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Gedling Borough Council

Civic Centre,
Arnot Hill Park,
Arnold,
Nottinghamshire,
NG5 6LU

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Wednesday 26 November 2025**

Time: **8.00 pm**

Place: **Council Chamber**

For any further information please contact:
Democratic Services
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Cabinet

Membership

Chair Councillor John Clarke

Vice-Chair Councillor Jenny Hollingsworth

Councillor David Ellis
Councillor Kathryn Fox
Councillor Viv McCrossen
Councillor Marje Paling
Councillor Lynda Pearson
Councillor Henry Wheeler

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Responsibility of committee:

Cabinet is the meeting of all executive members. The Executive will carry out all of the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the local authority, whether by law or under the Constitution. Cabinet Portfolios are detailed within Section 6, Part 9 of the Council's Constitution.

AGENDA

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2 **Declaration of interests**

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Report of the Chief Executive

4 **Any other items the Chair considers urgent**

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Report to Cabinet

Subject: Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Date: 26 November 2025

Author: Chief Executive

Wards Affected

All

Purpose

For Cabinet to consider the outcome of the Full Council debate on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and resolve the Council's position on which option to support as a final proposal for submission to Government by 28 November 2025.

Key Decision

This is a key decision as it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising of two or more wards of the borough.

Recommendations:

THAT CABINET:

a. Subject to consideration of the recommendations of the Full Council, approves submission of **Option 1e** (a Northern unitary based on existing boundaries of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood; a Southern unitary based on existing boundaries of Broxtowe, Nottingham City, Rushcliffe) as this Council's preferred option for submission to Government by 28 November 2025.

b. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments to the Option 1e submission if required prior to submission to government.

c. Supports continued collaborative working with other local authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire on implementation proposals for the new authorities.

d. Notes the risks associated with Local Government Reorganisation and ensures that appropriate governance, communication, financial and management arrangements are put in place to mitigate potential impacts during the transition period.

1 Background

The report to the earlier meeting of Full Council is attached and sets out in detail the background to Local Government Reorganisation, the latest position, and asked the Council to make recommendations to the Cabinet in respect of submitting a preferred option.

2 Proposal

The Cabinet is asked to consider the outcome of Full Council prior to this meeting and resolve to support a preferred option for submission to Government by 28 November 2025.

3 Alternative Options

As set out in the report to Full Council 26 November 2025.

4 Financial Implications

As set out in the report to Full Council 26 November 2025.

5 Legal Implications

As set out in the report to Full Council 26 November 2025.

6 Equalities Implications

As set out in the report to Full Council 26 November 2025.

7 Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications

As set out in the report to Full Council 26 November 2025.

8 Appendices

Appendices for the Full Council meeting 26 November 2025.

9 Background Papers

English Devolution White Paper
Gedling Interim Plan report – Council on 19 March 2025
Council report - Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Council on 30 July 2025

10 Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the statutory invitation from Government to submit a final proposal for Local Government Reorganisation by 28 November 2025.

Report to Council

Subject: Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Date: 26 November 2025

Author: Chief Executive

Wards Affected

All

Purpose

To consider the submission of the final business case for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in line with government requirements.

Key decision

This is a key decision as it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising of two or more wards of the borough.

Recommendations:

That full Council recommends the following to Cabinet for formal approval:

That Cabinet:

a. Approves submission of **Option 1e** (a Northern unitary based on existing boundaries of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood; a Southern unitary based on existing boundaries of Broxtowe, Nottingham City, Rushcliffe) as this Council's preferred option for submission to Government by 28 November 2025.

b. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments to the Option 1e submission if required prior to submission to government.

c. Supports continued collaborative working with other local authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire on implementation proposals for the new authorities.

d. Notes the risks associated with Local Government Reorganisation and ensures that appropriate governance, communication, financial and management arrangements are put in place to mitigate potential impacts during the transition period.

1 Background

1.1 On 16 December 2024, the Government published the English Devolution White Paper. The White Paper aims to devolve greater powers to regions and local areas to improve public services and drive economic growth. The White Paper described a new architecture of streamlined government, including Mayoral Strategic Authorities and the replacement of all two-tier areas of local government with unitary Councils (Principal authorities).

1.2 On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State issued a formal, statutory invitation to the nine Council Leaders within Nottinghamshire, asking each Leader to work collectively with other Council Leaders in the area to develop a proposal for Local Government Reorganisation. The first step in the process was a request to submit an Interim Plan containing options for new unitary councils to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025.

1.3 The Interim Plan was developed by officers from across the nine councils, with independent support and advice from PwC. It shortlisted three options for further assessment:

- ❖ Option 1b –Unitary one consisting of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Rushcliffe. Unitary two consisting of Broxtowe, Gedling, Nottingham City.

- ❖ Option 1e –Unitary one consisting of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood. Unitary two consisting of Broxtowe, Nottingham City, Rushcliffe.

- ❖ Option 2 – Unitary one consisting of Nottingham City only (current arrangement). Unitary two consisting of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Rushcliffe.

1.4 At an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council on 19 March 2025, Gedling Borough Council agreed to:

- ✓ Note the contents of the Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
- ✓ The Interim Plan being submitted to Government by 21 March 2025.
- ✓ Work collaboratively with the other authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with a view to developing a final proposal for Local Government Reorganisation for submission to Government by 28 November 2025.

1.5 On 3 June 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued its feedback on the Interim Plan. The feedback reiterated Government's encouragement for areas to work together to submit a single proposal, whilst acknowledging the opportunity for individual Councils to submit their own proposals. One key theme that emerged more prominently was the need to demonstrate how new unitary structures would enable neighbourhood empowerment, with local areas being invited to come forward

with proposals to create local area committees or other local engagement and decision-making forums.

1.6 Following submission of the Interim Plan, PwC were commissioned by all authorities to conduct further appraisal of the three options within the Interim Plan. This appraisal was undertaken with input from officers across all authorities. PwC's appraisal concluded that Option 2 demonstrated the weakest alignment against the MHCLG criteria by leaving Nottingham City Council on its existing boundary and a lack of balance between the two unitary Councils. This option was quickly rejected by all Nottinghamshire Councils. PwC's appraisal also concluded that that Option 1b and Option 1e both met the Government's criteria and *"that the differences between Options 1b and 1e within each criteria are marginal".*

1.7 An update report was brought to Council on 30 July 2025 which brought together (report plus 5 appendices) all of the documentation / letters from central government and the analysis work conducted by PwC. Council recommended that Cabinet approves further development of Option 1e as the preferred option for submission to government by 28 November 2025. This was approved by Cabinet on the same day.

1.8 Each council will only be allowed to express support for one option in its submission to government on 28 November 2025. Currently we have indications of the following (to be determined w/c 24 November 2025):

- Option 1b – Nottinghamshire County, Rushcliffe.
- Option 1e – Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood.
- Option Bii – Nottingham City are considering a two unitary option with one authority based on the City with expanded boundaries into parts of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe (now referenced as Option Bii).
- Ashfield - have not determined a preference.
- Broxtowe - have no desire to be part of any reorganisation.

Since the meeting on 30 July 2025, work has continued on Option 1e and a submission has been developed by officers from across the four councils of Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood with input from Ashfield and Broxtowe on an advisory basis. PwC and CIPFA have continued to develop the financial analysis of Option 1b and Option 1e to ensure independence and commonality of data for both options. Unfortunately, given the timescales, it has not been possible for the same level of detail to be applied to Option Bii. This is because of the arbitrary nature of the proposed boundaries and the difficulties created by splitting the Borough Councils and calculating budgets.

