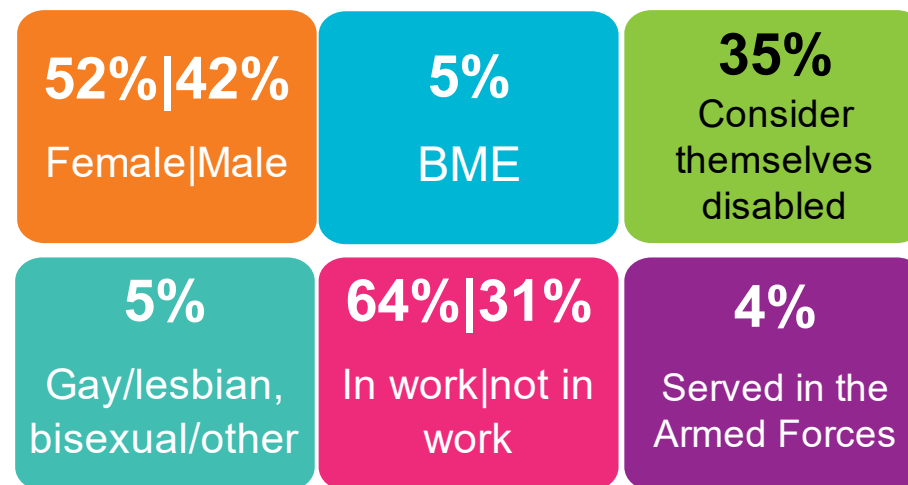
The survey received 4,532 responses, with 98% from Derbyshire and 2% from outside areas like Greater Manchester, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Dudley, and London. Of the respondents, 87% were Derbyshire residents (including Derby City), 7% were DCC employees, and 6% included business owners, local government staff, and council members.

How respondents answered this survey	Count	%
As a resident of Derbyshire	3,961	87%
As a business owner or business leader	31	1%
Member of a Parish/Town Council	39	1%
Elected member of Derbyshire District/Borough/City/County council	9	0%
Representative of a Statutory Organisation (e.g. Police, Fire Service, NHS)	11	0%
Representative of a Voluntary or Community Sector Organisation	19	0%
Employee of Derbyshire County Council	326	7%
Employee of a District/Borough Council	28	1%
As an employee of a housing association	5	0%
I work in Derbyshire	62	1%
Other	41	1%

Overall, there was wide range of respondent from the different demographic groups, 5% of respondents were from

black and minority ethnic groups and 35% consider themselves to be disabled.

Figures by demographic groups



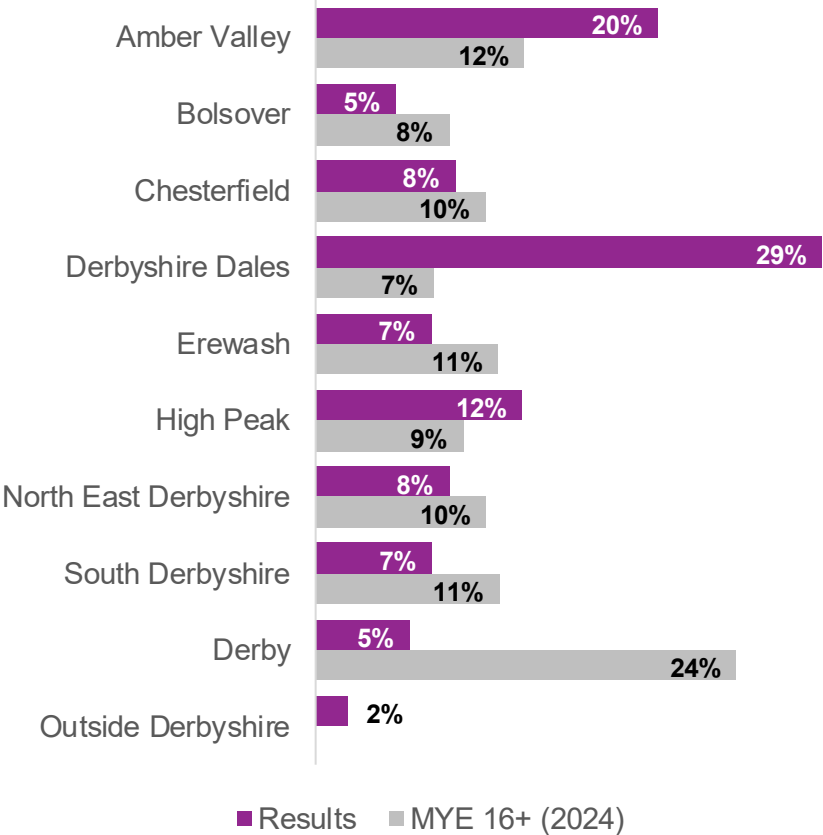
Further analysis on demographic groups is available in Appendix B.

Respondents by location

The results have been analysed by local authority using the postcode provided. The following chart compares the proportion of respondents by local authority with the latest 2024 mid-year population figures for those aged 16 years and over provided by ONS. Based on these results there is an overrepresentation of respondents from Derbyshire Dales (29%) and Amber Valley (20%), this is to be expected due to the targeted communications campaign directed to residents from these areas who are most likely to be impacted by the three options, particularly Option C.

Derby City is underrepresented with only 5% of its respondents submitting a response. All other districts fall within a 4-percentage point difference from each of the local authorities' proportion within the county as a whole.

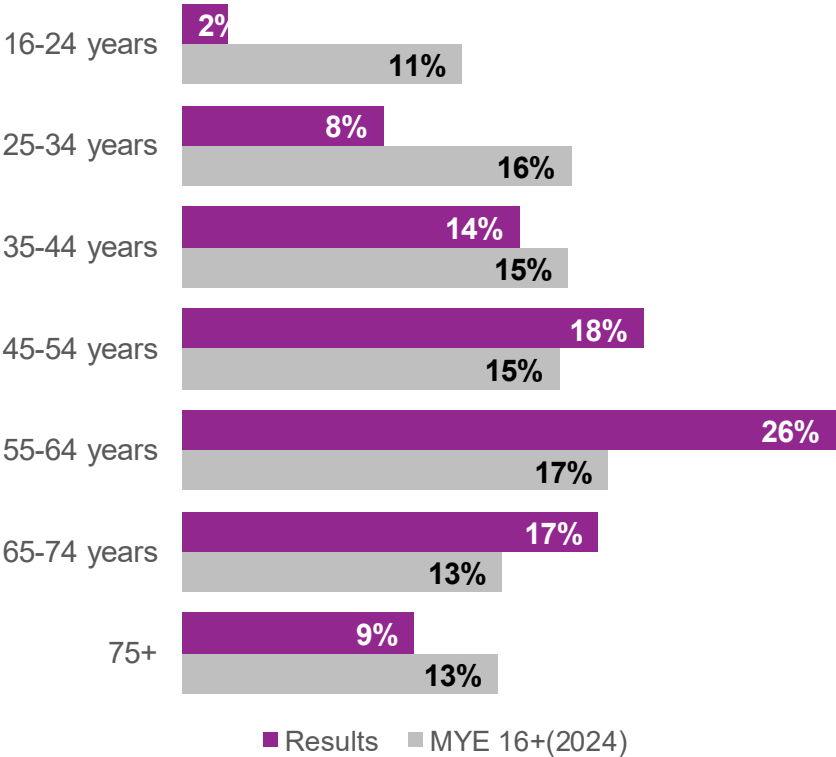
Respondents' breakdown by districts and borough
(including Derby City and outside Derbyshire)



Respondents by age band

Analysis of respondents by age band shows an overrepresentation of 55 to 64 years olds (26% of respondents), with 18% aged 45-54 years old. Only 8% are aged 25-34 and 2% aged 16-24 years old.

Derbyshire Respondents by age band



There is also a clear underrepresentation of the younger population, particularly amongst those aged 16 to 24 years of age, this age group has traditionally been difficult to engage with, and numbers were higher than anticipated for

this age band due to the inclusion of Snapchat and TikTok in the communications plan.

A further breakdown of respondents by demographic data can be found in Appendix B: Demographics.

County identity

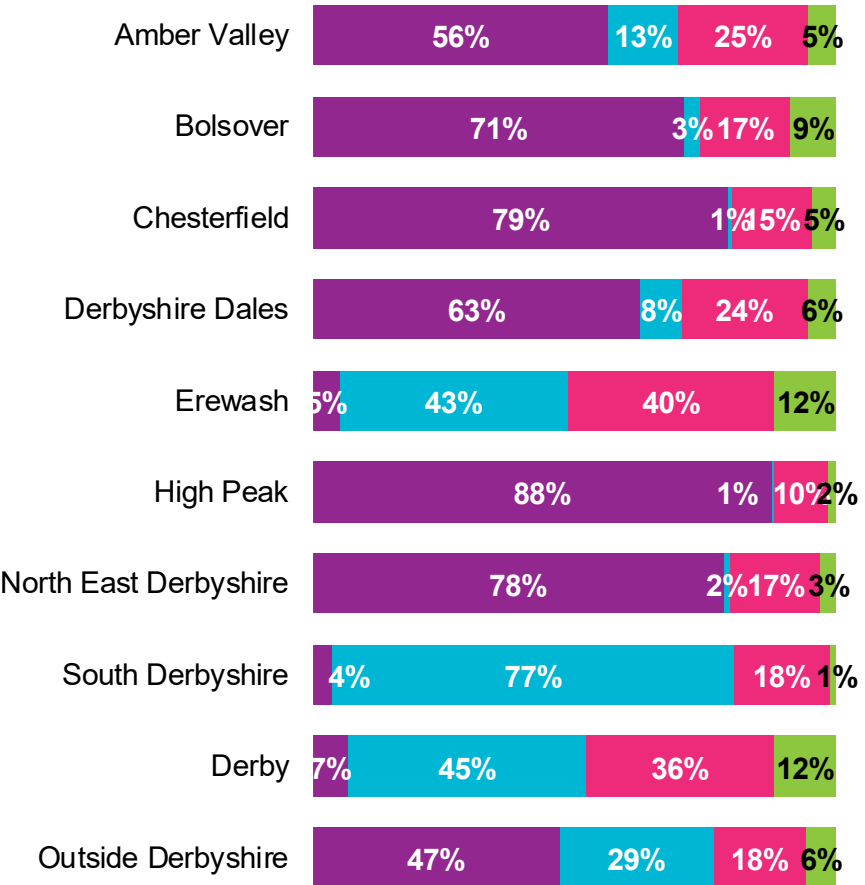
From the 4,342 respondents who answered the question on county identity, 56% (2,452) identify with the North of the county. Meanwhile, 16% feel connected to the South, and 22% identify with the county as a whole.

Respondents consider themselves to be a part of the North, South, or the whole of Derbyshire (n=4,342)	%
Part of the North	56%
Part of the South	16%
Whole county	22%
Don't know	5%

A detailed locality breakdown and comparison of these results show that most respondents residing within the proposed north unitary authority comprising of High Peak, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, and Derbyshire Dales, identify as being part of the north. Additionally, of the 858 respondents from Amber Valley who gave their view, over half (56%) also consider themselves part of the north.

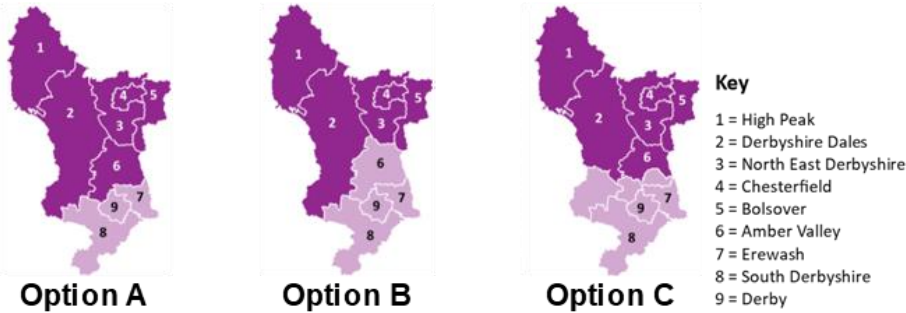
Most South Derbyshire respondents identify with the south, while opinions in Derby City and Erewash are evenly split between identifying with the south or the whole county.

Locality breakdown of respondents who identify with the North, South or whole of the county



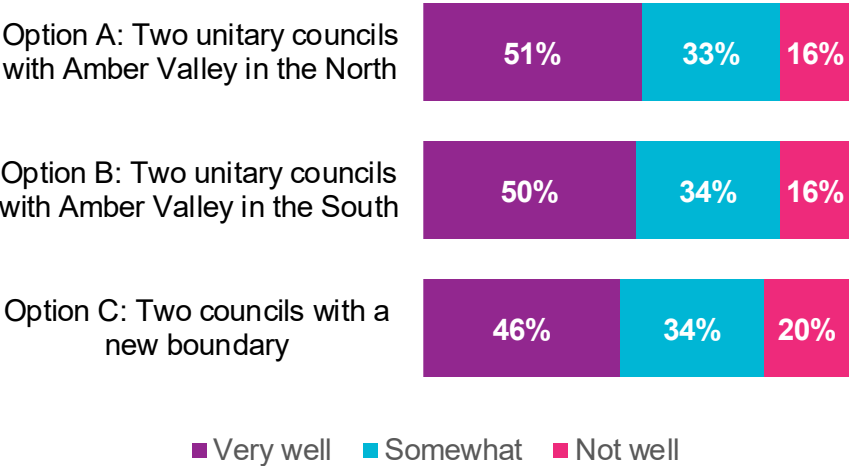
■ Part of the North ■ Part of the South
■ Whole county ■ Don't know

Understanding of LGR



Almost half of respondents feel they understood each of the options ‘Very well’. With 51% of respondents understanding Option A, 50% Option B very well, and 46% of respondents understanding Option C very well.

Level of understanding respondents have of each Option.



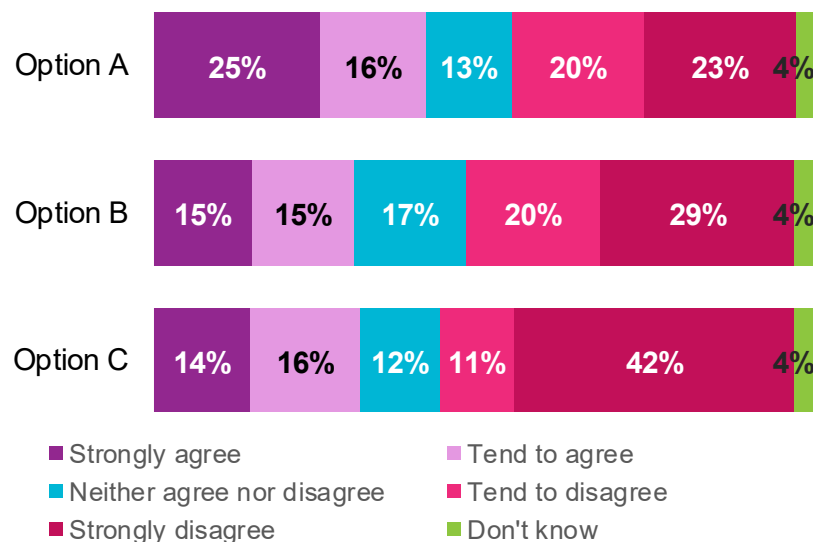
1.4 Results

Overall views on the three options

Participants asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each of the three options. Results, mainly from Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, show most respondents agree with Option A. Results also show that Option C has the highest level of respondents who 'strongly disagree'.

- **Option A:** 41% agreed, 43% disagreed
- **Option B:** 30% agreed, 49% disagreed
- **Option C:** 31% agreed, 53% disagreed

Extent of agree or disagreement with each of the options



Analysis of the responses to supplementary open-ended questions was consistent with the results, indicating more support for Option A. When respondents commented on

each option, Option C attracted the most disagreement. Feedback regarding Option C included concerns about local identity, opposition to the split in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, potential effects on services, and possible expansion of Derby City.

Option A - Of the 2,760 (61%) comments received:

- 22% cited issues with population or geographic distribution
- Other feedback included concerns over joining Derby City (9%), preference to maintain current arrangements (4%), and worries about impacts on services, county structure or infrastructure (4%); 3% did not support LGR.

Option B - Of the 2,576 (57%) comments received:

- 18% cited issues with population or geographic distribution
- Additional comments referenced concerns over joining with Derby City (11%), preference to maintain current arrangements (4%), and worries about impacts on services, county make-up or infrastructure (5%); 3% did not support LGR.

Option C - Of the 2,882 (64%) comments received:

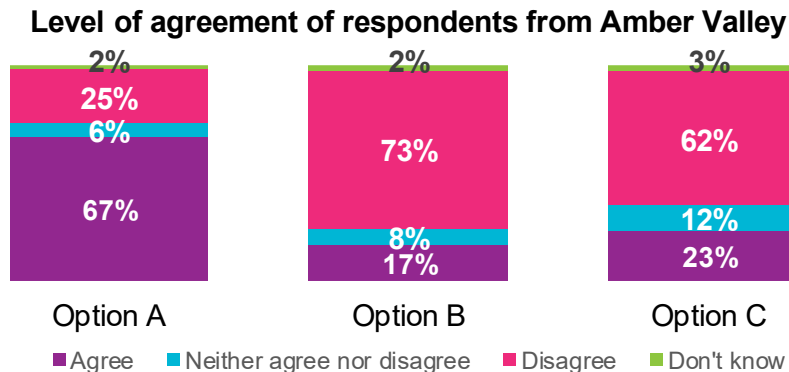
- 31% specifically opposed splitting Amber Valley or Derbyshire Dales; and 2% raised concerns about population or geographic distribution
- Other feedback included worries over joining with Derby City (12%), preference to maintain current arrangements (3%), and concerns over potential

impacts on services, county makeup or infrastructure (7%). 2% did not support LGR.

Respondents' views by district

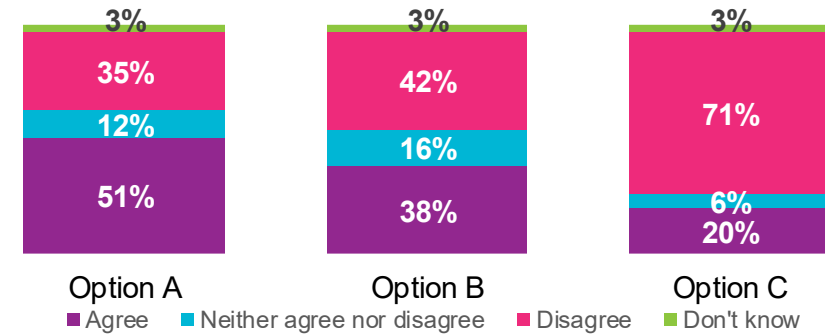
This section provides a breakdown and comparison of results by district and boroughs including Derby City and areas outside of Derbyshire.

In Amber Valley, 67% of respondents favour Option A. Option B received 17% support while Option C was selected by 23% of respondents.



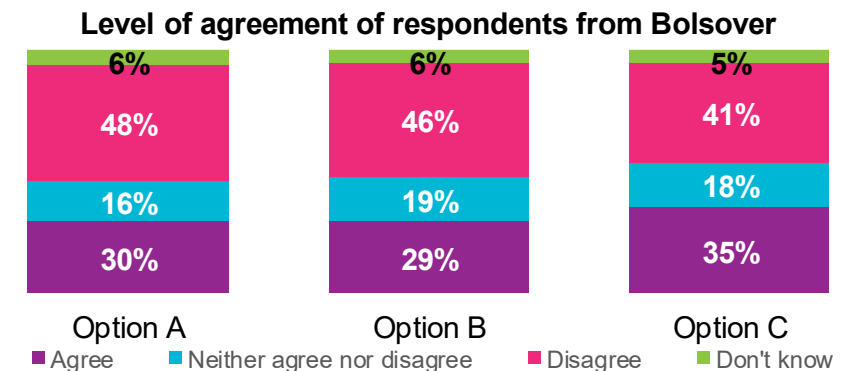
Derbyshire Dales, 51% favour Option A. Option B was supported by 38% of respondents, whereas Option C received the least support at 20%.

Level of agreement of respondents from Derbyshire Dales

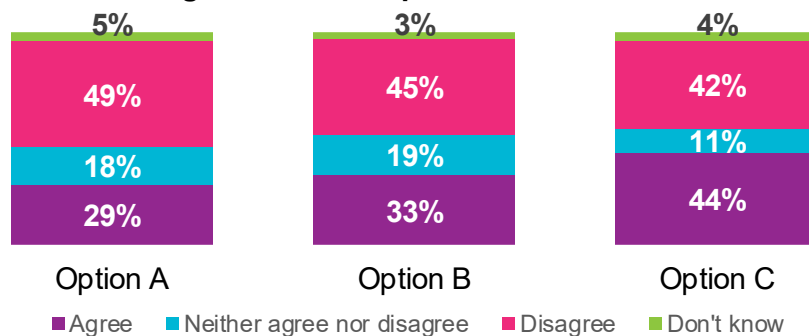


For all other districts and boroughs within Derbyshire, including Derby City, Option C received the highest level of support, ranging from 35% to 44%. The exception is respondents from outside Derbyshire who have business connections or work in Derbyshire; in this group, 42% supported Option A.

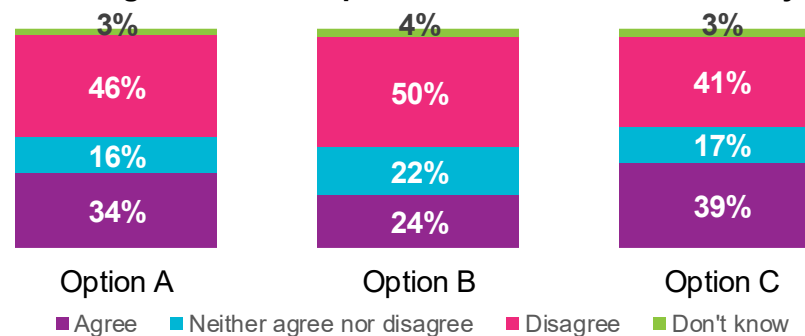
The results for the remaining districts are shown below.



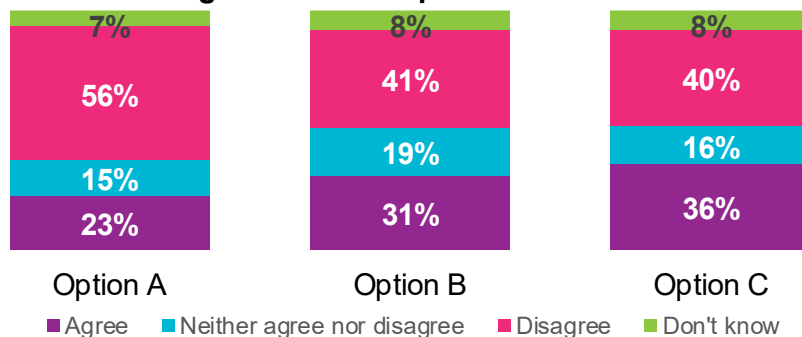
Level of agreement of respondents from Chesterfield



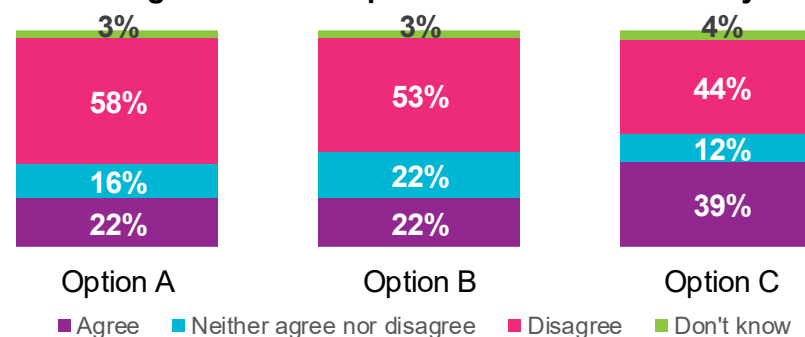
Level of agreement of respondents from North East Derbyshire



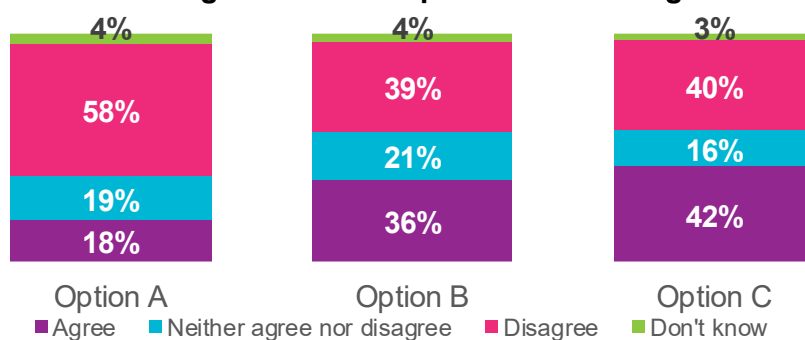
Level of agreement of respondents from Erewash



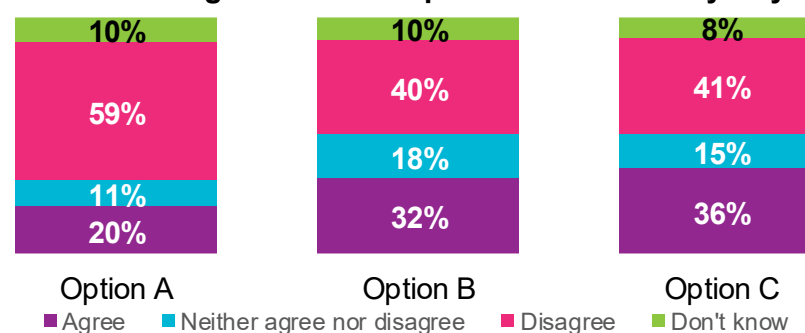
Level of agreement of respondents from South Derbyshire



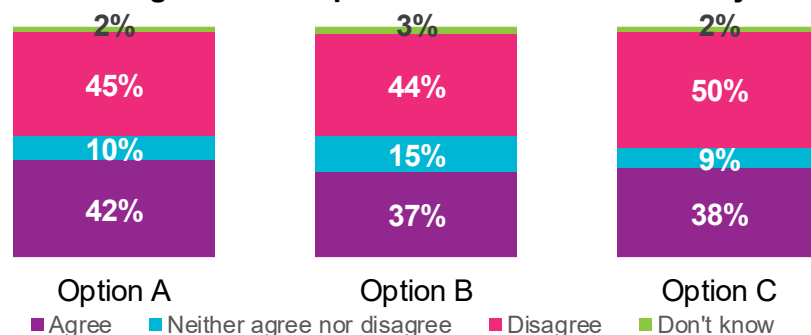
Level of agreement of respondents from High Peak



Level of agreement of respondents from Derby City

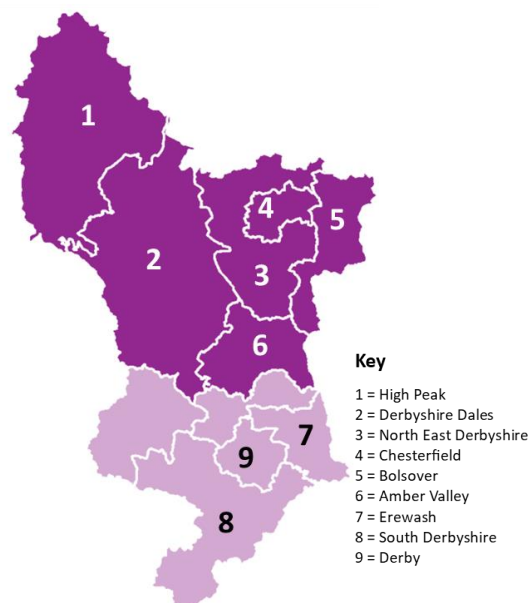


Level of agreement respondents from Outside Derbyshire



Views from targeted communities

Option C proposed creating a new boundary by splitting the borough of Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dale district along parish boundary lines. The suggested split including which parishes would potentially join each area is detailed in Appendix C.

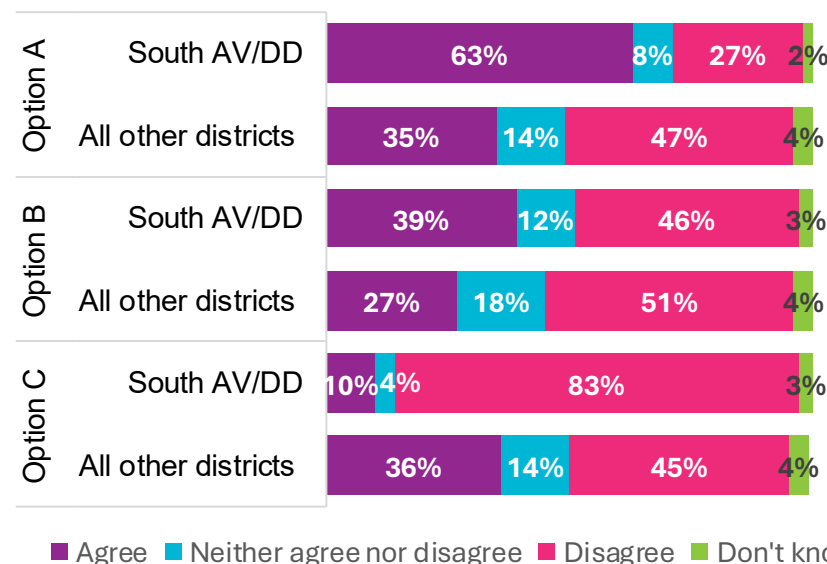


Analysis of respondents views from the areas identified in south Amber Valley and south Derbyshire Dales compared with the views of the remaining parts of Amber Valley and

Derbyshire Dales and all other districts and boroughs is explored below. More respondents completed the survey from these areas than others as these areas were targeted via the communications campaign as they are likely to be most affected by the LGR proposals.

Results for all districts and boroughs indicate that most respondents agree with Option C, except in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales. Respondents from the southern areas of Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales showed the least agreement with Option C and indicated the most agreement with Option A.

Extent of agreement with options comparing views from southern Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales with all remaining areas



Comparison with respondents from north Amber Valley shows no real difference in the extent of agreement or disagreement and is consistent with the views of residents from south Amber Valley.

Further feedback on local government reorganisation

Of the 4,532 respondents to the survey 1,589 respondents provided additional comments, suggestions or identified concerns regarding local government reorganisation.

The main concerns raised were related to the potential loss of community identity, losing their local voice/representation, and the potential effects of reorganisation on services.

- 38% concerns over loss of identity, local voice or impacts on services
- 12% expressed apprehension regarding the expansion of Derby City
- 11% indicated a lack of sufficient information
- 9% opposed the reorganisation process
- 9% preferred retaining the current structure
- 8% did not support any available option
- 6% considered it a waste of money
- 6% suggested whole county approach should be considered
- 4% expressed concerns over the possible disruption associated with reorganisation

Note: Percentages exceed 100% due to respondents providing responses on multiple topics in their feedback.

Government Criteria

There are six criteria that the Government has identified that need to be achieved by the preferred proposals submitted in November 2025. For the purpose of this survey five key outcomes were identified to support findings which matched against these criteria. These were:

- 1. Improving local services** (Criteria 3)
- 2. Saving money and delivering value** (Criteria 2)
- 3. Making local government simpler** (Criteria 1)
- 4. Supporting local identity** (Criteria 4)
- 5. Stronger community engagement** (Criteria 6)

These outcomes support the government criteria of:

Criteria 1 – Simple structures over a credible geography

Criteria 2 – Right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

Criteria 3 – Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Criteria 4 – Meets local needs and is informed by local views

Criteria 5 – Support devolution arrangements

Criteria 6 – Enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

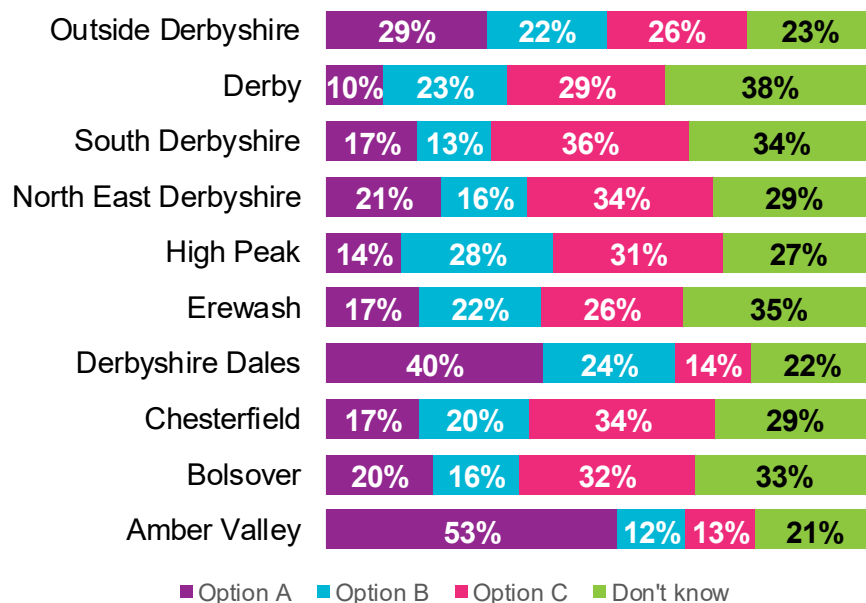
Most respondents view Option C as the most effective for achieving government outcomes, though preferences vary by area. Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, and regions outside Derbyshire prefer Option A, while other areas choose Option C.

The following charts illustrate which option respondents perceive as delivering on government outcomes by district, including Derby City and outside of Derbyshire.

1 - Improving local services

Respondents from Amber Valley (53%), Derbyshire Dales (40%), and outside Derbyshire (29%) believe Option A would most effectively improve local services, contrasting with the majority in other areas who prefer Option C.

