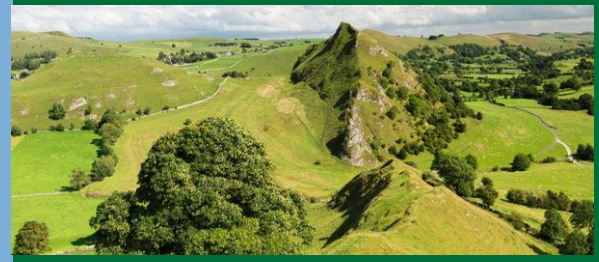
Derbyshire District & Borough Councils and Derby City Council

Interim proposal for local government reorganisation



March 2025

Purpose of this document

Audience: Derbyshire District and Borough Councils and Derby City Council

Purpose

This document has been developed in response to the Minister of State's request for initial proposals for Local Government Reorganisation. It describes the Derbyshire District and Borough Councils' and Derby City Council's outline proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Derbyshire.

This proposal document aims to:

- Describe the two options to be proposed by Councils.
- Provide interim responses to each of the 6 criteria laid out in the schedule included with the Minister's letter.

Next steps

Following submission of the interim proposal it is expected that this document will form the starting point for further analysis and engagement with local communities, business, partners and key stakeholders.

Derbyshire District & Borough Councils and Derby City Council

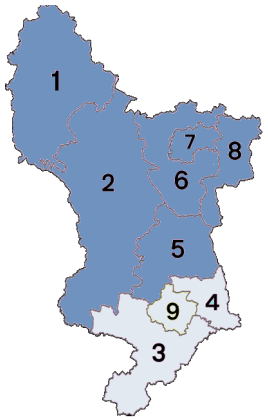
Interim Proposal for local government reorganisation overview

Derbyshire's **eight District and Borough Councils and Derby City Council** are working together to design and implement the right local government structure that **best meets the needs of the residents:**

- We have considered several options and evaluated them against the Government's six criteria and selected the 2 best options, which **meet all the government's requirements.**

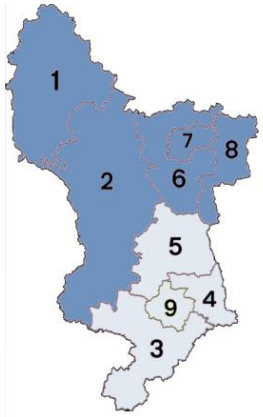
- Both options have **similarly sized unitary councils,** designed to support the different needs of the **north** and the **south** of the county.

Option 1



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

Option 2



Our proposal addresses MHCLG's criteria, striking the right balance between maintaining local identity, supporting local needs and harnessing the efficiencies and scale of the two larger unitary councils.

We already deliver **excellent services** and with our **knowledge, coverage and experience** we are well placed to **integrate additional services** and **create a culture of innovation and empowerment**.

We are planning to undertake a **thorough, robust, and inclusive engagement** programme that gathers perspectives from a broad range of stakeholders to understand their requirements and views before selecting the final option.

- Residents
- Central government
- The Mayor
- Local MPs
- Councillors
- Authority staff
- Parish and town councils
- Local Government Association
- District Council's Network
- Businesses
- The voluntary and community sectors
- Education providers
- Derbyshire residents

How we meet the MHCLG criteria for evaluating proposals

The Minister of State and the MHCLG have indicated that proposals should meet these criteria. This summarises how our proposal meets them:

Criteria		Our proposal	
Establishing a single tier of local government	• Sensible economic areas and geography • Appropriate tax base • Increasing housing supply to meet local needs • Robust evidence outlining single tier local government	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Our proposal is designed to meet local needs by creating two similarly sized unitary councils that address the requirements of the two areas, with a balanced tax base, equal representation and streamlined governance to foster economic growth.
Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks	• Population of c.500k • Improved councils' finances & best value for taxpayers • Transition costs & future transformation • Managing council debt	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Both options are for unitary councils that meet the 500k population criteria. They focus on building financial resilience and creating the opportunities for efficiencies.
High quality and sustainable public services	• Improved service delivery • Delivering public service reform • Manage social care, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and homelessness, • Wider public services including public safety	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	With the 2 authorities there is the opportunity to introduce new service structures that avoid unnecessary fragmentation, whilst delivering locally tailored services integrated with other public services. Where appropriate some services could be delivered jointly between both.
Working together to understand and meet local needs	▪ Meaningful and constructive local engagement ▪ Ensure local identity/cultural and historic importance ▪ Clear evidence of local engagement ▪ Demonstrating how concerns will be addressed	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Our proposal will be finalised once we have engaged with our residents, local businesses and partners. We will develop a thorough, robust, and inclusive engagement programme that ensures the proposal is reflective of local needs and perspectives.
Supporting devolution arrangements	▪ Clarification of governance arrangements with EMCCA ▪ Demonstrates alignment with EMCCA's Mayor ▪ Sensible local authority population size ratios ▪ Timelines that work for EMCCA and local authorities	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Our proposal will ensure both councils are represented equally with EMCCA, delivering economic development and regeneration tailored to the local need of each area.
Stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment	▪ Overview of plans outlining how communities will be engaged ▪ Illustration of how these will enable strong community engagement	✓ ✓	Our proposal is designed to support community engagement, with sensible representation that allows voices from all levels to be heard as the councils address Derbyshire's economic, social, and environmental challenges.

How we have addressed the requirements of the interim proposal

Government requirements	Where the requirements are addressed
	Section
a) identify any barriers or challenges where further clarity or support would be helpful.	Next Steps
b) identify the likely options for the size and boundaries of new councils that will offer the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, along with indicative efficiency saving opportunities.	Executive Summary
c) include indicative costs and arrangements in relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.	Executive Summary Next Steps
d) include early views as to the councillor numbers that will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of your cities, towns, rural and coastal areas, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.	Executive Summary
e) include early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.	Case for Change - devolution
f) include a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with your further plans for wide local engagement to help shape your developing proposals.	Case for Change - Working together
g) set out indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team as well as any arrangements proposed to coordinate potential capacity funding across the area.	Case for Change – Efficiency, capacity and withstanding financial shocks
h) set out any voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward and to help balance the decisions needed now to maintain service delivery and ensure value for money for council taxpayers, with those key decisions that will affect the future success of any new councils in the area.	Arrangements for continuing development of our proposal and community engagement