1.9 The proposed Option 1e submission has taken account of the Government feedback on the Interim Plan. It seeks to meet the government's requirements by covering the following elements:

a. *identification of any barriers or challenges where further clarity or support would be helpful.*

b. *identification of 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.*
c. *inclusion of indicative costs and arrangements in relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.*
d. *inclusion of proposals 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 Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.*
e. *inclusion of views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.*
f. *inclusion of a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with further plans for wider local engagement to shape developing proposals.*

1.10 The proposed Option 1e submission addresses the issues raised by MHCLG in response to the interim plan, and the Executive Summary of the appended submission sets out why Option 1e is still considered to present the best option to meet the government criteria and provide a future platform for the delivery of economic growth ambitions in conjunction with EMCCA.

1.11 Following submission by 28 November 2025, the government will take decisions on how to proceed, including laying any necessary legislation and working with councils to move to new "shadow" unitary councils in May 2027. At this stage it is anticipated that the announcement will be made in the summer with the aim of new unitary councils to be in place by April 2028. Government have provided capacity funding of £369,754 for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to support with preparing proposals for reorganisation. The next steps of Local Government Reorganisation will be a significant undertaking, and there will be a need as a priority to develop an understanding of the likely financial implications of implementation costs, and to set aside financial resources for this purpose.

Community Engagement

1.12 A public engagement exercise supported and approved by all nine authorities was carried out by *'Public Perspectives'* over a six-week period which closed on Sunday 14 September 2025. It invited residents, businesses, and local organisations to share their views on reorganisation. The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity, including a dedicated website (lgrnotts.org), as well as outreach events and engagement with stakeholders. The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats on request, such as paper copies, alongside e-mail, phone, BSL and translation support. In total there were 11,483 responses to the engagement exercise. This is a much higher level of response than many other areas. Relatedly, four focus groups were conducted involving 34 residents reflecting the diversity of Nottinghamshire and organised by urban and rural areas. These focus groups

allowed the emerging findings from the engagement process to be unpacked and views about the proposals to be discussed in-depth, both adding further insight as well as validating the findings from the engagement survey.

1.13 Over 96% of respondents lived in Nottinghamshire, with responses received from all nine affected areas. Understandably, as the three boroughs affected the most by the options put forward, the highest number of responses came from Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. The survey explored people's views on their local area, the effectiveness of current council structures, their awareness of LGR, and the potential impact of the proposed changes. Respondents were also asked to comment on the two options being put forward by the councils (the City Council also included questions for their own residents as part of the countywide survey).

1.14 Respondents highlighted the need for the new councils to focus on delivering good quality core and universal services like roads and pavements, crime/anti-social behaviour, clean streets, travel and transport. They also highlighted the importance of involving residents in decision-making to ensure that future councils understand and are responsive to the needs of different communities and areas, including urban and rural areas.

1.15 The engagement exercise did not demonstrate strong public support for LGR across our area. 58% of all respondents disagreed with the proposal to reduce the number of councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Nevertheless, the exercise showed that there is more positivity/support towards Option 1e compared to Option1b, with approximately a third of respondents supporting it or at least stating that it is the best of the two options. Some respondents stated it makes more sense geographically and/or is a cleaner North-South split with a better division of populations and resources. However, notable concerns remain including around the proposed boundaries and the inclusion or exclusion of certain areas.

2 Proposal

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide full Council with an update on the Government's requirement for Local Government Reorganisation, including the work undertaken to determine which option to develop as a final proposal(s) for submission in November 2025.

2.2 The proposal is that full Council recommends the following to Cabinet for formal approval:

a. Approves submission of Option 1e (a Northern unitary based on existing boundaries of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood; a Southern unitary based on existing boundaries of Broxtowe, Nottingham City, Rushcliffe) as this Council's preferred option for submission to Government by 28 November 2025.
b. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments to the Option 1 e business case if required prior to submission to government.

c. Supports continued collaborative working with other local authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire on implementation proposals for the new authorities.

d. Notes the risks associated with Local Government Reorganisation and ensures that appropriate governance, communication, financial and management arrangements are put in place to mitigate potential impacts during the transition period.

3 Alternative Options

To ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the statutory invitation from government, it is required to submit a final proposal for Local Government Reorganisation for the area of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire by 28 November 2025.

The Council could decide not to respond to the Secretary of State's invitation, however, a new structure will be implemented irrespective of this. Notwithstanding concerns about some aspects of reorganisation, the Council has determined that the responsible thing to do on behalf of the borough is to participate fully in the process. This includes making its position known on a preferred option that reflects the criteria given for reorganisation.

Councils could have developed proposals in isolation rather than collectively across the whole area of Nottinghamshire. This would have risked options being developed which meet the needs of part of the area but not the whole, and which have less alignment with the criteria set out by MHCLG in the statutory invitation. The proposed options for Local Government Reorganisation outlined in this report and detailed in the appendix have been developed through a structured and detailed work programme overseen by Leaders/Mayors with support from Chief Executives and advice and analysis from PwC and CIPFA. Although support for differing options has emerged, this work has continued.

The transition period will create a number of risks. There will be a period of uncertainty for staff, members and partners etc. This could affect morale, service continuity and create financial and resource pressures.

It is proposed that taking account of the criteria for:

1) Sensible single tier of local government.
2) 'Right sized' local government and financially viable.
3) High quality, sustainable services.
4) Meets local needs.
5) Supports devolution arrangements.
6) Local engagement and empowerment.

That the proposed Option 1e is the best for Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It is also noted that from the public engagement of those respondents expressing a view on the future structure,

it is Option 1e that makes most sense to them. In addition, the financial analysis shows that this is the most cost-effective option.

4 Financial Implications

At this stage there are no direct financial implications for the Council in submitting a final proposal to Government. The financial implications arising will depend upon the eventual form that any future Local Government Reorganisation might be for this Council.

At this stage it is not possible to quantify the costs and benefits to the Council and local residents, but the financial implications will be far reaching over a period of time. Areas that will need detailed research and financial assessment/modelling may include:

- Any short-term capacity funding.
- A sizeable long-term investment fund.
- Future integrated financial settlements.
- Consolidation of existing funding streams.
- Potential freedoms and flexibilities on existing financial arrangements.
- The costs associated with Local Government Reorganisation and setting up a new strategic authority.

As matters become clearer on timescales and the inevitable detailed work that will be undertaken by officers within and across Nottinghamshire, a fuller understanding of the financial implications will be known. These will be reported to Members for decision at the appropriate time as the programme of reform develops.

No specific allocation has been made as part of Gedling's agreed budget for 2026/27 but will be determined prior to the budget being completed. If this is not possible to determine, the Leader under Financial Regulations can approve a virement up to £50k from reserves or request additional funds through Cabinet and full Council.

5 Legal Implications

Full Council is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report in a consultative capacity as the decision is currently an executive function.

Under the Local Government Act 2000 (the 2000 Act) any function which is not specified in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (the Functions Regulations) is to be the responsibility of the executive (Leader and Cabinet). The invitation to submit proposals to MHCLG falls under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This part of the 2007 Act is not referred to in the Functions Regulations and as such is an executive function– exercisable by Cabinet as a key decision. The full Council (or another committee) can act in a consultative capacity by discussing and guiding Cabinet, as such this report is being brought to Council to formulate recommendations for Cabinet.

Structural and boundary change in England is governed by the 2007 Act and regulations made thereunder. If, following due process including statutory consultation by Government, a structural change is approved by Government, a structural change order will be made by way of secondary legislation to implement the change and establish a single tier of local government and abolish the relevant councils. An order would include provision for transitional arrangements and elections.

On 10 July 2025, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill was published. This piece of legislation is currently progressing through parliament and has now reached the Report stage in the House of Commons. Once it has received Royal Assent, it will provide further detail on the roles and responsibilities of new authorities as well as other governance arrangements.

6 Staffing Implications

At this early stage, it is difficult to predict the full impact on the Council's workforce, however there will be at least some changes in the uppermost tiers of management. For the remaining majority of the workforce it is not expected that there will be any significant changes prior to the new unitary Council being formed. This message has been communicated to staff through staff briefings from the Chief Executive and through cascade feedback from managers. Staff are reassured that the need for services remains, bins will need to be collected, streets cleaned, and officers will be required to continue this.