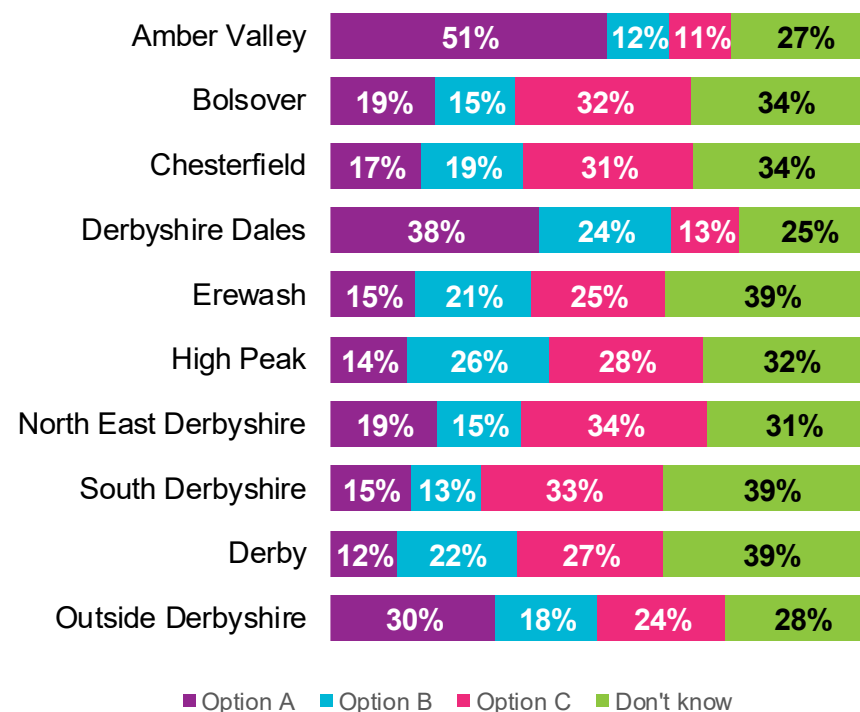
Improving Local Services



2 - Saving money and delivering value

Similar trends are observed regarding fiscal efficiency, with Amber Valley (51%), Derbyshire Dales (38%), and outside Derbyshire (30%) supporting Option A to save money and deliver greater value, whereas Option C is favoured elsewhere.

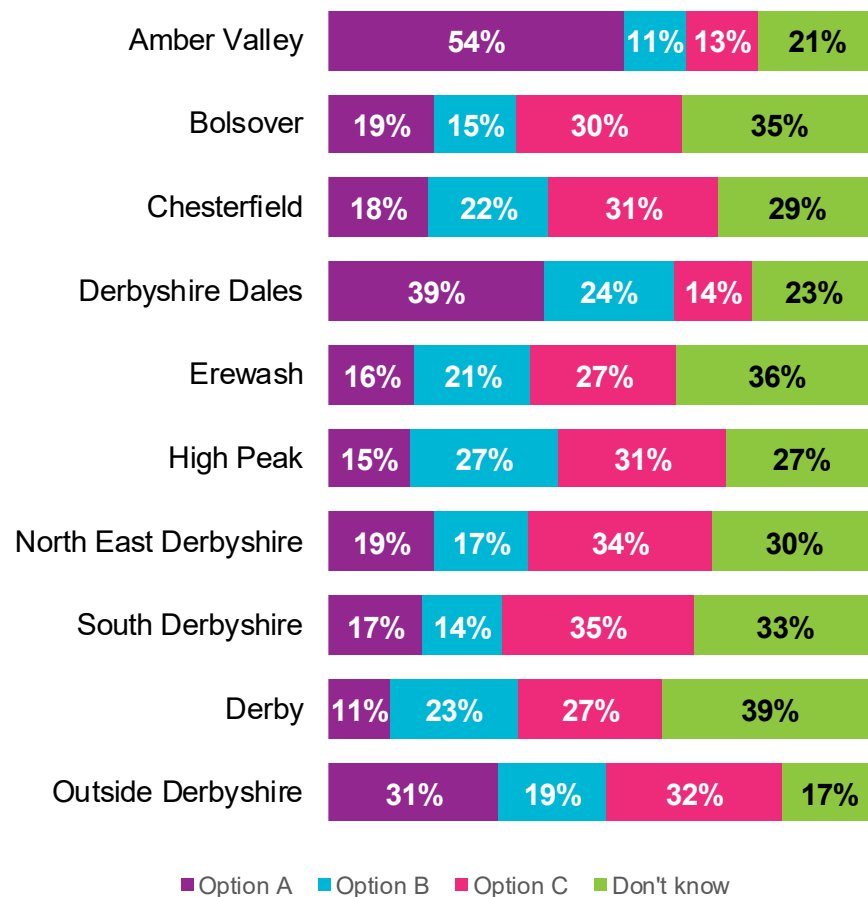
Saving Money and Delivering Value



3 - Making local government simpler

For simplifying local government structures, Amber Valley (54%) and Derbyshire Dales (54%) and Derbyshire Dales (39%) advocate for Option A, while the remaining districts favour Option C.

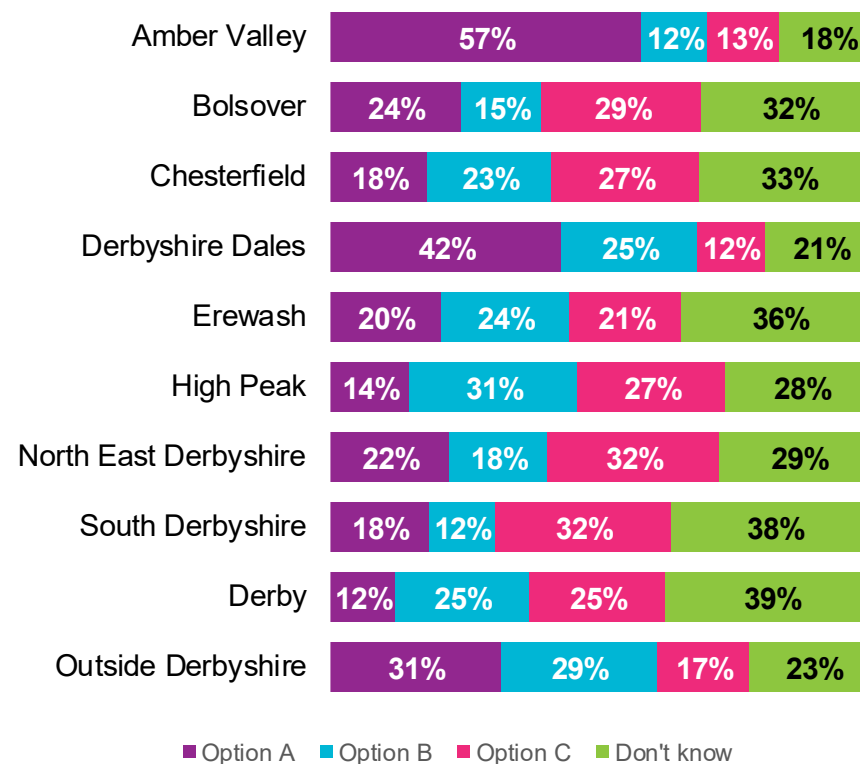
Making Local Government Simpler



4 - Supporting local Identity

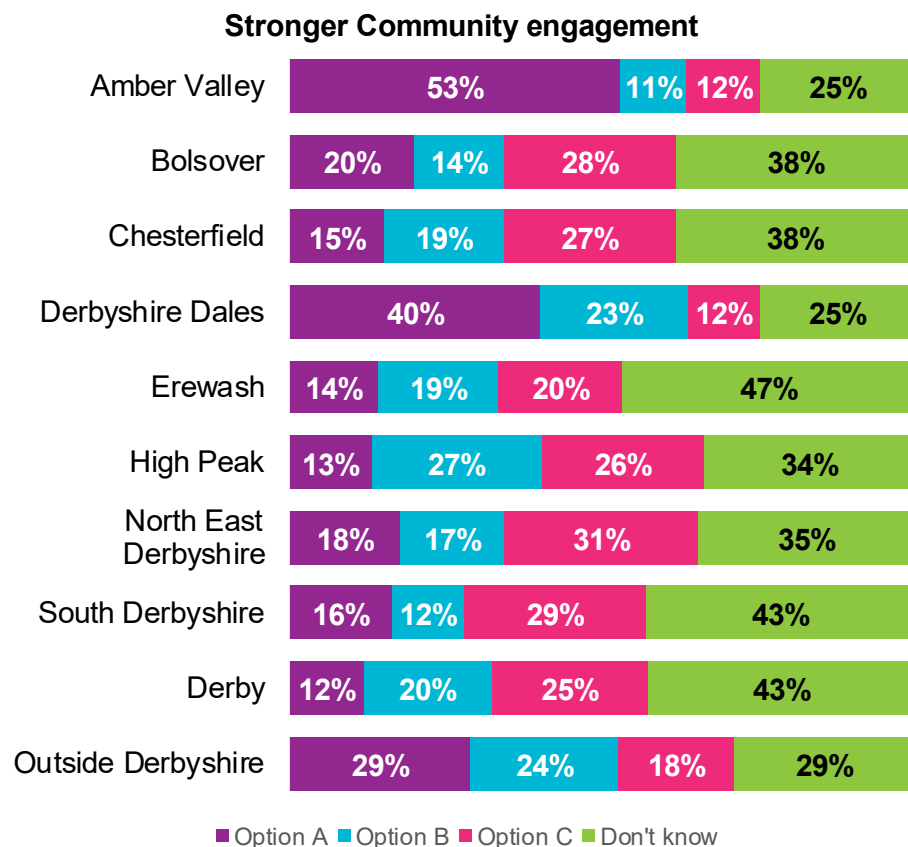
Respondents from Amber Valley (57%), Derbyshire Dales (42%), and outside Derbyshire (31%) believe Option A would best support local identity, with respondents from most other local authority areas highlighting Option C.

Supporting Local Identity



5 - Stronger Community Engagement

Regarding stronger community engagement, respondents from Amber Valley (53%), Derbyshire Dales (40%), and outside Derbyshire (29%) select Option A as the most favourable, in contrast to other areas highlighting Option C.



Nearly a third of respondents selected 'Don't know' when asked which option would best achieve the Government outcomes, indicating uncertainty—likely due to limited information, complex issues, or unclear differences between proposals.

Key feedback from respondents by the six government criteria

**Local
Leadership &
Accountability**

- Desire for transparency and robust representation
- Simple structures over a credible geography, prioritise simple structures
- Ensure credible geography
- Minimise disruption for residents and key partners

**Local
Identity**

- Fears of losing heritage and local identity, especially in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales
- Use feedback to redraw boundaries
- Respect historic ties
- Consider local voices
- Focus on areas with proposed splits

**Value for
Money**

- Public service efficiency and safeguarding
- Aim for efficient structures
- Misaligned boundaries may reduce value

**Strategic
Capacity**

- Balancing local needs with broader ambitions
- Combine data and stakeholder views
- Focus on local priorities and identity
- Build democratic support and accountability
- Establish a strong governance foundation

**Service
Integration &
Sustainability**

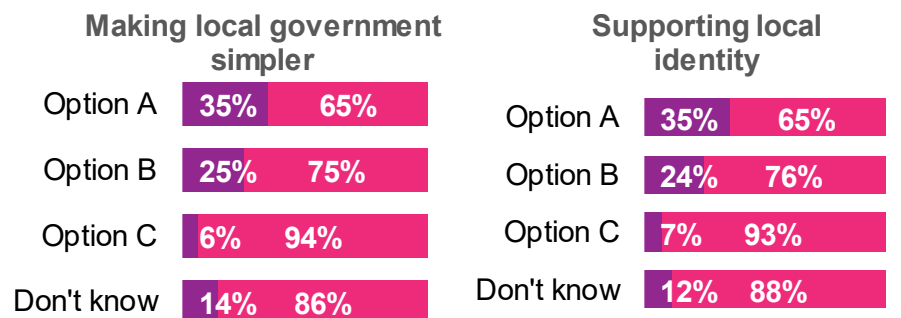
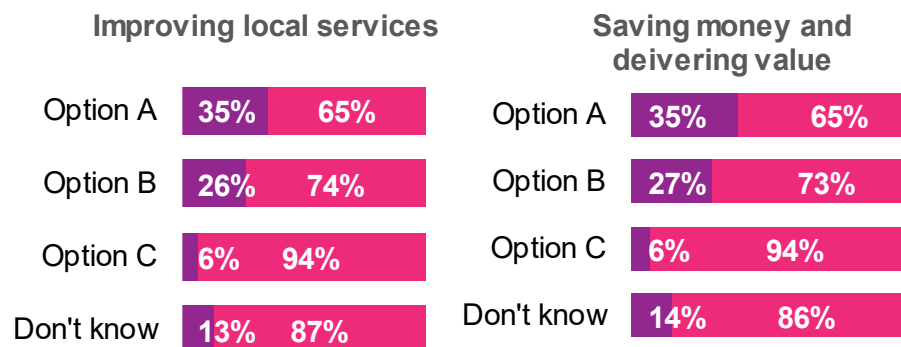
- Concerns about accessibility and quality
- Prioritise high-quality, accessible services
- Focus on roads, parks, and waste management
- Avoid disruption, especially for vulnerable groups
- Consider rural area needs carefully

**Stakeholder
Engagement**

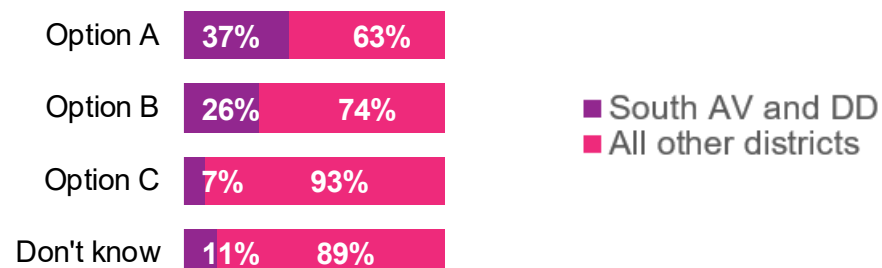
- Need for better engagement and more transparent options
- Encourage strong community involvement
- Provide genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment
- Support local hubs and campaigns
- Maintain accessible channels for ongoing engagement

Views from targeted communities

The following charts present a comparison between respondents from the south of Amber Valley and south Derbyshire Dales as identified by the current suggested line within Option C, and all other respondents. Results indicate that respondents in this area consider Option A as most likely to deliver on all Government outcomes, while their support for Option C is considerably lower.



Stronger community engagement



Priorities

When asked to identify the three most important factors regarding local government reorganisation and the establishment of two new unitary councils, respondents indicated that their top priorities were 'high quality services that work really well' (20%), 'efficient services' (14%) and 'maintaining or improving local services' (14%). The table below presents weighted results based on respondents selecting up to three options from the ten factors provided.

Important factors	%
High quality services that work really well	20%
Efficient services	14%
Maintaining or improving local services	14%
Clear, open and honest decision making	12%
Saving money and value for money	11%
Regularly listening to residents about wants and needs	9%
Impact on the local community and local identity	8%
Not losing local voices	7%
Good access for residents so it is easy to get help or contact the new council	5%
Other	1%

An analysis of results by district and borough indicates that a greater proportion of respondents from Derbyshire Dales prioritised the 'impact on the local community and local identity' (14%) and 'not losing local voice' (14%). Similarly, respondents from South Derbyshire assigned higher importance to the 'impact on the local community and local identity' (11%) and 'not losing local voice' (12%).

Council Services

In trying to identify the best way to deliver services for the residents, businesses, organisations, and communities of Derby and Derbyshire views about the services accessed (or not) are important for us to plan and develop the best outcomes for reorganising local councils and the services to be delivered.

When asked how important particular council services were to them, weighted results show that respondents consider all council services important with 'road, transport and infrastructure' (98%), 'parks and green spaces' (95%) and 'waste and recycling' (95%) as the top three. These are also among the top five services respondents are most concerned about if local government reorganisation affects them.

Council Services	Important	Not Important	I'm not sure
Road, transport and infrastructure (e.g. buses, potholes, street cleaning)	98%	2%	0%
Parks and green spaces	95%	4%	0%
Waste and recycling	95%	5%	0%
Partnerships with local NHS services to improve population health	91%	8%	1%
Sport, leisure and cultural facilities (e.g. Libraries, museums)	87%	13%	0%
Environmental health and Trading standards	83%	15%	1%
Adult social care and support	81%	17%	1%
Childrens social care, safeguarding and fostering	80%	18%	1%
Housing and homelessness	80%	18%	1%
Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	79%	20%	1%
Planning and building services	75%	23%	2%
Economic development and tourism	72%	27%	1%
Markets, fairs and community activities	70%	29%	1%

Impact on services

When asked to identify the five local services they were most concerned about being affected by local government reorganisation respondents identified 'road, transport and infrastructure' (15%), 'parks and green spaces' (11%), 'waste and recycling' (10%), 'sport, leisure and cultural facilities' (9%), and 'partnerships with local NHS services to improve population health' (9%). These reflect the same five services respondents identified in Q4 regarding which council services are most important to them.

Impact on services	%
Road, transport and infrastructure (e.g. buses, potholes, street cleaning)	15%
Parks and green spaces	11%
Waste and recycling	10%
Sport, leisure and cultural facilities (e.g. Libraries, museums)	9%
Partnerships with local NHS services to improve population health	9%
Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	8%
Adult social care and support	7%
Planning and building services	7%
Childrens social care, safeguarding and fostering	6%
Housing and homelessness	5%
Economic development and tourism	4%
Markets, fairs and community activities	4%
Environmental health and Trading standards	3%
None of the above	1%
Other	0%

What respondents value about their local area

When asked to select all the things respondents valued about their local area, from the 21 options supplied, the top five factors' (weighted) respondents identified were:

- Access to the natural environment/countryside (9%)
- Road network (7%)
- Public transport links (7%)
- A sense of community (6%)
- Access to neighbouring towns and cities (6%)

What respondents value about their local area	%
Access to the natural environment or the countryside	9%
Road network	7%
Public transport links (travelling within Derbyshire, inc. Derby)	7%
A sense of community	6%
Access to the neighbouring towns and cities	6%
Access to urban green spaces	6%
Pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes	6%
Access to historic places of interest	6%
Availability of good schools and educational facilities	5%
Leisure activities and facilities (not sport)	5%
Public transport links (travelling outside Derbyshire)	5%
Friends and family living nearby	5%
Retail and shopping opportunities	4%
Work and career opportunities	4%
Affordable housing	4%
Entertainment venues and facilities	4%
Sporting activities and facilities	4%
Local community or volunteering activities	3%
Access to tourist attractions	3%

None of the above	0%
Other	0%

Note: Respondents could choose from 21 options; most picked between 5 and 11, with a maximum of 19 selected.

A sense of belonging with their local area

Friends and family, along with shared local identity, were the top five factors for respondents' sense of belonging, followed by shopping facilities, leisure, and access to services.

- Friends and family (18%)
- Shared local identity (12%)
- Leisure and recreation activities (11%)
- Shopping facilities (11%)
- Transport links (10%)

Sense of belonging with the local area	%
Friends and family	18%
Shared local identity	12%
Leisure and recreation activities	11%
Shopping facilities	11%
Transport links (e.g. roads, buses, trains)	10%
Access to services (e.g. GP Surgery)	9%
Historical links	9%
Work/employment	9%
School/college	6%
Places of worship	3%
Other	2%

Many of the other comments received related to volunteering and community activities.

Involvement in decision making

The survey asked about involvement in local decision making and barriers to participation, as well as how new unitary authorities could best support local communities. The results are weighted for Derbyshire.

Do you feel involved in local decision making

- 17% feel involved
- 64% do not
- 10% don't get involved
- 9% don't know

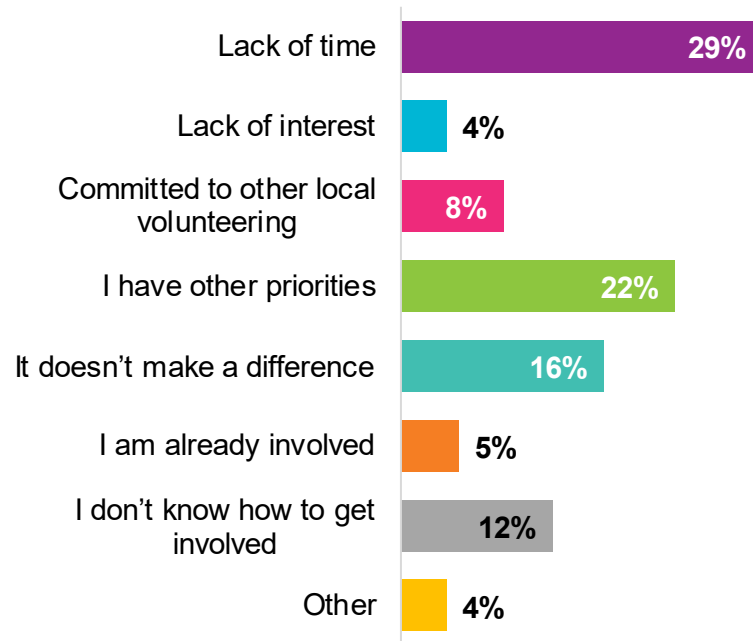
Involvement in local decision making

- 12% are currently involved
- 56% would like to be
- 32% do not want to be involved

What prevents respondents being involved

Among those not involved (56%), the main reasons given were lack of time, having other priorities, and a lack of trust that their involvement would not make a difference.

What prevents respondents being involved

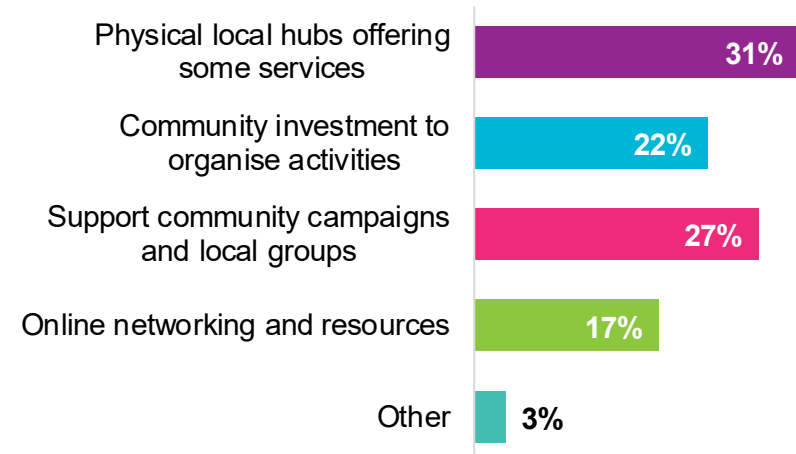


Additional factors such as poor health and a lack of information about how to get involved were also identified as preventing people from getting involved.

How a new unitary authority can best support local community

Overall respondents believed that all the options would benefit and support local communities within any new unitary authorities. Expressing support for physical local hubs offering services, supporting local community campaigns and investment for communities to organise activities to help support local communities.

How a new unitary authority can best support local community



Other comments received included respondents expressing that the current system should be kept, and comments around the need for improved communication and local authorities listening to communities

1.5 Survey Awareness

Respondents were asked to select all the communication methods they encountered promoting the engagement.

Results show that Facebook (27%) was the most common method including both organic post and paid advertisements by the Council. The Council website (15%) and direct emails (13%) were next, followed by local news (8%), Derbyshire Now (7%) and recommendations from other residents (7%).

How respondents came across promotional communication about the engagement	%
Facebook	27%
DCC website	15%
Direct email from DCC	13%
Local news	8%
Derbyshire Now (e-newsletter)	7%
A Derbyshire resident	7%
Your local councillor	6%
Friends / family	5%
Other	4%
Instagram	3%
LinkedIn	3%
TikTok	1%
X (formerly Twitter)	1%
YouTube	1%
Nextdoor app	1%
Snapchat	0%

Introducing TikTok and Snapchat raised awareness of the survey to younger age groups, but these groups were still underrepresented.

These results reflect the comprehensive communications plan which the Council delivered in support of the engagement and to promote and publicise the survey. Involving a range of media outlets and platforms, incorporating press releases, information provided on the Council website, direct communications via emails and letters to stakeholders, and a robust social media campaign targeting identified groups.

Social Media Feedback

A number of comments were received via the Councils social media platforms in response to posts promoting the survey.

Most comments reflected the thoughts and views received as feedback within the main survey regarding respondents preferred options, as well as raising concerns about the impact on services, local identity and losing local voice.



Part Two – Key Stakeholder Engagement

2.1 Purpose and Aims

Central to the criteria set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was the need to engage with key partners and stakeholders regarding local government reorganisation.

The aim is to ensure that significant partners, whose work and service delivery may be directly affected, are given a meaningful opportunity to provide input and raise any issues or suggestions regarding the proposed changes. By capturing the perspectives of a diverse range of organisations, the engagement process strives to inform decision-making with a comprehensive understanding of

potential impacts on local governance, public service provision, and community outcomes.

2.2 Methodology

Meetings were arranged between the Councils' senior leadership and some identified key partners while others were sent letters inviting them to provide a formal response to the Councils proposed options for local government reorganisation.

2.3 Stakeholders

Identified key partners and stakeholders included:

- MPs
- EMMCA Mayor
- Derby City Council and district and borough councils
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Derbyshire Constabulary
- Derbyshire Fire and Rescue service
- NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board
- University Hospitals of Derby and Burton Foundation Trust
- Higher Education: Derby University
- Further Education: Derby College, Burton and South Derbyshire College, Chesterfield College, Buxton and Leek College
- Primary and Secondary Schools
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Derbyshire Resilience Partnership
- Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Further stakeholder engagement was conducted with:

- Community and Voluntary Sector (Derby and Derbyshire Infrastructure Alliance)
- Derbyshire Armed Forces Community Partnership (DAFCP)
- Town and Parish Council (TPCLF) Liaison Forum
- Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Derbyshire branch

- Derbyshire Assoc. Local Councils (DALC)

A letter requesting responses was sent to primary and secondary schools and nurseries and included a link to an online form to capture responses. The analysis of which is included below in the results section.

2.4 Results

Below is a summary of the responses received from key stakeholders identifying their preferred option and providing a summary of their rationale.

EMCCA Mayor

Discussions were held between the Council and the EMCCA Mayor regarding a range of issues and factors relating to local government reorganisation.

Police and Crime Commissioner

Preferred option: [Option A](#)

- Option A retains the current north-south divisional policing structure, ensuring operational stability and balanced resource distribution without requiring disruptive changes.
- In contrast, Options B and C would require significant restructuring, impacting staffing, demand management, and community engagement, while also introducing governance challenges due to misaligned boundaries. These options would incur substantial financial costs from system updates, compromise data integrity, and risk inefficient practices. Although the reduction from ten

councils to two is supported, Option A offers the most strategically and financially stable approach within existing constraints.

Derbyshire Constabulary

Preferred option: [Option A](#)

- This option presents the least disruption to current policing structures and systems and offers the greatest potential for continuity and efficiency. It would simplify the relationships with local authorities and reduce the administrative burden associated with managing multiple council interfaces.
- Option A maintains the current local policing divisional structure (north and south), avoiding the need to reallocate resources and redefine command responsibilities. Options B and C would require significant adjustments to divisional boundaries and local policing units, with implications for staffing, demand management, and community engagement.
- Options B and C would necessitate extensive and expensive updates to our core systems. These changes would incur financial costs and risk compromising year-on-year data comparisons and performance metrics at a time of considerable fiscal challenge.

NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board

No preferred option

- In terms of overall population numbers, Option C provides the most balanced population numbers across the newly proposed council areas.
- Option A would see an increased concentration of the older population in the north of the county, with a 60/40 split between the north and south authorities specified within that option. The older population is a key focus for all partners across Joined Up Care Derbyshire and so councils would need to understand the potential consequences of this population split in terms of economic modelling, patient flows and the equitable provision and management of services.
- Option B would lead to a greater concentration of higher levels of economic deprivation in the south council. This reflects the current deprivation profiles, with the greater concentration of economic deprivation in the Derby City council area.
- The profile of emergency admissions from an NHS activity perspective would be highest in the north council for all options. When viewed through the lens of deprivation, there is a difference in emergency admissions between the lowest and highest deprivations deciles, most prominent in Option B. There is no statistical significance for elective care-based inequalities across all three options. Health inequalities exist in Emergency Department attendances but the gap between lowest and highest deprivation deciles remain unchanged across all three options. However, for ambulance activity, there is an inequality gap in all

options, linked to deprivation and influenced by the county's geography and ability to travel. The inequalities gap here is larger for Option B.

- Financial sustainability of the future councils is obviously important. Financially driven decisions about changes to public transport, adult social care, homelessness support, or public health interventions can directly and indirectly have consequences on the NHS and the patients ICB serve.
- Delivering adult social care for the population within the area of a new north Council has historically been more challenging and the ICB would be keen to understand the councils' plan to ensure there is no deterioration in waiting times for adult social care across the different options set out.
- ICB specifically reviewed the differential position of Amber Valley from an NHS perspective. In terms of patient flows into acute hospitals, historically the general profile is that residents of Amber Valley would tend to be served by University Hospitals of Derby and Burton, with a smaller volume of patient flow to Chesterfield Royal Hospital, Sherwood Forest Hospital and other out of area providers.
- ICB is mindful of the risks of a configuration which increases the number of interfaces, particularly in relation to discharge planning, community support, and population health management. And are also keen to emphasise the importance of existing relationships for the NHS providers with adult social care, mental health

(child, adolescent, and adult), child safeguarding, and others, and would wish to support a minimising of any potential disruption to these through the reorganisation process.

University Hospitals of Derby and Burton (UHDB) Foundation Trust

Preferred option: [Option B](#)

- UHDB provide a similar rationale for their preferred option as stated above by the ICB.
- Highlighting possible operational risks, impacting Trust boundaries (UHDB effective catchment geography) and council boundaries may not align neatly depending upon the configuration option pursued. This may complicate discharge planning, community support, and population health management.
- Any change which might result in different services or service capacity being moved across organisational or geographical boundaries may therefore present a risk to our operating environment.
- Changes to local government boundaries could have an impact on service delivery such as Adult Social Care.
- Reorganisation or disruption could also impact the delivery of Children's Services and Safeguarding, where there is lots of joint working in areas such as Child Protection, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Preferred option: [Option B](#)

- Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Trust feel that residents of Amber Valley are more likely to access health services provided by University Hospitals Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust (UHDB) than CRH. This is true for attendances at our Accident and Emergency department, and admissions for planned and unplanned care. Aligning the catchment of health and local authority teams would help ensure effective hospital discharge processes as much as possible.
- Similarly, CRH provides Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for the north of the county, including Derbyshire Dales. CAMHS provision for the south of the county, including Amber Valley, is delivered by Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Again, aligning the catchment of these health and local authority teams would optimise partnership working across the NHS and schools for example, which is particularly important for these teams.
- Option C, splitting Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, would result in a more equitable population distribution across two new councils. However, we do not believe the benefits of this option outweigh the added complexity and disruption to local teams.
- Noting that any northern council will have greater rurality than the southern, and acknowledging the challenges of delivering care and support across that geography.

Public transport and therefore access to services can be challenging, as can delivery of adult social care.

Peak District National Park Authority

[Informal Response](#)

An informal response has also been received from the Peak District National Park Authority, stating that within their remit to give feedback on proposed structures, their response is provided to support the consideration of the impacts on the National Park and its relationship to the new Derbyshire Authorities in whichever structure is implemented.

- Consideration would need to be given to the representation and new Council appointees to the PDNPA membership and determined by the National Park Authorities (England) Order 2015 (Sch.1 Pt.2) allowing for a distribution of representation from across the current Derbyshire authorities which fall within the National Park boundary. The potential new Northern Council for Derbyshire would therefore need to oversee the appointment of its required number of PDNPA members.
- Under the proposed reorganisation of Derbyshire's local authorities, the Northern Council will be required to fulfil the statutory duty to 'seek to further the purposes' of the National Park as included within the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and to strengthened responsibilities in relation to the PDNP.
- This duty should be fulfilled where local authorities have statutory responsibilities. These primarily include, but

are not limited to: Maintaining highways including footpaths, provision of public transport, housing and development.

- The Southern Council, due to its proximity to the PDNP, will also have some responsibility within the duty to seek to further where factors it has responsibility over might impact on the NPMP or its setting.

The only response received from further education establishments has been from Burton and South Derbyshire College. With no response received from Derby College, Chesterfield College, and Buxton and Leek College.

Burton and South Derbyshire College (BSDC)

No preferred option

- Would support the proposal that balances the population of each council.
- Raised concerns about the need for mechanisms to ensure collaborative working with further education establishments situated within a north council. As well as working effectively with colleges within EMCCA region.
- Would like to see the continuation of the Toyota City Partnership Board within any reorganisation of local authorities.

Primary and Secondary Schools

Range of preferred options

Responses have been received from 35 primary and secondary schools throughout Derbyshire. Due to the low

number of responses received their views cannot be seen as a representative expression of schools views regarding local government reorganisation across the county.

Schools who submitted a response:

- Ashbrook Infant and Nursery School
- Staveley Junior School
- Barlow Church of England Primary School
- Hartshorne CE Primary
- Risley Lower Grammar CE VC Primary School
- St Oswald's C.E. Primary School
- Scarcliffe Primary School
- David Nieper Academy
- Ripley Junior School
- Hunloke Park Primary
- St. John's CE Primary School and nursery, Belper
- Buxton Junior School
- Repton Primary School
- Swanwick Hall
- Heanor Gate Spencer Academy
- Denby Free CofE VA Primary School
- Fairmeadows Foundation primary School
- Parkside Community School
- ACE Derbyshire Trust
 - Norbury C of E Primary School
 - Hulland C of E Primary School
 - Brailsford C of E Primary School
 - Bradley C of E Primary School
 - Ashbourne Primary

- Morley Primary School
- Anthony Bek Community Primary and Nursery School
- Cromford C of E Primary School
- Barlborough Primary School
- Riddings Infant and Nursery School
- Town End Junior School and Tibshelf Infants and Nursery (Tibshelf Schools Federation)
- Alfreton Park School
- Holly House School
- Chinley Primary School
- Litton Church of England Primary School
- Park House Primary School
- Lenthall Infant and Nursery School

Most of the schools who provided a response identified Option B as their preferred option for local government reorganisation.