Case for change

Executive Summary

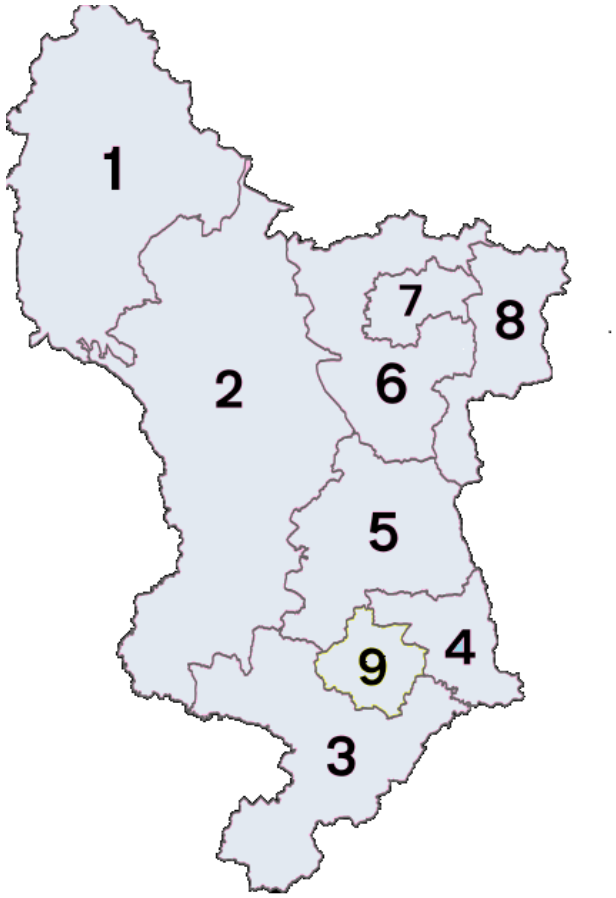
Criteria used to down-select the two shortlisted options

Fifteen different options for the unitary Councils design were discussed by the CEOs and Leaders of Derbyshire District and Borough Councils and Derby City Council. The core criteria used to review these 15 and short-list to the two preferred options were:

1. Shortlisted options should reflect **existing District, Borough and City boundaries** (i.e. proposals do not involve new boundaries being drawn) to remove complexity and maintain the integrity of the historic County of Derbyshire.
2. Shortlisted options should form **contiguous areas** (i.e. proposals do not leave any area isolated from the rest of its unitary)
3. Shortlisted options should **not be for more than 2 unitary councils**, in order to meet the MHCLG's criteria for population sizes to be around 500,000 and create councils of similar size.
4. Shortlisted options should **be approximately the same size**, in terms of population and GVA
5. Derbyshire has large areas of rurality, and the **geography of the options should be practical** to support efficient service delivery and transport networks
6. Where possible the options should **complement the structure of partners** including, Healthcare, Police and Higher and Further Education.

The vision for Derbyshire

Our proposal will promote strong and fair representation for our communities and businesses and our services and will aim to drive sustainable economic growth, enable safe and healthy lives and deliver value for money for everyone.



- Our proposal is for **two unitary councils, of similar size**, providing local representation, responsibility and accountability as part of a strong Combined Authority. The two unitary councils will be able to:
  - standardise and uplift the quality of service across Derbyshire through local, responsive, accessible services with the right balance between size and locally and effective governance;
  - deliver value for our residents through economies of scales and by sharing good practice across between each unitary;
  - increase collaboration with other local partners with the two unitary councils aligning closely to their structures;
  - promote growth and drive tourism across all regions with both unitary councils having a similar ability to generate and attract investment; and
  - ensure both unitary councils have the financial strength to withstand future financial shocks.

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Overview of our proposal for local government reorganisation in Derbyshire

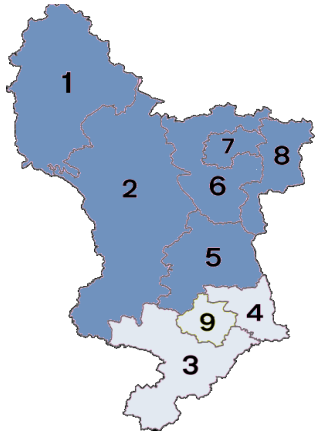
Our proposal is in line with the government's criteria. We have prepared two options, of equal merit, which we will consult on with our communities and businesses between this interim submission and the final submission. We will engage citizens to ensure local perspectives are taken into account, and consult on the naming of the two unitary councils.

The size of the two unitary councils proposed meets the white paper 500k guidance for sustainability and resilience.

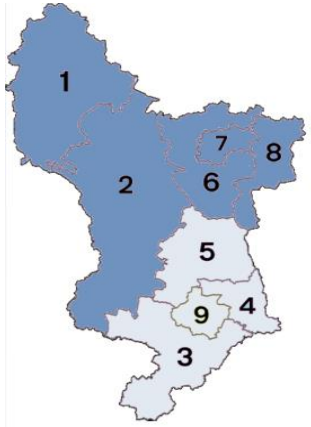
Our proposal is for two unitary councils: representing the north of Derbyshire and the south of Derbyshire, with the two options being a variation on this. Both options aim to maintain the integrity of the historic county of Derbyshire and use the existing boundaries of the district, borough and city councils as building blocks.

Option 1 is with Amber Valley Borough Council in the northern unitary council and option 2 is with Amber Valley in the southern unitary council.

Option 1



Option 2



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F/cast for 2025-26	Option 1 Northern Derbyshire	Option 1 Southern Derbyshire	Option 2 Northern Derbyshire	Option 2 Southern Derbyshire
Population	584k	494k	456k	622k
Area (km^2)	2,103	526	1,838	791
GVA	£13.7bn	£13.1bn	£10.6bn	£16.3bn
Tax base (dwlg)	194,804	147,434	152,247	189,991
Debt*	£560m	£811m	£542m	£829m
Reserves GF*	£40m	£76m	£28m	£89m
Deficit/ (surplus)*	£1.5m	(£8.6m)	£1.3m	(£8.4m)

* Note: these figures include Derbyshire County Council figures, pro-rated to the Northern and Southern unitary council options, based on expenditure. They are therefore indicative only and should not be use for decision making.

The case for a two unitary model

Our two unitary model for local government reorganisation in Derbyshire represents the optimum balance between maintaining local identity and harnessing the efficiencies and scale of the two larger unitary councils. The North and South model provides for two unitary councils of similar size providing equality and balance between the two. Organising in this way provides the following opportunities:

Two similar unitary councils

- Our proposal is designed to **meet the needs of local communities** with the establishment of two unitary councils serving resident populations of around 500k, resulting in appropriate taxbases and organised on sensible geographies that enable housing market areas to **address housing needs** and functional economic geographies to drive **economic growth**.
- Our proposed **governance structure** will ensure the two unitary councils are **accountable to residents** whilst **simplifying access** to services and support.
- Both unitary councils are focused on representing the **different geographies and economic areas** of Derbyshire and will encourage public participation by recasting backbench councillors' role to be more empowered.
- The two unitary councils aim to **provide balance** and **equal representation** for the north and south around travel to work, highways, housing, social care, homelessness and SEND.

Devolution & economic growth

- Our proposal creates the foundation for growth and for devolution to be built on.
- The two unitary councils of similar size will aim to work in partnership with EMCCA to meet EMCCA's **10 objectives**.
- The two unitary approach aims to provide the freedom to support the local areas and **drive economic development and regeneration** appropriate to that area.
- The two councils will aim to work in partnership with EMCCA to optimise economic growth around **EMCCAs Spatial Vision** for the area, implementing the **strategic transport network** and **developing the visitor economy**.
- The two unitary model may support the development of **new technologies** alongside the expansion of national industries of **minerals and extraction, railway**, **clean energy** and **aerospace** that will play a major part in the economic growth of Derbyshire and are important to the country more widely.

Councillor representation

- There are currently 447 councillors elected to the 10 councils.
- Councillor representation should account for the additional responsibilities of the unitary councils, in delivering all services.
- The table below gives an example of the suggested number of elected members, based on a ratio of 5,500 electors per elected member.