A new larger organisation will offer many new opportunities for staff to progress their careers, with larger and/or broader management roles, a wider range of specialist roles, and opportunities to step into different business units such as social services etc. The Council is working to support staff with this by focusing on workforce development and engaging more closely with staff through regular one-to-ones which have replaced annual performance development reviews.

At this stage, the Council's workforce and trade union representatives have been provided with regular updates. Further work will ensure that there is a clear understanding of the implications for staff from the reorganisation streams of work, however there is no getting away from the fact that the process of reorganisation over the next two years will provide for a period of uncertainty for the workforce. This may result in a higher turnover of staff and potential difficulties in the recruitment of new staff. Work is underway to develop staff and give them the confidence moving forward with any new opportunities that may arise.

Regulation 3 of the Local Government (Structural and Boundary Changes) (Staffing) Regulations 2008 (Employment Regulations) confirms that that the transfer of functions to a new unitary council shall constitute a relevant transfer under the TUPE Regulations. The only exception in respect of this relates to the position of the Head of Paid Service.

Moving forward, there will be a considerable impact on staffing capacity to develop the necessary implementation programme for the new authorities once the Secretary of State announces the final proposals. That work will have to commence immediately.

7 Equalities Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared to support this submission. It has reviewed the potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation on residents in Gedling and across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with the potential merger of areas. At this stage, high level data has been used to inform the submission and further work to fully assess equality implications will be undertaken.

The assessment identifies both potential positive and negative impacts. Potential positive impacts include improved coordination of services particularly around vulnerable service users e.g. linking up Social Care and Housing services more closely and improving opportunities for greater partnership working with other service providers e.g. NHS. Potential risks include the dilution of minority voices within a larger authority with reduced representation for some groups, rural access challenges, the loss of specialist services if rationalised, and uncertainty during the transition period.

Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion include:

- Maintaining parish and neighbourhood voice and representation.
- Enhanced local involvement and empowerment through the identified neighbourhood model.
- Ensuring day-one continuity of services, especially safeguarding and support for vulnerable groups.
- Retaining local access points for essential services, with accessible transport and non-digital routes for engagement.
- Protecting minimum funding levels for specialist services.

8 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

At this stage, no implications have been identified, however further assessment will be undertaken as the new unitaries develop.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 - Option 1e submission

10 Background Papers

English Devolution White Paper
Gedling Interim Plan report – Council on 19 March 2025
Council report - Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Council on January 2025

11 Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the statutory invitation from Government to submit a final proposal for Local Government Reorganisation by 28 November 2025.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by: M Hill
Date: November 2025
On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Approved by: F Whyley
Date: November 2025
On behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Equality Impact Assessment

Name of project, policy, function, service or proposal being assessed:	Proposal for future Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
The main objective of (please insert the name of accessed document stated above):	On 5 February 2025 the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution wrote to all councils in two-tier areas and small neighbouring unitary authorities to formally invite proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill 2025 aims to simplify the process to undertake reorganisation. Areas submitted interim plans by 21 March 2025 and full proposals are due to be submitted to government by 28 November 2025. The government will follow the established assessment and decision-making process with a view to undertake elections to a "shadow" authority in May 2027 ahead of the establishment of new unitary councils in April 2028.

What impact will the LGR project have on the following groups? Please note that you should consider both external and internal impact:

- External (e.g. stakeholders, residents, local businesses etc.)
- Internal (staff)

Please use only 'Yes' where applicable		Negative	Positive	Neutral	Comments
Gender	External			Yes	According to Census 2021 data, 50.9% of all Nottingham residents are female and 49.1% are male. For Nottinghamshire the percentage split is the same. No specific impact identified for this group at

					this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage.
	Internal			Yes	There may be a disproportionate impact on females in terms of employment due to council's having a higher percentage of female employees than male. However, there is no specific workforce impact identified which disproportionately disadvantages either gender.
Gender Reassignment	External			Yes	No specific impact identified for this group at this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage.
	Internal			Yes	The project should ensure that workplace policies are inclusive of trans and non-binary staff, including clear guidance on and access to facilities, and zero-tolerance of discrimination or harassment. Inclusive staff training and a supportive culture are key considerations.
Age	External			Yes	No specific impact identified for this group at

					this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage. Access to services could be a positive or negative impact depending on location.
	Internal			Yes	The project should promote age-inclusive employment practices, ensuring fair recruitment, development, and retention across all age groups. Considerations include supporting younger staff through training and mentoring, and older staff through flexible working and age-friendly policies.
Marriage and civil partnership	External			Yes	No specific impact identified for this group at this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage. For example, access to registry services and choice of wedding venues could be a positive or negative impact depending on location.
	Internal			Yes	The project should ensure that all employees, regardless of marital or civil partnership status, are treated equally in relation to employment terms, benefits and policies.

					Considerations include non-discrimination in recruitment, parental leave, and flexible working arrangements.
Disability	External			Yes	No specific impact identified for this group at this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage e.g. through amalgamating policies, procedures and thresholds of service provision. There is a potential for stronger links between social care, health services and other partners from a single tier two unitary model. Access to services could be a positive or negative impact depending on location. Overall, the higher proportions of residents who identify as disabled are in the former mining communities of mid and north Nottinghamshire, which also link with an overall older average age.
	Internal			Yes	The project must ensure an inclusive working environment where disabled staff are supported through reasonable adjustments, accessible facilities, and

					inclusive recruitment practices. Training and policies should promote disability awareness and eliminate barriers to participation and progression.
Race & Ethnicity	External			Yes	No specific impact identified for this group at this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage. Access to services could be a positive or negative impact depending on location. e.g. access to interpreting, translation or culturally appropriate services / support networks. Some existing councils e.g. Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Nottingham City (Hong Kong) do have larger communities than others and the option 1e proposal would place these areas together which would allow for a more joined-up and consistent approach to supporting this community through examples such as education programmes and passporting qualifications and skills.
	Internal			Yes	The project should promote a diverse and inclusive workplace, ensuring fair

					recruitment, training, and progression opportunities regardless of race or ethnicity. Anti-discrimination policies and cultural awareness training can help create a respectful, inclusive environment for all staff.
Sexual Orientation	External			Yes	No specific impact identified for this group at this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage.
	Internal			Yes	The project should ensure an inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ staff through clear anti-discrimination policies, inclusive language, and staff training. Recruitment and workplace culture should reflect a commitment to equality and respect for all sexual orientations.
Religion or Belief (or no Belief)	External			Yes	No specific impact identified for this group at this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage. The new councils must ensure that respectful communication and

					representation in community engagement and service delivery is always maintained.
	Internal			Yes	The project should ensure staff are supported in observing their religious beliefs through inclusive policies, flexible scheduling where feasible, and respectful workplace culture. Provision for prayer space and religious observance should be considered where appropriate.
Pregnancy & Maternity	External			Yes	No specific impact identified for this group at this stage but there could be direct or indirect impact through aggregation/ disaggregation, which would need to be assessed and/or monitored at that stage. There is a potential for stronger links between social care, maternity services, early years teams and other partners from a single tier two unitary model. Access to registry services could be a positive or negative impact depending on location. Family hubs currently provide a range support, and any proposals that impacted on their service function by the new authorities would require a

					detailed equality assessment.
	Internal			Yes	The project should support pregnant employees and new parents through inclusive maternity policies, risk assessments, flexible working options, and a supportive return-to-work process. The workplace must remain free from discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status.
Other Groups (e.g. any other vulnerable groups, rural isolation, deprived areas, low income staff etc.) Please state the group/s: Low income	External			Yes	Larger councils can be remote from local communities and proposals need to include enhanced arrangements for community engagement and enhancing the role of Town and Parish Councils. Any proposals by the new authorities that affect service delivery for care leavers would require a detailed impact assessment. All the current Nottinghamshire local authorities progress schemes to support veterans working alongside the Civil Military Partnership Board and Armed Forces charities. They are Defence Employer Recognition Award holders and progress their legal duties through the Armed Forces Covenant.