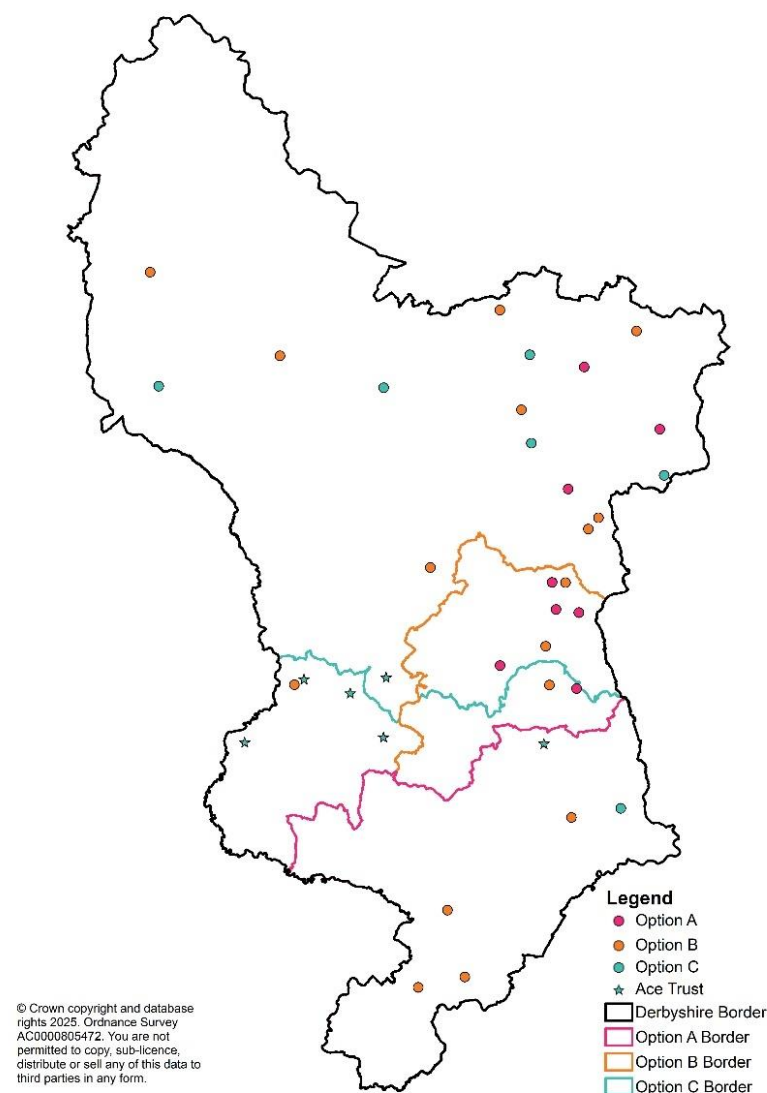
Number of Schools who prefer each option

Option A	8
Option B	15
Option C	12

As can be seen in the following map, showing the location of the schools who provided a response, those schools within Amber Valley and southern Derbyshire Dales impacted by each option have mixed views. With 5 schools in Amber Valley preferring Option A, 3 preferring option B. Whereas 4 of the 7 schools who responded located within the southern area of Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, as

defined within Option C, preferring Option C, 2 preferring Option B and one preferring Option A.

Respondent school locations



Most of the comments received for each Option appear to show schools' views are based on their own unique circumstances and location. With comments for each option mentioning factors such as population size, revenue and costs, and geographical cohesion. With the need for closer working relationships across boundaries, more joined up thinking for social care, and impact on SEND services all cited as concerns involved with all options.

Town and Parish Councils

No preferred option

A meeting of the Town and Parish Council (TPCLF) Liaison Forum on 15 September 2025 did not indicate a clear preference for any of the proposed options regarding local government reorganisation. Nevertheless, certain concerns were expressed in relation to the establishment of new unitary authorities and the division of services.

Additionally, thirty-nine respondents to the public survey identified themselves as members of Town and Parish Councils. Two formal submissions were received from Osmaston and Yeldersley Parish Council and Weston on Trent Parish Council, both articulating their reservations about Option C.

Community and Voluntary Sector

No preferred option

Nineteen survey respondents stated they represented community or voluntary organisations. Additional talks with

the Derby and Derbyshire Infrastructure Alliance revealed no specific concerns about local government reorganisation.

Derbyshire Armed Forces Community Partnership (DAFCP)

No preferred option

A meeting with the Derbyshire Armed Forces Community Partnership highlighted that any arrangements for any new unitary authorities should include the provision for Armed Forces champions within their constitutions.

Additional stakeholders

No preferred option

Discussions were also held with Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Derbyshire and the Derbyshire Association Local Councils (DALC) where no overall opinion was expressed.

Conclusion

Stakeholder feedback on local government reorganisation in Derby and Derbyshire indicates that whilst no option was particularly welcomed, Option A is generally preferred, while Option C faces the most opposition, particularly in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales. However, outside these areas, Option C is most supported, though most districts still saw strong disagreement with this option.

The feedback from key partners and stakeholders although mixed, has also provided a comprehensive understanding of potential impact all options could have on local governance, public service provision, and community outcomes. Responses are vital to the decision-making process, including the options appraisal and agreed final proposal which best fits the requirements of local government reorganisation in Derbyshire.

A review of the findings against the six government criteria for LGR also reveals several important insights:

- **Local Leadership & Accountability:** Respondents voiced clear concerns about transparency and the need for robust representation. The emphasis on ensuring local voices are heard illustrates a strong desire for accountable, responsive governance structures that reflect the community's needs.
- **Value for Money:** While not directly quantified, concerns about the impact of reorganisation on service and efficiency suggest that cost-effectiveness and the

safeguarding of public services remain central to public trust.

- **Service Integration & Sustainability:** Fears regarding the potential dilution of local service provision indicate that any future model must prioritise seamless, sustainable service delivery without compromising quality or accessibility.
- **Strategic Capacity:** The split in preferences points to the necessity for a model capable of balancing local ambitions with wider strategic goals, ensuring that Derbyshire's unique communities benefit from both localism and coordination at scale.
- **Local Identity:** The apprehension about losing local identity, local voice and representation—particularly in Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales—highlights the need for structures that protect heritage and promote inclusivity.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Criticism of the engagement process itself, and the options presented, signals an urgent requirement for more open, clear, and ongoing dialogue in future stages.

The goal of the final preferred option for Derbyshire County Council needs to balance efficiency with maintaining local democracy and community identity, creating a governance structure that truly represents Derbyshire's diverse population. Lessons from this engagement will also help shape future decisions to meet residents' needs.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Q1 How are you answering this survey?

- As a resident of Derbyshire
- As a business owner or business leader
- Member of a Parish/Town Council
- Elected member of Derbyshire District/Borough/City/County council
- Representative of a Statutory Organisation (e.g. Police, Fire Service, NHS)
- Representative of a Voluntary or Community Sector Organisation
- As an employee of Derbyshire County Council
- As an employee of a District or Borough Council
- As an employee of a housing association
- I work in Derbyshire
- Other (with box for answer)

Q1b If you would like to provide the name of your organisation, please enter below.

Q2 Your postcode (please write your full postcode e.g. DE4 3AG)

Awareness of Local Government Reorganisation

Q3 Before today, how much did you know about the proposals to bring together existing county and district/borough/city services to create a unitary model of local government in Derby and Derbyshire?

- I knew a lot about it

- I knew a fair amount
- I knew a little
- I'd heard about it but didn't know any detail
- I'd not heard about it before today

Council Services

We want to find the best way to deliver services for you and the businesses, organisations, and communities of Derby and Derbyshire. Your views about the services you access are important for us to plan and develop the best outcomes for reorganising local councils and the services you receive from them.

Q4 How important are these council services to you?

Please tell us how much you think each one matters - even if you don't directly use a service.

Respondents were asked to identify how important the following council services were to them, with a selection from Very important, quite important not very important, not important, and don't know.

- Sport, Leisure and Cultural facilities (e.g. Libraries, museums)
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Education and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)
- Parks and Green Spaces
- Planning and Building services
- Housing and Homelessness

- Partnerships with local NHS services to improve population health
- Road, Transport and Infrastructure (e.g. Buses, potholes, street cleaning)
- Markets, fairs and community activities
- Environmental Health and Trading Standards
- Waste and Recycling
- Adult Social Care and Support
- Childrens Social Care, Safeguarding and fostering

What's important to you about local government reorganisation

Please tell us what's important to you about reorganising local councils? What are your priorities? Do you have any concerns about any services which could be affected?

Q5 Your Priorities

What is important to you about local government reorganisation and the creation of new unitary council(s) in Derbyshire? Please select up to three options.

- Saving money and value for money
- Efficient services
- High quality services that work really well
- Clear, open and honest decision making
- Not losing local voices
- Impact on the local community and local identity
- Maintaining or improving local services
- Regularly listening to residents about what they want and need

- Good access for residents so it is easy to get help or contact the new council
- Other (Please specify)

Q6 Impact on services

County and district/borough/city councils are responsible for a number of services. Which, if any, local services are you concerned about being affected by reorganisation? (Please select up to a maximum of five services)

- Adult social care, such as support for people with disabilities, or care for the elderly
- Community safety and CCTV
- Council-managed car parking / parking enforcement
- Customer services / contact with council staff
- Education, including adult education, and children's services such as looked-after children, those with special educational needs or disability (SEND) and fostering
- Homelessness support
- Libraries
- Parks and other green spaces
- Planning and related services
- Public toilets
- Environmental health and licensing of taxis, pubs, restaurants and other facilities
- Highways (potholes, footpaths, drainage, street lighting etc)
- Waste and recycling collection and disposal

- Sports, leisure and cultural facilities (leisure centres, community centres, theatres, museums etc.)
- Social/council housing
- Street cleaning and prevention of fly-tipping
- Economic development
- Supporting local businesses
- Youth facilities
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

Your Local Area

This section is a set of questions for people who live in Derby and Derbyshire.

We want to know what is important to you, and what makes you feel connected to your local area. We also want to understand how you feel your opinions are listened to so that we can ensure a new council structure that pays attention to the voices of Derbyshire communities.

Q7 Do you live in Derbyshire (including Derby City)?

- Yes
- No

Q8 From the following list, what do you value about your local area? (Select all that apply).

- Access to historic places of interest
- Access to tourist attractions
- Access to the main towns and City of Derby
- Access to the natural environment of the countryside

- Access to urban green spaces
- Affordable housing
- Entertainment venues and facilities
- Sporting activities and facilities
- Leisure activities and facilities (not sport)
- Local community or volunteering activities
- A sense of community
- Friends and family living nearby
- Work and career opportunities
- Availability of good schools and educational facilities
- Public transport links (travelling within Derbyshire, including Derby City)
- Public transport links (travelling outside Derbyshire)
- Pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes
- Retail and shopping opportunities
- Road network
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

Q9 Which district/borough/city do you live in?

- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Derbyshire Dales District Council
- High Peak Borough Council
- Erewash Borough Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- South Derbyshire District Council
- Derby City Council

Q10 What village/town/city do you live in?

Q11 Do you have a sense of belonging with any other local village/town/city? (Please say which in the box below)

Q11a Why is this? (Please select all that apply)

- Shared local identity
- Historical links
- Shopping facilities
- Access to services (e.g. GP Surgery)
- Transport links (e.g. roads, buses, trains)
- School/college
- Work/employment
- Leisure and recreation activities
- Friends and family
- Places of worship
- Other

Q12 Thinking of your local community, do you consider yourself to be a part of the North of the county or the South?

- Part of the North
- Part of the South
- Whole county
- Don't know

Q13 Do you feel involved in local decision making?

- Yes
- No

- Don't know
- I do not get involved

Q14 Are you involved, or would you like to be involved, in any of the following areas of local decision-making?

Respondents were asked to identify if they were involved in the following activities, with a selection from currently involved, would like to be involved, and do not want to be involved.

- Taking part in public consultations, focus groups or residents' panels to have my voice heard
- Knowing more about my councillors and how to contact them
- Involved in local community groups
- Involved in local Town and Parish Councils
- Involved in local community campaigns, e.g. litter picking campaign, support local groups
- Attending or watching council meetings

Q15 If you are not already involved, what do you think prevents you from getting involved in local decision-making? Please select all that apply.

- Lack of time
- Lack of interest
- Committed to other local volunteering
- I have other priorities
- It doesn't make a difference

- I am already involved
- I don't know how to get involved
- Other (please specify):

Q16 Within a new Unitary Council how could we best support local community activity? Please select all that apply.

- Physical local hubs offering some services
- Community investment to organise activities
- Support community campaigns and local groups
- Online networking and resources
- Other (please specify)

Options for Local Government Reorganisation

Derbyshire County Council is currently exploring various ways to reorganise local government by gathering evidence and information to help create a proposal that best fits the needs of Derby and Derbyshire communities, businesses and residents.

All proposals would replace the existing 10 councils in Derby and Derbyshire with a new structure based on evidence and the opinions of local people and communities.

For more details on the proposed options, see the information booklet.

Q17 How well do you understand each of these proposed options for Derby and Derbyshire?

Respondents were asked to identify how well they understand the options, with a selection from very well, somewhat or not well.

- Option A: Two unitary councils with Amber Valley in the North
- Option B: Two unitary councils with Amber Valley in the South
- Option C: Two councils with a new boundary

The following questions ask for your opinion on how much you agree or disagree with the proposed options.

Q18 To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option A: Two unitary councils with Amber Valley in the North?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q18a Please tell us the reason/s for your choice:

Q19 To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B: Two unitary councils with Amber Valley in the South?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q19a Please tell us the reason/s for your choice:

Q20 To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option C:
Two councils with a new boundary?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q20a Please tell us the reason/s for your choice:

Q21 Thinking of the outcomes the UK Government expects us to achieve when reorganising councils in Derby and Derbyshire, which of the three options (A,B,C) options do you think would best deliver each of the following outcomes?

Respondents were asked to identify from a selection of Option A, Option B or Option C.

- Improving local services
- Saving money and delivering value
- Making local government simpler
- Supporting local identity
- Stronger community engagement

Q22 Do you have any other comments, suggestions, or concerns about the proposed reorganisation?

Survey Awareness

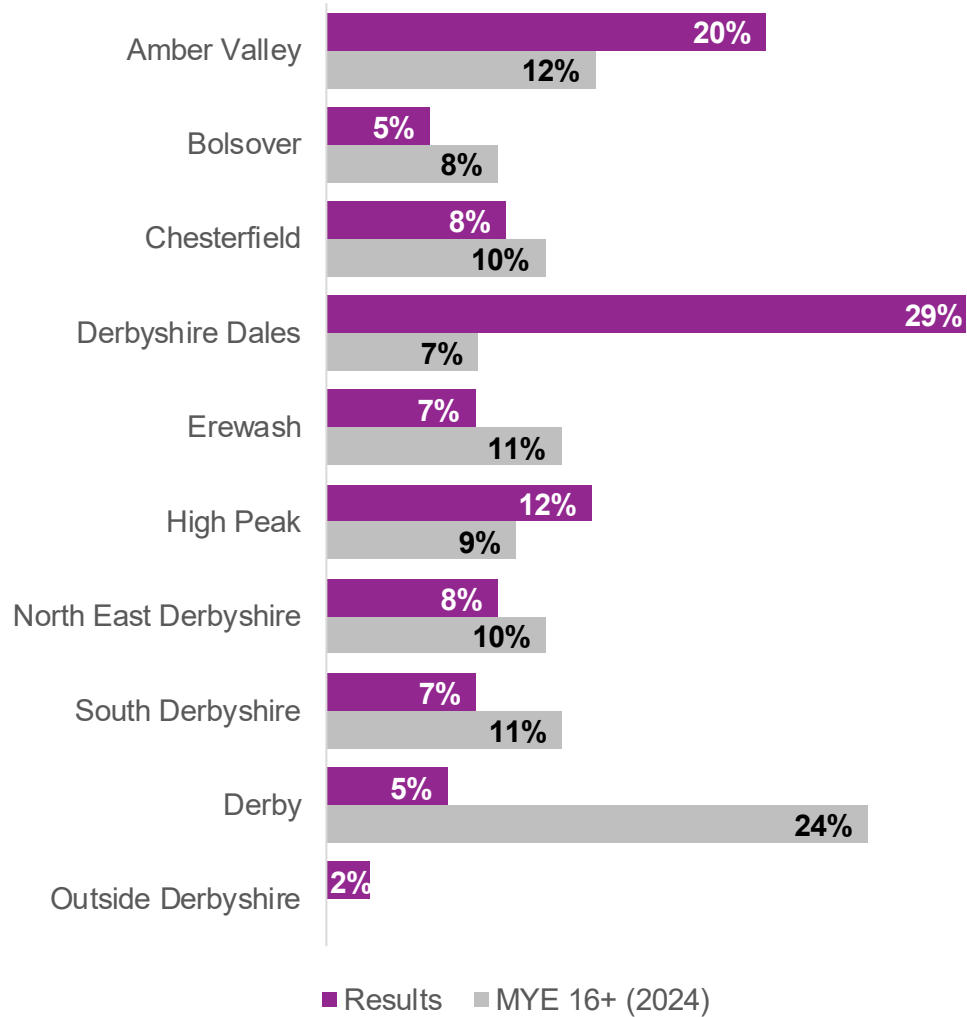
We have advertised this survey in a variety of ways and knowing how you came across it would help us promote consultations to reach as many residents and communities as possible in the future.

Q23 How did you hear about this survey?

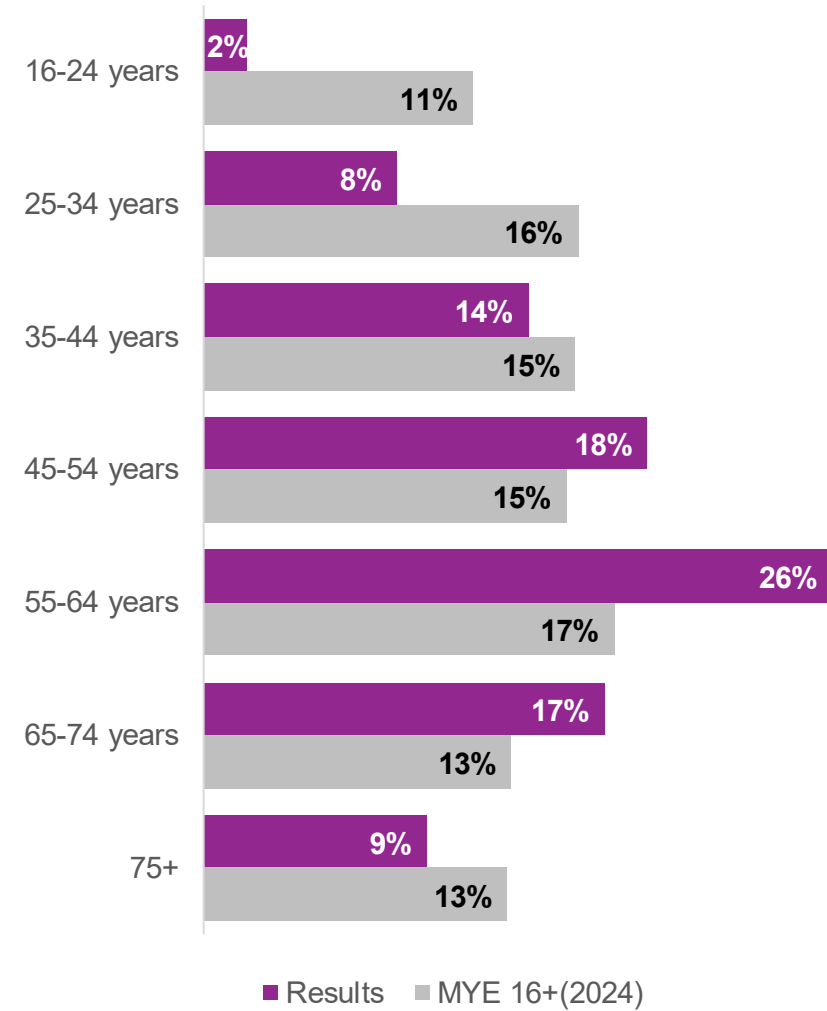
- DCC website
- Direct email from DCC
- Derbyshire Now (e-newsletter)
- Facebook
- YouTube
- X (formerly Twitter)
- SnapChat
- TikTok
- Nextdoor app
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Local news
- Your local councillor
- Friends / family
- Other (please specify):

Appendix B: Demographics

Respondents by Location
In which district or borough do you live?

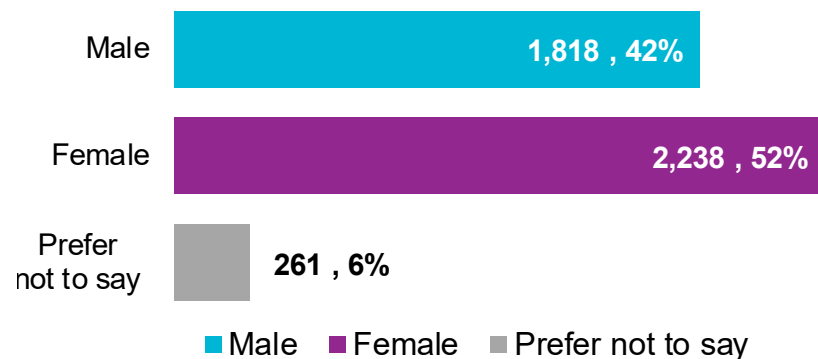


Respondents by age band
How old are you?



Respondents by sex

What is your sex?



Respondents by ethnicity

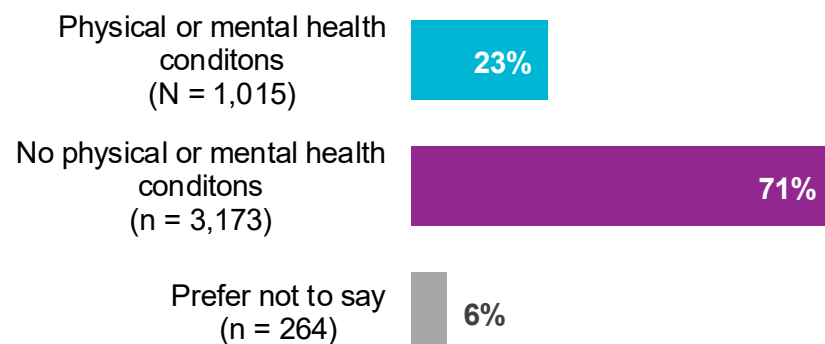
What is your ethnicity?



Note: Responses by detailed ethnicity category are too small to display and have been aggregated to BME

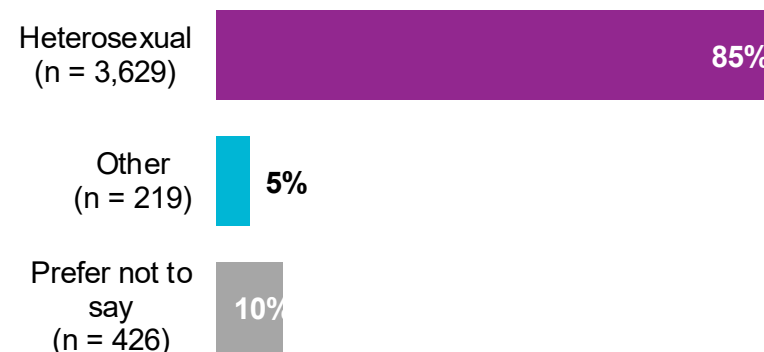
Respondents by disability

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?



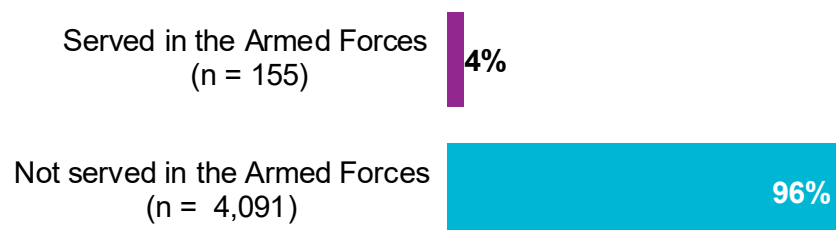
Respondents by sexual orientation

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?



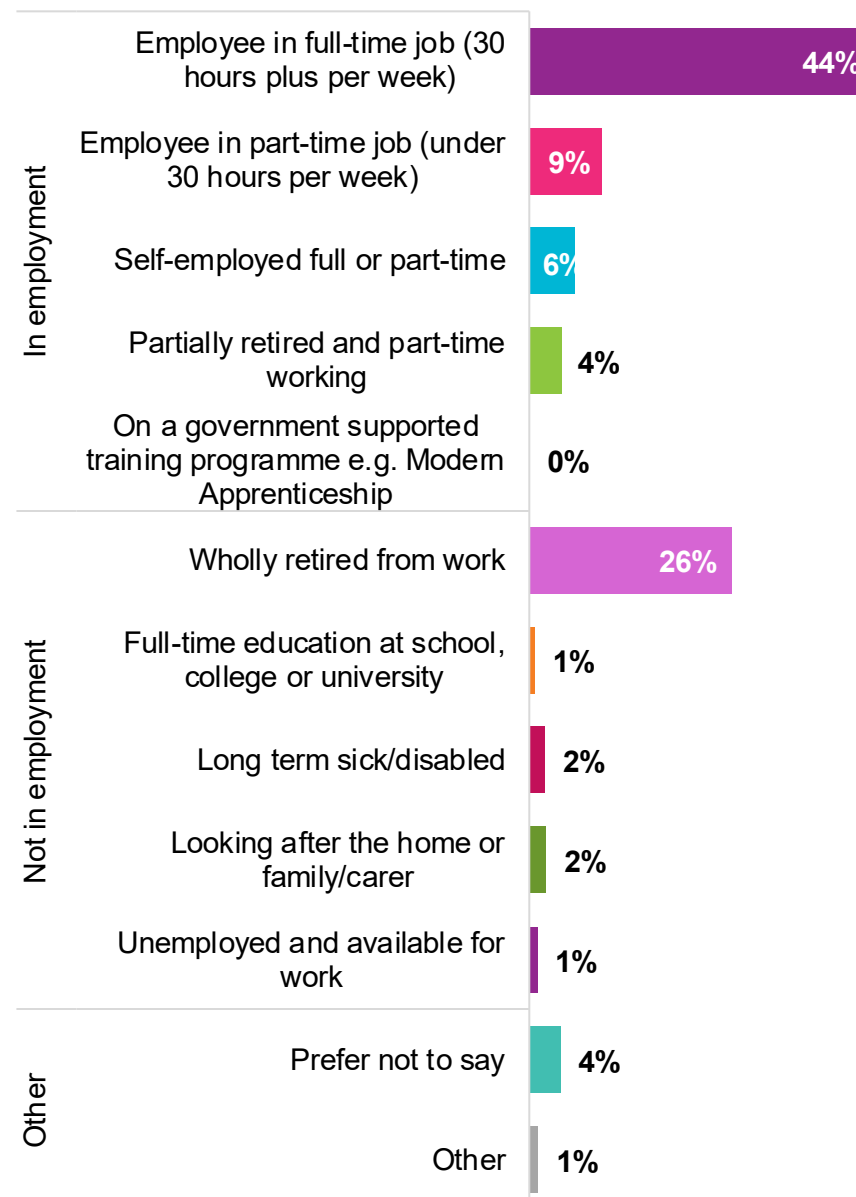
Respondents by whether they have served in the UK Armed Forces

Have you served in the UK Armed Forces?



Note: Responses by detailed Armed Forces service categories are too small to display and have been aggregated to 'Served in the Armed Forces'.

Respondents by what activity best describes what they do at present



Appendix C: Parishes within Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales

Option C involves creating a new boundary, splitting the borough of Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales district along parish boundary lines. The following is a list of parishes which have been allocated to the north or south of the split for the purposes of illustrating where a dividing line to create two new councils might be placed.

Amber Valley – North

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| • Aldercar and Langley Mill | • Ashleyhay | • Dethick, Lea and Holloway | • Idridgehay and Alton | • Ripley | • Swanwick |
| • Alderwasley | • Belper | • Hazelwood | • Ironville | • Shottle and Postern | • Turnditch |
| • Alferton | • Codnor | • Heanor and Loscoe | • Pentrich | • Somercotes | |
| | • Crich | | • Riddings (unparished) | • South Wingfield | |

Amber Valley – South

- | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| • Denby | • Horsley | • Kilburn | • Mapperley | • Shipley | • Windley |
| • Duffield | • Horsley Woodhouse | • Kirk Langley | • Quarndon | • Smalley | |
| • Holbrook | • Kedleston | • Mackworth | • Ravensdale Park | • Weston Underwood | |

Derbyshire Dales – North

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Abney and Abney Grange | • Brassington | • Flag | • Hassop | • Matlock Bath | • Sheldon |
| • Aldwark | • Brushfield | • Foolow | • Hathersage | • Matlock Town | • South Darley |
| • Ashford in the Water | • Callow | • Froggatt | • Hazlebadge | • Middleton and Smerill | • Stanton |
| • Atlow | • Calver | • Gratton | • Highlow | • Middleton | • Stoney Middleton |
| • Bakewell | • Carsington | • Great Hucklow | • Hognaston | • Monyash | • Taddington |
| • Ballidon | • Chatsworth | • Great Longstone | • Hopton | • Nether Haddon | • Tansley |
| • Baslow and Bubnell | • Chelmorton | • Grindleford | • Hulland | • Newton Grange | • Thorpe |
| • Beeley | • Cromford | • Grindlow | • Hulland Ward | • Northwood and Tinkersley | • Tideswell |
| • Biggin | • Curbar | • Harthill | • Ible | • Offerton | • Tissington and Lea Hall |
| • Birchover | • Darley Dale | • Hartington Middle Quarter | • Ivonbrook Grange | • Over Haddon | • Wardlow |
| • Blackwell in the Peak | • Eaton and Alsop | • Hartington Nether Quarter | • Kirk Ireton | • Parwich | • Wheston |
| • Bonsall | • Edensor | • Hartington Town Quarter | • Kniveton | • Pilsley | • Winster |
| • Bradbourne | • Elton | | • Little Hucklow | • Rowland | • Wirksworth |
| • Bradwell | • Eyam | | • Little Longstone | • Rowsley | • Youlgreave |
| | • Fenny Bentley | | • Litton | | |

Derbyshire Dales – South

- | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| • Alkmonton | • Clifton and Compton | • Hungry Bentley | • Norbury and Roston | • Snelston |
| • Ashbourne | • Cubley | • Longford | • Offcote and Underwood | • Somersal Herbert |
| • Boylestone | • Doveridge | • Mapleton | • Osmaston | • Sudbury |
| • Bradley | • Edlaston and Wyaston | • Marston Montgomery | • Rodsley | • Yaveley |
| • Brailsford | • Hollington | • Mercaston | • Shirley | • Yeldersley |

Uniting Derbyshire



Derbyshire County Council
Local Government Reorganisation
Appendix D – Options Appraisal

Contents

Introduction2

Why do an options appraisal?2

Assessment of the options2

Administrative vs operational boundaries3

Our Analysis Criteria5

Criteria 1: Simple structures over a sensible geography.....5

Criteria 2: Right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity
and withstand financial shocks6

Criteria 3: Prioritise the delivery of high quality and
sustainable public services6

Criteria 4: Meets local needs and is informed by local views...7

Criteria 5: Support devolution arrangements7

Criteria 6: Enable stronger community engagement and
deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood
empowerment8

Assessment, Scoring and Weighting9

Assessment and Scoring.....9

Weighting9

Options Appraisal 12

Option A - Two Unitary Model North (AV) & South13

Option B - Two Unitary Model North & South (AV)17

Option C - Two Unitary Model North & South (split AV and DD)
.....22

Option D - Single County Unitary Model Whole County.....26

Dis1 - Two Unitary Model City & County (Discounted for
further analysis)30

Dis2 - Three Unitary Model (Discounted for further analysis) 34

Options Appraisal Summary39

Conclusion 40

Appendix 1 – Indicators 41

Introduction

Why do an options appraisal?

On 15 May 2025 the Minister of State wrote to the Leaders of all Derbyshire councils, regarding whole Derby and Derbyshire area feedback to interim plans which were submitted to Government on 21 March 2025.

A key suggestion by Government within the feedback was as follows:

You may wish to consider an options appraisal against the criteria set out in the letter to provide a rationale for the preferred model against alternatives.

There are many potential options regarding the make-up of unitary structures when considering how to interpret Government's criteria when applied to local circumstances. It is important the Council puts forward preferred options which it believes are in the best interests of Derbyshire residents and businesses if agreement can't be reached.

Assessment of the options

The development and appraisal of the preferred option builds on the case-for-change design principles (as agreed by Council) as well as the criteria outlined in the Minister McMahon's written statement, published on 5 February 2025, on how proposals for unitary models should look.

Proposals should support local government in the area to:

- Reduce costs through the rationalisation of executive and senior management teams and council assets.
- Maximise local investments and provide economies of scale to protect vital services and deliver them more effectively.
- Bring together local services onto a more rational and appropriate basis.
- Improve the resilience of the Council's offer and ensure the long-term sustainability of local services across a sensible geography.
- Provide simplicity through clearer lines and a single point of accountability and responsibility for local services.
- Improve capacity and ability to make quicker decisions on local issues without navigating the roles and responsibilities of different authorities.
- Drive through transformational change and fostering innovation to challenge the status quo to deliver modern and integrated services.
- Enable further devolution of powers from Government strengthening the current deal, widening public sector reform further, and streamlining our delivery platform.

Administrative vs operational boundaries

For assessment purposes it is important to make a clear distinction between administrative and operational boundaries and their differences, as they can be used interchangeably to support certain arguments for preferred options, however they are fundamentally different.

Local government reorganisation is currently concerned with the preferred options regarding the best fit **administrative boundaries** of a new unitary structure for Derbyshire.

In public services, administrative boundaries define the jurisdiction of an authority or organisation, while operational boundaries define the areas where services are delivered and activities occur. Administrative boundaries are the ‘where’ of power and authority, while operational boundaries are the ‘where’ of service delivery.