Option 1 – North Derbyshire (Amber Valley in North)

Unitary	Electorate	No of elected members
North	457,110	83
South	357,201	65
Total	**814,311**	**148**

Option 2 – South Derbyshire (Amber Valley in South)

Unitary	Electorate	No of elected members
North	355,325	65
South	458,986	83
Total	**814,311**	**148**

The case for a two unitary model

For this interim submission we have not been able to prepare estimates of the potential savings and costs that could be delivered from transitioning to the two unitary councils proposed. We will carefully consider the opportunities for savings, efficiencies and the costs to transition before our final submission, ensuring the figures we present are realistic and justified.

However, to give an indication of potential savings and costs, we have estimated figures using the savings and costs from other, recent, Local Government Reorganisations. These figures are indicative only and do not take account of Derbyshire's particular circumstances. They should not be used for decision making.

Building financial resilience

- Our proposal may enable the delivery of **savings of £56m - £93m over 5 years***
- Our proposal may deliver savings from aggregation, economies of scale and re-structuring
- These savings may come from the transition from the current two-tier arrangements to two unitary councils
- Our proposal may also enable savings with the **transformation of service,** bringing best practice and innovation from the councils

Transition costs and savings	Indicative only
One-off costs	£15m - £25m
Annual savings	£15m - £25m
Payback period	approx. 2 years
Net cumulative savings over 5 years**	£56m - £93m

Costs to be incurred through the transition

- The transition costs associated with creating and stabilising these two new unitary organisation may include:
  - staff exit
  - staff development
  - transition programme management
  - estates and facilities rationalisation
  - transition communications and culture change
  - IT estate and application rationalisation
  - process rationalisation etc.
- The initial transition costs would be funded from reserves. Some of the reserves currently set aside for transformation and cost savings within individual councils will be re-purposed for this transition. By combining councils we aim to strengthen the overall reserves position, allowing capacity to support this transition.
- As the transition progresses, we expect savings generated may fund the later stages of the transition.

* Note: These figures are estimated using figures similar Local Government Reorganisations. They do not take account of Derbyshire's particular circumstances and are indicative only. They should not be used for decision making.

** Note: assumes 25%, 50% and 100% savings for year 1, 2 and 3 – 5 respectively

The case for a two unitary model

Our two unitary model for local government reorganisation in Derbyshire represents the optimum balance between maintaining local identity and harnessing the efficiencies and scale of the two larger unitary councils. The benefits of this approach may include:

Modern services for the 21st Century

- The two unitary councils may create the opportunity to introduce **new streamlined management structures**, **re-think and re-design services**, remove **legacy constraints** and ways-of-working and continue evolving to **agile, innovative councils.**
- The councils will have the opportunity to **work together in collaboration** to deliver **services jointly**, where appropriate, whilst delivering **services locally** to support local communities and businesses needs.
- Where appropriate**, back-office services** could be **shared** across the two unitary councils to maximise the efficiencies by building on the existing shared services between the district and borough councils.
- **Children's Social Care** may build on Derby City's '**outstanding' Ofsted rating** to share best practice across the northern and southern unitary councils.
- Our proposal provides the opportunity to introduce **innovative service re-design** that Derby City are currently implementing in **Adult Social Care** as well as linking with sport, leisure and cultural services to drive service improvements and efficiencies across Adult Social Care Services.
- The model may allow social care services to continue to work in **partnership with the ICB, NHS Trusts, Adult and Children Safeguarding boards, and Police** who are also structured on a North / South basis.
- The two unitary council model can support services for **SEND children,** building on Derby City's record of services whilst **tailoring support for schools and children** in the different **rural areas** and **suburban** areas.
- Both unitary councils may continue to expand and develop the Districts and Borough councils' already **exemplar Homeless services.**
- Existing **housing services** delivered by the Districts, Borough and City councils may be further improved by **sharing good practice,** allowing previously constricted **areas to grow** and by **reducing the governance.**

Strong community engagement

- The councils are implementing a unified engagement and communication strategy. This strategy is designed to ensure community voices are heard and considered in shaping local services.
- Our proposal may provide the conditions to maintain public engagement and participation by creating the opportunity to recast backbench councillors' role to be more empowered.

Strengthening partnerships

- The Local Authorities' partners are organised on a north / south basis.
- Creating the two unitary council model on a similar north / south basis may strengthen partnership working and enable services to be tailored to local needs.

Approach to developing the case for change

Stage 1: Develop case outline → **Stage 2: Develop detailed case for change**

Government timeline

- **21 March 2025** — **Deadline for outline plans**
- **28 November 2025** — **Submission for final proposal**

Mobilisation
- Established project and identified key stakeholders to drive content development

Options analysis
- Conducted options analysis using publicly available data and evaluation criteria
- Aligned Derbyshire councils with LGR options and short list options

Case outline
- Understood the needs of District, Borough and City Councils through 1:1 interviews with Council CEOs and collaborative workshops

- Developed storyboard for case for change and aligned Council Leaders and CEOs on the vision and the key messages for the Minister of State.

Mobilisation and governance
- Establishment of programme governance
- Confirm the analysis to be completed
- Agree on approach to manage challenges and how to deliver the transitions
- Prepare implementation plan and resourcing plan
- Identify funding sources

External engagement
- Engage with residents, businesses and external partners to gather insight, test ideas and assumptions, refine the proposal and develop an evidence base for public support for proposal
- Engage with public sector bodies and other partners to help refine the proposal and gather iterative feedback

Engagement with politicians
- Engage and seek guidance from local MPs, Council Leaders and Portfolio holders

Design of new unitary councils (further detail is available on slide 34)
- Deep dive on services to understand challenges, opportunities and redefine the two unitary council proposal for Derbyshire
- Establish how the services will be designed and delivered
- Design new services and new unitary council structures (incorporating new innovations and ways-of-working)
- Engage with local partners on service design
- Conduct financial analysis to quantify the costs and benefits associated with the changes.

Case for Change

Establishing a single tier of local government

Our proposal is designed to meet **local needs** by establishing two unitary councils to address the requirement of the two areas. Our proposal also meets the **Government's requirement** to create unitary councils of **similar** and **sensible economic areas**, an **appropriate tax base** and to **drive economic growth**. It provides **balance and equal representation**.

The two unitary councils aim to introduce new **streamlined management structures, re-think and re-design services, remove legacy constraints** and create **agile, innovative councils** delivering modern services for the 21st Century.

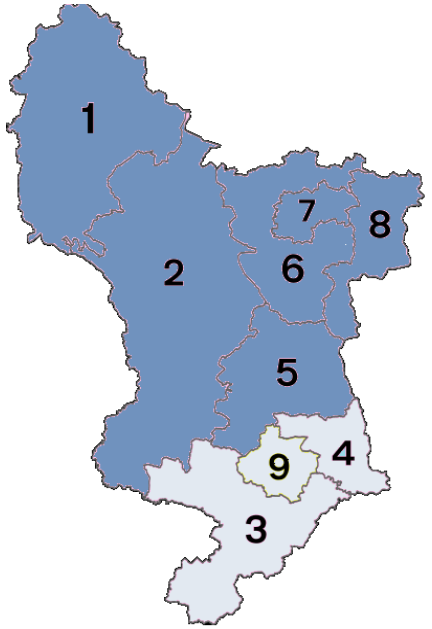
The model aims to enable the councils to work collaboratively to **deliver services jointly**, where appropriate, as well as **deliver services locally** to support local communities and businesses and taking account of the **needs of citizens** in the north and south including **travel to work, highways, housing** and **social care**.