					It is recognised that veterans suffer a disproportionately high levels of health and mental wellbeing issues, and any impact on this will require a detailed assessment.
	Internal			Yes	The project should ensure fair and equitable employment practices, including consideration of paying at or above the Real Living Wage, offering stable contracts, and providing opportunities for skills development and progression to support economic inclusion.

Is there is any evidence of a high disproportionate adverse or positive impact on any groups?		No	Potential positive impacts include improved coordination of services particularly around vulnerable service users e.g. linking up social care and housing services more closely and improving opportunities for greater partnership working with other service providers e.g. NHS. Potential risks include the dilution of minority voices within a larger authority with reduced representation for some groups, rural access challenges, the loss of specialist services if rationalised, and uncertainty during the transition period. By rationalising offices or service points could mean longer travel distances for some residents. Also, there could be an impact on the voluntary / community sector as some relationships and partnerships may need to be renegotiated.
Is there an opportunity to mitigate or alleviate any such impacts?		Yes	Successful mitigation can be achieved by: • Maintaining parish and neighbourhood voice and representation. • Enhanced local involvement and empowerment through the identified neighbourhood model. • Ensuring day-one continuity of services, especially safeguarding and support for vulnerable groups.

			• Retaining local access points for essential services, with accessible transport and non-digital routes for engagement. • Protecting minimum funding levels for specialist services.
Are there any gaps in information available (e.g. evidence) so that a complete assessment of different impacts is not possible?		Yes	Detailed information will not be available until the government decide on which of the three options is chosen for implementation.

In response to the information provided above please provide a set of proposed action including any consultation that is going to be carried out:

Planned Actions	Timeframe	Success Measure	Responsible Officer
Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement	Throughout programme	Government will initiate the consultation in the new year. All Nottinghamshire councils will continue to collaborate on engagement with stakeholders.	Chief Executive / Communications Manager
Inclusive Communication	Throughout programme	The Council will continue to prepare communication briefs to all staff / groups / individuals.	Chief Executive / Communications Manager

Authorisation and Review

Completing Officer	**Mike Hill** **Chief Executive**
Authorising Head of Service/Director	**Fran Whyley** **Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer**
Date	**11 November 2025**
Review date (if applicable)	**11 November 2026**

Appendix A: General Overview of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Key facts about Nottinghamshire:

Population

Nottinghamshire has an estimated population of 824,800 people (Census 2021).

In Nottinghamshire 20% (168,500) of the population are children aged 0-17 years old; 59% (489,800) are working age of 18-64 years old; 21% (175,100) are over 65 years old.

The population of Nottinghamshire is slightly older than the national average, with 21% aged 65+ in 2020 compared with 18% in England. The median age of the population in Nottinghamshire in 2019 was 43.8 years compared to 40 years in England.

The total population of Nottinghamshire is expected to increase by some 67,000 persons to 895,000 from 2019 to 2031, an 8% increase. Between 2019 and 2041 the population is expected to increase by some 108,400 persons to 936,600 persons, an increase of 13%. The increase in population is due to an increase in net migration of people from both other areas of the UK and abroad, and an increase in life expectancy.

Life expectancy and health

Life expectancy at birth for females is 82.6 years (2018-2020 data). Number of years healthy life expectancy at birth for males is 62.4 years (2018-2020 data).

Life expectancy at birth for males is 79.5 years (2018-2020 data). Number of years healthy life expectancy at birth for females is 60.0 years (2018-2020 data).

Deprivation

According to the 2019 Indices of Deprivation, Nottinghamshire is ranked 9th most deprived out of 26 Shire Counties in England, and 101 most deprived out of 151 Upper Tier Local Authorities in England. Deprivation levels vary across Nottinghamshire, and Mansfield District and Ashfield Districts are the 56th and 63rd respectively most deprived Local Authority Districts (LAD) out of 317

lower tier Local Authorities in England. On the other hand, Rushcliffe District is ranked 314 least deprived out of 317 lower tier Local Authorities in England.

Employment

Nottinghamshire's employment rate is 74.5% (323,600) (April 2020-March 2021 – Annual Population Survey via NOMIS). This is the number of people that are employed as a percentage of all those that are working age i.e. 16-64 years old.

Further information is available in the employment bulletins produced monthly by Nottinghamshire County Council, and the Employment and Skills Dashboard produced by Nottingham City.

Education and skills

Final KS4 data for 2019 shows 45.4% of pupils achieved a strong pass (grades 9-5) in both GCSE English and mathematics which represents a slight fall of 0.2 percentage points from 2018. Nationally over the same period 43.4% of state funded schools achieved this measure which is a 0.1 percentage point fall.

Nottinghamshire is placed 54th against all local authorities nationally (a slight fall from 52nd in 2018).

At the standard pass (grades 9-4) final data shows 67.6% of Nottinghamshire pupils achieved grades 9-4 in both English and mathematics, an increase of 1.0 percentage points on 2018. Nationally there was a slight increase of 0.5 percentage points to 64.9%.

Comparisons with all authorities nationally place Nottinghamshire 47th (53rd in 2018). 67.6% of pupils attending Nottinghamshire schools achieved GCSE English and Mathematics grades 9-4 compared to 65.0% nationally. (Academic year 2018/19)

Number of domestic properties

There are 360,290 domestic properties in Nottinghamshire.

60% of houses in Nottinghamshire are in Council Tax bands A and B (Valuation Office Agency, Council Tax Stock of Properties, 2019).



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FINAL PROPOSAL

FOR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

SHERWOOD FOREST UNITARY COUNCIL AND
NOTTINGHAM AND SOUTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE UNITARY COUNCIL

A brighter future for driving growth and improving lives.
Rooted in community. Connected by place.

NORTH - SOUTH

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This section sets out the collective ambition and rationale for pursuing Local Government Reorganisation, offering a strategic introduction from political leaders.

Page 8. Executive summary
A high-level overview of our north-south proposal, summarising the evidence, key benefits, and recommended option for creating two new unitary councils.

Page 18. About Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
This section provides essential context about our area's geography, communities, economy, and public service landscape to ground the case for change.

Page 28. Options appraisal
An explanation of the options considered, how they were assessed, and why our north-south model emerged as the preferred solution.

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This section outlines the future we aim to create through reform - one of stronger local leadership, financial resilience, improved services, and empowered communities.

Page 57. Criteria 1 – Establishing a single-tier of local government
This section demonstrates how our proposal creates a clear and effective single-tier structure across the whole area, removing duplication, and simplifying governance.

Page 66. Criteria 2 – The right size for efficiency, capacity, and resilience
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Page 150. Target operating model
An overview of the design principles, service structures, and operating arrangements that will enable high-quality, efficient, and resident-focused services in the new authorities.

Page 158. Transition and transformation
This section explains how we will manage the safe transition to new councils and deliver long-term transformation to ensure lasting improvements and financial sustainability.