Administrative boundaries cover the whole of an organisation’s geography for organising in corporate planning, capacity and capability building terms, whereas operational boundaries are simply about deployment. Administrative geographies tend to be long lasting (and changed through statute), with operational boundaries more flexible and locally determined.

This summary outlines six options for possible local government reorganisation administrative structures in Derbyshire. These have been developed to give a broad range of viable council combinations representative of the main types of aggregation (merging organisations, governance and services

across a larger geography) and disaggregation (splitting up organisations and services), the six options are as follows:

1. Option A – a two unitary option with Amber Valley in the northern unitary
2. Option B – a two unitary option with Amber Valley in the southern unitary
3. Option C - a two unitary option with Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales split along Parish boundaries
4. Option D – a single unitary option for the whole county
5. Dis 1 – a two unitary option keeping the current administrative areas of both the County and City councils
6. Dis 2 – a three unitary option, splitting the county into West, East and South

The following table compares the six options:

A	B	C	D	Dis1	Dis2
Two Unitary Model North (AV) and South	Two Unitary Model North and South (AV)	Two Unitary Model North and South (split AV & DD)	Single County Unitary Model Whole County	Two Unitary Model County and City	Three Unitary Model West, East and South
					
<p>This option would: disaggregate the County Council and aggregate the City Council, district and borough councils to form two new unitary authorities for the area. One covering the north and one covering the south of the county. In this option Amber Valley is in the North unitary.</p>	<p>This option would: disaggregate the County Council and aggregate the City Council, district and borough councils to form two new unitary authorities for the area. One covering the north and one covering the south of the county. In this option Amber Valley is in the South unitary.</p>	<p>This option would: disaggregate the County Council and aggregate the City Council, district and borough councils to form two new unitary authorities. One covering the north and one covering the south, with Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales both split north-south.</p>	<p>This option would: aggregate all eight district and borough councils with the City and County Council to create a new whole county unitary authority.</p>	<p>This option would: aggregate all eight district and borough councils with the County Council to create a new county unitary authority. Derby City Council would remain unchanged.</p>	<p>This option would: disaggregate the County Council and aggregate the City Council, district and borough councils to form three new unitary authorities for the area.</p> <p>West: Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire</p> <p>East: Bolsover, Amber Valley, Erewash</p> <p>South: Derby, South Derbyshire</p>

Our Analysis Criteria

Each option has been assessed against the guidance and feedback provided by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) taken from the statutory invitation and feedback letter to councils in February and May 2025 respectively. This assessment will inform decision makers of the opportunity, suitability, complexity, costs and risks of the different options presented.

It should be noted that this is an indicative, logical and strategic assessment given the time constraints and possible known consequences. All analysis has however been interrogated against a comprehensive data set of proxy measures against the assessment assumptions below for accuracy and fairness. A list of these can be found in Appendix 1.

The following sets out the six Government criteria, and details the areas of analysis and assessment assumptions.

Criteria 1: Simple structures over a sensible geography

Key areas of analysis include:

- Case for change and principles.
- Description of proposed geography.
- Sensible geography over a functional area.

Assumptions for assessment

Based on Government criteria and local analysis, it is assumed that the optimum LGR structure, accounting for Criteria 1, will be the option that:

- Makes changes to all local authorities within the proposed area and does not set up authorities to prosper at the expense of others.
- Best fits the topographical profile of Derbyshire accounting for major roads, rivers and the physical landscape of the county.
- Provides the most diversity and has a balanced socio-economic profile with a sound and appropriate tax-base.
- Has a high degree of administrative co-terminosity with the wider public sector and enables a high degree of aggregation, collaboration and partnership across all local services in Derbyshire.
- Most reflects how people live their lives, where they work and travel, and where they access and/or receive their services.

Criteria 2: Right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

Key areas of analysis include:

- Population size.
- Financial efficiencies and transition costs.
- Long-term viability and sustainability.

Assumptions for assessment

Based on Government criteria and local analysis, it is assumed that the optimum LGR structure, accounting for Criteria 2, will be the option that:

- Creates new unitary/s structures which has a substantial population, in excess of 500,000.
- Covers areas large enough and diverse enough to generate sufficient income through a number of sources to meet its costs and spread its risks.
- Saves the most money and provides the most opportunity to exploit economies of scale and service transformation.
- Costs the least amount to implement, including ongoing costs of disaggregation.
- Can operate most sustainably in the long-term reflecting changing demographics and future demand pressures.

Criteria 3: Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Key areas of analysis include:

- New structure will improve local government, reduce bureaucracy and avoid unnecessary fragmentation.
- Opportunities to deliver public sector reform.
- Consider the impact on crucial services and partners' services.

Assumptions for assessment

Based on Government criteria and local analysis, it is assumed that the optimum LGR structure, accounting for Criteria 3, will be the option that:

- Has critical mass to operate most strategically and at scale with improved capacity and performance, bringing together expertise and best practice at the most appropriate level.
- Will be the least disruptive to the ongoing delivery of critical services across the county and can be implemented simply, swiftly and effectively.
- Has the least amount of service fragmentation, the fewest disbenefits and carries the least amount of risk and uncertainty.

Criteria 4: Meets local needs and is informed by local views

Key areas of analysis include:

- Evidence of meaningful and constructive local engagement.
- Local identity and culture and historic importance.
- How concerns will be addressed.

Assumptions for assessment

Based on Government criteria and local analysis, it is assumed that the optimum LGR structure, accounting for Criteria 4, will be the option that:

- Most reflects common, familiar and dominant identities across the County.
- Best respects the historic and cultural identity of the area.
- Is supported by or best meets key stakeholders' needs and priorities for change.

Criteria 5: Support devolution arrangements

Key areas of analysis include:

- How devolution and governance arrangements would be affected.
- Whether the proposal is support by the Mayor.
- Sensible ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority.

Assumptions for assessment

Based on Government criteria and local analysis, it is assumed that the optimum LGR structure, accounting for Criteria 5, will be the option that:

- Best dovetails with the current CCA arrangements and provides the least amount of disruption to EMCCA plans and decision-making practices.
- Is supported in principle by key stakeholders at EMCCA including the Mayor.
- Ensures that EMCCA can work most effectively and that there is sufficient separation in roles and responsibilities between the structures of local government.
- Best reflects LGR plans from other areas within the CCA region.

Criteria 6: Enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

Key areas of analysis include:

- Explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.
- How these will enable strong community engagement.

Assumptions for assessment

Based on Government criteria and local analysis, it is assumed that the optimum LGR structure, accounting for Criteria 6, will be the option that:

- Most ensures local people can be represented effectively and new authority/s can best conduct its business.
- Can best engage with local communities on services which are important to them.
- Brings together expertise in local community engagement practices and has experience in neighbour empowerment.
- Ensures new authorities can work most effectively with Town and Parish Councils and that there is sufficient separation in roles and responsibilities between the structures of local government.

Assessment, Scoring and Weighting

Government has helpfully provided Councils with a significant number of criteria outlined above which will be used to assess proposals. It is important that the Council devises a method for determining, against the criteria, which option should be preferred. To achieve this the following methodology is proposed.

Assessment and Scoring

It is proposed that for each option, each of the six criteria is assessed and given a score against how well that option meets the criteria as follows:

- **Very High** (dark green) - meets the government criteria to a large extent and is highly likely to deliver significant benefits.
- **High** (green) – meets the government criteria and is likely to deliver significant benefits.
- **Medium** (amber) – meets the government criteria or may deliver significant benefits.
- **Low** (red) – may not meet the government criteria or weakens the benefits of local government reorganisation.
- **Very Low** (dark red) – does not meet the government criteria or significantly weakens the benefits of local government reorganisation.

Numerical scores can then be assigned based on that assessment measure:

Assessment		Score
Very High	Dark Green	5
High	Green	4
Medium	Amber	3
Low	Red	2
Very Low	Dark Red	1

Weighting

Whilst it is important that any successful proposal addresses and accounts for a number of important factors, it is equally critical to prioritise those factors as many proposals warrant merit and attention depending on your point of view. To ensure that the options which meet the most important criteria are given sufficient value when compared it is proposed that the most important criteria are weighted. This has been shaped through engagement with the public. The weighting and justification are as follows:

Criteria 1: Simple structures over a sensible geography.

It is critical that the administrative geography/s of any new authorities for the area covers a sensible and substantial geographical area. Our research shows that getting the geography right for any unitary proposal is a critical success factor for any new authority. Administrative reorganisation of local government is a once in a generation event and makes a significant impact in the ability for the new authority/s and their

partners to deliver benefits across the rest of the criteria over time. For these reasons it is suggested that **this criteria is given a higher weight** for assessment purposes.

Criteria 2: Right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

The financial challenges facing local government are well known. Reduced public sector funding, increased inflation, increased demand for services driven by demographics and long standing social, health and economic pressures mean that councils continue to face significant challenges in providing the services that local people need and want with available resources.

Many Councils across the country are already receiving exceptional financial support and over 75% of upper-tier Councils report that they are at risk of bankruptcy by 2027. It is vital any new proposed unitary authorities can maximise efficiencies and costs savings to combat this perilous financial situation, creating new Councils which are financially resilient in the short, medium and long-term. Engagement with key stakeholders identified that saving money and efficient services were the second and fifth most important factors regarding LGR. For these reasons it is suggested that **this criteria is given the highest weighting** as it is the most critical factor when considering the Council's preferred option.

Criteria 3: Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Through the transition and then into implementation of the new single tier of local government for the area, the Councils should maintain and look to improve their offer to local people. This means that everyone benefits from reorganisation, and that this can happen at the earliest opportunity.

Reorganisation can bring a number of councils together to increase expertise, capacity, join together best practice, and harmonise the service offer 'up' across the area. It is also critical that the direction of travel for local government reflects that of the wider public sector and is coterminous to our partners to improve delivery and enable further collaboration and reform in the future. But reorganisation can also be a distraction at a time when social care services are already under significant pressure and face rising demand and costs.

Providing certainty and minimising disruption for residents is important through any transition period, especially for those who are vulnerable. Engagement with key stakeholders identified that maintaining high quality services and improving services were the first and third most important factors regarding LGR. For these reasons it is suggested that **this criteria is also given the highest weighting**.

Criteria 4: Meets local needs and is informed by local views

It is important that local key stakeholders have been meaningfully engaged with their priorities regarding the available reorganisation options and can therefore constructively influence the Council's preferred option. Local

people and service users will want to understand how different proposals may affect them and will wish to give a view on what option makes most sense. Other key stakeholders are also important, such as other public sector bodies, if proposals impact on their working practices - both strategically and operationally. This criteria is therefore **given a higher weight** to ensure that local views can influence the assessment of options going forward.

Criteria 5: Support devolution arrangements

The Council has already demonstrated its commitment to the devolution agenda by making rapid progress to successfully create the first Mayoral Combined County Authority under the LURA 2023. It is important that reorganisation continues to support EMMCA to open up new devolution opportunities for the area, strengthening our current deal, widening public sector reform, and streamlining our delivery platform, and therefore leading to better value for money and bringing about greater opportunity for growth and prosperity for the area. However, as the region already has a MCCA and a devolution deal, it does not require LGR to unlock devolution (unlike other areas) and therefore **this criteria is weighted lower** than others.

Criteria 6: enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

Making a deliberate and authentic commitment to local decision making across Derbyshire, ensuring that communities and their diverse voices are built into the fabric of any new

organisation moving forward is vital to ensure that new unitary councils engage and empower local communities. However, how organisations do this is more influenced by the culture and design and operations of an organisation as opposed to fundamentally concerned or affected by administrative boundaries and size of the authority in question, at this time. Equally responding to residents' concerns through implementation is less of an issue regarding this phase of the work. Therefore **this criteria is weighted lower** than others for this assessment.

The weighting score for each of the six criteria is as follows:

Criteria	Weight
Sensible geography	2
Efficiencies and financial resilience	3
High quality local services	3
Meets local needs / views	2
Supports devolution	1
Strong community engagement	1

The score for each of the six criteria will then be multiplied by the weighting factor to give a weighted score. The option with the highest total (weighted) score when all values are added together within an option, is the one that overall, most meets the Governments criteria.

Example in practice:

Criteria	Assessment	Score	Weighted score
Sensible geography	High	4	8



Options Appraisal

The options appraisal section presents a comprehensive evaluation of six distinct organisational models for local government reorganisation within the county. Each option is assessed against the six key criteria set by the government: sensible geography, local identity, service delivery, value for money, accountability and democracy, and transition risk. This structured approach ensures that the strengths and weaknesses of each model are objectively considered, providing a clear basis for comparison and informed decision-making.

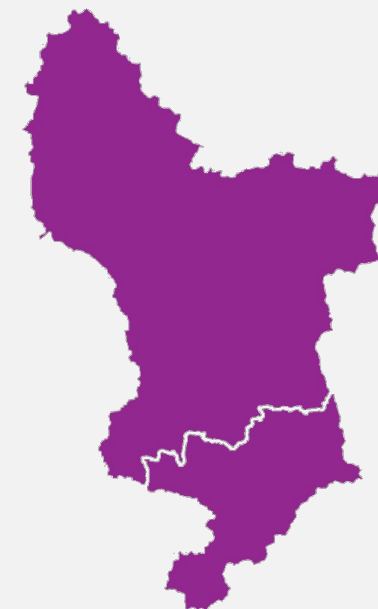
Option A - Two Unitary Model North (AV) & South

This option would disaggregate the County Council and aggregate the City Council, district and borough councils to form two new unitary authorities for the area. One covering the north and one covering the south of the county. In this option Amber Valley is in the North unitary¹.

Simple structures over a sensible geography

High

- Covers and impacts on all Councils within the reorganisation area.
- Loosely fits with how people travel to work, move around the county and access their services – although less so in the case of Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley.
- Has a large impact on Derby City's topography and identity as a city authority.
- Generally provides more balance in most socio-economic characteristics across the two proposed unitary areas, in comparison to the status quo, although some outliers such as older age projections and disability levels.
- Allows for Derby City to have a large/r and diversified tax base, but risks creating two authorities with less resilience and more risk.
- Some evidence to support that this option reflects the county's distinct but inter-related geographies for some areas, but the district areas of Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley do not fit well into a North/South geographical split.
- This is a new administrative arrangement for the area. While it partially matches some public sector operational boundaries (such as Derbyshire Fire and Rescue and Police divisions), adopting it may reduce future operational flexibility and may not meet Derbyshire's evolving needs.
- Would give greater flexibility for Greater Derby on meeting housing demand, although would reduce flexibility in the North compared with the status quo.



North Derbyshire Unitary (AV)

Population:	590,631
Electorate:	456,834
Hectares:	209,900
Council size:	92

South Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	505,895
Electorate:	355,211
Hectares:	52,579
Council size:	69

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

Medium

- Meets Government criteria in relation to population size of new authorities.
- Would save only £44m as a net benefit over six years².
- Ongoing net annual benefit after implementation for a single unitary model is £45m, in comparison to £25m in this two unitary scenario - a premium payment to move to multiple authorities in a county area.

Indicative financial analysis – PwC Oct 2025

Annual benefit	£25.3m
Annual disaggregation cost	£7.9m
One off transition costs	£50.1m
Net total benefit after 6 years	£43.6m
Payback period	4.3 years

Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Medium

- Disaggregating the County Council into more than one unitary authority would have a significant impact on residents and would create the potential for high levels of disruption.
- Multiple new unitary authorities on this geography and at this scale would be completely new for staff, elected representatives and residents, with the County Council disaggregated and district/borough councils aggregated. This would have to be in place for day-one.

- Fragmented County Council services would require the creation of completely new and additional partnerships for joint working as many public services are currently coterminous with the county geography, rather than at a district level or between the districts and the city.
- Changes county council delivery geography means changes could impact upon the services delivered to residents. Aggregation into Derby City services will be complex and could misalign, due to the very different operational nature of the delivery footprint (city urban vs rural county).
- Decreases the number of district councils being merged, decreasing capacity, experience and expertise across the workforce, but would bring Derby City expertise into the South Unitary.
- Smaller units of unitary local government could impact on opportunities for large scale transformation across combined services and supporting functions (ICT, HR, business support etc), but would allow opportunities for Derby City.

Meets local needs and is informed by local views

Medium

- 4,532 responses to the consultation showed limited agreement from key stakeholders regarding options A-C. Option A was the most favoured with 25% of residents strongly agreeing with this option. 43% of residents disagreed with this option.
- Could be viewed as breaking up the historic county geography.

- Comments received indicate that there is significant concern amongst respondents about splitting the county into multiple authorities.
- Has been put forward by a number of D&B Councils as one of two preferred options and therefore it is supported politically in those areas.
- Does not match other public sector administrative geographies and may not be supported in this regard.

Support devolution arrangements

Medium

- Unitary structures can provide a greater clarity around delivery, leadership and a focused vision for the county in the context of the East Midlands region.
- Would create a large amount of disruption in the short term in the continuation to deliver excellent public services.
- Wouldn't change the numbers of constituent authorities in relation to the EMCCA constitution and formal membership of the EMCCA Board.
- Diverges from the distinct economic offers/challenges of the County and the City. Could be disruptive to current ways of working for EMCCA.
- Loosely reflects the Derby/Notts growth zones.
- Reflects similar options on the table across the region.

Enable stronger community engagement

High

- A recent boundary review means the current County Council electoral divisional boundaries and City Council wards provide a sound basis for Council size.

- Two members per ED/Ward in this scenario means the North Unitary would have 92 councillors and the South 69 councillors.
- Overall council numbers for this option broadly fits within the size and scale of other unitary authorities.
- A unitary model would have the opportunity to make a deliberate and authentic commitment to localism and local democracy across Derbyshire. It would mean that the new authorities would be forced to think differently about how they deliver strong community engagement going forward.
- Two large unitary authorities provides a clear distinction between the layers of local government and removing the district boundaries would enable town and parish councils to better clarify their unique identity. However, there is a mismatch between the county and city in this regard as the city is unparished.
- A larger Council and smaller number of Councillors in the city area could lead to local leaders and local services becoming more distant from the centre.

Option A Assessment Score

Criteria	Assessment	Score	Weighted score
Sensible geography	High	4	8
Efficiencies	Medium	3	9
High quality local services	Medium	3	9
Meets local views	Medium	3	6
Supports devolution	Medium	3	3
Community engagement	High	4	4
Total		20	39

Strengths



- Brings **all councils across Derbyshire** into two new authorities, each covering a substantial and balanced geography.
- **Includes every district, borough, the county, and the city**, ensuring a full, county-wide reorganisation.
- **Meets Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries, providing viable structures.
- Has **broadly similar GVA** across the two authorities.
- Loosely reflects **some existing operational boundaries and travel-to-work areas**.
- Creates **more parity** in geographic size between the two new authorities, reducing perceptions of dominance.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Delivers **modest efficiencies** through rationalised management and back-office functions.
- Allows for **pooling of resources** and reduction in duplication.
- Produces a **diverse tax base** and a more balanced socio-economic profile across both areas though some variation would remain.
- Could give **Derby greater flexibility** to meet housing demand by accessing a wider land supply in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).

Weaknesses



- The geography is **unfamiliar** to residents and partners and **does not have public support**.
- **Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley** do not fit naturally into a simple north-south split.
- Risks **fragmenting existing relationships** and creating **two unsustainable, less resilient authorities**.
- May **dilute Derby City's identity** and reduce its delivery expertise.
- Offers only **modest financial savings** and would be **costly and complex to implement**, with around a 4 year payback period.
- Requires **full disaggregation of county services** and re-aggregation into two new structures.
- Could **reduce flexibility** to meet housing targets in the north.

Option B - Two Unitary Model North & South (AV)

This option would disaggregate the County Council and aggregate the City Council, district and borough councils to form two new unitary authorities for the area. One covering the north and one covering the south of the county. In this option Amber Valley is in the South unitary.

Simple structures over a sensible geography

Medium

- Covers and impacts on all Councils within the reorganisation area.
- Reflects how people travel to work, move around the county and access their services – although less so in the southern part of Derbyshire Dales.
- Would have a huge impact on Derby City's topography and identity as a city authority.
- Generally provides more balance in socio-economic characteristics across the two proposed unitary areas in comparison to the status quo although some outliers such as older age projections, qualifications and disability levels.
- Some evidence to support that this option reflects the county's distinct but inter-related geographies, but the district areas of Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley do not fit well into a North/South geographical split.
- Allows for Derby City to have a larger and diversified tax base, but risks creating authorities with less resilience and more risk. The northern unitary would be a smaller geography, smaller population and would not contain a City or have a market towns network of scale– might have major impact on parity to South and be unsustainable in the future.
- This is a new administrative arrangement for the area. While it partially matches some public sector operational boundaries (such as Derbyshire Fire and Rescue and Police divisions), adopting it may reduce future operational flexibility and may not meet Derbyshire's evolving needs.



North Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	460,180
Electorate:	355,488
Hectares:	183,356
Council size:	72

South Derbyshire Unitary (AV)

Population:	636,346
Electorate:	446,557
Hectares:	79,123
Council size:	89

- Would give greater flexibility for Greater Derby on meeting housing demand, although would reduce flexibility in the North compared with the status quo.
- Transport connectivity could be an issue for the southern part of Derbyshire Dales.

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

Low

- Creates the biggest population difference of all the options and proposed North Unitary does not meet Government criteria in relation to population size of new authorities.
- Would save only £32m as a net benefit over six years – the least savings of the options being considered.
- Ongoing net annual benefit after implementation for a single unitary model is £45m, in comparison to £23m in this two unitary scenario - a premium payment to move to multiple authorities in a county area.

Indicative financial analysis – PwC Oct 2025

Annual benefit	£23.4m
Annual disaggregation cost	£9.7m
One off transition costs	£50.1m
Net total benefit after 6 years	£32.4m
Payback period	4.6 years

Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Medium

- Disaggregating the County Council into more than one unitary authority would have a significant impact on residents and would create the potential for high levels of disruption.
- Multiple new unitary authorities on this geography and at this scale would be completely new for staff, elected representatives and residents, with the County Council disaggregated and district/borough councils aggregated. This would have to be in place for day-one.
- Fragmented County Council services would require the creation of completely new and additional partnerships for joint working as many public services are currently coterminous with the county geography, rather than at a district level or between the districts and the city.
- Changes county council delivery geography means changes could impact upon the services delivered to residents. Aggregation into Derby City services will be complex and could misalign, due to the very different operational nature of the delivery footprint (city urban vs rural county).
- Decreases the number of district councils being merged, decreasing capacity, experience and expertise across the workforce, but would bring Derby City expertise into the South Unitary.
- Smaller units of unitary local government could impact on opportunities for large scale transformation across combined services and supporting functions (ICT, HR, business support etc), but would allow opportunities for Derby City.

Meets local needs and is informed by local views

Medium

- 4,532 responses to the consultation showed limited agreement from key stakeholders regarding options A-C. Only 15% of residents strongly agreeing with Option B. 49% of residents disagreed with this option.
- Comments received indicate that there is significant concern amongst respondents about splitting the county into multiple authorities.
- Could be seen as breaking up the historic county geography.
- North and South County split does make sense intuitively with the way that some of the county naturally identifies – but is not straightforward for Amber Vally and Derbyshire Dales.
- Has been put forward by a number of D&B Councils as one of two preferred options and therefore it is supported politically in those areas.
- Does not match other public sector administrative geographies and may not be supported in this regard.

Support devolution arrangements

Medium

- Unitary structures can provide a greater clarity around delivery, leadership and a focused vision for the county in the context of the East Midlands region.
- Would create a large amount of disruption in the short-term in the continuation to deliver excellent public services and lead to a reworking on the vision for economic growth across the North/South geographical areas.

- Wouldn't change the numbers of constituent authorities in relation to the EMCCA constitution and formal membership of the EMCCA Board.
- Diverges from the distinct economic offers/challenges of the County and the City. Could be disruptive to current ways of working for EMCCA.
- Does not reflect the Derby/Notts growth zones and could distract with less city distinction.
- Reflects similar options on the table across the region.

Enable stronger community engagement

High

- A recent boundary review means the current County Council electoral divisional boundaries and City Council wards provide a sound basis for Councillor numbers.
- Two members per ED/Ward in this scenario means the North Unitary would have 72 councillors and the South 89 councillors.
- Overall council numbers for the proposed unitaries broadly fits within the size and scale of other unitary authorities.
- A unitary model would have the opportunity to make a deliberate and authentic commitment to localism and local democracy across Derbyshire. It would mean that the new authorities would be forced to think differently about how they deliver strong community engagement going forward.
- Two large unitary authorities would mean there is a clear distinction between the layers of local government and removing the district boundaries would enable town and parish councils to better clarify their unique identity.

However there is a mismatch between the county and city in this regard as the city is unparished.

- A larger Council and smaller number of Councillors in the city area could lead to local leaders and local services becoming more distant from the centre.

Option B Assessment Score

Criteria	Assessment	Score	Weighted score
Sensible geography	Medium	3	6
Efficiencies	Low	2	6
High quality local services	Medium	3	9
Meets local views	Medium	3	6
Supports devolution	Medium	3	3
Community engagement	High	4	4
Total		18	34

Strengths



- **Includes all councils** within the Derbyshire area, ensuring full coverage of the county.
- **Loosely aligns** with some existing operational and service boundaries.
- **Reflects how people travel to work and access services**, with broad functional ties across Derby and South Derbyshire.
- Creates **more parity in geographic size** between the two unitaries, reducing imbalance across the county.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Allows for **pooling of resources** and reduction in duplication.
- Produces a **more balanced socio-economic profile** than the current structure, though some variation would remain.
- Provides **greater flexibility for Derby** in meeting future housing demand, with stronger growth capacity in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).

Weaknesses



- Represents an **unfamiliar geographical split** that lacks public support or recognition.
- **Does not meet Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries.
- **Savings are minimal**, with limited financial return compared to implementation costs with around a 4 year payback period.
- Requires **full disaggregation of county services** and re-aggregation into two new structures.
- **Creates difficult boundaries** for Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley, which do not divide cleanly north-south.
- **Risks diluting Derby City's identity** and undermining its delivery expertise.
- Could **lead to two unsustainable, less resilient unitaries**, particularly in the north where resources and tax base are weaker.
- **Reduces flexibility** to meet housing needs in the north, constraining development opportunities.
- Would be **complex and disruptive to implement**, requiring major structural change and service reconfiguration.
- **Does not reflect the functional urban area** shared between Derby and Nottingham, weakening strategic coherence.
- **Transport connectivity challenges** would persist in the southern part of Derbyshire Dales, limiting service access.

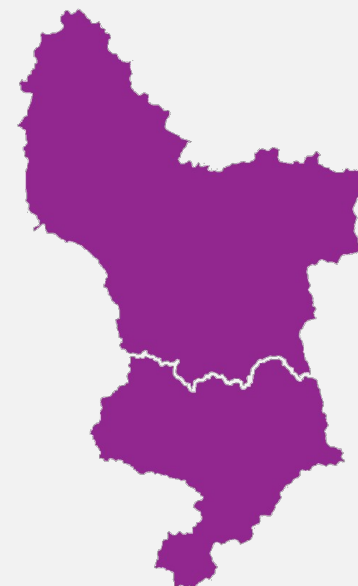
Option C - Two Unitary Model North & South (split AV and DD)

This option would disaggregate the County Council and aggregate the City Council, district and borough councils to form two new unitary authorities for the area. One covering the north and one covering the south of the county, with Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales both split north-south.

Simple structures over a sensible geography

Low

- Covers and impacts on all of the Councils within the reorganisation area.
- Very loosely fits with how people travel to work, move around the county and access their services – although less so in the case of Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales.
- Would have a huge impact on Derby City's topography and identity as a city authority.
- Generally provides more balance in socio-economic characteristics across the two proposed unitary areas in comparison to the status quo although some outliers such as older age projections, health, disability levels and market towns density.
- Some evidence to support that this option reflects the county's distinct but inter-related geographies for some areas, but the district areas of Derbyshire Dales and Amber Valley do not fit well into a North/South geographical split.
- Allows for Derby City to have a large/r and diversified tax base, but risks creating authorities with less resilience and more risk.
- Is not a familiar administrative geography and would be completely new in the area.
- Would create the added complication of splitting Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales and would need a boundary review. Would be complex to manage the transition.
- Would give greater flexibility for Greater Derby on meeting housing demand, although would reduce flexibility in the North compared with the status quo.
- Some restrictions in topography (higher ground) in the northern area.



North Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	548,302
Electorate:	423,244
Hectares:	181,099
Council size:	85

South Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	548,224
Electorate:	388,801
Hectares:	80,954
Council size:	76

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

Low

- Meets Government criteria in relation to population size of new authorities.
- Would save only £38m as a net benefit over six years.
- Ongoing net annual benefit after implementation for a single unitary model is £45m, in comparison to £25m in this two unitary scenario - a premium payment to move to multiple authorities in a county area.

Indicative financial analysis – PwC Oct 2025

Annual benefit	£24.7m
Annual disaggregation cost	£8.4m
One off transition costs	£52.6m
Net total benefit after 6 years	£37.7m
Payback period	4.5 years

Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Medium

- Disaggregating the County Council into more than one unitary authority would have a significant impact on residents and would create the potential for high levels of disruption.
- Multiple new unitary authorities on this geography and at this scale would be completely new for staff, elected representatives and residents, with the County Council disaggregated and district/borough councils aggregated. This would have to be in place for day-one.

- Fragmented County Council services would require the creation of completely new and additional partnerships for joint working as many public services are currently coterminous with the county geography, rather than at a district level or between the districts and the city.
- Changes county council delivery geography means changes could impact upon the services delivered to residents. Aggregation into Derby City services will be complex and could misalign, due to the very different operational nature of the delivery footprint (city urban vs rural county).
- Decreases the number of D&B Councils being merged, decreasing capacity, experience and expertise across the workforce, but would bring Derby City expertise into the South Unitary.
- Smaller units of unitary local government could impact on opportunities for large scale transformation across combined services and supporting functions (ICT, HR, business support etc), but would allow opportunities for Derby City.

Meets local needs and is informed by local views

Low

- 4,532 responses to the consultation showed limited agreement from key stakeholders regarding options A-C. Only 14% of residents strongly agreed with Option C. 53% of residents disagreed with this option and 42% strongly disagreed, the highest of all the options for comment.
- Comments received indicate that there is significant concern amongst respondents about splitting the county into multiple authorities.

- Could be seen as breaking up the historic county geography.
- Has not been put forward, or supported, by other Councils.
- Was not supported by other public sector organisations.

Support devolution arrangements

Medium

- Unitary structures can provide a greater clarity around delivery, leadership and a focused vision for the county in the context of the East Midlands region
- Would create a large amount of disruption in the short term in the continuation to deliver excellent public services and lead to a reworking on the vision for economic growth across the North/South geographical areas.
- Wouldn't change the numbers of constituent authorities in relation to the EMCCA constitution and formal membership of the EMCCA Board.
- Diverges from the distinct economic offers/challenges of the County and the City. Could be disruptive to current ways of working for EMCCA.
- Does not reflect the Derby/Notts growth/travel zone and could distract with less city distinction.
- Reflects similar options on the table across the region.

Enable stronger community engagement

High

- A recent boundary review means the current County Council electoral divisional boundaries and City Council wards provide a sound basis for Councillor numbers.

- Two members per ED/Ward in this scenario means the North Unitary would have 85 councillors and the South 76 councillors.
- Overall council numbers for the proposed unitaries broadly fits within the size and scale of other unitary authorities.
- A unitary model would have the opportunity to make a deliberate and authentic commitment to localism and local democracy across Derbyshire. It would mean that the new authorities would be forced to think differently about how they deliver strong community engagement going forward.
- Two large unitary authorities would mean there is a clear distinction between the layers of local government and removing the district boundaries would enable town and parish councils to better clarify their unique identity. However, there is a mismatch between the county and city in this regard as the city is unparished.
- A larger Council and smaller number of Councillors the city area could lead to local leaders and local services becoming more distant from the centre.

Option C Assessment Score

Criteria	Assessment	Score	Weighted score
Sensible geography	Low	2	4
Efficiencies	Low	2	6
High quality local services	Medium	3	9
Meets local views	Low	2	4
Supports devolution	Medium	3	3
Community engagement	High	4	4
Total		16	30

Strengths



- **Includes all councils** within the Derbyshire area, ensuring full county coverage.
- **Meets Government criteria** for minimum population size in both unitaries, providing viable structures.
- **Loosely reflects** travel-to-work areas.
- Creates **more parity in geographic size** between the two unitaries, reducing imbalance across the county.
- Supports **Derby City's capability** to share expertise and maintain high-quality services.
- Creates a **more balanced socio-economic profile** across both unitaries than the current two-tier system, though with some variation.
- Offers **greater flexibility for Derby** in meeting housing demand through expanded growth opportunities in the south.
- Would **retain existing EMCCA governance model** (2 constituent councils representing the area).

Weaknesses



- Proposes an **unfamiliar and unpopular geography**, generating significant public opposition.
- Would **deliver minimal financial savings**, offering little value relative to the costs of implementation with around a 4 year payback period.
- **Splitting Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales** would create substantial administrative and operational challenges, requiring a **formal boundary review**.
- **Service disaggregation** would become more complicated, as current delivery structures and partnerships would be divided across two new authorities with disaggregation required across the County Council but also functions delivered by Amber Valley District Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council.
- Risks **undermining Derby City's identity** and weakening its delivery expertise.
- Would **reduce flexibility** in meeting housing targets in the north, constraining future growth.
- The **transition process would be complex and disruptive**, with significant short-term delivery risk.
- Does **not reflect the functional urban area** shared by Derby and Nottingham, limiting strategic and economic coherence.

Option D - Single County Unitary Model Whole County

This option would aggregate all eight district and borough councils with the City and County Council to create a new whole county unitary authority.