Either option of our proposal aims to deliver improved value to the people of Derbyshire because both authorities would:

- have the **scale and capacity** to invest in **improved service delivery**;
- provide the ability to address **social inequalities** by **combining high and low-income deprivation areas**;
- have stable finances by **diversifying financial risk,** promoting **economic growth** and continuing to have a **significant positive impact on GVA**;
- best support the **Mayoral Combined Authority** with two equal partners, bringing balance and equity to the delivery of devolution; and
- **empower leaders** to support their local communities.

Both options maintain the integrity of the historic county of Derbyshire and utilise the existing councils as building blocks.
With Amber Valley included in Option 1 in the Northern Derbyshire Unitary Council & Option 2 in the South Derbyshire Unitary Council.

Option 1



Option 2

Efficiency, capacity and withstanding financial shocks

Building financial resilience

- Our proposal, at this stage based solely upon other LGR's of similar size and scale, has an indicative **potential savings** of **£56m - £93m net** over 5 years.
- The proposal may deliver savings from aggregation, economies of scale and re-structuring.
- Our proposal may also enable savings with the transformation of services through innovation and service redesign.

Indicative cost of transition

- The two unitary councils we propose are similar in size and scope to other recent Local Government Reorganisations. Using their budgeted cost we have estimated indicative costs of approximately **£15million** and **£25million** (for both). We will forecast costs in more detail for the final submission.

Our approach to managing the transition to the new unitary councils is outlined later in the document.

Savings to be delivered through transition

- The proposal may deliver savings from:
  - Consolidating and streamlining back-office services
  - Streamlining management structures
  - Consolidating frontline services
  - Rationalising estates and facilities
  - Procurement and contract management
  - Improving recruitment and retention

Costs to be incurred through the transition

- The transition costs associated with creating and stabilising these two new unitary organisation may include: staff exit; staff development; transition programme management; estates and facilities rationalisation, transition communications and culture change; IT estate and application rationalisation; process rationalisation etc.
- Combining councils may strengthen resilience, allowing capacity to support this transition.
- As the transition progresses, we expect savings generated could fund the later stages of the transition, however we will need to complete detailed analysis before submission of the final proposal, to confirm this.

Efficiency, capacity and withstanding financial shocks

There are broader transformation related benefits and costs that may be derived during the service redesign.

Savings to be delivered through transformation

- The proposal may also enable savings through the transformation of services and implementation of new technology.
- With the services combined within and across our proposed two unitary councils, services may have critical mass to support the investment in innovations and technology that could drive further efficiencies, improve services and reduce costs.
- The new unitary councils may also harness Derby City's expertise in digital and potentially deliver further savings and reduce cost to serve citizens.

Costs to be incurred through transformation

- There are many opportunities for service improvement and cost reduction including innovative redesign of services.
- Many of these opportunities to improve services may have the benefit of reducing demand through early intervention and improved communications with citizens or ensuring the demand is channelled to the most appropriate service. Each opportunity should be considered carefully and should ensure the business case is supported by improved services and a healthy payback.

Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks

Operational efficiencies to be generated

Our proposal is to create two similarly sized unitary councils which ensure local representation for the population of Derbyshire, whilst maximising the opportunity for efficiencies across the unitary councils. Our proposal may enable the delivery of savings through aggregation, economies of scale and re-structuring. We believe this is the best option for Derbyshire and the right approach to delivering best value for our residents.

The formation of the two unitary councils will present the opportunity to create the following efficiencies:

Back-office services

The creation of the unitary councils presents the opportunity to consolidate back-office services to deliver greater efficiencies. With the current District and Borough councils there are already examples of share back-office service between councils and there is the opportunity to expand this approach to create and expand shared services for some back-office services. For example, the current Building Control service already serves the majority of the Councils and has already delivered significant savings and demonstrate the councils' ability to deliver tangible benefits through collaboration.

Councillors and senior management structures

With the creation of the two unitary councils, it will be possible to rationalise the management structures.

Within the new larger unitary council structures there will be a need to review the roles and responsibilities which may result in increased costs for some roles but there will still be the opportunity for cost savings overall.

Consolidating services

For those services that are currently delivered separately by each council there is the opportunity to rationalise them within each of the unitary councils enabling the delivery of improved services at reduced costs.

Similarly, the new unitary councils would be able to rationalise the depots and fleet for other place-based services as well as to optimise the service delivery logistics, especially around the boarders of the current districts.

With greater critical mass we would expect the new councils to be able to accelerate plans to move to greener vehicle fleets.

*

Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks

Operational efficiencies to be generated (continued)

Rationalisation of Estates and facilities

The formation of two similarly sized unitary organisations may enable the rationalisation of building and other fixed assets as well as office space. This would allow the new councils to reduce the current estate, minimising operational costs and generating capital receipts.

Procurement

Economies of scale are already being achieved using regional and national frameworks and joint procurement. There may be further opportunities to share procurement services across both unitary councils. Part of this opportunity could include taking advantage of the best contracts currently available across all the councils, to deliver benefits rapidly. The new councils will have to novate and honour existing contracts, but we expect there will be opportunities to drive benefit quickly.

Contract management

Many of the existing councils have contracts with the same suppliers. The two unitary councils may also be able to share best practice in contract management and ensure they maximise the value from their contracts.

Localised services with increased effectiveness and resilience

With some of our services the individual councils find it difficult to recruit and retain specific skilled staff. The formation of the two unitary councils may create the opportunity to improve recruitment and retention with larger more attractive roles and more scope for progression.

For services that are currently delivered county-wide there is the opportunity to respond more flexibly to local needs and work more closely with local partners and providers.

Adult social care services

Whilst immediate efficiencies may not be seen, it may be possible to deliver more integrated and localised services by improving integration across partners like the Adults Safeguarding Boards, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Joined Up Care Derbyshire, and the councils. With this transformation it may be possible to improve outcomes and align services with local needs, focusing on micro-enterprises and place-based care through locality hubs. Social Care Commissioners are already developing joint cross-council commissioning for dementia, carers, and advocacy services, to improve supply and quality. Our two unitary proposal could support and accelerate these initiatives.

Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks

Derbyshire has more than 29,000[12] businesses that employ 290,300[12] people. The area has significant strengths in the advanced manufacturing sector, with several world class companies such as Toyota, Rolls Royce, JCB and Bombardier. Although Derbyshire has fewer new businesses starting up than England, the survival rate of local businesses continues to be higher. These strengths are exemplified by prominent success cases in both the north and south.

Driving economic growth - Toyota

Toyota's Burnaston manufacturing plant in southern Derbyshire plays a significant role in strengthening the region's economy. Since commencing production in 1992, the plant has produced over five million vehicles. The company has invested approximately £2.75 billion in its UK operations, with the Burnaston site benefiting from substantial upgrades, including a £240 million investment in 2017 to enhance competitiveness and promote supply chain efficiencies.