Page 170. Conclusion
A summary of why our north-south model provides the strongest, most deliverable, and future-proof option for local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

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WEST BRIDGFORD, RUSHCLIFFE

NORTH - SOUTH

FOREWORD

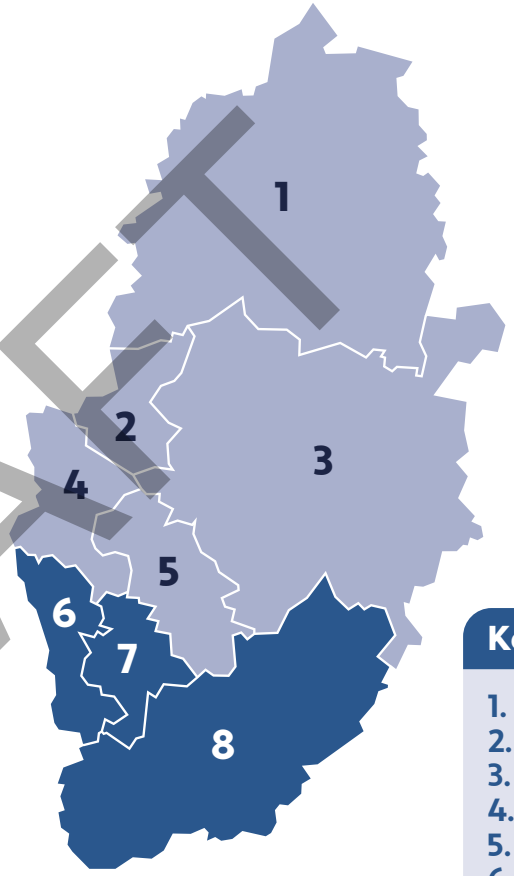
FOREWORD

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is long overdue. Our two-tier system is inefficient and fragmented; it hampers growth, is confusing to the public and stifles our ability to improve the lives of the people we serve.

Our proposal offers 'a brighter future'; one that will deliver growth and better outcomes for our residents. Of the options being presented for our area, our north-south model stands out as having the greatest potential for delivering on national priorities and improving local outcomes. It carries the greatest support of the public because the geography of our north-south model "makes sense." It aligns strongly with the government's criteria for reorganisation and best reflects how local communities interact and live their lives.

As a group of leaders, we represent 473,000 people covering over 70 percent of the geography of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. We know and understand our local communities and what 'sensible geography' means in practice.

Nottingham City must expand. We all stand to gain, at a local, regional, and national level from a more prosperous Nottingham. Our proposal provides the opportunity for Nottingham to grow in a way that best maintains community cohesion beyond Nottingham and enables our whole area to thrive. Our proposal aligns with the geographic model proposed by nine of the ten councils in Derbyshire and builds on existing relationships and plans to support the delivery of the East Midlands Combined County Authority's (EMCCA) growth strategy.



Key

1. Bassetlaw
2. Mansfield
3. Newark and Sherwood
4. Ashfield
5. Gedling
6. Broxtowe
7. Nottingham
8. Rushcliffe

Figure 1: *Our option for LGR in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, known as option 1e, creating a north-south split.*

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It's often said that reorganisation is a 'once in a generation' opportunity. We believe it is. We're creating two brand new councils. Now is the time to bring local communities and public services together in a way that improves the current two-tier arrangements.

The creation of two new unitary councils - Sherwood Forest (North Nottinghamshire) and Nottingham and South Nottinghamshire (South Nottinghamshire) - is rooted in communities and connected by place. Our approach avoids the disruption and risk of complex boundary changes and linking communities together that have no shared heritage or identity.

We mustn't pretend that communities in South Nottinghamshire connect and identify with communities in North Nottinghamshire. For us, the alternative proposal (option 1b as outlined in the Options Appraisal) that puts Trent Bridge cricket ground and the home of Nottingham Forest's football ground outside of a Nottingham-based council 'makes no sense' to our communities.



Our option places Nottingham Forest's football ground – widely associated with the City of Nottingham and currently in Rushcliffe – within the new Unitary Council that includes Nottingham City.

Equally, to align the identities of our most northern communities, bordering South Yorkshire, alongside the south of Nottinghamshire 60 miles away on the edge of Leicestershire, again 'makes no sense.'

Unlike Nottingham City Council's complex boundary change option, our north-south proposal minimises disruption and enables delivery to the Government's timetable.

Based on listening to our stakeholders, and further and more detailed consideration and analysis, we consider that our north-south model stands out as offering the greatest potential to deliver national priorities at a regional, local and neighbourhood level.

Our model:

- Is the people's choice.
- Is a recognised geography.
- Offers a financially sustainable and resilient solution, with cumulative positive net benefit of £485 million over the first five years post-vesting day and annual net positive recurring benefits of £148 million from year five onwards.
- Drives transformation through its geography and target operating model for social care.
- Improves the delivery of local government services for residents.
- Aligns with existing collaboration and connections with health and other public sector bodies.
- Best aligns with the strategic ambitions of the East Midlands Mayor.
- Accelerates and delivers housing growth and offers the best option for one of the country's core cities to grow.
- Builds on natural, organisational and transport links.

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In conclusion, we are ready to move on and deliver reorganisation. It's been talked about in our area for too long.

Our proposal carries the best prospect of delivering two new, forward-thinking councils that will be financially sustainable, deliver housing and economic growth, and genuinely transform people's experience of public services.

Our north-south proposal will deliver **a brighter future for driving growth and improving lives. Rooted in community. Connected by place.**



Councillor Julie Leigh
Leader of Bassetlaw District Council



Councillor John Clarke
Leader of Gedling Borough Council



Executive Mayor Andy Abrahams
of Mansfield District Council



Councillor Paul Peacock
Leader of Newark and Sherwood District Council

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Bassetlaw DISTRICT COUNCIL — North Nottinghamshire —

Gedling Borough Council

Mansfield District Council

NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

NORTH - SOUTH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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ROBIN HOOD STATUE, SHERWOOD FOREST

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our proposal for two new unitary councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire offers the most sensible and pragmatic route to delivering national and local ambitions. It lays the foundation for a new era of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver lasting change, creating two strong, sustainable councils that will drive growth, improve lives, and be truly rooted in the communities they serve.

One council for the north and one council for the south represents the only 'sensible geography' of the proposals being submitted. It avoids complex boundary changes and brings communities together that are most closely connected in terms of heritage, identity, housing, transport, and travel to work.

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Sherwood Forest (North Nottinghamshire)

(Contains: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, and Newark and Sherwood)

Nottingham and South Nottinghamshire (South Nottinghamshire)

(Contains: Broxtowe, Nottingham City Council, and Rushcliffe)

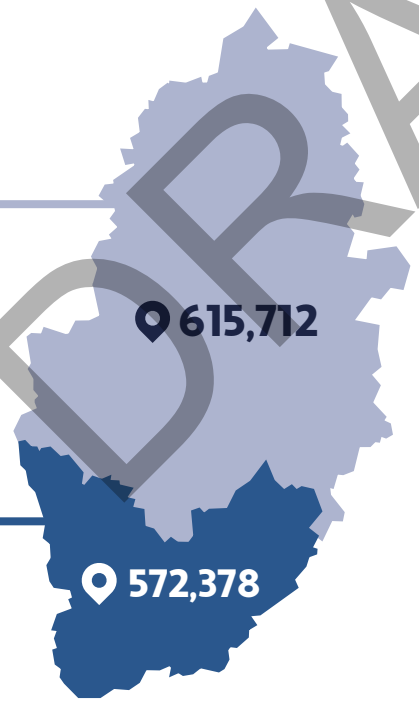


Figure 2: *Map to show the new unitary councils under our north-south model and their population sizes.*

Our proposal, in contrast to others, **offers the simplest viable route to a future-proofed model of local government** for the area, as well as providing the scale and clarity of accountability needed to work effectively with our East Midlands Mayor to maximise the benefits of devolution.

This executive summary outlines the government's criteria for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the collaborative approach we have taken, and the model proposed for LGR. It demonstrates how our model fully meets the criteria but also aspires to exceed them – delivering enhanced outcomes for our residents and businesses.

Collaboration for a brighter future

We have come together as four collaborating councils under different political leaderships and with distinct local priorities, opportunities, and challenges.

Together, we are united in our determination to deliver the best future for our communities so that Nottingham and Nottinghamshire can play its fullest part in supporting the government's 'Plan for Change', and the future growth and success of our area and country.