Simple structures over a sensible geography

Very High

- Covers and impacts on all of the Councils within the reorganisation area.
- Reflects the county's distinct but inter-related geographies which also includes the distinct nature of the city area.
- Better fits, and is able to flex, with how people travel to work, move around the county and access their services.
- Provides more balance in socio-economic characteristics across a larger local government area and brings increased strength and resilience.
- Has a considerably large and diversified tax base.
- Has most alignment with the administrative public service map in Derbyshire, such as healthcare, police and fire. And fits with the trending of bigger administrative footprints.
- Provides maximum flexibility in being able to meet the demand for housing and delivery of housing targets across the geographical area in scope.
- Is not restricted by topography and has good transport links.

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

Very High

- Meets government criteria in relation to population size of new authorities.



Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	1,096,526
Electorate:	812,045
Hectares:	262,479
Council size:	112

- It is calculated through independent analysis that a single unitary model for the county would save an estimated £144m as a net benefit after six years, with an implementation payback of less than three years. See table below.
- The order of magnitude is clear, the more authorities included in the aggregation and the less new authorities need creating and, with least amount of disaggregation, more money can be saved.
- It increases savings due to the increased number of Councils being merged.

Indicative financial analysis – PwC Oct 2025

Annual benefit	£45.1m
Annual disaggregation cost	£0m
One off transition costs	£47.7m
Net total benefit after 6 years	£143.9m
Payback period	2.6yrs

Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

High

- The concept and practicality of district and borough council mergers is in principle relatively straightforward. This option is more complicated due to the aggregation of Derby City lower and upper-tier services. This could be phased and may not have to be in place from day-one.
- Prevents the fragmentation of County Council and any D&B Council services. Analysis shows that disaggregating Council services would be complex, costly and potentially risky. It

would also be disruptive for residents, especially any newly created administrative borders. These factors could compromise the delivery of high quality and sustainable services and reduce or harm the ability of the new councils to optimise LGR benefits.

- Potentially changes the city and county council delivery geography meaning changes could impact upon the services delivered to residents, although this may not be immediate.
- Brings together the most number of Councils, increasing capacity, experience and expertise across the workforce.
- Significant merging of multiple local authorities creates scope for large scale transformation across combined services and supporting functions (ICT, HR, business support etc).

Meets local needs and is informed by local views

Medium

- 4,532 responses showed limited agreement from key stakeholders regarding options A-C.
- Although the Council did not specifically engage on a single county unitary option in the engagement survey, comments received indicate that there is significant concern amongst respondents about splitting the county into multiple authorities.
- A single county unitary option would therefore show that the Council has genuinely listened to residents and used feedback to inform the development of its proposals.
- Other public sector services have indicated that this may be a most favourable option as it shows greatest administrative alignment to their geography.

Support devolution arrangements

High

- Provides even greater clarity around delivery, leadership and a focused vision for the county in the context of the East Midlands region.
- Would create some disruption in the short-term in the continuation to deliver excellent public services and ensuring that alongside the regional Mayor, there is strategic leadership to articulate a clear and consistent vision for economic growth across an extended area.
- Would simplify EMCCA arrangements and partnership practices with only one constituent authority in the Derbyshire area to work with.
- Would require small changes in relation to the EMCCA constitution and formal membership of the EMCCA Board.
- Merges the distinct economic offers/challenges of the County and the City.
- Does not reflect the current options on the table across the region.

Enable stronger community engagement

Medium

- Requires changes to warding arrangements to provide a sound basis for Councillor numbers, but proposals can still be built on existing electoral boundaries.
- 112 Councillors sits just outside LGBCE guidance on upper limits for Council size and would need a strong and compelling case to justify.

- Overall 112 Councillors for the whole new county unitary however does fit within the size and scales of other unitary authorities for Shadow arrangements, in relation to both Council size and ratios of elected members to electorate.
- A single unitary would have the opportunity to make a deliberate and authentic commitment to localism and local democracy across Derbyshire. It would mean that the new authority would be forced to think differently about how it delivers strong community engagement going forward.
- One large unitary authority would mean there is a clear distinction between the layers of local government and removing the district boundaries would enable town and parish councils to better clarify their unique identity.
- A larger Council and smaller number of Councillors for the area could lead to local leaders and local services becoming more distant from the centre.

Option D Assessment Score

Criteria	Assessment	Score	Weighted score
Sensible geography	Very High	5	10
Efficiencies	Very High	5	15
High quality local services	High	4	12
Meets local views	Medium	3	6
Supports devolution	High	4	4
Community engagement	Medium	3	3
Total		24	50

Strengths



- **Includes all councils** across Derbyshire within one authority, covering the entire county and the city.
- **Makes changes to the Derby City border**, creating a single coherent geography for service delivery.
- **Meets Government criteria** for minimum population size, ensuring scale and financial sustainability.
- **Protects the history and identity** of Derbyshire as a single place, uniting urban, market town, and rural communities.
- **Delivers the greatest financial savings** of all options, providing long-term value for money, with a payback period under 3 years.
- **Lowest cost to implement**, with fewer transition risks and less duplication.
- Creates the **broadest socio-economic balance and tax base**, bringing strength, resilience, and flexibility.
- Offers **maximum adaptability** in meeting housing needs, supporting travel-to-work patterns, and improving access to services.
- **Aligns most closely** with existing administrative and public service boundaries across Derbyshire.
- Reflects the county's **varied topography and transport connectivity**, linking urban centres to rural areas.
- **Consolidates democratic representation** with a single, accountable body overseeing all local government spending.
- **Avoids disaggregation of county council functions** and re-aggregation into two new structures.
- Would cause **least disruption to residents** compared with a two-unitary model, maintaining service continuity.

Weaknesses



- Requires **horizontal aggregation** of existing upper-tier services, merging systems and processes across all authorities.
- Covers a **large geography**, requiring a **greater number of elected members** to ensure full representation.
- Could be **perceived as reducing local voices**, with concerns about decision-making feeling more distant from communities.
- Necessitates **changes to EMCCA governance** as there would no longer be 2 constituent councils representing the area.

Dis1 - Two Unitary Model City & County (Discounted for further analysis)

This scenario would aggregate all eight district councils with the County Council to create a new county unitary authority. Derby City Council would remain unchanged

Simple structures over a sensible geography

Medium

- This meets the government criteria regarding its impact on all Councils within the reorganisation area.
- Does not impact the Derby City Council administrative boundary within the area.
- Reflects the county's distinct but inter-related geographies and incorporates the polycentric regional economic geographies around our major market towns such as Ashbourne, Bakewell, Chesterfield and Matlock. Enables the city to focus on its strengths and areas of expertise.
- Status quo means a well-practiced geographical understanding and data modelling.
- A partial fit with how people travel to work, move around the county and access services.
- Provides relatively limited balance in socio-economic characteristics between the two unitaries although it brings strength and resilience in the county. There are challenges for the City though in addressing socio-economic needs.
- Allows the County authority to have a considerably large and diversified tax base, although again not so evident for the City.
- Is familiar and maintains the status quo, allowing for continued alignment with the administrative public service map in Derbyshire, such as healthcare, police and fire.
- Provides a degree of flexibility in being able to meet the demand for housing and delivery of housing targets across the geographical area in scope, although less so for Derby.
- Not restricted by topography and has good transport connectivity.



Derbyshire County Unitary

Population:	822,377
Electorate:	628,882
Hectares:	254,676
Council size:	128

Derby City Unitary

Population:	274,149
Electorate:	183,163
Hectares:	7,803
Council size:	51

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

Low

- Does not meet government criteria in relation to population size of Derby City which would remain small and mismatched with regard to the new County Unitary.
- It is estimated through independent analysis that a single unitary model for the County would save an estimated £133m as a net benefit after 5 years, with an implementation payback of less than a year. See table below.
- Whilst it provides significant savings and efficiencies potential for the county area, there is no ability for Derby City to financially benefit from reorganisation plans, could lead to mismatch in future prosperity of both Councils.

Indicative financial analysis – PwC Feb 2025

Annual benefit	£32.4m
Annual disaggregation cost	£0
One off transition costs	£20.3m
Net total benefit after 5 years	£133.6m
Payback period	Less than 1yr

Note: the financial analysis for discounted options Dis1 and Dis 2 was based on analysis carried out in February 2025 and is not comparable with that carried out in October 2025 for options A-D.

Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Medium

- The concept and practicality of D&B ‘council mergers’ on the existing county boundary into one continuing unitary authority is, in principle, relatively straightforward.

- Maintains a county council delivery geography meaning changes could be made with limited impact upon the services delivered to residents.
- Brings together the most number of lower-tier Councils, increasing capacity, experience and expertise across the workforce, but not for Derby City.
- Significant merging of multiple local authorities creates scope for large scale transformation across combined services and supporting functions (ICT, HR, business support etc), but not for Derby City.

Meets local needs and is informed by local views

High

- On 17 February 2025 the Council launched ‘The future of councils in Derbyshire’ consultation putting forward the Council’s ‘One Derbyshire’ option covering the whole county for comment.
- Weighted results show 59% of Derbyshire’s respondents (weighted by location, age, gender and ethnicity) supported the Councils ‘One Derbyshire’ option either ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’.
- This option is supported by the County Council, whose elected members represent around 75% of the whole Derbyshire population.
- Other public sector services may support the option which represents the status-quo above others as it continues administrative and operation alignment and familiarity.

Support devolution arrangements

Very High

- Provides a greater clarity around delivery, leadership and a focused vision for the county in the context of the East Midlands region.
- Would continue to deliver excellent public services and ensure that alongside the regional Mayor, there is strategic leadership to articulate a clear and consistent vision for economic growth across an extended area.
- Maintains the status quo in relation to the EMCCA constitution and formal membership of the EMCCA Board.
- Maintains a split between the distinct economic offers/challenges of the County and the City. Is least disruptive to current ways of working for EMCCA.
- Reflects the current options (2UAs) on the table across the region.

Enable stronger community engagement

Medium

- A recent boundary review means the current County Council electoral divisional boundaries provide a sound basis for Councillor numbers.
- A 100% increase in the amount of County Councillors for a new unitary authority, based on current Electoral Division boundaries, would double the number from 64 to 128. Overall 128 Councillors for the whole new county unitary fits

within the size and scales of other unitary authorities, strengthening and balancing local democracy and accountability in Derbyshire across key spend services.

- A single unitary would have the opportunity to make a deliberate and authentic commitment to localism and local democracy across Derbyshire. It would mean that the new authority would be forced to think differently about how it delivers strong community engagement going forward.
- One large unitary authority would mean there is a clear distinction between the layers of local government and removing the district boundaries would enable town and parish councils to better clarify their unique identity.
- A larger Council and smaller number of Councillors for the area could lead to local leaders and local services becoming more distant from the centre.

Option Dis1 Assessment Score

Criteria	Assessment	Score	Weighted score
Sensible geography	Medium	3	6
Efficiencies	Low	2	6
High quality local services	Medium	3	9
Meets local views	High	4	8
Supports devolution	Very High	5	5
Community engagement	Medium	3	3
Total		20	37

Strengths



- **Does not include changes to all councils** in the area.
- **Maintains the status quo** as much as possible.
- Maintains a **familiar and practiced geography**.
- Continues with the **County/City identity**.
- Enables the County to **maintain a strong, coherent market town network** and the City to focus on its strength in urban delivery.
- A **partial fit with how people travel to work**, move around the county and access their services.
- Ability to flex the **meeting of housing need** in the County.
- **Consolidates democratic representation** with local government spending.
- Would be the most **simple and straightforward to deliver**.
- Would make **significant efficiencies** and cost the least amount to implement.
- Is the **least disruptive to residents**.
- Not restricted by topography and has **good transport connectivity**.

Weaknesses



- Does not include changes to Derby City Council – **does not meet critical Government criteria**.
- Many **benefits of reorganisation are not available** to the City Council.
- Provides relatively **limited balance in socio-economic characteristics** between the two unitaries although it brings some strength and resilience in the county.
- However, **ageing population an issue** in the Derbyshire part of the footprint alongside wider socio-economic challenges in the City.
- Could lead to a **mismatch in prosperity** between the unitary authorities.
- Status-quo could lead to **lack of ambition** and be seen as a county take-over.
- Would not allow for easy meeting of increased **housing need in the City**.

Dis2 - Three Unitary Model (Discounted for further analysis)

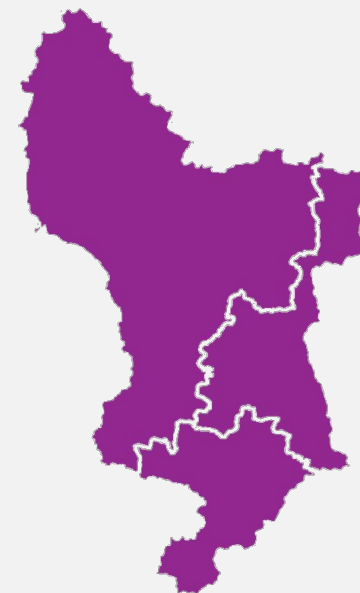
This option would disaggregate the County Council and aggregate the City Council, district and borough councils to form three new unitary authorities for the area.

- **West:** Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire
- **East:** Bolsover, Amber Valley and Erewash
- **South:** Derby City and South Derbyshire

Simple structures over a sensible geography

Very Low

- Meets Government criteria as it relates to affecting all of the Councils within the reorganisation area.
- However, none of the areas would not fit the criteria for population size.
- Does not reflect the county's distinct but inter-related geographies and does not offer a sensible functional geography for the unitary which contains Bolsover, Amber Valley and Erewash.
- Does not fit with how people travel to work, move around the county and access their services. The proposed unitary councils' boundaries do not generally reflect travel to work areas, housing market areas, travel hub geographies or service access patterns.
- Provides more limited balance in socio-economic characteristics across smaller local government areas and risks increased vulnerability.
- Does not allow for the new authorities to have a considerably large and diversified tax base, increasing the risks associated with lower income levels and long-term viability.
- Does not relate to familiar administrative geographies and would be completely new in the area.



East Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	328,477
Electorate:	250,513
Hectares:	53,540
Council size:	50

South Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	391,642
Electorate:	269,034
Hectares:	41,616
Council size:	51

West Derbyshire Unitary

Population:	376,407
Electorate:	292,498
Hectares:	167,323
Council size:	60

- Has very little alignment with the administrative public service map in Derbyshire, such as healthcare, police and fire. And does not reflect operational or partnership boundaries either.
- Would give greater flexibility for Greater Derby on meeting housing demand, although would reduce flexibility in the other two areas compared with the status quo.
- Topography and transport connectivity are restrictive.

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

Very Low

- Does not meet government criteria in relation to population size of new authorities.
- It is estimated through independent analysis that a three unitary model for the county would cost an estimated £12m and would have a negative net benefit after 5 years with the payback period of implementing a three unitary model being 7.3 years.
- Whilst these figures do not currently include Derby City, the order of magnitude is clear, the more Councils need disaggregation and the more new authorities need creating and the less money can be saved and the higher the transition costs.
- It is anticipated that this option would not meet the Government's case-for-change regarding achieving efficiencies in local government due to the increased number of upper-tier councils in the area and the increased costs due to service fragmentation.

Indicative financial analysis – PwC Feb 2025

Annual benefit	£23.8m
Annual disaggregation cost	£18.4m
One off transition costs	£33.5m
Net total benefit after 5 years	£-12.9m
Payback period	7.3 years

Prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services

Low

- Would need a boundary review to determine Council numbers, increasing complexity to deliver.
- This option would require the simultaneous disaggregation of the County Council and aggregation of all council services across the geographies described. This would be very complex to deliver and would have to be in place for day one.
- Changes county council delivery geography and means changes would have a significant impact upon the services delivered to residents and lead to potentially disruption for vulnerable residents – especially in areas close to where new upper-tier administrative boundaries are created.
- Decreases the number of district councils being merged and disaggregates the County Council, decreasing capacity, experience and expertise across the workforce and would be even more challenging with already hard to recruit to positions.
- Would not allow for significant merging of multiple local authorities and potentially creates challenges for the critical mass needed for large scale transformation across combined

services and supporting functions (ICT, HR, business support etc).

Meets local needs and is informed by local views

Low

- On 17 February 2025 the Council launched 'The future of councils in Derbyshire' consultation putting forward the Council's 'One Derbyshire' option covering the whole county for comment.
- Weighted results show 59% of Derbyshire's respondents (weighted by location, age, gender and ethnicity) supported the Councils 'One Derbyshire' option either 'a lot' or 'a little'.
- This indicate that this option (whilst not tabled) could be supported by a significant minority of residents (<41%), although this particular option was not mentioned by any respondent in the comments.
- Would break up the historic county geography.
- This option has been put forward by Amber Valley Council and therefore it is supported politically in that area. This option is not supported by any other local authority in the area.
- Does not match other public sector administrative or operational service geographies.

Support devolution arrangements

Low

- Would lead to greater uncertainty around delivery, leadership and a focused vision for the county in the context of the East Midlands region.

- Would create large levels of disruption in the short-term in the continuation to deliver excellent public services and would fragment the strategic leadership across the Derbyshire geography risking the ability to articulate a clear and consistent vision for economic growth across an extended area.
- Would need new governance and voting arrangements in relation to the EMCCA constitution and formal membership of the EMCCA Board.
- Would fragment the county across the current distinct economic offers/challenges of the County and the City. Would be most disruptive to current ways of working for EMCCA.
- Does not reflect similar options on the table across the region.

Enable stronger community engagement

High

- Multiple unitary authorities would still have the opportunity to make a deliberate and authentic commitment to localism and local democracy across Derbyshire. However, it would be less of a necessity and could mean that new authorities choose not to think differently about how they deliver strong community engagement going forward.
- Smaller unitary authorities would mean there is less distinction between the layers of local government and may mean that Councils are less willing to work with Town

and Parish Councils or introduce local decision making/engagement forums.

- Smaller Councils and larger number of Councillors for the area could lead to local leaders and local services becoming closer to the communities they serve.

Option Dis 2 Assessment Score

Criteria	Assessment	Score	Weighted score
Sensible geography	Very Low	1	2
Efficiencies	Very Low	1	3
High quality local services	Low	2	6
Meets local views	Low	2	4
Supports devolution	Low	2	2
Community engagement	High	4	4
Total		12	21

Strengths



- Includes **all councils** in the area.
- Makes **changes to the Derby City border**.
- New councils would be **closer to the communities they serve**.
- Would give greater flexibility for Greater Derby on **meeting housing demand**, although would reduce flexibility in the other two areas compared with the status quo.

Weaknesses



- **None of the areas fit the criteria** for population size.
- **Does not save money** – costs money in the short/medium term to implement.
- Very **expensive and disruptive** to disaggregating service provision – complex to deliver.
- **Does not reflect functional geographies** – especially in the north western and eastern unitaries.
- **Does not relate** to familiar administrative geographies.
- Creates a **significant number of administrative borders** across functional populations, impinging on travel to work and service patterns.
- Is **not aligned** to any local administrative or operational boundaries.
- Only has a **small amount of local support** in one area.
- **Limited socio-economic balance** amongst populations with increased risk of demand issues.
- Topography and **transport connectivity are restrictive**.
- Risks creating three **unsustainable and less resilient authorities**.
- **Weakens workforce** capacity and capability.
- **Does not align to EMCCA governance** or regional LGR proposals.

Options Appraisal Summary

Following the options appraisal above below is a table outlining the assessment scores of all the options for comparison.

Criteria	Option					
	A	B	C	D	Dis1	Dis2
1	8	6	4	10	6	2
2	9	6	6	15	6	3
3	9	9	9	12	9	6
4	6	6	4	6	8	4
5	3	3	3	4	5	2
6	4	4	4	3	3	4
Total	39	34	30	50	37	21
Rank	2	3	4	1	NA	NA

Based on available evidence and analysis, the findings indicate that creating a single unitary authority (Option D) for the entire county council area, including the City, would offer the greatest opportunity to simultaneously deliver financial savings to the whole area whilst reorganising the local government landscape in a way that better meets the needs of Derbyshire residents now and in the future.

This option for Derbyshire, can realise benefits against key principles including:

- **Scale** - substantial size and mix of rural and urban areas to offer equivalence, parity and competition to other local areas.
- **Simplicity** - 'Council mergers' is the least complex option to implement and therefore represents the lowest risk.
- **Established delivery geography** - has most alignment with the administrative public service map in Derbyshire and may mean minimum changes to the delivery geography for services in the short-term.
- **Savings** – Reorganisation on a whole county boundary creates the largest savings potential and lowest transitional cost of options A-D.
- **Sustainability** – A county unitary would support a larger and more diverse population, spread across urban and rural areas with financial resilience.
- **Disruption** – Lower levels of disruption for residents and most service users as service fragmentation is limited. It is also less disruptive for our public sector partners.
- **Identity** - A whole county unitary council provides for the most common or dominant identity for Derbyshire.
- **Wider public sector** - A county unitary provides the most effective, efficient and convenient model, coterminous with other public sector agencies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this analysis has employed a robust methodology, drawing upon a comprehensive review of local government structures, financial modelling, and stakeholder engagement to assess the potential impacts of reorganising Derbyshire's local authorities. By evaluating a range of options through the lens of key principles such as scale, simplicity, sustainability, and public sector alignment, the study has ensured that recommendations are grounded in both evidence and the practical realities facing Derbyshire's communities.

The main findings clearly demonstrate that the creation of a **single unitary authority for the entire county council area, including the City—Option D**—offers the most substantial benefits. This approach not only maximises financial savings but also streamlines governance, minimises disruption for residents and service users, and aligns most closely with

established delivery geographies. The county-wide unitary model best supports Derbyshire's diverse mix of rural and urban communities, providing a sustainable framework for future growth and resilience. Furthermore, by creating a single point of accountability and aligning with other public sector agencies, this option enhances both efficiency and the sense of a shared Derbyshire identity.

Option D is therefore favoured as it delivers on the core objectives of the review: achieving significant cost efficiencies, reducing complexity, and establishing a robust foundation for delivering high-quality services. It represents the most effective and least disruptive path forward, ensuring that local government in Derbyshire is well placed to meet the current and future needs of its residents.

Appendix 1 – Indicators

Economy

- Gross Value Added (GVA) (£)
- Annual change in GVA 2019-20 arising from the pandemic (% change)
- Aggregate net difference in employment profile by sector (% point)
- Gross median weekly earnings (£)
- Gigabit broadband availability in all premises (%)
- Projected change in population aged 16-64, 2022 - 2047 (%)
- Number of businesses employing 10 or more people per 1,000 working age adults

Socio-economic

- Children aged 0 to 19 years living in relative low-income households (%)
- People of working age claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work (%)
- Semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations; unemployed and lowest grade occupations (% of residents in households)
- Population in the most deprived 20% of areas nationally (%)
- Working age adults qualified to level 4+ or above (%)
- Residents in bad or very bad health (%)

- Number of households that are homeless or threatened with homelessness per 1,000 households
- Working age population who are economically inactive (neither in work nor looking for work) (%)

Demography

- Total population
- Population aged 65+ (%)
- Projected change in population aged 0-15, 2022 - 2047 (%)
- Projected change in population aged 65+, 2022 - 2047 (%)
- Projected change in population aged 85+, 2022 - 2047 (%)
- Population living in rural areas (%)
- Disabled under the Equality Act (%)
- Population from BME backgrounds (%)

Tax Base

- Number of people aged 0-15 and 65+ per 100 working age adults aged 16-64
- Projected change in total population, 2022 - 2047 (%)
- Projected change in households, 2025-43 (%)
- Number of properties in council tax band D and above, i.e. those that are higher value (% of all properties)
- Total resources (business rates, council tax and grant funding combined) per head of population

Reflects where people live and work and use services

- Number of households as a % of all households in the housing market areas that the area is part of (%)
- National Planning Policy Framework target (new dwellings per 1000 people)
- National Planning Policy Framework new target hit (%)
- Number of travel to work areas that each area in an option intersects
- Number of people as a % of the total population in all of the travel to work areas that the area is part of (%)
- Number of market towns/cities per 100,000 hectares
- Number of people per 100 hectares

¹ Population - mid-year population estimates, 2024, Office for National Statistics (ONS) (nomis) © Crown Copyright.
Electorate - October 2025 electorate based on the electoral registers of each district and borough.

- Number of hospital catchments that the areas in an option intersect
- Number of further education college catchments that the areas in an option intersect
- Average travel time in minutes to nearest town centre by car
- The extent to which the topographical profile of an area allows the free flowing movement of people, goods and services
- The extent to which an area has good transport connectivity internally and externally

Hectares - Census 2021, TS006 (Population density), ONS (nomis) © Crown Copyright.

² Further detail regarding the financial analysis and how we arrived at figures and conclusions can be found in Appendix B.

Uniting Derbyshire



Derbyshire County Council

Local Government Reorganisation

Appendix E - Democracy and Council Size

Contents

Introduction	1	
Key considerations	2	
Part One – Democracy, local voice and representation	3	
1.1 Introduction.....	3	
1.2 Policy context	3	
1.3 Resident and stakeholder feedback	3	
1.4 Practical approach to reorganisation	4	
1.4.1 Methodology	4	
1.5 Councillor workload.....	5	
1.6 Achieving efficiency through reconfiguration.....	5	
1.7 Changing shape of local government.....	6	
1.7.1 Council Size	6	
1.7.2 Indicative committee structures	6	
1.7.3 Locality planning, representation and local voice	7	
1.7.4 Town and Parish Councils.....	9	
1.7.5 Civic and ceremonial arrangements	10	
1.7.6 Relationship with Strategic Authority	10	
Part Two – Council Size	12	
2.1 Introduction.....	12	
2.2 Options Comparison	13	
2.2.1 Option A.....	13	
2.2.2 Option B	14	
2.2.3 Option C	15	
2.2.4 Option D	17	
2.3 Comparison with other authorities.....	19	
Surrey and Devolution Priority Programme Submissions.....	21	
2.3 Preferred Option	22	
Amber Valley	24	
Bolsover	25	
Chesterfield.....	26	
Derby.....	27	
Derbyshire Dales.....	28	
Erewash	29	
High Peak	30	
North East Derbyshire	31	
South Derbyshire.....	32	
Conclusion	33	
Appendix 5a: Voting and elections	34	
Voting patterns and behaviours.....	34	
Elections to the new council	34	
Appendix 5b: Indicative warding arrangements for 112 seats	35	

Introduction

Local democracy is part of the fabric of local government and reorganisation creates the chance to re-imagine the current system, which is imbalanced, inefficient and confusing.

Stakeholders who responded to engagement raised the importance of transparency and robust representation, requesting simple structures that ensure accountability and respond to local needs.

A single unitary council for Derbyshire provides a unique opportunity to review democratic processes and the supporting locality infrastructure.

The proposal includes our intentions for establishing a new and streamlined approach to:

- a leader and cabinet executive governance structure,
- area based planning, and
- neighbourhood governance.

This document has been produced to highlight the working behind the elements of the Derbyshire LGR proposal relating to democracy, representation, local voice and council size.

Key considerations

As part of the Local Government reorganisation submission, the proposal must indicate the democratic arrangements and council size required to provide sufficient strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership to run the new unitary authorities.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has provided guidance¹ to support local authorities to produce their evidence to support their preferred solution. Additional advice from the LGBCE is not to conduct a full boundary review and to consider these proposals to be an interim solution until a full boundary review can be undertaken prior to the first full election in 2031.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment (EDCE) Bill is in progress alongside local authorities' proposals for local government reorganisation. This will impact on the nature of future governance and devolution, and potentially the proposals councils have submitted.

Whilst this is still progressing through Parliament, we await any enacted details and have flexibility to adapt and update our

democracy proposals and their implementation as necessary in the coming months.

On this basis our proposal has taken a practical approach to determining new democratic arrangements and the council size of the proposed Derbyshire unitary council. This will serve well for the short-term until government regulations are published and a detailed boundary/ warding review is undertaken.

Using existing democratic arrangements and administrative boundaries as building blocks, the proposal presents a strong case for establishing the foundations to create the new unitary authority.

In addition, it provides a sound opportunity for MHCLG and LGBCE to work with Derbyshire to review and re-shape local democracy within a larger, efficient and streamlined local authority.

¹ [Microsoft Word - LGBCE \(21-22\)185-OperationalReport App E council size guidance](#)

Part One – Democracy, local voice and representation

1.1 Introduction

In preparing this proposal for local government reorganisation for Derbyshire, consideration has been given to this unique opportunity to reshape democratic representation. With a current system that causes duplication, confusion and inefficiency, we have focussed on ways to make it fit for purpose in the future.

1.2 Policy context

The proposal has considered the national and local policy and political context, alongside the socio-economic factors determining people's lives in Derbyshire.

The government's EDCE Bill² (currently in Committee Stage after its second reading in the House of Commons) sets the tone for the future for devolved working, local government and neighbourhood governance and the relationship with Strategic Authorities.

Specific reference is made in the Bill, to having '*leader and cabinet executive*' arrangements within local authorities and for local authorities in England to make '*appropriate arrangements to ensure the effective governance of any area of a specified description which falls within the authority's area*'. Once enacted this will provide a strong basis upon which future arrangements for representation and local voice can be built. We await with interest, the Secretary of State's regulations (following MHCLG's Review of Local Authority-led Neighbourhood Governance) which will help us to design our new neighbourhood structures for involvement.

In the current uncertain fiscal landscape for local government, this proposal also gives due consideration to the need to streamline and improve the efficiency of local government democratic processes.

Added to all the above, is the shifting political landscape at the national and local level with general downward trends in voting turnout rates (particularly for local elections) and some public disillusionment regarding democracy.

Appendix 5a provides additional material regarding voting and elections and the opportunities to improve the local electoral system through reorganisation.

1.3 Resident and stakeholder feedback

Reflecting the national picture, resident feedback has told us that one of the reasons people don't get involved in decision making is because of a 'lack of trust that their involvement would make a difference'. 56% of responses to our consultation on reorganisation, however said they would like to be involved. This presents an excellent opportunity to learn more about the ways in which representation can most effectively be designed, to engage a greater number of residents in civic and democratic life.

People also reported that time restrictions and other priorities in their lives can reduce their ability to be involved in decision making. This proposal is rooted in finding ways to modernise and improve people's experience of local government, in order that they can play a role in shaping the future of the place where they live.

² [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#)

Wider feedback from residents and stakeholders suggests their preferences for LGR proposals include:

- Transparency and robust representation
- Strong governance foundations, with democratic support, accountability and responsiveness to community input
- Simplified structures and minimal disruption
- Balance between local needs and broader strategic ambitions for Derbyshire
- Preservation of community heritage, historic ties and inclusivity
- Consideration of local voices
- Effective dialogue and governance that supports community involvement moving forwards

The proposal has considered all of the above points in the design of its strategic and locality governance arrangements.

1.4 Practical approach to reorganisation

The preparation stages of this submission have focussed on aligning with the Government's commitment to 'ensuring both effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of cities, towns and rural areas in line with LGBCE guidance'.

LGR creates an excellent opportunity to ensure that council size and Councillor roles support the new authority to deliver the best outcomes for Derbyshire communities, based on their unique characteristics.

1.4.1 Methodology

The overall **aim** has been to propose an equitable, representative and efficient option for council size, which is supported by MHCLG and

LGBCE, in order to undertake practical and effective shadow council elections in 2027.

On this basis, the following **principles** have been applied to the development of the proposal:

- Achieving parity with minimal disruption
- Utilising existing ward and/or electoral division boundaries
- Ensuring electoral equity and reducing electoral imbalance
- Delivering effective and convenient local government, including manageable councillor workload and ability to represent the electorate
- Achieving efficiencies through opportunities to provide Councillors with the correct powers, resources and streamlined processes
- Aiming to meet the LGBCE's guidance of no more than 100 members and no less than 30
- Prioritising practicality, to achieve successful shadow election arrangements in 2027
- Creating opportunities to align with government ambitions, e.g. English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, Civic Society Covenant and other relevant policies and guidance relating to democratic representation and neighbourhood governance.

The proposal has considered relevant council size, in relation to **strategic leadership, accountability** and **community leadership** Councillor roles.

Notwithstanding forthcoming regulations on neighbourhood governance (as part of the EDCE Bill), it also provides indicative plans for locality/ neighbourhood arrangements and community involvement.

1.5 Councillor workload

The latest Local Government Association Councillors' Census 2022 revealed that just over half (53.5%) of Councillors held at least one position of responsibility, most commonly chair or vice-chair of a committee (32.5%) or membership of the cabinet/ executive (18.4%).

Additionally, on average Councillors reported that they spent on average 22.4 hours a week on council business. 20.3% of respondents spent 10 hours or fewer and 13.5% spent more than 35 hours per week. The largest chunk of time was spend attending council meetings (7.9 hours on average), followed by engaging with constituents, surgeries, enquiries (6.6 hours), working with community groups (4.4 hours) and other items (3.5 hours).

This research indicates, that whilst most Councillor time is spent in council meetings, there is a significant part of the role dedicated to engaging with constituents and working with local groups within the community.

As such, the proposals take full account of both strategic and community leadership roles for Councillors, the time required to carry out their duties fully and the officer support which may be necessary.

1.6 Achieving efficiency through reconfiguration

As noted in the proposal, there is current imbalance, confusion, duplication and inefficiency within the democratic structures in Derbyshire, which reorganisation will remedy.

Whilst there will be fewer councillors in the new authority, the new council creates more accountability to local people regarding high

spend services. This means there is a better balance between representation, responsibility and efficiency, as the majority of democratic costs (member support, elections, allowances etc) in the county are currently at the district and borough council level³.

Additionally, there are 18 County Councillors from the 64 (29%) who are 'two-hatters', meaning they are already elected to County and District Borough Council or Derby City roles (some with executive roles in more than one authority), therefore their workload is both simplified and reduced. To create a proposal that ensured there are enough Councillors to fulfil roles within the new council, the following **assumptions** have been applied:

- Creation of a leader and cabinet/ executive model
- Maximum number of portfolios legally permitted
- Minimum number of committees to carry out business
- Strengthened and streamlined strategic roles
- Establishment of structured area committee roles, providing agency and local flexibility
- Focus on reducing duplication and creating the right powers at the right level.

Based on researching existing Councillor roles, the following logic has been applied.