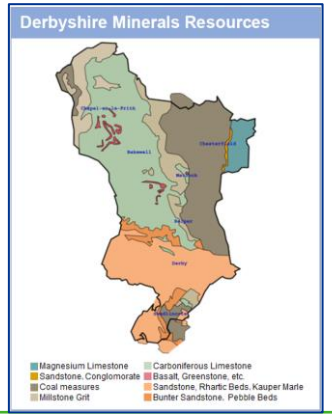
Toyota is one of the largest employers in Derbyshire, providing direct and indirect employment. Toyota's presence has invigorated the local supply chain, fostering the growth of numerous suppliers and service providers in the area. Toyota maintains strong ties with the Derbyshire community collaborating with local institutions including Derby College and the University of Derby, facilitating skills development and innovation, ensuring a continuous flow of talent and ideas between the company and the community.

Driving economic growth - Minerals & Aggregate Extraction

The minerals and aggregates extraction industry in northern Derbyshire, particularly in the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales districts, plays a crucial role in the local and national economy.

The districts are home to 21 active quarry sites, contributing approximately 7% of the UK's total supply of aggregates annually. In 2015, around 14.8 million tonnes of resources were extracted, with limestone and sandstone making up 90% of the total. This sector supports 924 direct FTE jobs locally, and over 2,000 FTE jobs nationally. Its contribution to the local economy is significant, with an estimated £2.352 billion in GVA by 2040.

In terms of environmental and technological advancements, The Peak Cluster project exemplifies the industry's commitment to sustainability. This initiative aims to capture and store carbon dioxide emissions from cement and lime plants in the region, preventing over three million tonnes of CO_2 emissions annually from 2030.



Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks

Driving economic growth (continued)

There are two strategic local plans in place that identify opportunities to provide housing, employment and develop the infrastructure. This approach may support economic growth and aligns to the portfolio of spatial development areas identified by EMCCA. These include opportunities relating to Trent Arc, Derwent Valley Mills, the Canal Corridor, Supercluster, Peaks & Dales, Heartlands and the Loop. The strategies combine place-based assets with emerging opportunities to create bespoke growth concepts.

Similarly, Higher Education and Further Education Institutions play a crucial role in supporting the Derbyshire economy and the two new councils may continue to drive growth in the education sector and enable improved access to education for Derbyshire residents.

The excellent inclusion work underway in Derby City has led to schools in the County requesting to join the Inclusion Strategy group and Charter; and the Derby Promise. We are a national leader in the development of an inclusive and ambitious City. The two unitary model has the opportunity to take this best practice to optimise the disaggregation of schools from the County.

By refocussing resources and oversight into the north and the south of Derbyshire, schools could benefit from both the excellent developments underway in the City and from a strengthened and localised improvement journey for children across Derbyshire, including children with Special Educational Need and Disabilities (SEND).

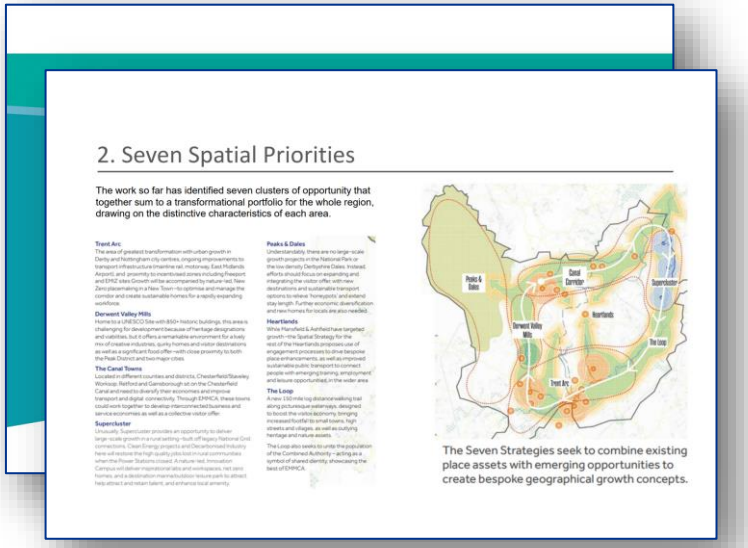


Image of East Midlands Combined County Authority Emerging Spatial Vision Proposition

Derby University

City of Derby Academy

Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks

Managing Resilience and Sustainability

The new authorities enables the management of long-term resilience, particularly in relation to infrastructure maintenance, climate adaptation, and workforce sustainability. This will be achieved by utilising national policies that are aligned with local requirements and funding:

Coherent climate & emergency response strategy: a comprehensive climate action plan can be developed that is in line with being carbon-neutral by 2030 while incorporating the unique needs and vulnerabilities of each region such as flood defence. For Example, **Derby City's Our City, Our River** (OCOR) project has a Grant-in-Aid of £35 million by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Having a unitary authority would simplify the ability to work together and reduce the complexity of council boundaries and planning governance.

Unified infrastructure plan: a comprehensive infrastructure plan can be developed that prioritises critical projects and aligns them across the two unitary councils. This could eliminate overlaps and ensure resources are allocated efficiently with a greater bargaining power to access national funding streams such as the UK's National Infrastructure Strategy and Levelling Up Fund. For example, the southern Derbyshire unitary would be able to optimise the use of the funding set to go to **South Derbyshire and Derby City** to create a more connected future based on the communities' needs.

Workforce sustainability: workforce initiatives can be aligned with regional economic goals and addresses skills gaps effectively. Additionally, a unified governance structure can provide greater access to education and training programs, as well as more efficient matching of job seekers with employment opportunities. For example **Chesterfield Borough Council** has introduced internal career progression schemes that enable employees to upskill and take on new responsibilities. This scheme could be expanded across the unitary councils. Similarly, **Derby City Council's** Employment and Skills Team provides tailored recruitment support to businesses throughout the city. This also enhances the ability to attract and retain businesses and industries that provide stable, high-quality jobs, further contributing to regional economic resilience.

High quality and sustainable public services

We recognise the importance of strategic planning, and our two unitary model, working with EMCCA and other partner will enable the development a **comprehensive strategic plan and investment programme** that will help to deliver improvements in transport, infrastructure and affordable housing, relevant to local needs.

Building 28 new council homes

Amber Valley Borough Council

Bolsover District Council

Improving the thermal performance of 92 existing dwellings

Housing

The Mayor of EMCCA has pledged to **build affordable homes** on disused land and by bringing properties back into use.

The two **strategic local plans** will help to **identify key housing**, employment and infrastructure.

Consolidation will enable increased investment opportunities by utilising the **combined Housing Revenue Accounts** to drive positive change in Derbyshire with improved housing and the social benefits this brings as well as environmental sustainability.

Green energies

There are now more than 600 community energy projects in the UK, involving local groups in rural and urban locations who own solar panels on school rooftops, wind turbines on nearby hills, and hydroelectric schemes on their local rivers.

- Our two unitary councils would have the opportunity to work with the **Government's Local Power Plan** to develop community energy which could **play a significant role in the UK's energy landscape**, contributing to sustainability, strong economies and community resilience.