This collaboration has been built on shared recognition of the need for reform; data-driven understanding of service performance and cost; and a shared commitment to retaining strong local identity and accountability. The extent of collaboration, which has transcended politics, underscores that our proposal represents a consensus approach, not a unilateral plan by any single council. The joint working has continued throughout the preparation of the final submission and is a contributory factor in receiving one of the largest responses to the public engagement in all the existing two-tier areas. All the Nottinghamshire councils (including upper tier Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Councils) have worked closely together, including sharing data, service information and common evidence, even after respective councils have declared their preferred option.

Despite differing views on what model for the future of local government best serves Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, we all agree that creating financially sustainable unitary councils is of fundamental importance for the future of local government in the area.

Indeed, it is only through creating sustainable, resilient, and efficient councils that we will be able to address the challenges we collectively face.

Why our proposal creates a brighter future

Having regard to the government criteria, here's why our option creates a brighter future for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire:

- **Sensible geography** - our proposal draws communities together that identify and connect with each other; that have a shared heritage, and mutual travel to work and housing market areas. It avoids complex boundary changes.
- **Community empowerment and localism** - the north-south councils, given their closer alignment to communities and connection to their place, offer a strong basis for Area Committees and devolution of decision-making and service delivery.
- **Financial sustainability and transformation** - analysis shows that our proposal meets the criteria and offers a financially sustainable and resilient future, through the operational efficiencies of our geography and the platform for further transformation.

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- **Devolution and growth** - our proposal aligns the new unitary councils with the pipeline of growth interventions being developed across the area of the East Midlands Mayor. Our north-south proposal mirrors the north-south proposals for Derby/ Derbyshire and offers the greatest potential for the growth of Nottingham city and the delivery of a long-term supply for housing growth.
- **Public support and people's choice** - public engagement shows the strongest support for our proposal, with respondents highlighting its "**sensible geography.**"
- **Fair and equitable** - our proposal works for the whole area creating single-tier local governance that is most balanced in terms of population, need, demand, resources, and democratic representation. It creates a more even geographic split, ensuring fairer representation for Town and Parish Councils, giving southern communities a stronger voice while preserving parish-level input.
- **Delivery, partnership, and practicality** - built on existing partnership structures, our proposal aligns with current NHS, police, and voluntary sector collaborations. It is practical, can be delivered according to the government's timetable, and reflects where people live and work for a coherent local authority structure.

Taking account of all the factors, the two new unitary councils we propose will secure greater and clearer accountability, simpler governance, resilient finances, and bring effective, efficient, and modern services, closer to residents.

Our place: Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

The historic city and county of Nottinghamshire is situated centrally in England and covers 832 square miles (2,156 sq. km). It has three distinct areas: the urban conurbation of Nottingham city; the towns and villages in the north-west which grew out of the textiles and coal industries; and the rural areas to the east and south with their prosperous market towns and villages.



Newark Market Place

It is a place rich in heritage, history, and culture, where innovation flourishes. More recently, traditional industries (for example, coal, textile, and clothing) which supported entire communities and multiple generations, have transitioned to new patterns of employment. Automative, servicing, and manufacturing industries, small businesses, and start-ups across a range of sectors, along with logistics and distribution companies now provide the foundations for a strong and vibrant local economy that continues to grow and expand.

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Nottingham is a young, creative, and entrepreneurial city with a diverse range of industrial strengths including the creative and digital, health and life sciences, low carbon clean technology and advanced manufacturing sectors. Nottingham has world class research capabilities driving innovation and growth and is home to two high-performing universities.

There are seven district/borough councils in the area and one unitary authority, Nottingham City Council. Nottinghamshire County Council is the upper tier authority covering the seven non-metropolitan councils - Ashfield District Council, Bassetlaw District Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Gedling Borough Council, Mansfield District Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council. In addition, local communities are served by 233 Town and Parish Councils.

The English Devolution White Paper and LGR criteria

The government's English Devolution White Paper sets out six clear criteria against which it has invited our area to submit LGR proposals, that will simplify local authority structures, enhance local democratic accountability, and drive economic growth. The criteria are:

1. A single tier of local government.
2. Councils of a size that are efficient, sustainable, and local.
3. Delivery of high-quality, sustainable local services.
4. Strong local support.
5. Strategic leadership and commitment to devolution.
6. Local identity and strong community engagement.

In this proposal, we demonstrate how our option fully meets, and aspires to exceed, all the government's criteria and provides a clear path to ensuring high-quality, sustainable local services, neighbourhood and democratic renewal, civic pride, and strong strategic leadership.

In addition, the submission proposes some considerations for the transition period up to 2028, as well as suggestions for reform and transformation by the new unitary councils after vesting day.

Fulfilling the six criteria for reorganisation

The following section demonstrates, in summary, how our proposal fully meets the government's criteria for LGR:

1 Proposals should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government:

Our proposal would see the abolition of all nine current Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils (districts/boroughs, county, and city), and the creation of a single tier of local government comprising two new unitary councils, based on existing district boundaries.



View from Gedling

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

The two new unitary councils would serve populations of approximately 615,700 and 572,300, respectively. These figures are in line with the government's stated population guidelines for new unitary councils, as well as striking a balance between economies of scale, accessibility and local identity and resilience.

The proposed reorganisation brings Nottingham City's population size in line with other major UK core cities, Sheffield (566,000), Manchester (568,000), and Liverpool (496,000). This enhances its strategic parity and influence as well as its financial sustainability. At the same time, our proposal ensures a sustainable and viable remaining area, maintaining balanced governance and service delivery across Nottinghamshire.

There is minimal difference between the baseline financial position of the two options (1b and 1e) being proposed for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. However, the 'sensible geography', together with the delivery model for future services, in our north-south proposal we will drive through realisable efficiencies along with real service transformation. This ensures that both unitary authorities in our option deliver improved services and outcomes for our residents while carrying the prospect of a financially sustainable and resilient future, with cumulative positive net benefit of £485million over the first five years post-vesting day and annual net positive recurring benefits of £148million from year five onwards.

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

At every stage of this proposed reorganisation, our commitment remains clear, to keep residents at the heart of all we do. From reducing fragmentation to improving responsiveness, our proposal will simplify access, enhance visibility of leadership, and ensure that services are designed with, and for, the communities they serve. We recognise that this transformation must deliver not just operational efficiency, but genuine improvement in the lives of residents.

The current two-tier system creates duplication, administrative complexity, inconsistent service delivery, and unclear and confusing accountability, all of which lead to inefficiency. There are marked differences in deprivation, health, and economic opportunity across the area, which require their own distinct strategies. Public engagement shows that residents want local government to focus on the basics - high-quality, reliable services, value for money, and clear accountability.



Refuse collecting, Nottingham City

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Our proposal:

- Integrates and consolidates social care, education, planning, housing, public health, environmental services, and community safety within each sovereign unitary authority, significantly reducing fragmentation and inefficiency, while driving joined up approaches that generate improved outcomes. Adult social care (ASC) for instance, will be reimagined to focus on independence, early support, and place-based integration, prioritising dignity, and access to community support.

- Supports place-based delivery tailored to local needs, integrated health and care models, improved local partnerships and neighbourhood working.

- Prioritises high quality services through clearer accountability, local delivery, and better value for money, preserving, where beneficial, existing local systems and partnerships that drive high performance at the same time as putting in place the foundations for transformation and public service reform.

- Is driven by a broader objective, to build stronger trust between residents and local government. By ensuring councils are more visible, accountable, and culturally connected to their communities, we can better understand local priorities and deliver high-quality services that truly meet those needs and improve lives.

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

The work to shape a joint vision, determine and appraise viable options, and develop our proposal has been collaborative throughout, driven by a deep and experienced understanding of local needs. This has been supplemented by an extensive LGR engagement programme, that gathered views from residents, staff, and stakeholders across the region to inform the final proposals. The results show a noticeably higher level of positivity and support for our proposal, partly attributed to respondents' views that it offers a more sensible geographical alignment and a cleaner north-south arrangement across the county.