- Councillors have **two basic committee roles** (a position on Full Council and a position on their local area committee)
- It is estimated that a minimum of a further **390 committee roles** will remain to be filled
- Committee roles require **varying levels of expertise, knowledge and time commitment**

³ Cost savings are included in the financial analysis

- There will be an **uneven spread of roles and responsibilities** across Councillors depending on their availability and interests.

It should be noted that, because this proposal is for a larger unitary authority, there is some estimation work required as a council of this size has not been created before.

Some of the considerations we have explored in this respect include:

- **Workload of active Councillors** with multiple roles
- **Meaningful roles/ engagement** for a potentially large number of Councillors without a position of responsibility/ backbenchers
- Servicing of **very large Council meetings**
- **Democratic balance** within committees, particularly scrutiny
- Large enough pool of Councillors to **cover positions**
- **Democratic support** to a large number of individual Councillors, e.g. training, case work support and administration of allowances to those elected to the new council.

1.7 Changing shape of local government

1.7.1 Council Size

As 21 two-tier county areas are currently preparing for reorganisation, we anticipate a trend towards the creation of larger single unitary authorities. Our proposal contains a minimum council size of 112, with a preference to negotiate for as many Councillors as possible, given the potential for new larger single unitary councils to require different democratic arrangements from previously unitarised areas.

Part 2 of this document contains the workings, assumptions and options appraisal for council size.

1.7.2 Indicative committee structures

Schedule 25 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill amends the Local Government Act 2000, to make provisions for all new authorities to have leader and cabinet executive arrangements. As such, the new single unitary authority will consist of a leader and cabinet executive model, supported by associated committees and representation on partnerships and outside bodies.

Reorganisation provides an opportunity to review and streamline committee structures which will both support organisational priorities and local circumstances.

An executive structure is likely to be established as follows.

- **Council** (full membership)
- **Cabinet/ Executive** (with up to 10 portfolios)
- At least one **Scrutiny Committee** or equivalent (with sub-committees established as required)
- Regulatory Committees
 - **Planning** – Strategic Planning Authority and Area Planning Committees
 - Licensing
 - Other relevant regulatory committees
- Other Committees, e.g. audit, governance and ethics and standards etc
- **External committees**, e.g. statutory partnerships and outside bodies
- Area Committees (tbc)

This allows for Councillors elected to serve within the newly created unitary authority to:

- give strategic leadership and direction in executive roles,
- manage the business of the council and take decisions effectively,
- scrutinise decisions,
- support regulatory functions,
- represent the council on external bodies and partnerships,
- represent and engage with local people and communities,
- handle casework.

Our proposed council size of 112 provides sufficient Councillors to engage with and discharge the business of the new council, in terms of representation on council committees, external committees, partnerships and bodies and as community leaders. Strategic leadership, accountability and community leadership roles are all clarified and strengthened by this proposal.

The one unitary council:

- Consolidates **10 current leader and executive systems into one**
- One set of local elections means residents **only vote once** for their local representatives, making elections simpler, cheaper, more efficient and easier to understand
- Creates a **powerful strategic planning committee** to consider and influence major developments
- **Streamlines regulatory area planning**, reducing administrative bureaucracy and aligning with natural spatial development zones
- Provides **structured, consistent and transparent local representation** arrangements and **networking opportunities** for Councillors

- **Reduces duplicated governance structures** and public sector representation on key partnerships and external bodies
- **Dissolves the democratic confusion** of the current two-tier system and associated workload for councillors who will now only need to deal with one organisation

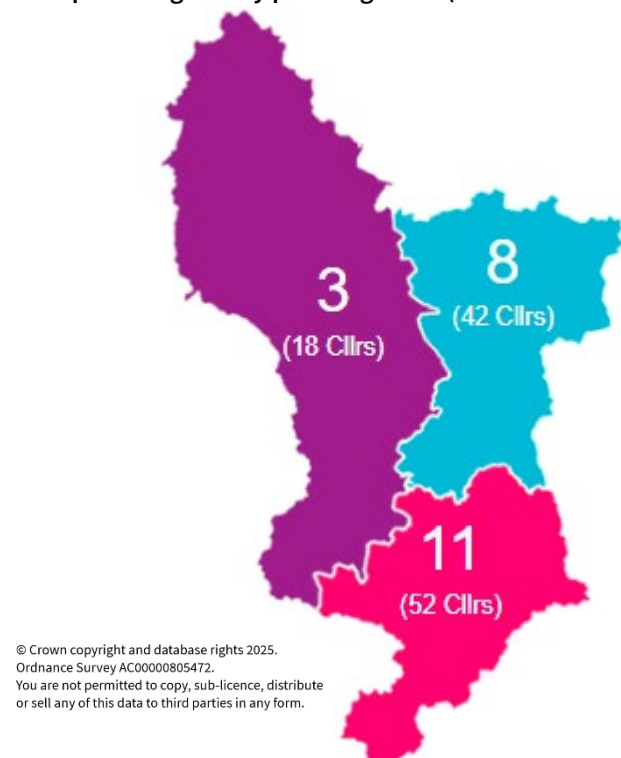
1.7.3 Locality planning, representation and local voice

Providing clearer roles at the strategic level for Councillors (alongside streamlined and improved processes for accountability) means that more time is freed up for community leadership activity. The new authority provides an opportunity to design consistent structures at the locality level, which are clear regarding decision-making and accountability but with flexibility to account for diverse and changing community needs.

Given the proposal for Derbyshire is for a large unitary council, suitable area arrangements are critical to ensuring local voices are heard and effective local governance structures are in place to support Councillors' community leadership role.

Using current lower tier boundaries as building blocks and taking into consideration stakeholder feedback, we would look to establish approximately three regulatory area planning committees and between 20-50 local area committees.

Figure 1 - Proposed regulatory planning areas (different colours)



Map showing indicative regulatory planning areas (3) and the potential number of area committees within each (based on council size of 112)

Existing administrative boundaries have been used to create these areas, except for Amber Valley which has been split to align with natural spatial development zones. A future Boundary Review will assess and re-define boundaries without lower tier administrative restrictions.

It is envisaged that reorganisation provides an excellent opportunity to align some operational service delivery with locality decision making and democratic structures. There is scope to align with

ambitions for local service ‘hubs’, neighbourhood health services and other government ambitions for locality working at area and neighbourhood level geographies.

In the first instance regulatory planning (Local Planning Committees) has the potential to bring about significant administrative efficiencies, as shown below.

Figure 2 - Local Planning Committee administrative efficiencies



The proposal includes the introduction of area committees and details their potential design and features. These are an excellent way for Councillors to enhance local engagement, network with local partners, the VCSE and Parish and Town Councils, increase visibility

within their areas and get things done. Their introduction also aligns well with the principles of the Government's Civil Society Covenant⁴.

As previously mentioned, the EDCE Bill includes provisions for local authorities in England to make the appropriate arrangements to secure the effective governance of any area which falls within the authority's area (a neighbourhood area). At the time of writing, the Secretary of State may introduce regulations through the Bill to:

- require the establishment and maintenance by local authorities of specified organisational structures for the governance of neighbourhood areas
- specify the number, membership, funding and review of such structures
- specify the functions that may or must be carried out by such structures, including structures to carry out functions on behalf of the local authority
- require the carrying out of such activities for the purpose of ensuring local engagement with the neighbourhood areas as may be specified.

For the purposes of this proposal, we have referred to the establishment of neighbourhood arrangements as '**area committees**' (but recognise naming conventions for these new structures, in the context of the public sector system, is important but potentially problematic) and have made provisions for them to include the potential following features.

- **Chair** - a Councillor from the unitary authority
- **Membership** – active roles for all Councillors and representation from local services/ partners, voluntary and community sector

groups, town and parish councils, schools, housing associations, residents and resident action groups

- **Area profiles** – developed to provide data, insight and intelligence to understand need
- **Action plans** – prioritising collective local goals, linked to strategic Council Plan ambitions
- **Devolved budget** – for delivering local priorities and supporting community-led projects
- **Small grant pot** – with delegated powers to distribute
- **Community engagement activity** – local gatherings and online opportunities to share plans, create collective responses and develop ideas
- **Devolved powers** – scope for services to provide discretionary funding and officer support to operate some local services, e.g. local highways schemes, youth and older people grants (this may also form part of the forthcoming EDCE Bill regulations, set out by the Secretary of State)

We will await further information and guidance from MHCLG prior to confirming any neighbourhood governance plans.

1.7.4 Town and Parish Councils

There are currently 204 Town and Parish Councils (local councils) serving Derbyshire residents, with some areas unparished. Local councils provide a chance for residents to engage with civic life at the very local level. To varying degrees (depending on size and resource) they may provide local services such as maintaining a village hall, providing allotments and running litter campaigns. Some larger town

⁴ [Civil Society Covenant: programme - GOV.UK](#)

councils (with a mayor in the chair's role) may run leisure facilities, support museums and maintain parks.

In the new unitary authority Parish and Town Councils will continue to play a significant role representing the views of residents in their area, and/ or in the provision of local services, where possible and/ or appropriate. Parish and Town Councils will be encouraged to participate fully in Neighbourhood Boards.

In addition, there will be potential for local councils to be created in areas which are currently unparished. Town and Parish Councils will remain independent bodies, with the choice to take on the delivery of a variety of local services where there is a desire to do so.

The Parish and Town Council Liaison Forum, currently facilitated by Derbyshire County Council will continue to play an important role in furthering co-operation and communication between the local authority, Derbyshire Association of Local Councils (DALC) and Parish and Town Councils. This forum provides an opportunity to discuss sharing responsibilities for services and to consult on priorities for local communities in Derbyshire.

Parish and Town Councils are often the first point of contact for local people and they know the main issues for their individual communities. This local knowledge is essential to ensure that the county wide strategies respond to the needs of local people and help to improve the lives of everybody in Derbyshire. The ongoing connection of the forum into the development of local government reorganisation in Derbyshire will ensure that local councils are part of the co-design of new arrangements. It will be important to ensure

their independent status remains strong, alongside ensuring their effective role in local authority-led neighbourhood governance.

1.7.5 Civic and ceremonial arrangements

During LGR, outgoing councils must request the establishment of charter trustees⁵ as part of the process. This ensures that when the outgoing council is abolished, any important civic arrangements and ceremonial activities that are important to civic life in those areas are maintained during the transition.

During LGR, charter trustees are established by the Secretary of State via a statutory order, usually in the months leading up to the reorganisation date. As such, the proposal includes the establishment of charter trustees as temporary bodies to continue civic and ceremonial activities once the former borough and city councils are abolished and the new unitary council comes into effect.

1.7.6 Relationship with Strategic Authority

As the role of Strategic Authorities continues to develop and the EDCE Bill is finalised and enacted through Parliament, the relationship with the new unitary council in Derbyshire will adapt accordingly. In the first instance, Councillor representation on the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) will need to consider the change from two constituent authorities to one and how this may affect representation. As referenced in our proposal, it may be necessary to amend the regulations to ensure Derbyshire retains equity with the new council(s) across Nottinghamshire.

Currently, membership requirements for constituent council include membership of the EMCCA Board, chair/ vice-chair/ portfolio lead

⁵ [The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009 No. 467](#)

roles on regulatory, non-regulatory, advisory and joint committees and potential input into commissions and working groups. Representational parity with neighbouring Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities will need to be considered, as local government reorganisation schemes are confirmed across the EMCCA area. Council numbers are sufficient to cover roles within EMCCA, though consideration will need to be given to ensuring that Councillors with multiple executive and/ or high profile portfolio responsibilities are adequately supported.

This is a unique opportunity to consider how the governance of the new unitary authority can provide a unified voice for Derbyshire, alongside structured knowledge and intelligence of community needs and priorities.

There is great potential to:

- Increase **authority, responsibility and accountability** from those nominated into the committee structure
- **Align strategic and local planning** with EMCCA ambitions for spatial planning
- Share robust strategic and local insight and intelligence to aid decision making
- Provide structured and equal opportunities to **consult and engage** with Derbyshire residents
- Offer 'one voice' and democratic representation balancing diverse rural and urban priorities



Part Two – Council Size

2.1 Introduction

Derbyshire is a large authority with a population of almost 1.1 million⁶ and an electorate of 812,045⁷. The county has a mix of rural and urban areas meaning there are differences in the size and population mix across the county.

There are currently 447 councillors across the upper and lower tier authorities. Derbyshire County Council currently has 64 councillors, with an average ratio of 9,826 electorate per councillor. Derby, the only unitary in the county, has a ratio of 3,591 electors to every councillor while the districts have an average of one councillor to every 1,894 electors.

Local government reorganisation proposals required a recommended Council Size, having ascertained the three main criteria of providing

sufficient Strategic Leadership, Accountability and Community Leadership as set out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

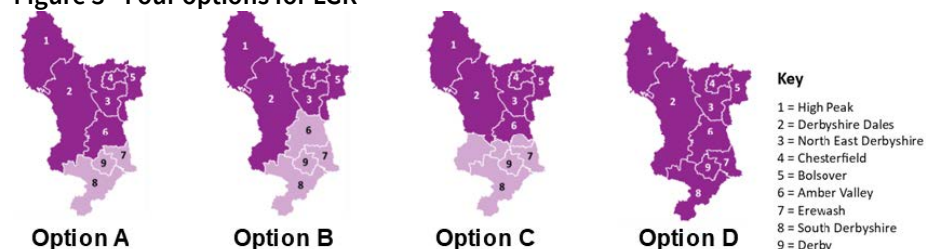
The guidance from the LGBCE goes further to recommend that the council size should be no smaller than 30 seats and no larger than 100 seats, and any recommendations outside of this range require “particularly strong evidence”.

⁶ 2024 Mid-Year Population Estimates; ONS; July 2025

⁷ 2025 Electorate; Derby City, Derbyshire District and Boroughs; October 2025

2.2 Options Comparison

Figure 3 - Four options for LGR



Evaluation has taken place for several Council Size options for each of the four choices under consideration. During the process, the evaluation retained the existing district, borough, and city boundaries, and based the options on current electoral division, ward, and parish boundaries.

To calculate the council size, the October 2025 electoral registers for the county's nine local authorities have been used, with a combination of existing parishes, wards and electoral divisions used as divisional building blocks. In any standard boundary review, this electorate would have been projected forward by five years, but in the timescales allowed for this work, projections have not been possible and the LGCBE guidance of using the current electorate figures has been used.

2.2.1 Option A

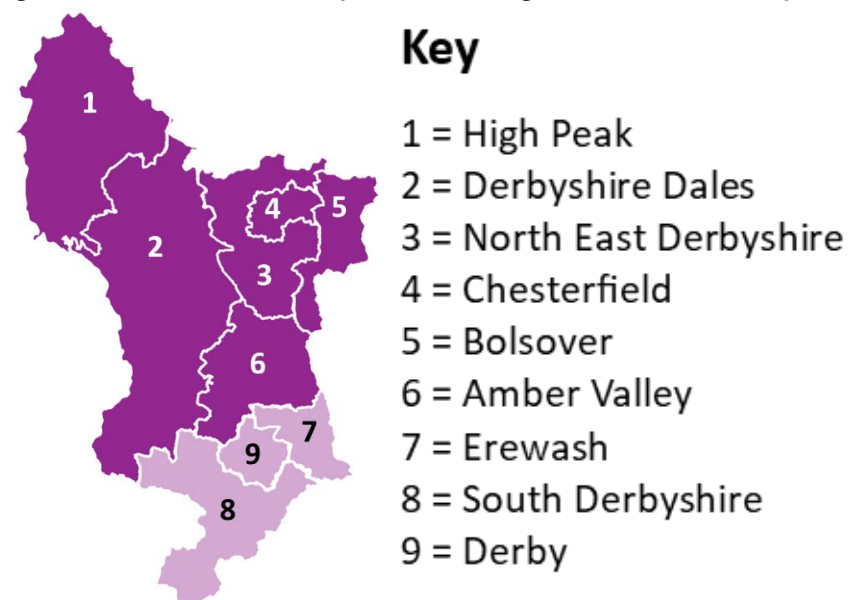
Option A is a two unitary option with Amber Valley in the North of the County. This option would use the county's existing electoral divisions alongside the city's existing wards to create the new divisional arrangements.

Currently, Derbyshire has 64 single member divisions while Derby has 18 wards, each with either two or three members. The county has an average of 9,826 electors per division while the city has an average of

10,176 electors per ward, meaning they are of electorally comparable size.

To set up the initial arrangements for the two authorities Derbyshire would retain its 64 existing divisions, with each gaining a councillor to become two-member divisions. Derby would then see its existing wards all lose a member to bring the elector to councillor ratio into line with the County's divisions.

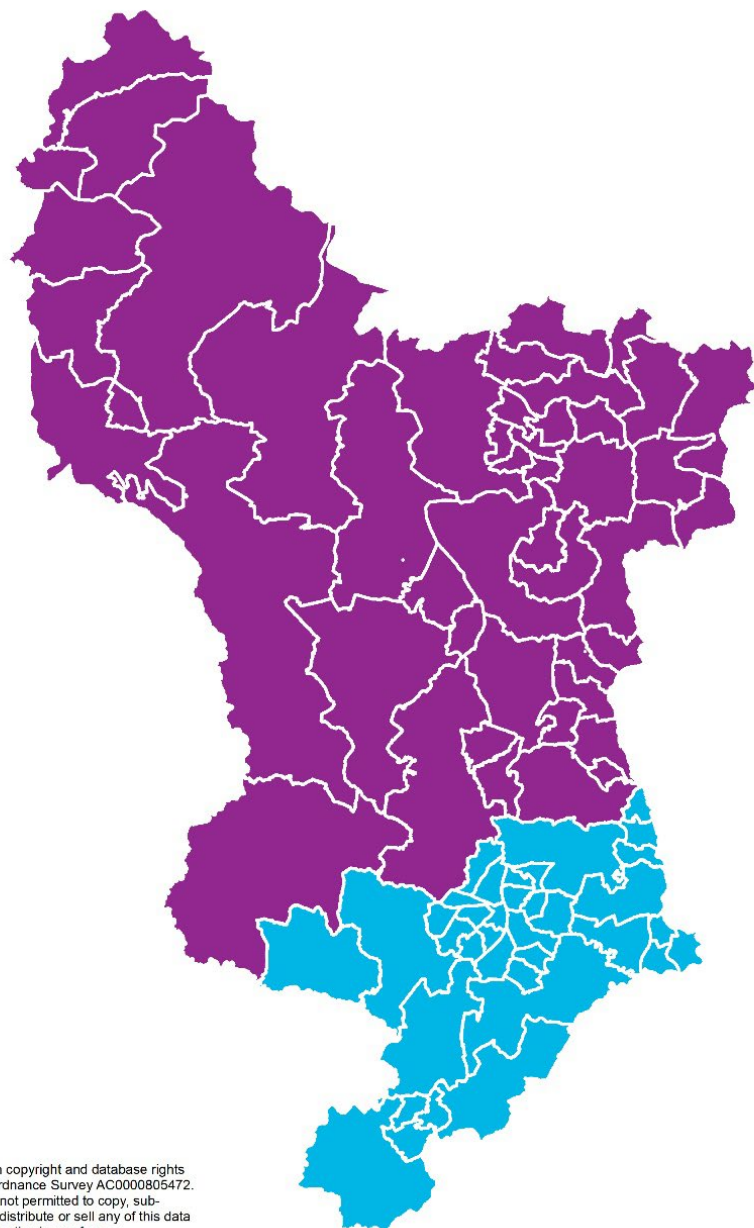
Figure 4 - Option A: Two unitary model showing current local authority boundaries



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As the county would be split, the Northern authority would have 92 councillors while the southern authority would have 69, giving 161 seats in total with an average ratio of 5,044 electorate per councillor.

Figure 5 - Option A: Two unitary model proposed warding arrangements based on current Electoral Divisions for Derbyshire and Derby City Wards

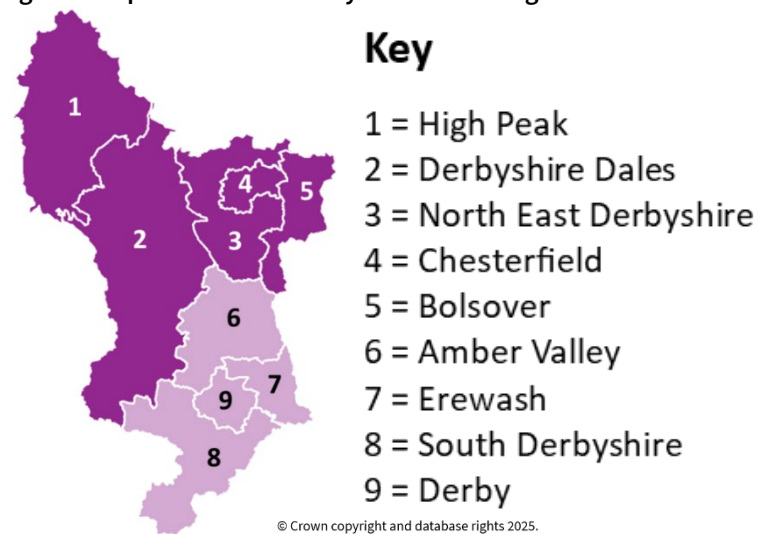


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2.2.2 Option B

Option B is a two unitary option with Amber Valley in the South of the County. Like Option A, this option would use the county's existing electoral divisions alongside the city's existing wards to create the new divisional arrangements.

Figure 6 - Option B: Two unitary model showing current local authority boundaries

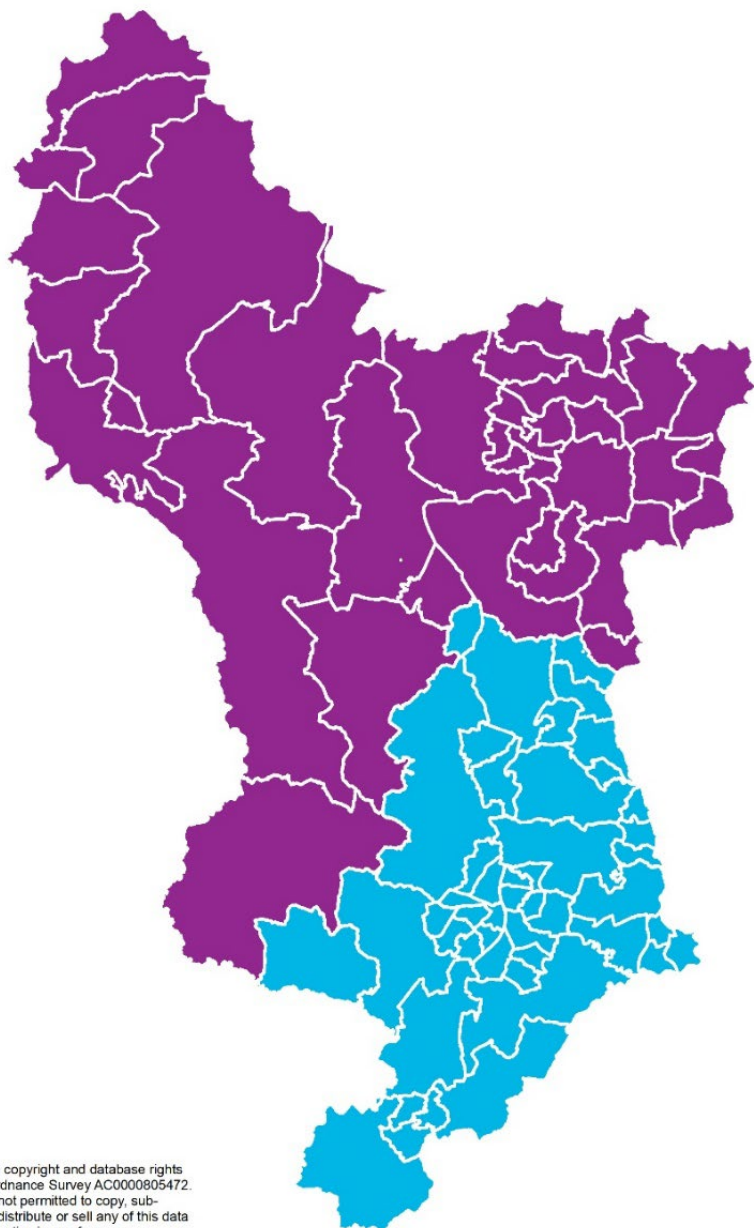


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Currently, Derbyshire has 64 single member divisions while Derby has 18 wards, each with either two or three members. The county has an average of 9,826 electors per division while the city has an average of 10,176 electors per ward, meaning they are of electorally comparable size.

To set up the initial arrangements for the two authorities Derbyshire would retain its 64 existing divisions, with each gaining a councillor to become two-member divisions. Derby would then see its existing wards all lose a member to bring the elector to councillor ratio into line with the County's divisions.

Figure 7 - Option B: Two unitary model proposed warding arrangements based on current Electoral Divisions for Derbyshire and Derby City Wards



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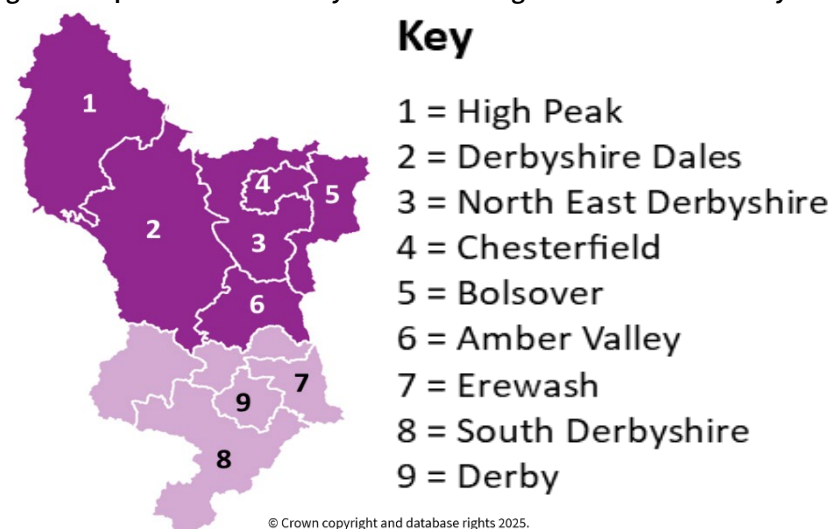
As the county would be split, the Northern authority would have 72 councillors while the southern authority would have 89, giving 161 seats in total with an average ratio of 5,044 electorate per councillor.

2.2.3 Option C

Option C is a two unitary option which splits both Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales to give a more even split of the population across the two proposed unitary councils, meaning both unitaries are over 500,000 minimum population size as set out in the Statutory Invitation guidance and in the English Devolution White Paper.

As in Options A and B, for the initial elections the two new authorities largely use the existing county divisions and city wards for their electoral arrangements, with the county divisions all gaining one member and the city wards all losing one member to balance the elector ratio between city and county.

Figure 8 - Option C: Two unitary model showing current local authority boundaries



Key

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

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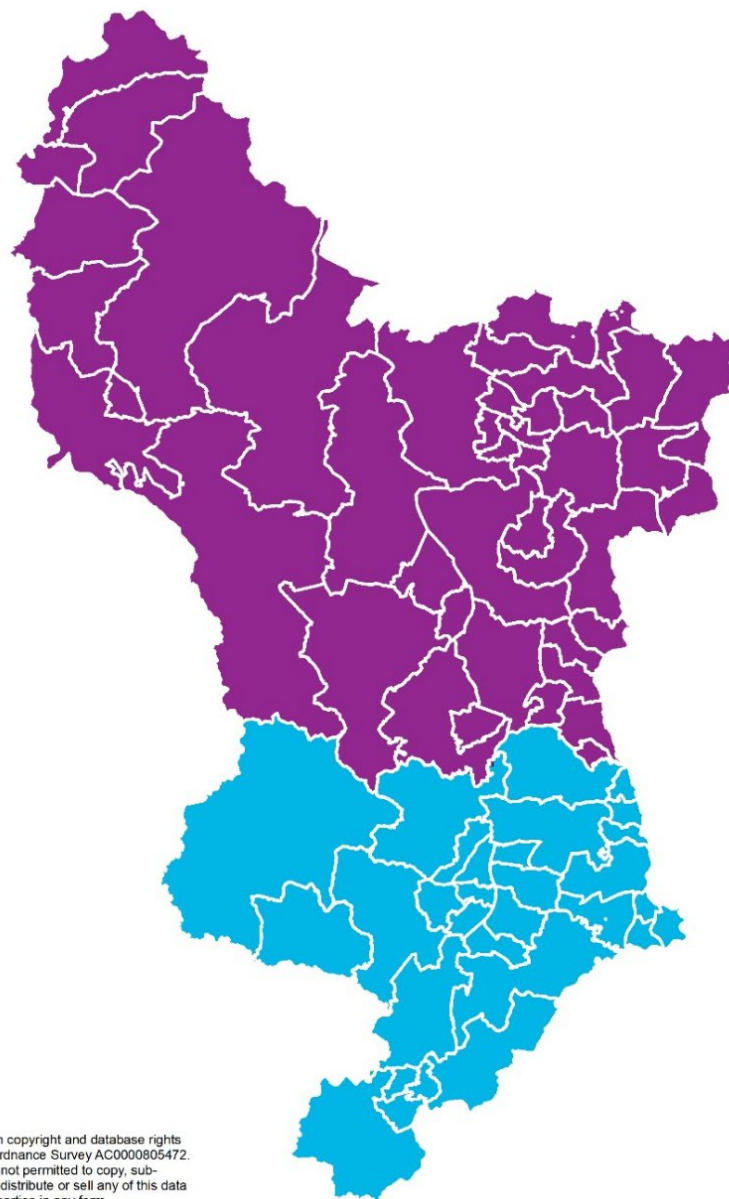
Like with options A and B, there would be a total of 161 councillors across the two authorities, with an average ratio of 5,044 electorate per councillor.

However, due to the location of the split to Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales, it would mean four county divisions seeing some change as they would be split by the boundary between authorities.

In Derbyshire Dales, this option runs to the north of the town of Ashbourne, placing the town in the new southern authority while splitting the division of Dovedale and Ashbourne North.

The southern portion of this division is added to the existing Ashbourne South division, making that a three-member division. The northern portion of Dovedale & Ashbourne North would then be retained in the northern authority as a single member division. Both divisions would be within +/-10% of the average elector ratio.

Figure 9 - Option C: Two unitary model proposed warding arrangements based on current Electoral Divisions for Derbyshire and Derby City Wards, except Amber Valley and Derbyshire Dales which have been split along Parish boundaries



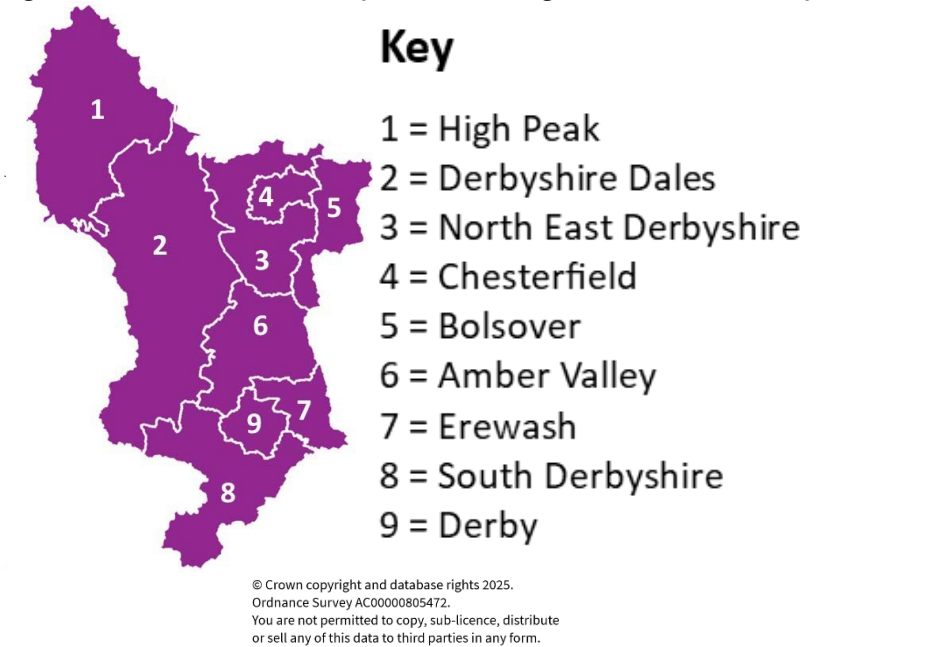
In Amber Valley this option splits both Alport & Duffield and Belper South & Holbrook divisions. Sections of both divisions in the new north and south divisions are grouped together to make a new Alport & South Belper division in the northern authority with two members and a new Duffield & Holbrook division in the southern authority with two members. While the new Duffield & Holbrook division would have -13% of the average elector ratio, it avoids making wholesale changes to the district's other divisions and is only a temporary measure.

Following these changes the northern authority would have 85 councillors while the south would have 76.

2.2.4 Option D

Option D is a single unitary option, with the entire ceremonial county of Derbyshire all placed in a single authority, merging the city and districts with the county.

Figure 10 - Option D: One unitary model showing current local authority boundaries



Although the current county divisions and city wards could be incorporated, doing so would result in either 82 councillors if single-member divisions were adopted or 164 councillors for two-member divisions. Neither option is considered ideal for the new authority.

82 Councillors is seen as being too few as each councillor would have an average of 9,903 electors, well above the current highest ratio of any unitary authority (7,328 in Northumberland). While 164 councillors is seen as too many, well above the LGBCE's guideline maximum council size of 100. The pros and cons of the variations are compared in the table below.