- Similarly, **Derby** is one of fifty areas across the UK kickstarting a grassroots response to the climate emergency and nature loss. Through the initiative, **Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is working with local groups, schools and Derby City Council**, to facilitate the creation of a **Green Corridor** between Normanton and Arboretum Park **and improve pockets of green space for urban wildlife.**

High quality and sustainable public services

Example of what South Derbyshire has delivered

Developing our workforce to deliver innovative services

We understand that as local communities' needs evolve, our workforce must adapt. **Workforce planning** ensures we continue to offer high-quality services delivered by trained and competent people. Our proposal will allow the workforce within the unitary councils to have access to **training, development**, and work experience opportunities to meet changing demands. With two unitary councils we will be able to grow local talent and upskill and reskill existing staff who are local to their area and **encourage, promote, and support their people**, to be healthier, happier, and more productive.

Public Transport

A significant investment in Transport in the region is set to be approved in the next year. The money will be used for **urgent road repairs, better transport connections,** and projects that help **people travel by foot or bike**. It is designed to help **transform lives and communities**, **connecting people across the region**, making it easier to access jobs, skills training, health appointments, and tourist attractions.

Derby City Council are likely to receive funding for several key projects, including the A52/A52T Spondon Interchange. This is an example of how the Unitary Council can enable better traffic flow and support active travel initiatives, making it easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Technology Systems

It will be necessary to consolidate systems across the councils and take the opportunity to modernise old legacy systems which will support the drive to deliver modern 21st Century services and drive efficiencies.

The members of the Unitary Council already have experience of automating tasks and can work together to implement a unified system.

This will lead to better data integration, consistency, accuracy and improved decision-making.

High quality and sustainable public services

Under the new model, children's social care will build on Derby City's 'outstanding' Ofsted rating to share best practice across the northern and southern unitary councils.

- Derby City has demonstrated successful delivery of children's services to those that need it the most. The 2022 Ofsted report noted Derby City was 'Outstanding' in three out of four categories, including overall effectiveness. The report acknowledged the impact of the leadership team on the quality of social work delivered to children and families in need of assistance and protection. Derby City was rated 'Good' for the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers. Social workers were described as highly responsive and effective in identifying the emerging risks for children.
- Both unitary councils could benefit from this expertise to ensure Children's services continue to deliver excellent services during the formation of the new councils.

The two unitary council model can continue to support SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) children, building on Derby City's record of services whilst tailoring support for children across the different areas.

- As part of the ongoing service redesign, special attention and consideration can be given to the unique needs of children and young people living in different regional areas. Through these efforts, the service redesign will aim to create an equitable and inclusive environment where all children, regardless of where they live, can access the support they need to thrive.

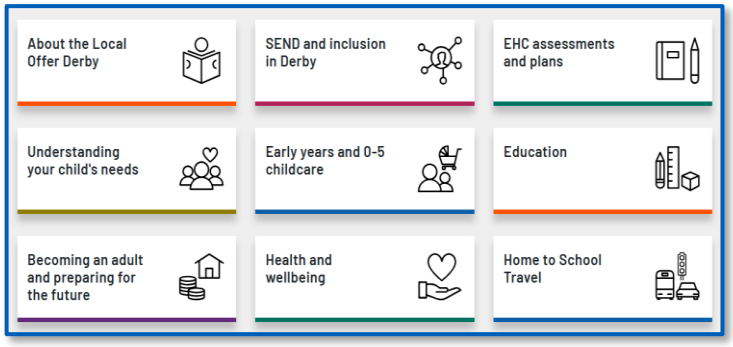
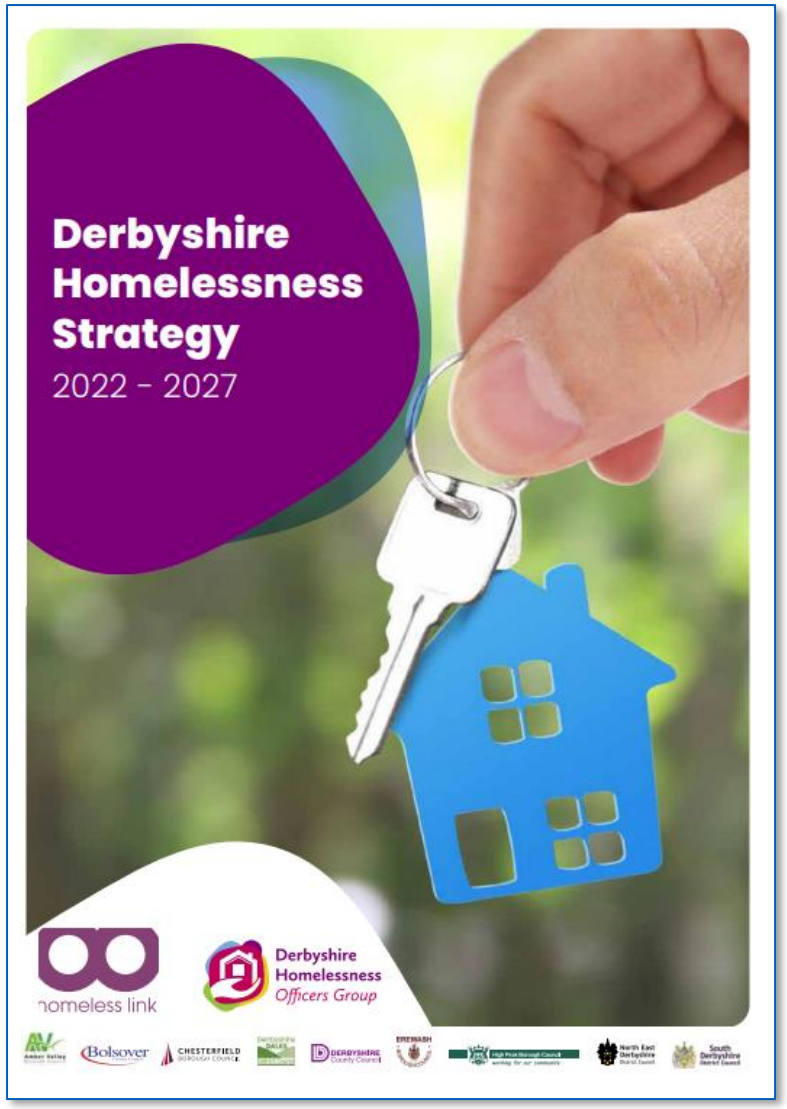


Image of Derby City services offering, sourced from Derby City Council website

High quality and sustainable public services

Under the new model, there is an opportunity to build on the District's exemplar services that support people experiencing homelessness and unstable housing.