> "This seems like a more logical and fair option, a more natural split between the north and the south of the county."
>
> *- Urban participant, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's LGR engagement exercise.*

Subsequent work on our proposal has been led by a cohesive and effective partnership programme board comprising leaders and chief executives. This has provided a continued focus on local needs and clear direction to working groups and workshops.

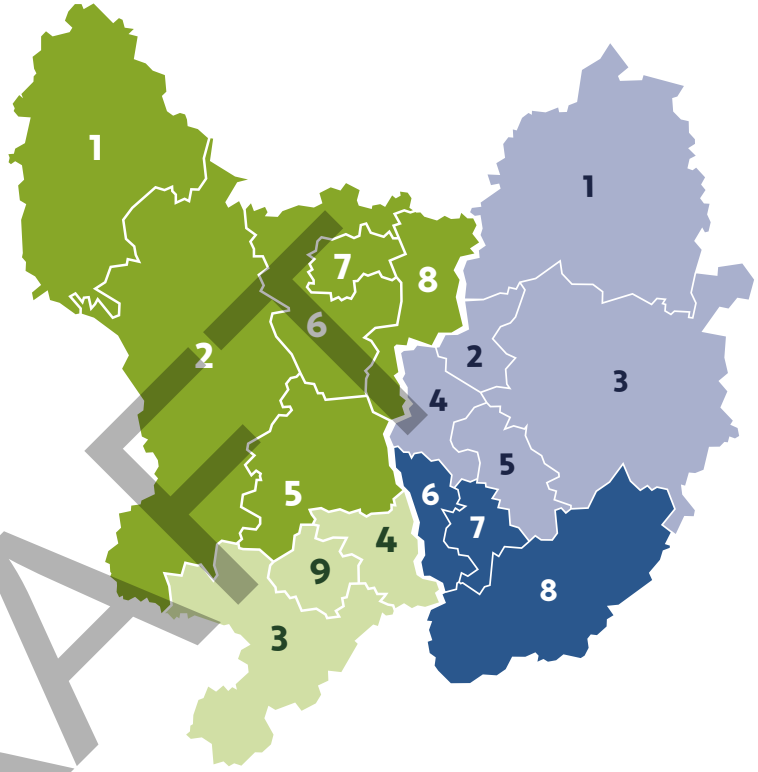
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5 New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements:

Our proposal effectively supports devolution arrangements, in the context of the already existing EMCCA. We are recognised by EMCCA as an important growth area in their emerging regional strategy. Our proposal brings councils together within EMCCA's 'Heartlands' and 'Super Cluster' spatial zones (with further information to follow) and is therefore better aligned with the emerging Mayoral Spatial Development Strategy than the alternative options. Across the EMCCA region, our proposal aligns well with our neighbours in Derbyshire, who are also proposing a similar north-south arrangement for LGR. Already, north-south 'cross border' relationships have been developed, across and beyond local government, to develop a pipeline of future growth opportunities.

Our proposal provides a strong foundation to build on these existing relationships and deliver mayoral ambitions for greater business development, improving skills and driving housing growth. It also maximises opportunities for transformational benefits of public service reform to address health and financial challenges in our local communities and providing a stronger voice for those communities.

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Derbyshire Key

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

Nottinghamshire Key

1. Bassetlaw
2. Mansfield
3. Newark and Sherwood
4. Ashfield
5. Gedling
6. Broxtowe
7. Nottingham
8. Rushcliffe

Figure 3: *Proposed Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire options for LGR. (Derbyshire has presented four different north-south options, this map presents their option A, with the alternative three north-south options showing Amber Valley in the south or being split between northern and southern unitary councils.)*

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

Arrangements are already in place to encourage and support local communities to have an active involvement in society and to contribute to the decisions and services that impact their quality of life, for example, tenant engagement boards, youth and seniors' councils, town centre partnerships, friends of parks groups, citizen panels, interfaith forums, festivals and community events, and business improvement districts.

Building on these, our proposal for two new unitary councils will enable better co-ordination of community engagement and partnership working, and will simplify and join-up what has become a confusing and disjointed landscape of local public service provision. Part of this we propose would be done through Area Committees, with the new councils determining their precise number, geography, role, and remit.

Our proposal for neighbourhood empowerment, combined with bringing currently disparate services together aligns closely with the neighbourhood structures of key partners, particularly health. It will enable the two new councils to better engage with communities and provides the basis for improved alignment of public services at a neighbourhood level, acting as a catalyst for wider, locality-based public service reform, for example, in line with the NHS 10 Year Plan. This in turn, with co-design by local people, will facilitate the delivery of early help, and preventative activities, impacting demand and downstream costs, reducing escalation and demand pressure on the NHS.

Our proposals for council size take account of the different roles of elected members and the diverse needs and geography of our place. Our thinking on council size and future electoral arrangements further evidences our understanding of, and commitment to, localism and neighbourhood governance. Our proposed electoral arrangements combine current county divisions and electoral wards to provide small units of geography that lend themselves better to an Area Committee structure and neighbourhood-based working.

Transition, transformation and reform

By aligning to existing district/borough boundaries and sustaining established collaborations and partnerships, our proposal enables straightforward and efficient implementation and service continuity, reducing the risk of disruption during transition. While this phase will be facilitated by the shadow authorities to ensure the **safe and legal** transfer of functions on vesting day (1 April 2028), our proposal and work to date will support them with this.

Local authorities face spiralling demand and increased costs across all services if they continue to deliver based on their current approaches. The system needs transformation, not simply structural reform for its own sake, but a fundamental shift in how services are designed, commissioned, and delivered, supporting the future financial sustainability of the new unitary authorities while improving outcomes.

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This proposal is not just a response to structural complexity, but a strategic commitment to public service excellence, equity of access, and stronger place-based leadership.

While it will be for the new unitary authorities to determine, our proposal envisages reorganisation as the foundation for extensive transformation in the longer-term. We suggest this is likely to include:

- Wider public service reform, engaging health, police, business, and the voluntary sector.
- Enhanced resident engagement and empowerment and stronger local democracy.
- Enhanced preventative, early help and demand management activities.
- More efficient use of public funds and assets.
- Renewed neighbourhood and locality partnership working.
- Radically different new ways of working, exploiting digital advantages.
- Capitalising fully on devolved powers, aligned with EMCCA strategies.

Our north-south model is not only deliverable, but also desirable. It reflects local identity, builds on existing partnerships, and offers a pragmatic, future-focused pathway to local government reform. With strong leadership, collaborative governance, and a clear vision, the new councils will be well-positioned to lead a new era of local government, one that is more connected, more accountable, and more capable of meeting the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Our model will provide a brighter future for driving growth and improving lives. Rooted in community. Connected by place.



Rooted in community. Connected by place.
Pleasley Pit, Mansfield

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ABOUT US



BENTINCK BUSY MARKET AND TOWN HALL, MANSFIELD

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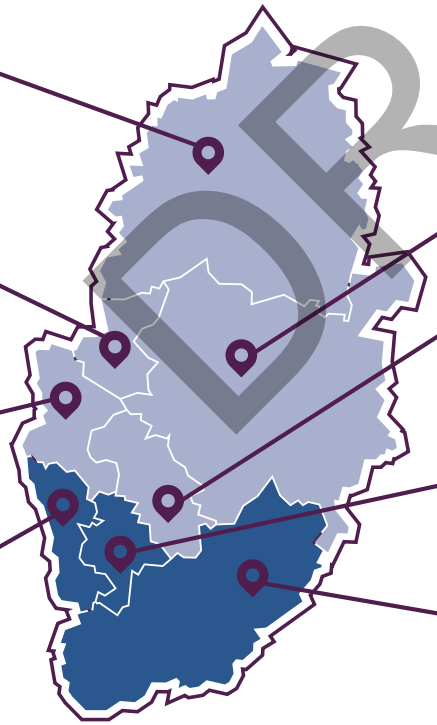
ABOUT NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are situated centrally in England and, alongside Derby and Derbyshire, constitute the area covered by EMCCA. The county, including the city, covers 832 square miles (2,156 sq. km) and has three distinct areas:

- The urban conurbation of Nottingham, one of the UK's core cities and an economic, service, and cultural hub for the East Midlands, including relatively affluent suburbs surrounding the City of Nottingham.
- The towns and villages in the north-west which grew out of the textiles and coal industries.
- The rural areas to the east and south with their market towns and villages in the Trent Valley.