Table 1 - Option D comparison of Council Size variations

Seats	82	100	112	164
Wards	82	84	69	82
Ratio	9,903	8,120	7,250	4,951
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current upper tier boundaries (64 EDs + 18 Wards) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum allowed within LGBCE guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratio matches current highest unitary county (Northumberland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current upper tier boundaries (64 EDs + 18 Wards)
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost effective Meets LGBCE guidelines Simple warding arrangement process Single seat wards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost effective Meets LGBCE guidelines More single seat wards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate workload Can define ward arrangements on parishes and wards More support to establish new structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple warding arrangement process Similar to Norfolk shadow proposal (168) High support to establish new structures
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High workload Under-representation in some areas Outlier – ratio is 2,500 higher than next authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High workload Difficult to define warding arrangements evenly on parish, wards & EDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside LGBCE guidelines Increased costs of representation and support Large geographic areas to represent Higher proportion of multi-seat wards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential over-representation in smaller areas High costs of representation and support Outside LGBCE guidelines All wards are multi-seat

It is proposed that Derbyshire has a single unitary authority with a minimum council size of 112. This would give Derbyshire a ratio of 7,250

electors per councillor, bringing it within the range of existing unitary authorities. However, as previously stated it would be preferable to have a larger number of seats due to the size of the proposed unitary option.

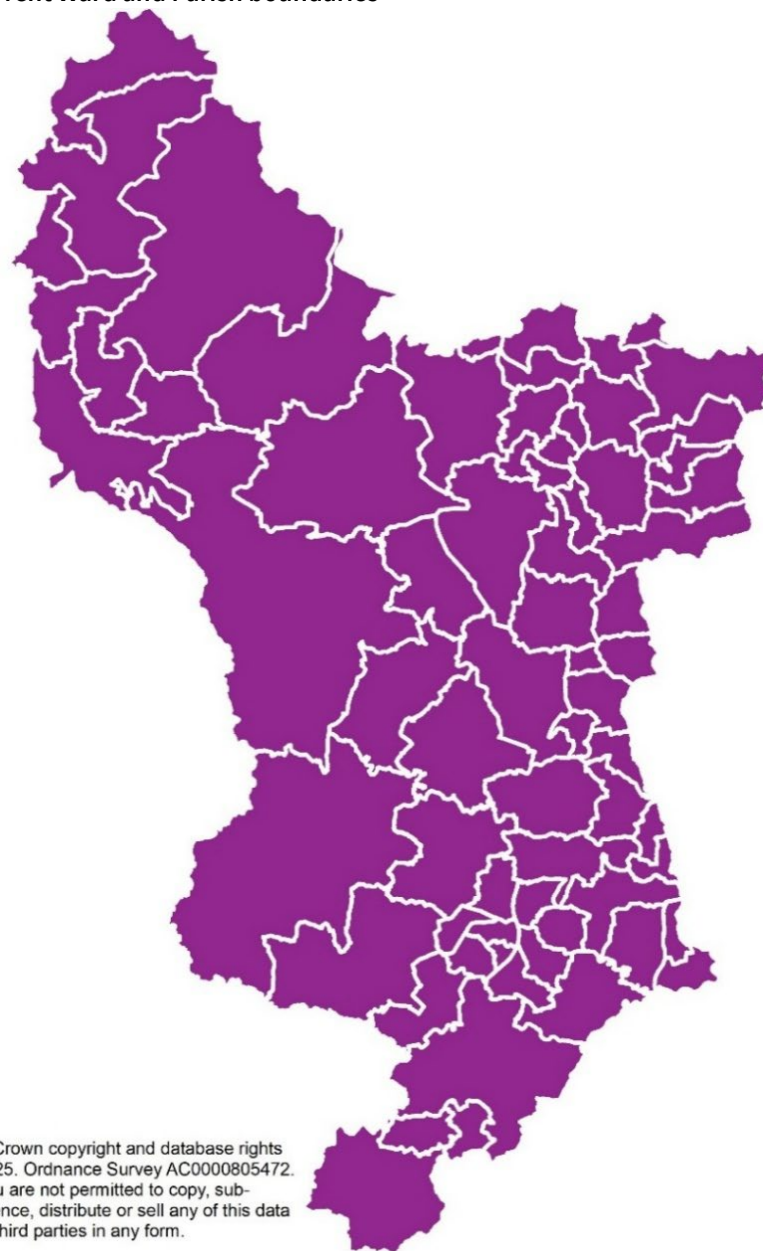
As Derbyshire's current divisions have an average of 9,826 electors, they do not fit divisions with an average of 7,250 electors meaning the county's divisions cannot be used in any new divisional arrangements. It is therefore necessary to create entirely new divisional arrangements for the county utilising the district wards and parishes as building blocks.

While every effort has been made to create a proposal with single member seats, the existing wards and parishes do not always make this possible – particularly in more urban areas such as Chesterfield, where wards are too small or large to be grouped into 7,250 electors and there are no parishes with which to split wards.

The city is slightly different, there are no building blocks smaller than the existing wards and the wards here have an average electorate of 10,176 meaning two wards combined is roughly equivalent to 3 councillors. So, for the city it is proposed that existing wards be combined to create new seats with multiple members.

It should be recognised that these are only interim recommendations and any official warding arrangements will be agreed prior to the Statutory Order being laid in Parliament in the Autumn of 2026.

Figure 11 - Option D: One unitary model proposed warding arrangements based on current Ward and Parish boundaries



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2.3 Comparison with other authorities

With all two-tier authorities transitioning to unitary status, it is useful to compare our four proposed options with others. The following analysis is based on current county unitary authorities and proposals submitted to MHCLG for the Devolution Priority Programme as of 26 September 2025.

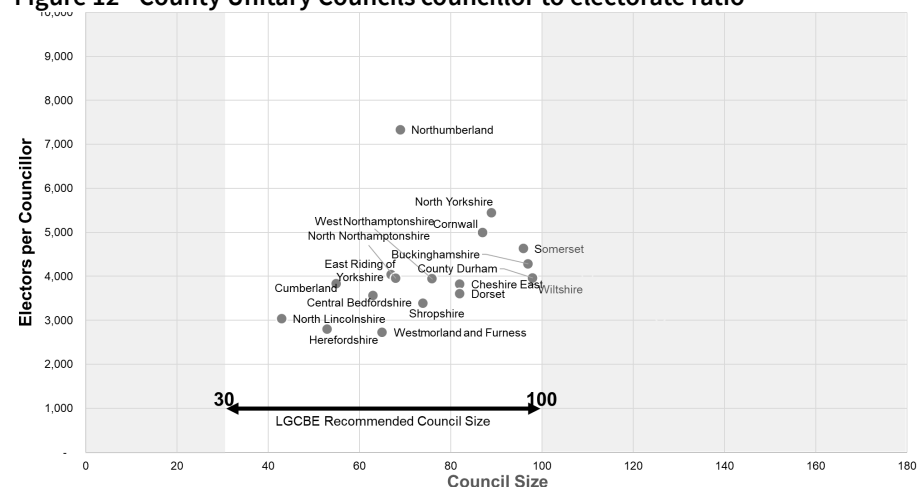
Derbyshire is geographically large but has an average population compared to other counties, as shown in the table listing counties with at least one unitary authority.

Table 2 - County Council population with unitary authorities within its administrative boundaries

County	Total	Name	2024 Pop	Type
Derbyshire	1,096,526	Derbyshire	822,377	County
		Derby	274,149	Unitary
Devon	1,254,506	Devon	842,313	County
		Plymouth	272,067	Unitary
		Torbay	140,126	Unitary
Essex	1,929,610	Essex	1,563,365	County
		Southend-on-Sea	185,256	Unitary
		Thurrock	180,989	Unitary
Hampshire	1,920,959	Hampshire	1,447,214	County
		Portsmouth	214,321	Unitary
		Southampton	259,424	Unitary
Kent	1,931,684	Kent	1,639,029	County
		Medway	292,655	Unitary
Lancashire	1,601,645	Lancashire	1,294,914	County
		Blackburn with Darwen	162,540	Unitary
		Blackpool	144,191	Unitary
Leicestershire	1,133,921	Leicestershire	745,573	County
		Leicester	388,348	Unitary
Nottinghamshire	1,188,090	Nottinghamshire	857,013	County
		Nottingham	331,077	Unitary
Staffordshire	1,177,578	Staffordshire	907,153	County
		Stoke-on-Trent	270,425	Unitary
Sussex	1,759,789	East Sussex	560,882	County
		West Sussex	915,037	County
		Brighton and Hove	283,870	Unitary

The chart below shows the current county unitaries and their electorate to council size ratio. Northumberland stands out as an outlier with an electoral ratio of 7,328 electors per each of the 69 councillors. County Durham and Wiltshire both have the largest council size of 98 seats but with an average electorate of 3,961 and 3,901 respectively. The remainder of the cluster of authorities range from a minimum of 2,715 electorate in the newly created Westmorland and Furness (65 seats) and North Yorkshire 5,414 (89 seats), in all (including Northumberland) the median electorate is 3,917 per councillor.

Figure 12 - County Unitary Councils councillor to electorate ratio



Quite a few of these authorities have recently been through a boundary review due to their recent formation and have seen quite radical changes to their council size as a result. For example, the following chart shows Northumberland reducing its number of seats from 132 to within the recommended council size range of 30 to 100 seats, increasing the electorate from the middle of the pack to its current outlier position. Only Cumberland has increased its number of seats since its Shadow authority status, rising from 46 to 55 seats, decreasing its electorate ratio from 4,569 to 3,821 per councillor.

The scatter plot displays the relationship between Council Size (X-axis, 0 to 180) and Electors per Councillor (Y-axis, 0 to 10,000). A shaded grey region at the bottom indicates the LGCBE Recommended Council Size range from 30 to 100. Data points are labeled with county names. Dashed lines represent trends for specific counties: Northumberland (blue), Somerset (purple), Cornwall (pink), County Durham (orange), and Buckinghamshire (green). The plot shows that as council size increases, the number of electors per councillor generally decreases, with Northumberland having the highest electors per councillor for its size and Northumberland Shadow having the lowest.

County	Council Size (approx.)	Electors per Councillor (approx.)
Northumberland	70	7,300
Northumberland Shadow	135	3,800
Somerset	95	4,500
Somerset Shadow	110	4,000
Cornwall	85	5,000
Cornwall <2019	125	3,500
County Durham	100	4,200
County Durham <2025	125	3,000
Buckinghamshire	150	2,800
Buckinghamshire <2025	150	2,800
North Yorkshire	85	5,500
North Yorkshire @2022	105	4,500
West Northamptonshire	65	5,200
North Northamptonshire	85	3,500
North Northamptonshire <2025	105	3,200
Cheshire East	85	3,800
Dorset	85	3,500
Wiltshire	95	3,800
Shropshire	75	3,300
Westmorland and Furness	75	2,800
Westmorland and Furness Shadow	85	2,500
Herefordshire	55	2,800
North Lincolnshire	45	3,000
Central Bedfordshire	60	3,500
East Riding of Yorkshire	55	3,800
Cumberland, Yorkshire	50	4,000
Cumberland Shadow	45	4,500

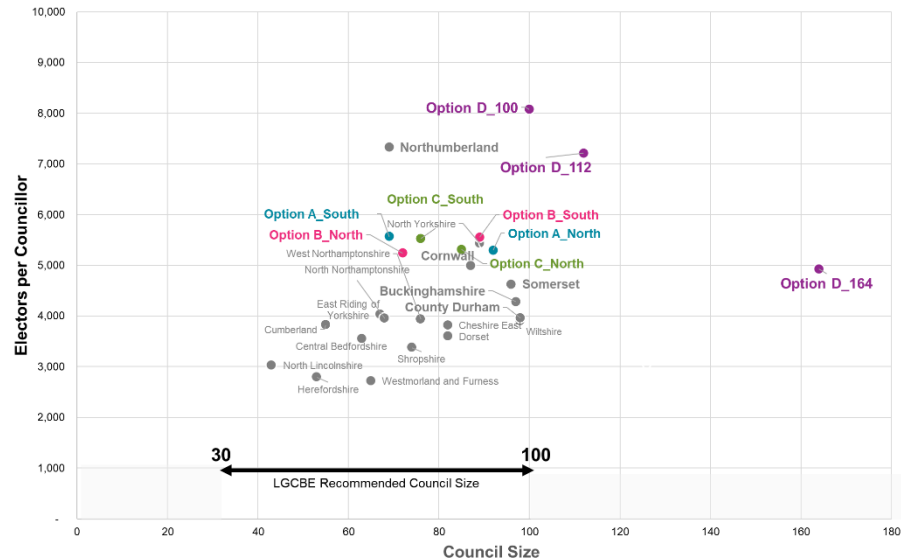
In considering the variations, a council size of 82 was dismissed early on, although it would be a simple solution in terms of warding arrangements as the average electoral division for Derbyshire and ward for Derby City are comparable, this would give an average electorate of 9,903 which, for a unitary authority would not be sufficient representation to ensure the smooth running of the Council and community leadership due to the sheer size and scale of some of the larger electoral divisions geographically.

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Figure 15 - County Unitary Councils councillor to electorate ratio inc. Options A, B ,C and D.



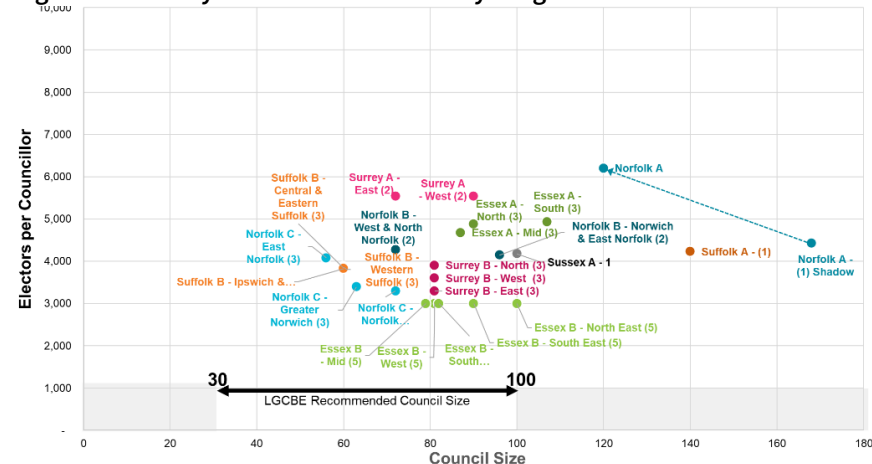
The chart above shows the placement of all the options (A to D) considered by the Council and it is clear that all options have a higher electoral ratio than other county unitaries in the main, with the exception of Northumberland and North Yorkshire.

Surrey and Devolution Priority Programme Submissions

An analysis of the submissions from the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) and Surrey has been conducted where authorities have indicated their preferred council size.

Of the three submissions for Norfolk, only the County Council (Norfolk A) has indicated its proposed Shadow authority size of 168 seats, proposing to reduce this to 120 seats at their initial boundary review. The other two submissions for Norfolk propose a total of 268 and 191 seats, far higher than the County's 168/120 option.

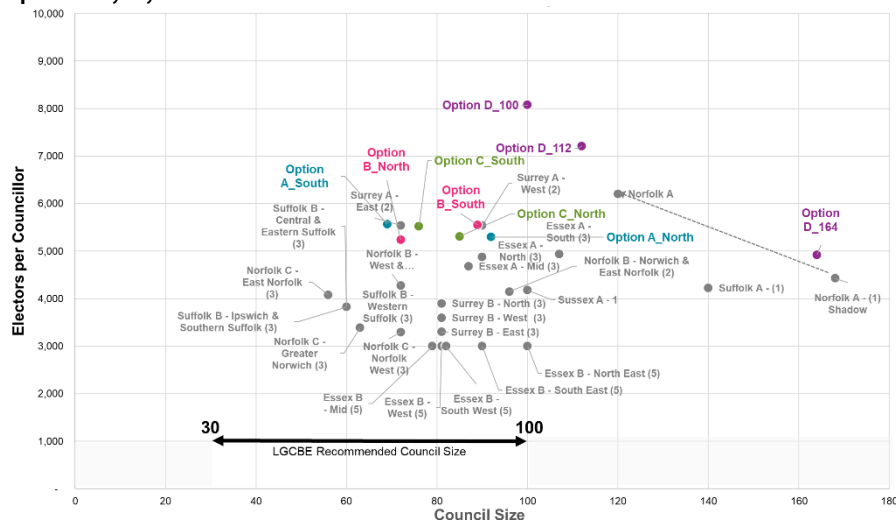
Figure 16 - Surrey and Devolution Priority Programme Submissions



There is quite a spread of single unitary council size proposals being submitted with four proposals with a council size in excess of 100 seats. However, splitting the unitaries into several smaller authorities such as the proposal from the Essex districts and boroughs would see a total of 432 councillors, far above the Greater Essex County submission of 284.

When the variations for Derbyshire's options are added to the chart (below) it is clear that Derbyshire's electoral ratio remains higher than the majority of proposals and all three variations for Option D remain an outlier with the option for 164 councillors perhaps being the standard for future council size of large single unitary authorities rather than being classed as an outlier.

Figure 17 - Surrey and Devolution Priority Programme Submissions including Options A, B ,C and D.



2.3 Preferred Option

Should Derbyshire look to fit within the LGCBE recommended range of 30 to 100 councillors, the smallest electoral ratio it could achieve would be 8,120 electors per councillor with a council size of 100 councillors. This is some way above even the highest ratio for a unitary authority, which is currently Northumberland where the ratio is 7,328 electors per councillor. It is for this reason that Derbyshire is requesting a council size of 112 councillors. This size would allow the new authority to have an elector ratio of 7,250 per councillor, keeping it within the range of existing authorities.

In order to best balance these 112 councillors, they would be best split across the existing districts, boroughs and city as follows:

Table 3 - Councillors by local authority

District	Cllr	Electorate	Ratio	Variance	Current		Proposed divisions
					wards	divisions	
Amber Valley	14	101,346	7,239	0%	18	10	9
Bolsover	9	62,990	6,999	-3%	17	6	7
Chesterfield	11	78,263	7,115	-2%	16	8	6
Derby	25	183,163	7,327	1%	18	18	9
Derbyshire Dales	8	58,922	7,365	2%	21	6	6
Erewash	12	86,177	7,181	-1%	19	9	7
High Peak	10	72,909	7,291	1%	28	8	8
North East Derbyshire	11	82,404	7,491	3%	24	8	10
South Derbyshire	12	85,871	7,156	-1%	15	9	7
Total	112	812,045	7,250		176	82	69

It is important to note that as districts have irregular numbers of wards and irregular current ratios at district level, it is not possible to create 112 uniform single member divisions/ward in Derbyshire without splitting existing wards. Where splitting existing wards has been necessary, parishes have been used. These suggested boundaries should be treated as an interim arrangement until a full boundary review is possible, with this due before the first proper election for the new authority.

All districts encounter unique challenges during the redistricting process, particularly when existing wards serve as the primary building blocks. Wards frequently represent disparate communities or divide larger ones solely to achieve electoral parity. While the use of parishes can mitigate these issues in some regions, this strategy is unavailable in most densely populated areas, leaving wards as the only means of subdivision.

The Derby unitary area existing wards currently exceed the required size ratio; therefore, combining wards to form two- and three-member seats becomes necessary. The current configuration of 18 wards does not facilitate an even distribution among the proposed 25 councillors.

Amber Valley has a sparsely populated western area encompassed by the large Alport & South West Parishes ward, this would have to be divided to create viable new divisions. Additionally, the size of wards and parishes in locations such as Swanwick, Somercotes, Ironville, and Riddings precludes the formation of single-member seats.

The geographical shape of Bolsover complicates efforts to group and split communities effectively. For instance, Shirebrook requires division into two separate electoral areas, while single-member seats cannot be established using the current ward and parish boundaries in the northern part of the district.

Chesterfield benefits from two parished areas—Brimington and Staveley—that allow for coherent seat creation. However, much of the town remains unparished, and restrictions on dividing existing wards necessitate the grouping of wards into multi-member constituencies.

Derbyshire Dales is large with a low population density in many regions, and four market towns. Although ward-based solutions have been largely feasible, selected parishes have been incorporated to better balance the electorate across divisions.

Erewash experiences population imbalances, with concentrations along the eastern border in Ilkeston, Long Eaton, and Sandiacre. The utilisation of entire wards in these areas results in the amalgamation of distinct communities.

High Peak has extensive rural moorlands and borough towns which require some communities to be grouped and others kept separate.

In North East Derbyshire, the wards of Tupton and Pilsley & Morton offer distinctive geographical characteristics. Tupton ward includes much of Wingerworth, while Pilsley & Morton brings together several communities.

South Derbyshire has not undergone a boundary review since 2010, so current wards do not reflect recent community changes following substantial residential development. Achieving electoral parity with the present ward structure entails merging distinct communities, such as Melbourne, Repton, and Stenson, and splitting off parts of Swadlincote from the remainder of the town.

This proposal should be regarded as a temporary measure, with a comprehensive boundary review to be undertaken prior to the first full election of the new authority.

Amber Valley

The County Council currently has 10 electoral divisions in Amber Valley, each with a single councillor. To balance the electorate in the district with each councillor having a ratio of around 7,250 electors the district requires **14 councillors**.

Amber Valley currently comprises 10 divisions and 18 wards. To ensure an average electorate of 7,239 per councillor for Amber Valley, **9 new divisions** are required, of which 4 are single-member divisions and the remaining 5 are two-member divisions. This approach avoids altering current wards and enhances community representation.

Table 4 - Amber Valley proposed division electorate

Code	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
A01	Alfreton	1	6,958	6,958	-4%
A02	Swanwick, Somecotes & Riddings	2	13,448	6,724	-7%
A03	Ripley East	1	7,830	7,830	8%
A04	Ripley West & Crich	2	14,404	7,202	-1%
A05	Codnor, Langley Mill & Aldercar	1	7,129	7,129	-2%
A06	Heanor & Shipley	2	14,558	7,279	0%
A07	Belper South, Kilburn & Smalley	2	14,965	7,483	3%
A08	Belper North & Alport	2	14,598	7,299	1%
A09	Duffield & South West Parishes	1	7,456	7,456	3%
Amber Valley		14	101,346	7,239	

There are several significant market towns and communities—such as Belper, Ripley, and Heanor situated across multiple wards. While it is often possible to retain these towns within a single ward, doing so typically necessitates multi-member representation.

The Alport and South West Parishes ward encompasses a substantial geographic area and includes numerous small rural communities with predominantly rural characteristics. For effective boundary management, it is necessary to divide this ward into at least three segments.

Somercotes, Ironville and Riddings, and Swanwick wards and parishes are individually too small for single-member divisions, but collectively too large to be encompassed within one single-member division. Therefore, establishing a two-member division covering all three wards represents the most practical approach.

Figure 18 - Amber Valleys proposed warding arrangements



Bolsover

The County Council currently has 6 electoral divisions in Bolsover with one councillor each but needs **9 councillors** to achieve a balance of about 7,250 electors per councillor.

Bolsover currently has 6 divisions and 17 wards. To ensure an average electorate of 6,999 per councillor for Bolsover, **7 new divisions** are required, of which 5 are single-member divisions and the remaining 2 are two-member divisions. This approach avoids altering current wards and enhances community representation.

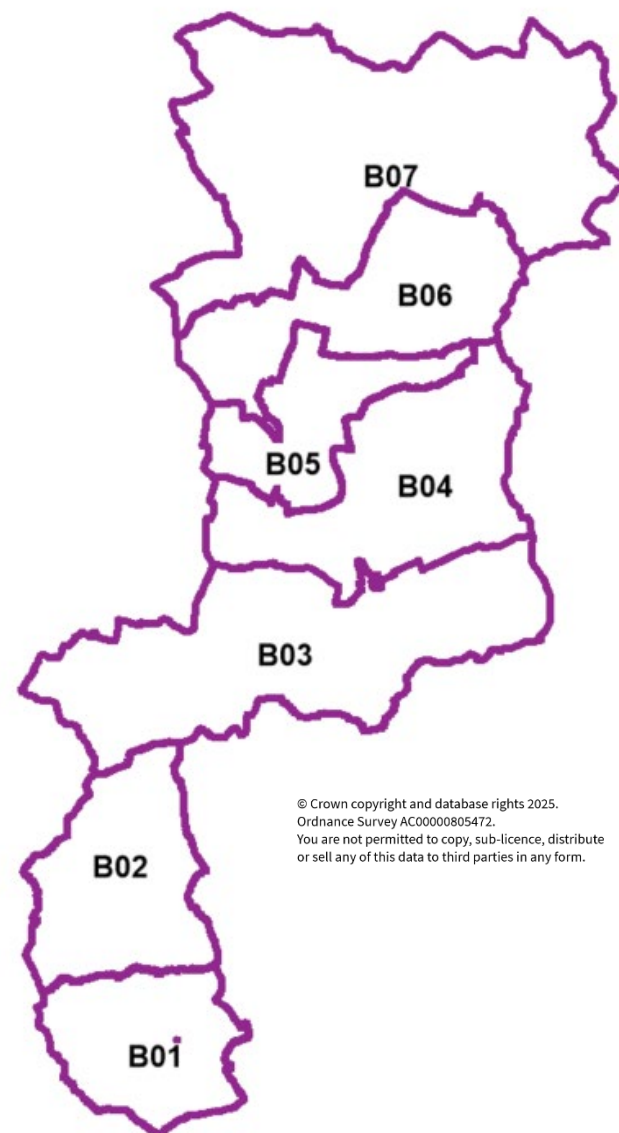
Table 5 - Bolsover proposed division electorate

Code	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
B01	South Normanton & Pinxton	2	12,348	6,174	-15%
B02	Tibshelf	1	6,615	6,615	-9%
B03	Shirebrook South, Glapwell & Pleasley	1	7,795	7,795	8%
B04	Shirebrook North, Langwith & Scarcliffe	1	7,600	7,600	5%
B05	Bolsover South	1	7,308	7,308	1%
B06	Bolsover Noth & Creswell	1	7,815	7,815	8%
B07	Barlborough, Clowne & Whitwell	2	13,509	6,755	-7%
Bolsover		9	62,990	6,999	

Bolsover's population is primarily situated in the north and south of the district, which means single-member divisions are less straightforward in areas such as South Normanton, Pinxton, Barlborough, Clowne, and Whitwell. The Shirebrook wards align well with a single division; however, this would lead to a larger rural division surrounding them.

The town of Bolsover is divided between divisions, reflecting its established pattern of being shared across multiple wards, which brings diverse representation to its residents.

Figure 19 - Bolsover proposed warding arrangements



Chesterfield

The County Council currently has 8 electoral divisions in Chesterfield, each represented by one councillor. To achieve a ratio of approximately 7,250 electors per councillor, the district requires a total of **11 councillors**.

Chesterfield currently has 8 electoral divisions and 16 wards. To ensure an average electorate of 7,115 per councillor for Chesterfield, **6 new divisions** are required, of which 2 are single-member divisions, 3 are two-member divisions with 1 three-member division for Dunstan, Linacre and Whittington. This approach avoids altering current wards and enhances community representation.

Table 6 - Chesterfield proposed division electorate

Code	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
C01	Brimington	1	6,772	6,772	-7%
C02	Staveley	2	13,470	6,735	-7%
C03	Dunstan, Linacre & Whittington	3	20,854	6,951	-4%
C04	Brampton West & Walton	2	15,233	7,617	5%
C05	Spire & Tapton	1	6,875	6,875	-5%
C06	Brampton East, Hasland & Rother	2	15,059	7,530	4%
Chesterfield		11	78,263	7,115	

Chesterfield comprises several distinct yet interconnected communities. In the east, the parishes of Brimington and Staveley have separate identities; while Brimington Parish is appropriately sized for a single-member division, Staveley is not. It is not feasible to split Staveley's three wards into two divisions, so one division with two members is proposed.

The western part of the borough is densely populated and unparished, containing communities with defined boundaries. However, no individual ward or community is large enough to form its own division, nor can any collection of wards be grouped to create a single-member division of suitable size. Pairing Spire with Tapton, separated along parish lines from Brimington South Ward, is the only viable option for a single-member division in this area.

Across the remainder of Chesterfield, wards have been merged as needed to create divisions of the appropriate size for two- or three-member divisions. Wards have been paired with neighbouring areas to maintain community identities where possible.

Figure 20 - Chesterfield proposed warding arrangements



Derby

Derby City does not have two tiers of local government, instead already having a unitary authority with 18 wards of roughly 10,000 electors each represented by multiple members. To achieve a ratio of approximately 7,250 electors per councillor the city requires a total of **25 councillors**.

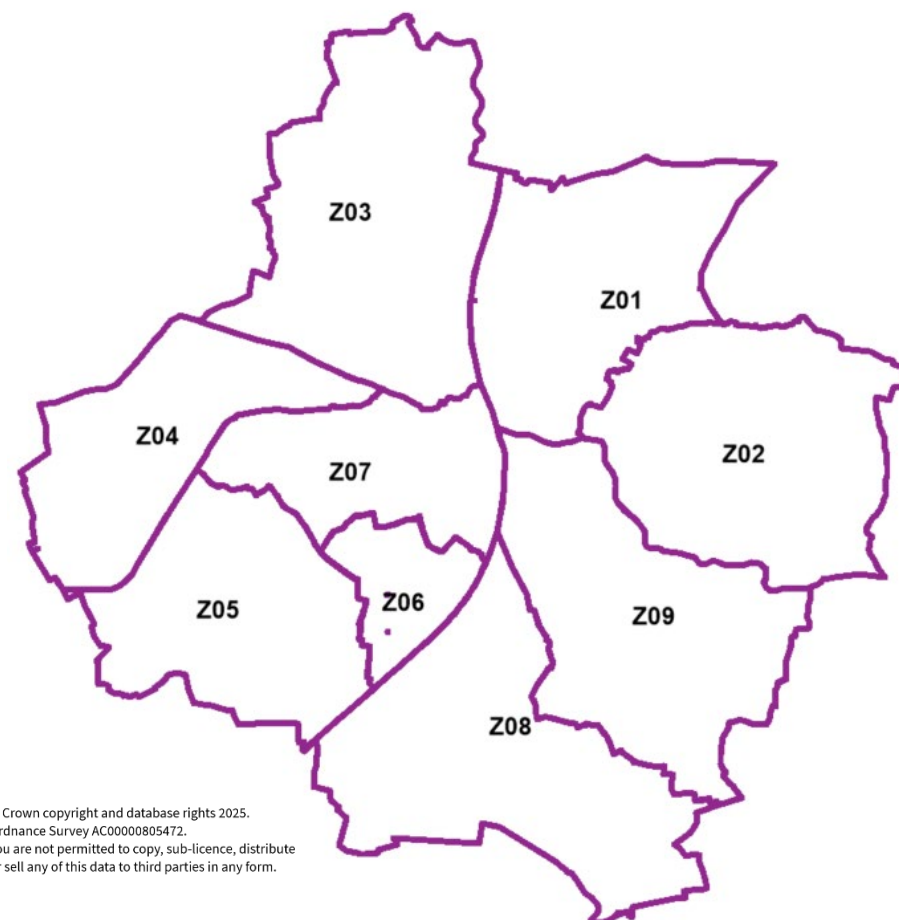
Derby City has 18 wards. To ensure an average electorate of 7,327 per councillor, **9 new divisions** are required, of which, 2 are two-member divisions and 7 are three-member divisions. As the city is not parished, only wards are available as building blocks and it has been possible to produce divisions within the LGBCE's +/-30% variance rules, but several are +/-10%. This approach avoids altering current wards and enhances community representation.

Table 7- Derby proposed division electorate

Code	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
Z01	Chaddesden North & Oakwood	3	23,684	7,895	9%
Z02	Chaddesden South & Spondon	2	16,221	8,111	12%
Z03	Allestree & Darley	3	21,583	7,194	-1%
Z04	Mackworth & Mickleover	3	22,317	7,439	3%
Z05	Blagreaves & Littleover	3	21,637	7,212	-1%
Z06	Normanton	2	12,174	6,087	-16%
Z07	Abbey & Arboretum	3	20,965	6,988	-4%
Z08	Chellaston & Sinfyn	3	22,810	7,603	5%
Z09	Alvaston	3	21,772	7,257	0%
Derby		25	183,163	7,327	

Additionally, many of Derby's distinctive communities—such as Mickleover, Spondon, and Chaddesden—are individually too large to form a single-member division of approximately 7,250 electors, yet too small to justify the creation of two- or three-member divisions. Furthermore, the electorate is not evenly distributed across the city and its wards, leading to large variances across the city; for example, the suggested Normanton division has a variance of -12%, while the Chaddesden South & Spondon division sits at +16%.

Figure 21 - Derby proposed warding arrangements



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Derbyshire Dales

The County Council currently has 6 electoral divisions in Derbyshire Dales, each with a single councillor. To balance the electorate in the district with each councillor having a ratio of around 7,250 electors the district requires **8 councillors**.

Derbyshire Dales currently has 6 divisions and 21 wards. To ensure an average electorate of 7,365 per councillor, **6 new divisions** are required, of which 4 are single-member divisions and 2 are two-member divisions. This approach avoids altering current wards and enhances community representation.

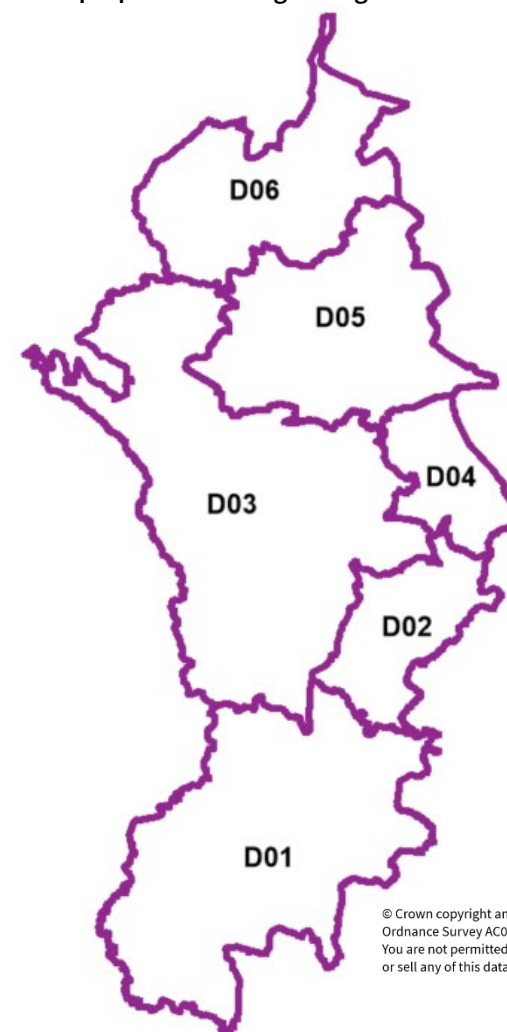
Table 8 - Derbyshire Dales proposed division electorate

Code	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
D01	Ashbourne	2	15,561	7,781	7%
D02	Wirksworth	1	7,490	7,490	3%
D03	Dovedale, Youlgrave & Bonsall	1	7,238	7,238	0%
D04	Matlock & Darley Dale	2	14,470	7,235	0%
D05	Bakewell	1	7,134	7,134	-2%
D06	Hathersage & Tideswell	1	7,029	7,029	-3%
Derbyshire Dales		8	58,922	7,365	

The Derbyshire Dales area presents unique opportunities due to its distinctive size and rural character. These features encourage creative approaches to establishing divisions that respect existing ward and parish boundaries. The four market towns are spread across the district, providing vibrant centres that balance the more tranquil rural surroundings. For instance, Ashbourne's position near the centre of the district enables it to serve as a hub for the southern rural area, making it logical and beneficial to combine these communities into a cohesive two-member division. In Matlock, the strong population base allows

flexibility—either by maintaining the town as a whole or by merging Matlock with Darley Dale to form a two-member division, both of which ensure effective representation. Meanwhile, the north-western part of the county, with its low-density population and absence of market towns, offers the chance to create a broad, community-focused division that brings together areas such as Dovedale, Youlgrave, and Bonsall.