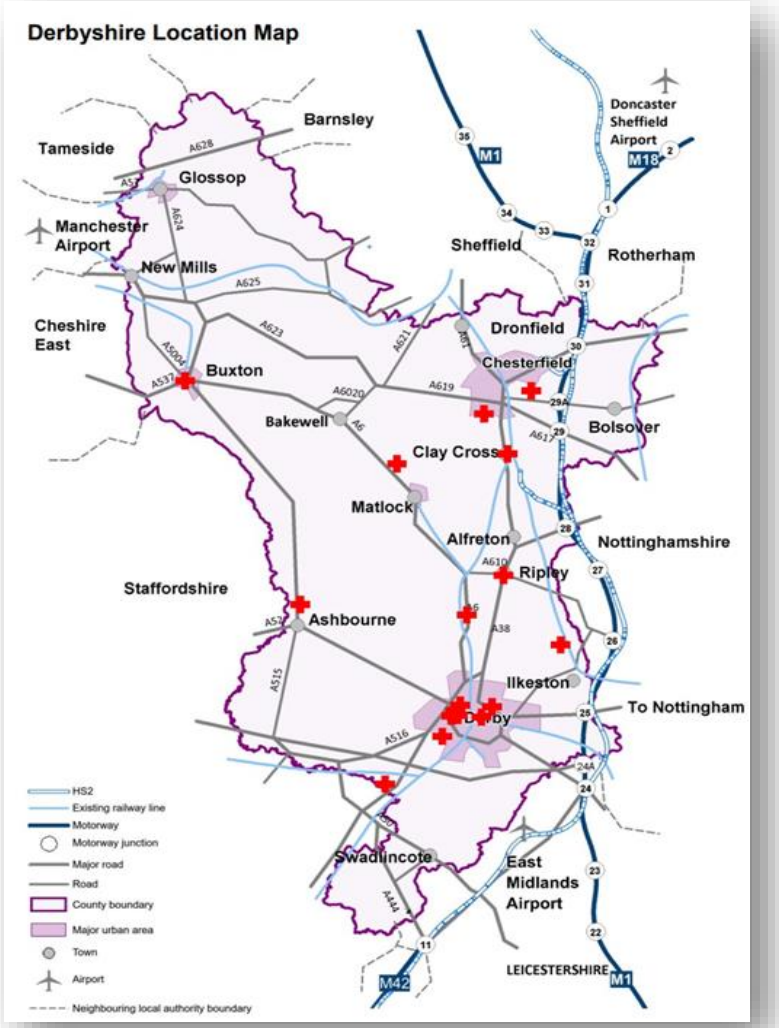
- Derbyshire Homelessness Officers Group is a governing body with representation across the eight District and Borough Councils as well as representatives from Public Health and the Derbyshire County Council. The group seeks to promote prevention and reduction of homelessness in Derbyshire, developing and commissioning integrated services for people with complex needs. Going forward, the group can continue to facilitate collaboration across the two unitary councils, ensuring tailored and integrated services for citizens.
- The Districts, Derbyshire County Council and local housing organisations have demonstrated effective collaboration, coming together to create a Derbyshire Homelessness Strategy 2022 – 2027. The strategy acknowledges the complexity of the issue and calls for a system-wide approach and commitment to transforming services, acknowledging the need for multidisciplinary and holistic supports to make lasting change in people's lives.
- Homeless Link is one of the leading organisations delivering localised services to people with complex needs in the South Derbyshire District, North-East Derbyshire District and Chesterfield Borough. Homeless Link supports people to sustain their existing tenancies in social housing, people who are seeking to move from temporary accommodation as well as those experiencing homelessness.



High quality and sustainable public services

The two unitary model provides a viable geography for social care services, whereby existing arrangements can remain intact, minimising disruption to existing services for Derbyshire's citizens.

- Healthcare partnerships, such as the NHS acute hospital trusts (see Map 1) are already aligned with the North and South model, with Chesterfield Royal located in the north and the University Hospital of Derby in the south. The NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board is currently facilitating collaboration and integration across the NHS hospital trusts to deliver multidisciplinary services to Derbyshire citizens and promote the health of the local community. Under the new model, functions, powers and ways of working will remain until opportunities to improve effectiveness are identified through the redesign.
- Similarly, health and wellbeing boards and safeguarding boards for adult and social care have constituent members from the ICBs and trusts which are already organised on north and south basis.
- The Derbyshire Constabulary's police force has 2 divisional command structures with the north division based in Chesterfield and the south division in Derby and with the police headquarters located in Ripley. These command structures align well with the proposed unitary councils.
- Similarly, the geographies of Derbyshire's existing Further Education and Higher Educations institutions will align well with the two unitary councils with Chesterfield College and Buxton and Leek College in the north and Derby College in the south and the University of Derby's main campus in Derby in the south and their satellite campuses in Chesterfield and Buxton in the north; thereby reducing barriers to access further and higher education.



Map 1: Hospital Networks in Derbyshire, sourced from Google maps

Working together to understand and meet local needs

Successful local government reorganisation requires consultation and support from a broad range of stakeholders

This includes central government, Mayor of the East Midlands and East Midlands Combined County Authority, local MPs, local councillors, local authority staff, other public services (health, fire and police), parish and town councils, Peak District National Park Authority, education providers (incl. Derby College, Chesterfield College and University of Derby), business leaders, voluntary and community sector and the wider public. For this reason, we are planning to undertake a thorough, robust, and inclusive engagement programme. This will enable us to incorporate the views and needs of a range of stakeholders into the design of the future model. We will listen to what individuals and organisations identify as the most important priorities for the design and delivery of new unitary councils. By engaging with these diverse perspectives, we aim to acknowledge what they value, what they want to protect, and what they believe is crucial for the success of the new councils.

We will be undertaking a range of engagement methods to capture insight, which will be refined in the upcoming phase of the project. This includes the development of a microsite and conducting targeted surveys, focus groups, interviews and online sentiment analysis of press and social media. A microsite will be developed as part of the communications strategy, to ensure residents across all council areas are engaged with consistently. Effective engagement will require inclusive arrangements for all people, including those that are culturally and linguistically diverse, those with disabilities, and the digitally excluded.

Economic development and regeneration

The two similarly sized unitary councils will create the foundation for growth and for devolution

Economic development and regeneration

The two Unitary Councils would be able to work in partnership with EMCCA to optimise economic growth around **EMCCAs Spatial Vision** for the area and supporting the:

- **Visitor economy** - developing a comprehensive strategy, investing in infrastructure and promoting the area effectively so that it continues to grow and develop.
- **Strategic transport network** – delivering a thriving visitor economy. By supporting the continued development of a comprehensive strategy, investing in infrastructure, promoting the area effectively, and engaging with local communities.

Derbyshire has immense potential for growth by making it more attractive to both residents and visitors.

The **Peak district** world heritage site in the North supports the preservation and celebration of local culture, history, and landscapes.

South Derbyshire is at the heart of the **National Forest**, where 200 square miles have been transformed by the planting of millions of trees and the creation of many other valuable habitats

Great British Railways (GBR)

GBR is working towards a safer, more reliable, more accessible and more affordable railway and one that is joined up.

- These enhanced transportation links will facilitate economic integration, improve accessibility and help drive growth in the region.
- It has the possibility to enhance the delivery of services across Derbyshire.

Supporting devolution arrangements

Efficient way of working: The similarly sized unitary model will help to move away from the more complex and differentiated system of constituent and non-constituent councils.

The two new unitary councils also have the opportunity to draw upon the insights and experience of bordering unitary councils who are already part of more established strategic authorities such as Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and the West Midlands.

Delivering growth - The two unitary councils would be able to commit to work in tandem with EMCCA to deliver the 10 growth objectives, which are described on the following slides.