Figure 22 - Derbyshire Dales proposed warding arrangements



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Erewash

The County Council currently has 9 electoral divisions in Erewash, each with a single councillor. In order to balance the electorate in the district with each councillor having a ratio of around 7,250 electors the district requires **12 councillors**.

Erewash currently has 9 divisions and 19 wards. To create 12 single member wards/divisions without splitting existing wards is not possible, therefore it is suggested that **7 divisions be created** containing 4 multi-seat wards, to avoid the need to split existing wards and to better represent communities.

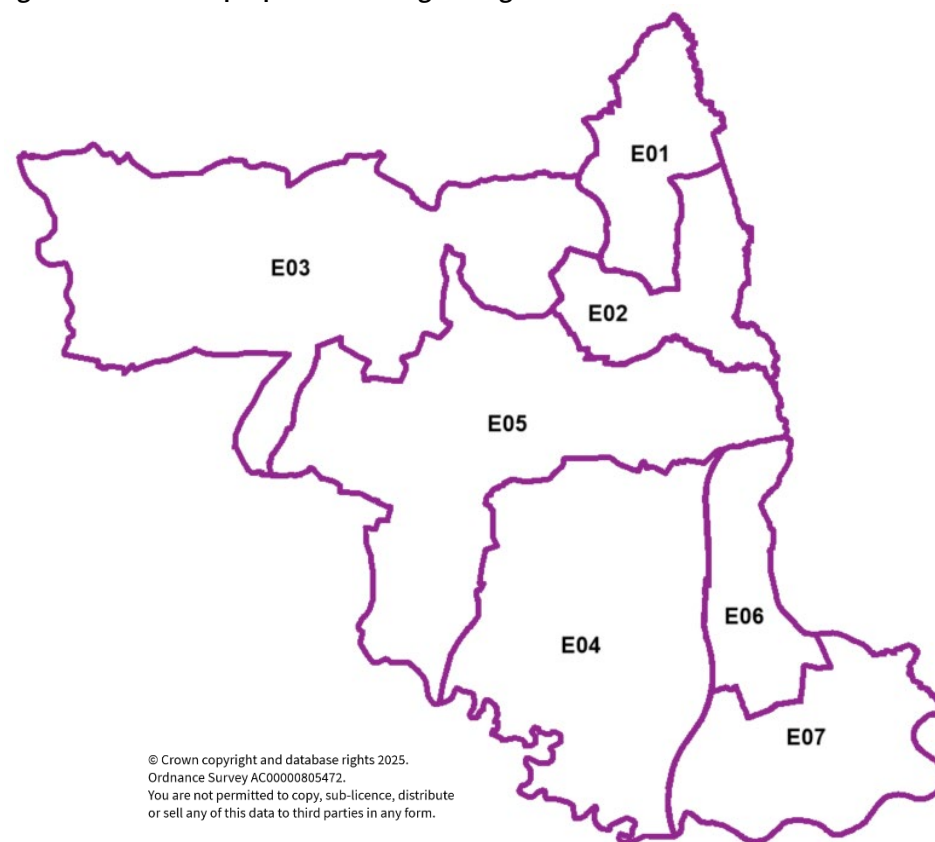
Table 9 - Erewash proposed division electorate

Code	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
E01	Ilkeston North	2	14,554	7,277	0%
E02	Ilkeston South	2	14,862	7,431	2%
E03	Breadsall & West Hallam	1	8,268	8,268	14%
E04	Breaston	1	6,862	6,862	-5%
E05	Ockbrook & Staton	1	6,207	6,207	-14%
E06	Sandiacre & Long Eaton North	2	15,209	7,605	5%
E07	Sawley & Long Eaton South	3	20,215	6,738	-7%
Erewash		12	86,177	7,181	

Erewash, like the majority of Derbyshire, has an uneven population distribution, with most residents located along the eastern border in areas such as Ilkeston, Sandiacre, and Long Eaton. Ilkeston and Kirk Hallam together account for four councillors; however, the current ward boundaries do not permit single-member divisions, resulting in the formation of two two-member divisions. Sandiacre, with approximately

6,000 electors, is not large enough for its own division and too populous to be paired with a neighbouring ward for a single-member division, so it is combined with the Derby Road wards from Long Eaton into a two-member division. Long Eaton and Sawley have populations supporting three councillors, yet existing boundaries do not allow single-member divisions. In the rural west, single-member divisions are feasible but require grouping communities such as Ockbrook and Borrowash with Stanton, or alternatively creating a larger two-member division that would encompass diverse areas.

Figure 23 - Erewash proposed warding arrangements



High Peak

The County Council currently has 8 electoral divisions in High Peak, each with a single councillor. In order to balance the electorate in the district with each councillor having a ratio of around 7,250 electors the district requires **10 councillors**.

High Peak currently has 8 divisions and 28 wards. Given the electoral size of the existing wards/divisions it is suggested that **8 new divisions** be created using a combination of ward and parish boundaries creating 2 two-member divisions and 6 one-member divisions to provide an average of 7,291 electorate per councillor.

Table 10 - High Peak proposed division electorate

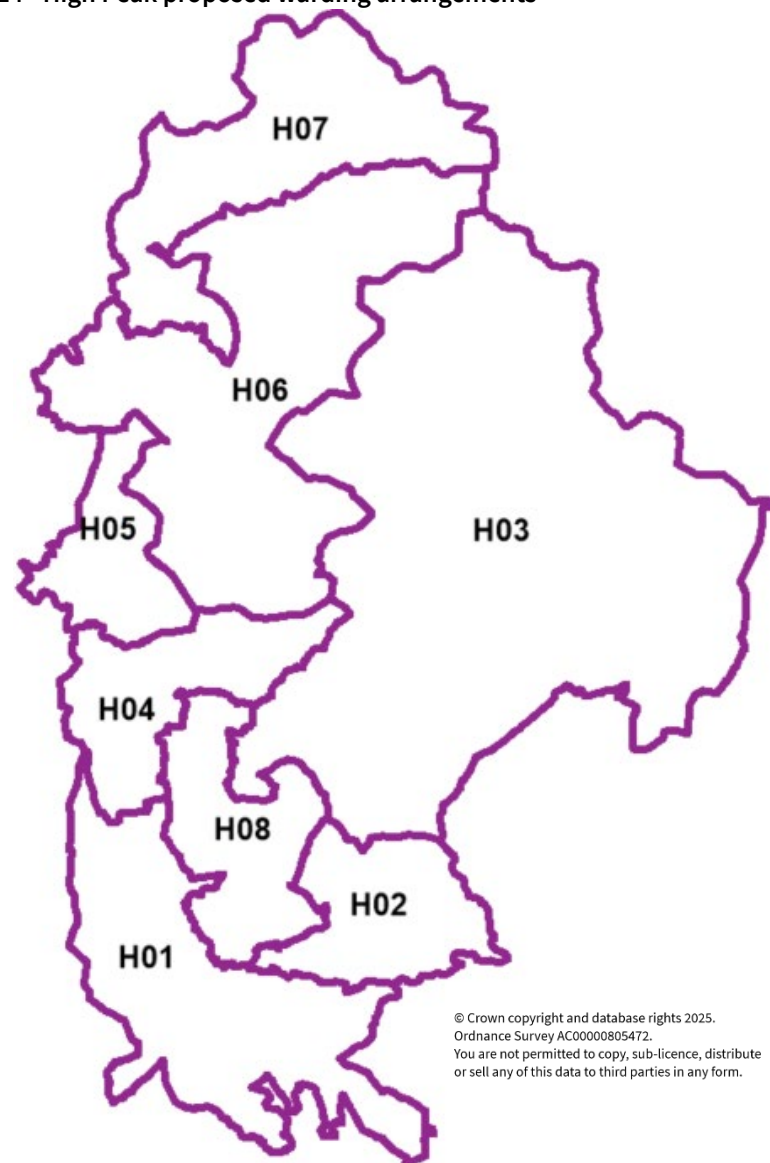
Code	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
H01	Buxton South West	1	7,190	7,190	-1%
H02	Buxton Central	1	7,010	7,010	-3%
H03	Chapel & Hope Valley	1	8,531	8,531	18%
H04	Whaley Bridge	1	7,445	7,445	3%
H05	New Mills	1	7,465	7,465	3%
H06	Glossop South & Hayfield	2	14,288	7,144	-1%
H07	Glossop North & Etherow	2	14,176	7,088	-2%
H08	Buxton North & Blackbrook	1	6,804	6,804	-6%
High Peak		10	72,909	7,291	

High Peak has an uneven population distribution—with most residents living in Glossop and Buxton. Glossop and its neighbouring parishes are too populous for three representatives but not enough for four, leading to Hayfield parish's inclusion to form two two-member divisions.

New Mills fits as a single-member division, while Whaley Bridge is combined with nearby parishes and requires Blackbrook ward to be split. Buxton's population also falls between the ideal sizes for two or

three members, resulting in Barms and Corbar wards being joined with part of Chapel parish to create an awkwardly shaped, single-member division lacking community cohesion.

Figure 24 - High Peak proposed warding arrangements



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North East Derbyshire

The County Council currently has eight – single member electoral divisions in North East Derbyshire. To balance the electorate in the district with each councillor having a ratio of around 7,250 electors the district requires **11 councillors**.

North East Derbyshire has 8 divisions and 24 wards. Given the electoral size of the existing wards/divisions it is suggested that **10 new divisions** be created using a combination of ward and parish boundaries creating 1 two-member divisions and 9 single-member divisions to provide an average of 7,491 electorate per councillor.

Table 11 - North East Derbyshire proposed division electorate

Cod e	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
N01	Killamarsh	1	7,018	7,018	-3%
N02	Eckington	1	7,604	7,604	5%
N03	Dronfield North	1	7,247	7,247	0%
N04	Dronfield Woodhouse & Unstone	1	7,676	7,676	6%
N05	Gosforth, Barlow & Brampton	1	7,144	7,144	-1%
N06	Ashover & Wingerworth	1	7,909	7,909	9%
N07	Holmewood & Sutton	1	6,957	6,957	-4%
N08	Grassmoor & North Wingfield	1	8,147	8,147	12%
N09	Clay Cross, Pilsley & Tupton	2	16,036	8,018	11%
N10	Shirland	1	6,666	6,666	-8%
North East Derbyshire		11	82,404	7,491	

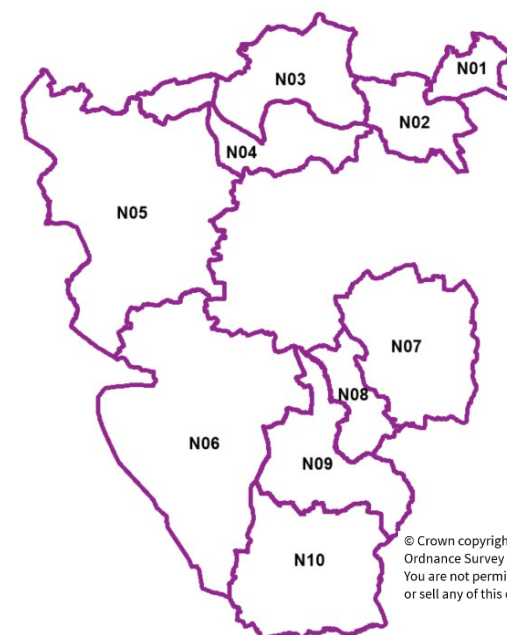
The configuration of electoral divisions in North East Derbyshire involves several distinct arrangements. In the north, Killamarsh and Eckington each form single-member divisions of appropriate size.

Dronfield is divided into three areas: the north ward combines with Coal Aston and Ridgeway and Marsh Lane wards; the south ward, Woodhouse ward, and Unstone together form another division; and Gosforth Valley merges with Barlow and Holmesfield ward, along with the parish of Brampton.

Walton and Holymoorside parish is grouped with Wingerworth ward and Ashover ward to create another single-member division. Tupton Ward remains separate and is paired with the two Clay Cross wards and the parish of Pilsley to establish a two-member division, as the size of the Clay Cross wards does not support single-member constituencies.

Grassmoor and North Wingfield are combined to create one division, while Sutton and Holmewood & Heath wards are similarly grouped. In the south of the district, Shirland ward is joined with Morton and Stretton parishes to form a single-member division based on geographic proximity.

Figure 25 - North East Derbyshire proposed warding arrangements



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South Derbyshire

The County Council currently has nine single-member electoral divisions in South Derbyshire. To balance the electorate in the district with each councillor having a ratio of around 7,250 electors the district requires **12 councillors**.

South Derbyshire presently comprises 9 divisions and 15 wards. It is recommended that **7 new divisions** are created, comprising of 4 multi-member divisions and 3 single-member divisions to make up the 12 seats required to give an average electorate of 7,156 per councillor to maintain ward integrity and more effectively represent local communities.

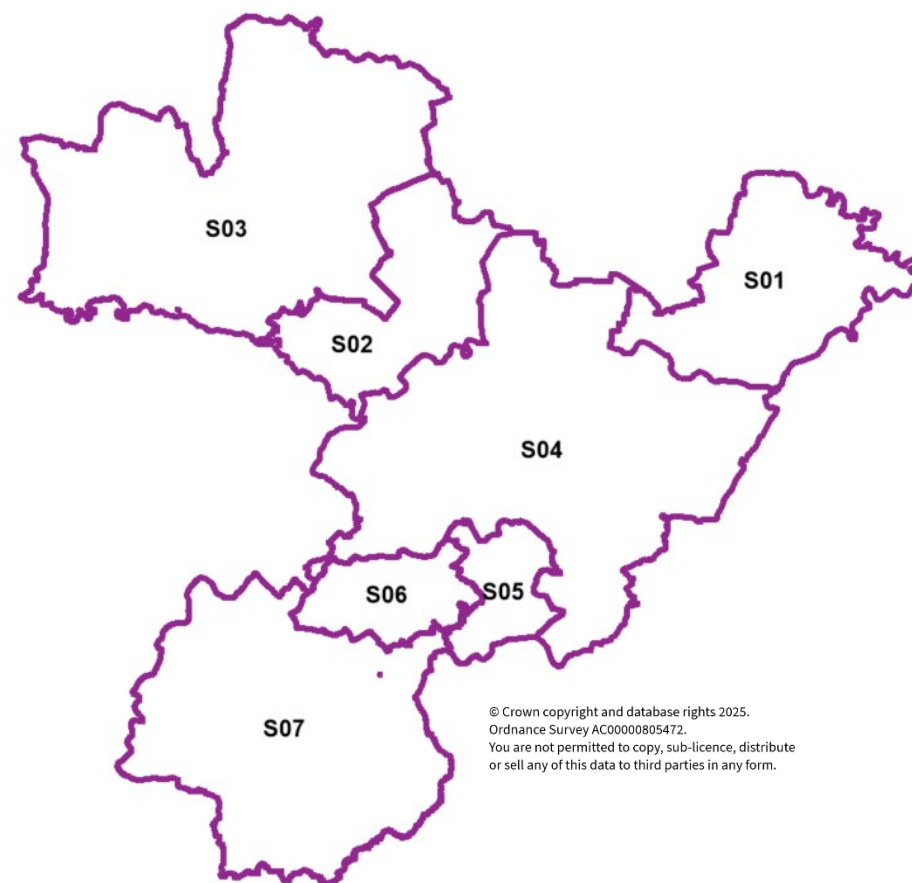
Table 12 - South Derbyshire proposed division electorate

Code	Name	Cllrs	Total Electorate	Ratio	Variance
S01	Aston	1	7,453	7,453	3%
S02	Willington & Findern	1	7,403	7,403	2%
S03	Etwall & Hilton	2	15,128	7,564	4%
S04	Melbourne, Repton & Stenson	2	13,266	6,633	-9%
S05	Woodville	1	6,995	6,995	-4%
S06	Swadlincote	3	19,555	6,518	-10%
S07	Linton & Gresley	2	16,071	8,036	11%
South Derbyshire		12	85,871	7,156	

To create the seven divisions: the large Aston ward requires transferring Barrow-upon-Trent to maintain manageable division sizes. Hilton parish's size necessitates a two-member division for Etwall & Hilton, while Willington & Findern ward, with Burnaston and Egginton parishes,

forms a suitable single-member division. In contrast, communities like Melbourne, Repton, and Stenson are merged leading to a proposed two-member division. Linton and Seales wards are paired with Church Gresley to form another two-member division, while Woodville fits as a single-member division, leaving the rest of Swadlincote as a three-member division. These scenarios highlight the complexities of achieving fair representation within the district.

Figure 26 - South Derbyshire proposed warding arrangements



Conclusion

The proposed reorganisation of local government in Derbyshire marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of local democracy, representation, and efficiency. Through careful analysis and extensive stakeholder engagement, this report has demonstrated both the necessity and the opportunity for establishing a new, single unitary authority, supported by a council size that strikes a pragmatic balance between effective strategic leadership and meaningful community engagement.

The preferred option of a 112-member council, while slightly exceeding the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's recommended range, is justified by Derbyshire's unique demographic and geographic profile. This size ensures a more equitable ratio of electors to councillors, addresses concerns about workload and representation, and provides the flexibility needed to accommodate both rural and urban communities. It also allows for the creation of robust governance structures, including a leader and executive committee model, streamlined committees, and area-based planning and neighbourhood governance, all of which are designed to enhance local accountability and empower local voices.

Stakeholder and resident feedback has underscored the need for transparent, responsive, and simplified democratic arrangements. The proposed model responds directly to these priorities, reducing duplication, aligning with national policy developments such as the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, and laying the groundwork for future adaptation as legislation evolves. The continuation and strengthening of Town and Parish Councils, alongside the establishment of area committees and charter trustees, will ensure that local heritage and civic identity are preserved during transition, while also supporting more inclusive and participatory local governance.

In summary, Derbyshire's proposal offers a forward-thinking blueprint for local democracy. It respects existing community structures, promotes efficiency, and prepares the county for the challenges and opportunities of a changing local government landscape. By adopting a council size and governance model tailored to Derbyshire's needs, the new unitary authority will be well placed to deliver strategic leadership, robust accountability, and a stronger local voice for all its residents.

Appendix 5a: Voting and elections

Voting patterns and behaviours

The table below shows voter turnout in recent elections locally, illustrating the lowest turnout of 26.7% in Bolsover and the highest of 40.5% in Derbyshire Dales. There is a range of levels, but generally the Electoral Commission expects local election turn out to be relatively low. As shown, elections also operate on different cycles, compounding confusion and meaning that the costs and necessity to provide the electorate with appropriate and timely information must be provided multiple times.

Table 13 - Voter turnout in recent local elections

Election Year/ Council	Type	Turnout (%)
2023		
Amber Valley	Borough	35.8
Bolsover	District	26.7
Chesterfield	Borough	31.9
Derby City	City Unitary	32.8
Derbyshire Dales	District	40.5
Erewash	Borough	33.7
High Peak	Borough	39.5
South Derbyshire	District	28.7
2024		
EMCCA Mayoral Election	Combined County	28.0
2025		
Derbyshire	County	36.0

Source: Electoral Commission, 2025

The current election system causes duplication of effort (and subsequent workload) for those Councillors who wear dual hats. 18 of the current 64 County Councillors, for instance, are also District/ Borough and/ or City Councillors.

After a low turnout at the 2024 parliamentary general election, the May 2025 local elections also recorded a low level of participation. Nationally, the most common reasons people say they didn't vote are; too busy/ busy at work (19%), away on election day (11%), not interested in politics/ fed up with politics (10%). Of those people who were not confident about the running of the polls, commons reasons for their lack of confidence included a **lack of information** about the candidates/ parties, **negative views** of the voting system and the **complication** of voting.

Electoral Commission research suggests that people are more likely to take part in elections if they **feel confident** and have **enough information**. Creating the single unitary council provides a significant opportunity to streamline election arrangements, which will;

- reduce the costs of running **multiple elections** across two tiers,
- increase the **resilience** of electoral administrative teams and staffing
- reduce the costs and reporting difficulties of **booking polling venues** and any associated **'on the day' support** (including candidate discrimination and harassment, which is on the rise)
- assist in providing more effective and coherent information.

Elections to the new council

This proposal has prioritised creating a practical solution for council size, to enable effective shadow council elections to take place in 2027. The LGBCE has indicated that no boundary or electoral review will take place until after the new authorities are in place, so there are no significant changes envisaged in this respect prior to vesting day. We will work with MHCLG and LGBCE representatives to implement appropriate joint committees in the interim period, to ensure the timely delivery of efficient and effective shadow authority elections. As there are also local council elections scheduled to take place in 2027, this will be factored into the roadmap regarding electoral planning.

Appendix 5b: Indicative warding arrangements for 112 seats

There are 69 proposed divisions, each with one to three seats based on current ward and parish boundaries. Ward names displayed in *purple italics* indicate that the wards has been split, with Parish boundaries applied accordingly. Additionally, the variance has been highlighted in pink where the councillor to electorate ratio differs by +/-10% from the Derbyshire average.

	Code	Name	Total Electorate	Hectares	Seats	Electorate/ Councillor	Variance	Wards	Parishes
Amber Valley	A01	Alfreton	6,958	456	1	6,958	-4%	Alfreton	
	A02	Swanwick, Somercotes & Riddings	13,448	1,682	2	6,724	-7%	Ironville & Riddings	
								Somercotes	
								Swanwick	
	A03	Ripley East	7,830	660	1	7,830	8%	Ripley	
	A04	Ripley West & Crich	14,404	5,530	2	7,202	-1%	Alport & South West Parishes	Dethick, Lea & Holloway
								Crich & South Wingfield	
								Heage & Ambergate	
								Ripley & Marehay	
	A05	Codnor, Langley Mill & Aldercar	7,129	1,117	1	7,129	-2%	Codnor, Langley Mill & Aldercar	
	A06	Heanor & Shipley	14,558	1,779	2	7,279	0%	Heanor East	
								Heanor West & Loscoe	
								Smalley, Shipley & Horsley Woodhouse	Shipley, Mapperley
	A07	Belper South, Kilburn & Smalley	14,965	3,860	2	7,483	3%	Belper South	
								Kilburn, Denby, Holbrook & Horsley	
								Smalley, Shipley & Horsley Woodhouse	Smalley, Horsley Woodhouse
	A08	Belper North & Alport	14,598	5,844	2	7,299	1%	Alport & South West Parishes	Alderwsley, Ashleyhay, Shottle & Postern, Hazelwood, Turnditch, Idridgehay & Alton

	Code	Name	Total Electorate	Hectares	Seats	Electorate/ Councillor	Variance	Wards	Parishes
	A09	Duffield & South West Parishes	7,456	5,529	1	7,456	3%	Belper East	
								Belper North	
								Alport & South West Parishes	Kirk Langley, Mackworth, Kedleston, Ravensdale Park, Weston Underwood, Windley
								Duffield & Quarndon	
Bolsover	B01	South Normanton & Pinxton	12,348	1,314	2	6,174	-15%	Pinxton	
								South Normanton East	
								South Normanton West	
	B02	Tibshelf	6,615	1,656	1	6,615	-9%	Blackwell	
								Tibshelf	
	B03	Shirebrook South, Glapwell & Pleasley	7,795	3,267	1	7,795	8%	Ault Hucknall	Ault Hucknall, Glapwell, Pleasley
								Shirebrook South	
	B04	Shirebrook North, Langwith & Scarcliffe	7,600	2,221	1	7,600	5%	Ault Hucknall	Scarcliffe
								Langwith	
								Shirebrook North	
	B05	Bolsover South	7,308	1,109	1	7,308	1%	Bolsover East	
								Bolsover South	
	B06	Bolsover Noth & Creswell	7,815	1,881	1	7,815	8%	Bolsover North & Shuttlewood	
								Elmton-with-Creswell	Elmton-with-Creswell
	B07	Barlborough, Clowne & Whitwell	13,509	4,534	2	6,755	-7%	Barlborough	
								Clowne East	
								Clowne West	
								Elmton-with-Creswell	Hodthorpe & Belph
								Whitwell	

	Code	Name	Total Electorate	Hectares	Seats	Electorate/ Councillor	Variance	Wards	Parishes
Chesterfield	C01	Brimington	6,772	532	1	6,772	-7%	Brimington North	Brimington
								Brimington South	Brimington
	C02	Staveley	13,470	2,552	2	6,735	-7%	Staveley Central	Staveley
								Staveley North	Staveley
								Staveley South	Staveley
	C03	Dunston, Linacre & Whittington	20,854	1,686	3	6,951	-4%	Brimington North	CA3 (unparished)
								Dunston	
								Linacre	
								Whittington	
	C04	Brampton West & Walton	15,233	623	2	7,617	5%	Whittington Moor	
								Brampton West & Loundsley Green	
								Brockwell	
	C05	Spire & Tapton	6,875	583	1	6,875	-5%	Walton	
								Brimington South	Tapton (unparished)
	C06	Brampton East, Hasland & Rother	15,059	604	2	7,530	4%	Spire	
								Brampton East & Boythorpe	
								Hasland	
Derby	Z01	Chaddesden North & Oakwood	23,684	892	3	7,895	9%	Rother	
								Chaddesden North	
								Chaddesden West	
	Z02	Chaddesden South & Spondon	16,221	1,086	2	8,111	12%	Oakwood	
								Chaddesden East	
	Z03	Allestree & Darley	21,583	1,199	3	7,194	-1%	Spondon	
								Allestree	
	Z04	Mackworth & Mickleover	22,317	724	3	7,439	3%	Darley	
								Mackworth & New Zealand	
								Mickleover	

	Code	Name	Total Electorate	Hectares	Seats	Electorate/ Councillor	Variance	Wards	Parishes
	Z05	Blagreaves & Littleover	21,637	837	3	7,212	-1%	Blagreaves Littleover	
	Z06	Normanton	12,174	249	2	6,087	-16%	Normanton	
	Z07	Abbey & Arboretum	20,965	578	3	6,988	-4%	Abbey Arboretum	
	Z08	Chellaston & Sinfen	22,810	1,146	3	7,603	5%	Chellaston & Shelton Lock Sinfen & Osmaston	
	Z09	Alvaston	21,772	1,066	3	7,257	0%	Alvaston North Alvaston South	
Derbyshire Dales	D01	Ashbourne	15,561	20,564	2	7,781	7%	Ashbourne North	
								Ashbourne South	
								Brailsford	
								Doveridge & Sudbury	
								Hulland	Hulland, Hulland Ward
								Norbury	
	D02	Wirskworth	7,490	5,719	1	7,490	3%	Cromford & Matlock Bath	
								Hulland	Biggin, Hognaston, Kirk Ireton
								Wirksworth	
	D03	Dovedale, Youlgrave & Bonsall	7,238	25,352	1	7,238	0%	Bonsall & Winster	
								Dovedale, Parwich & Brassington	
								Hartington & Taddington	
								Youlgrave	
	D04	Matlock & Darley Dale	14,470	4,137	2	7,235	0%	Darley Dale	
								Matlock East & Tansley	
								Matlock West	
	D05	Bakewell	7,134	12,704	1	7,134	-2%	Bakewell	
								Calver & Longstone	

	Code	Name	Total Electorate	Hectares	Seats	Electorate/ Councillor	Variance	Wards	Parishes
	D06	Hathersage & Tideswell	7,029	10,800	1	7,029	-3%	Chatsworth	
								Bradwell	
								Hathersage	
								Tideswell	
Erewash	E01	Ilkeston North	14,554	695	2	7,277	0%	Awsworth Road	
								Cotmanhay	
								Little Hallam	
								Shipley View	
	E02	Ilkeston South	14,862	697	2	7,431	2%	Hallam Fields	
								Kirk Hallam & Stanton-by-Dale	Kirk Hallam (Ilkeston - Unparished)
								Larklands	
	E03	Breadsall & West Hallam	8,268	2,958	1	8,268	14%	Little Eaton & Stanley	
								West Hallam & Dale Abbey	Wet Hallam Parish
	E04	Breaston	6,862	2,265	1	6,862	-5%	Breaston	
								Draycott & Risley	
	E05	Ockbrook & Staton	6,207	2,574	1	6,207	-14%	Kirk Hallam & Stanton-by-Dale	Stanton-by-Dale
								Ockbrook & Borrowash	
								West Hallam & Dale Abbey	Dale Abbey
	E06	Sandiacre & Long Eaton North	15,209	624	2	7,605	5%	Derby Road East	
								Derby Road West	
								Sandiacre	
	E07	Sawley & Long Eaton South	20,215	1,113	3	6,738	-7%	Long Eaton Central	
								Nottingham Road	
								Sawley	
								Wilsthorne	

	Code	Name	Total Electorate	Hectares	Seats	Electorate/ Councillor	Variance	Wards	Parishes
High Peak	H01	Buxton South West	7,190	6,405	1	7,190	-1%	Burbage	
								Cote Heath	
								Temple	
	H02	Buxton Central	7,010	2,790	1	7,010	-3%	Buxton Central	
								Limestone Peak	Wormhill, Green Fairfield
								Stone Bench	
	H03	Chapel & Hope Valley	8,531	20,629	1	8,531	18%	Chapel East	
								Chapel West	
								Hope Valley	
	H04	Whaley Bridge	7,445	3,075	1	7,445	3%	Blackbrook	Chinley, Buxworth and Brownside
								Whaley Bridge	
	H05	New Mills	7,465	2,098	1	7,465	3%	New Mills East	
								New Mills West	
								Sett	New Mills
	H06	Glossop South & Hayfield	14,288	10,140	2	7,144	-1%	Gamesley	
								Hayfield	
								Howard Town	
								Sett	Hayfield
								Simmondley	
								St John's	
								Whitfield	
	H07	Glossop North & Etherow	14,176	5,612	2	7,088	-2%	Dinting	
								Hadfield North	
								Hadfield South	
								Old Glossop	
								Padfield	
								Tintwistle	

	Code	Name	Total Electorate	Hectares	Seats	Electorate/ Councillor	Variance	Wards	Parishes
	H08	Buxton North & Blackbrook	6,804	3,097	1	6,804	-6%	Barms Corbar Blackbrook Limestone Peak	Chapel Chapel
North East Derbyshire	N01	Killamarsh	7,018	627	1	7,018	-3%	Killamarsh East Killamarsh West	
	N02	Eckington	7,604	1,204	1	7,604	5%	Eckington North Eckington South & Renishaw	
	N03	Dronfield North	7,247	2,014	1	7,247	0%	Coal Aston Dronfield North Ridgeway & Marsh Lane	
	N04	Dronfield Woodhouse & Unstone	7,676	1,730	1	7,676	6%	Dronfield South Dronfield Woodhouse Unstone	
	N05	Gosforth, Barlow & Brampton	7,144	6,291	1	7,144	-1%	Barlow & Holmesfield Brampton & Walton Gosforth Valley	Brampton
	N06	Ashover & Wingerworth	7,909	6,347	1	7,909	9%	Ashover Brampton & Walton Wingerworth	Holymoorside & Walton
	N07	Holmewood & Sutton	6,957	2,941	1	6,957	-4%	Holmewood & Heath Sutton	
	N08	Grassmoor & North Wingfield	8,147	939	1	8,147	12%	Grassmoor North Wingfield Central	
	N09	Clay Cross, Pilsley & Tupton	16,036	2,175	2	8,018	11%	Clay Cross North Clay Cross South Pilsley & Morton Tupton	Pilsley
	N10	Shirland	6,666	3,208	1	6,666	-8%	Pilsley & Morton	Stretton, Morton

	Code	Name	Total Electorate	Hectares	Seats	Electorate/ Councillor	Variance	Wards	Parishes
								Shirland	
South Derbyshire	S01	Aston	7,453	3,500	1	7,453	3%	Aston	All but Barrow-Up-on-Trent
	S02	Willington & Findern	7,403	2,734	1	7,403	2%	Etwall	Egginton, Burnaston
								Willington and Findern	
	S03	Etwall & Hilton	15,128	8,641	2	7,564	4%	Etwall	All but Egginton & Burnaston
								Hatton	
								Hilton	
	S04	Melbourne, Repton & Stenson	13,266	9,650	2	6,633	-9%	Aston	Barrow-Up-on-Trent
								Melbourne	
								Repton	
								Stenson	
	S05	Woodville	6,995	1,073	1	6,995	-4%	Woodville	
	S06	Swadlincote	19,555	1,307	3	6,518	-10%	Midway	
								Newhall and Stanton	
								Swadlincote	
	S07	Linton & Gresley	16,071	6,804	2	8,036	11%	Church Gresley	
Linton									
Seales									
Total			812,045	262,026	112	7,250			

Table 14 - Indicative warding arrangements for 112 seats



Derbyshire County Council
County Hall
Smedley Street
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3AG

Version 1.2: 27 November 2025