Case Study: Transformational Leadership in the East Midlands

In May 2024, Claire Ward was elected Mayor of the East Midlands, representing 2.2 million people across the area. The Mayor's role includes responsibilities in transport, skills and adult education, housing and land, net-zero initiatives, and economic development.

As Chair of the East Midlands Combined County Authority, Mayor Claire Ward collaborates with partners to deliver transformational change. The Mayor also champions the region at a national level to boost growth, shape policy, and access funding.

Mayor Claire's Pledges

1. **Tourism and Cultural Strategy**: Launching 'Visit East Midlands' to boost tourism and celebrate heritage.
2. **Local Economy Support**: Supporting high streets and local businesses.
3. **Transport Improvements**: Enhancing road, bus, and train services.
4. **Job Creation and Skills Development**: Delivering more jobs and better skills through apprenticeship.
5. **Environmental Sustainability**: Working towards a greener East Midlands and meeting net-zero.
6. **Affordable Housing**: Building affordable homes.

Mayor Claire Ward's leadership focuses on transformational change and regional development, aiming to enhance the quality of life for residents and position the East Midlands as a thriving and sustainable.

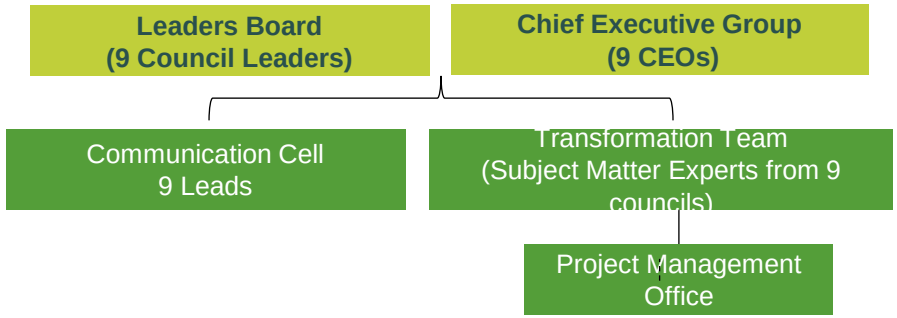
Arrangements for continuing development of our proposal and community engagement

Arrangements for continuing development of our proposal

Leaders and CEOs from all 9 councils have already been collaborating to prepare this proposal and a governance structure is in place to manage completion of the final proposal.

Leaders and Executive are supported by a Proposal Design Team comprising of senior executives with different specialisms from the 9 councils. The councils have also created a Communication Cell that will ensure a unified and carefully designed engagement and communication strategy is implemented, allowing the community voices to feed-in their thoughts and ideas about local services and community places.

Our governance structure



Community engagement

Derbyshire's communities possess a wealth of ideas, skills, innovation, passion and local knowledge. It is imperative that community voices continue to shape and inform strategic decisions and investments under the new model.

Working with existing local governance structures and fostering effective, ongoing community engagement, we will refine our proposal to address Derbyshire’s economic, social, and environmental challenges. We engage Parish and Town councils, local people, businesses and the voluntary sector and continually look for ways to improve our approach to community engagement.

Next Steps

Challenges to be addressed

We recognise there are challenges that will need to be addressed as part of the proposal for two unitary councils; some of these are here:

Evaluation Criteria	Challenges
Efficiency, capacity and withstanding shocks	The area is currently facing significant financial pressures, with a significant budget gap and emergency funds at risk of falling below required levels, it needs corrective actions to reduce forecast expenditure and ensure financial stability. There is a mix of outsourced service, legacy contracts and many corporate systems that will need to be managed during transition.
High quality and sustainable public services	Whilst there are opportunities to deliver more integrated and localised services, there are challenges associated with service delivery that will need to be considered and planned for when undergoing local government reorganisation: • Adult Social Care and Children's Services, are currently delivered by Derby City and the County. Under the two unitary model, the services delivered by the County will be disaggregated and integrated with those of the City. This could be a disruption to the way services are planned and delivered. • The two unitary councils will inherit cost pressures associated with managing social care services and care will be needed to ensure additional costs are not added in to the new services. • Under the new model, referral pathways will need to be redesigned to ensure that there is no gap in service for citizens, and to make sure that there is service continuation and safe provision. • There are competing key government priorities such as waste and finance reforms that will need to be managed.
Integration	• Bringing several councils together and combining services and back-office functions will require careful planning. For example, integrating legacy IT systems could be complex to integrate with different protocols and systems could be difficult to unwind as licences expire at different times.
HR and communications	Integrating staff from councils with different employment terms and different cultures will take time and careful management. Similarly, communications and engagement throughout the process will be critical to the successful transition.
Supporting devolution arrangements	Devolution can empower communities and improve governance, but there can be challenges if not carefully managed. Clear lines of responsibility, effective communication, and equitable resource allocation are required to avoid overlapping roles, financial instability, and political tensions. Ensuring devolved governments have the capacity and expertise to deliver services effectively, while preventing duplication of efforts and addressing existing social and economic disparities, is essential for a successful and equitable devolution process.
Stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment	While a unitary model will deliver streamlined services and a unified approach, its success hinges on effective community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment. Without careful management, it risks silencing local voices, neglecting diverse needs, and exacerbating social and economic disparities. A lack of transparency and accountability can erode trust and lead to conflict, undermining the very communities the model aims to serve. To avoid these pitfalls, strong community engagement, neighbourhood empowerment strategies, and a commitment to equity and social justice are essential.

The journey ahead to transform

Transforming Derbyshire will require in-depth planning across the following workstreams:

Workstream		Purpose
1	**Programme management**	Establish governance and ways of working across various workstreams within the transformation program. Track progress against key milestones and identify project risks. Support establishment of new governance structures within the two unitary councils and oversee the design and delivery of the future operating model.
2	**Legal**	Develop the new unitary constitutions and plan and mitigate any legal impacts and risks.
3	**Communications**	Design a compelling stakeholder engagement strategy. Lead engagement with key stakeholder cohorts to understand needs, preferences and test concepts associated with local government reorganisation.
4	**HR, People, Workforce/ Transformation Strategy**	Design, develop and deliver HR processes and manage the overall change impacts and shifts required to transition to the new model. Engage with staff and trade unions during the process.
5	**Service design**	Conduct service mapping and redesign approach to deliver services under the two unitary model. Plan and design customer engagement to codesign new services and transform ways of working. Support with implementing new service model by designing new policies, processes, roles and responsibilities and supporting with the design and delivery of training.
6	**Technology and data**	Review current state IT architecture and systems and identify opportunities to design and implement new solutions to support the new target operating model. Support with detailed design activities through to implementation and integration.
7	**Finance**	Manage and support the transition from a finance perspective. Design the approach for managing finances going forward and support with the development of the first budget for the new unitary councils.
8	**Estates**	Examine the estate portfolios, identifying opportunities to rationalise assets and create the strategy for managing estates going forward.
9	**Contracts management and commercials**	Create a strategy to capitalise off potential commercial opportunities associated with the transformation. Support with procurement process for new services and manage required contractual changes.
10	**Combined authority**	Define the governance structure and ways of working for the unitary authorities and combined authority.

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