The county is represented by 11 parliamentary constituencies, many of which closely align with district and borough boundaries.

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Bassetlaw
Population: 122,286
Total annual net spend: £21.2m

Mansfield
Population: 112,091
Total annual net spend: £15.2m

Ashfield
Population: 128,360
Total annual net spend: £22.0m

Broxtowe
Population: 113,172
Total annual net spend: £14.7m

Newark and Sherwood
Population: 126,168
Total annual net spend: £22.6m

Gedling
Population: 118,563
Total annual net spend: £15.6m

Nottingham City
Population: 329,276
Total annual net spend: £632.9m

Rushcliffe
Population: 123,854
Total annual net spend £16.8m

Nottinghamshire County
Population: 844,494
Total annual net spend: £1.2bn

Figure 4: *Map showing Nottingham and Nottinghamshire boundaries with population size and council spend.*

Nottinghamshire has a diverse socio-economic profile, with place and demographic trends indicating contrasts between urban and rural areas, as well as across those places which are historically industrial compared to those which are experiencing growth in new sectors.

OUR PLACE

Our place as a visitor destination

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are rich in heritage, culture, and innovation. From historic landmarks such as Nottingham Castle, Newstead Abbey, Southwell Minster, Clumber Park, and Sherwood Forest to leading cultural institutions like Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham Contemporary, and the Royal Concert Hall, the area offers residents and visitors a wealth of attractions and experiences. The area is renowned for its sporting venues including the home of Premier League Nottingham Forest, Mansfield Town and Notts County football clubs; the internationally renowned Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Holme Pierrepoint National Watersports Centre; the National Ice Centre (home to the Nottingham Panthers), Nottingham Rugby Stadium, Nottingham and Southwell Racecourses and Nottingham Tennis Centre.

Our place as an economic region of excellence

Once defined by coal, textiles, and manufacturing, the local economy has transformed over recent decades. Traditional industries have been replaced by a diverse mix of small businesses, advanced manufacturing, logistics, and digital enterprises. Former industrial areas in the north and west now host a growing automotive, servicing, and manufacturing base, while the M1 and A1 corridors have become national hubs for logistics and distribution.

The Trent Valley 'Super Cluster', centred on former power station sites at West Burton, Cottam, and High Marnham, is now home to the UK Atomic Energy Authority's STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) Fusion Programme[1] –a £400 million government investment pioneering clean nuclear fusion technology. The project is expected to create over 15,000 high-skilled jobs and attract billions of pounds of inward investment. In 2025, Holtec International, EDF, and Tritex announced a £11 billion redevelopment of the Cottam site for advanced nuclear and data technologies.

Economic growth is also accelerating along the M1 corridor and mid-Nottinghamshire, with major investment in advanced manufacturing, automation, digital technologies, and agri-tech. To the south, the East Midlands Freeport at Ratcliffe-on-Soar is being developed as a hub for clean energy and green manufacturing, extending the region's strengths in innovation and sustainable industry.

As the economic hub of the East Midlands, Nottingham generated £11.5 billion Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2022, rising to £19.2 billion across the wider urban area, equivalent to nearly 15 percent of regional GVA and over one-third of the EMCCA economy. This underlines

1 www.ukaea.org/work/step

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Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's pivotal role in driving inclusive, sustainable regional growth.

Our place for education

Nottingham itself is a creative and knowledge-led city, home to two world-class universities driving innovation and skills. The University of Nottingham ranks among the world's top 100 universities and second in the UK for graduate employability, while Nottingham Trent University leads in creative technologies, sustainable design, and health sciences.

OUR PEOPLE

Demographic overview

There are an estimated 1.1 million[2] people living across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. There is a notably higher proportion of those aged 65+ with 21.5 percent compared to 18.7 percent nationally, and there is a lower rate of working age adults with 58.4 percent compared to 60.5 percent nationally.



Enjoying a forest walk with friends.

2 www.ons.gov.uk

The index of multiple deprivation (IMD) 2025[3] deprivation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Levels of deprivation are higher in Nottingham with 31 percent of local super output areas (LSOAs) within the 10 percent of most deprived areas nationally, the 20th highest upper tier authority in the UK. There are notable pockets across the urban centres of Newark, Mansfield, Worksop, and Sutton in Ashfield. The areas with high average deprivation scores are Mansfield (61) and Ashfield (74). The least deprived areas are Gedling (206), Broxtowe (223) and Rushcliffe (294).

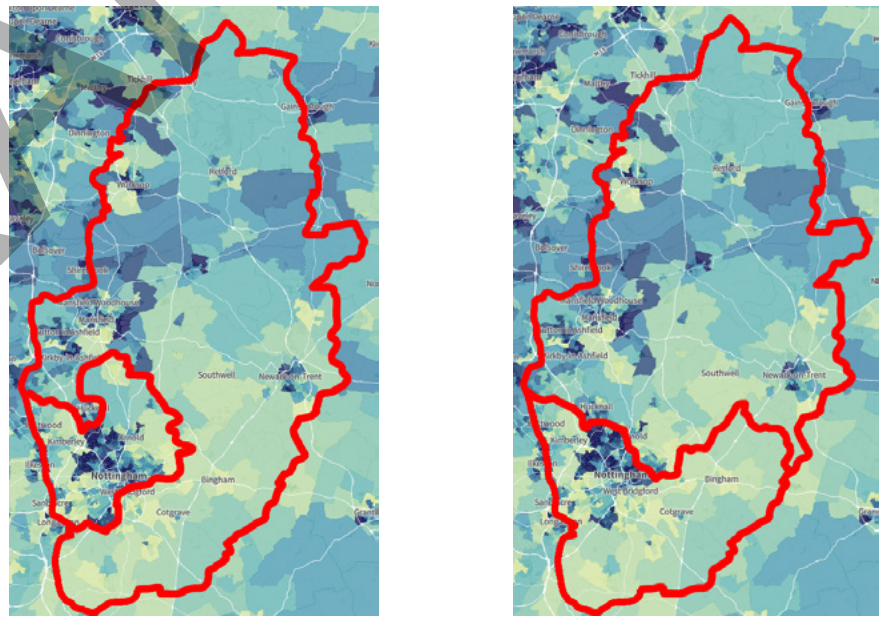


Figure 5: *Maps showing the 2025 Indices of Deprivation data by Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire for the two viable options – 1b (left) and 1e (right)*

3 www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025

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Balanced levels of deprivation with our north-south proposal

In the alternative option described as 1b, there is a higher concentration of LSOAs that rank as more deprived than the national median (59.9 percent) compared to the south in our proposed north-south option (1e) (55.2 percent). Conversely, in the north under option 1b, the majority of LSOAs are in the 50 percent less deprived LSOAs nationally (52.4 percent), whereas in option 1e, the north is slightly more deprived than the UK average with 52.1 percent of LSOAs in the 50 percent more deprived LSOAs nationally.

Overall, the imbalance in deprivation between urban and rural is 12.3 percent under option 1b, compared with just 3.1 percent under the north-south model in option 1e, demonstrating that option 1e provides a more balanced distribution of deprivation across the two areas.

Further details of the viable options for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire can be found in the Options Appraisal.

Children living in low-income families

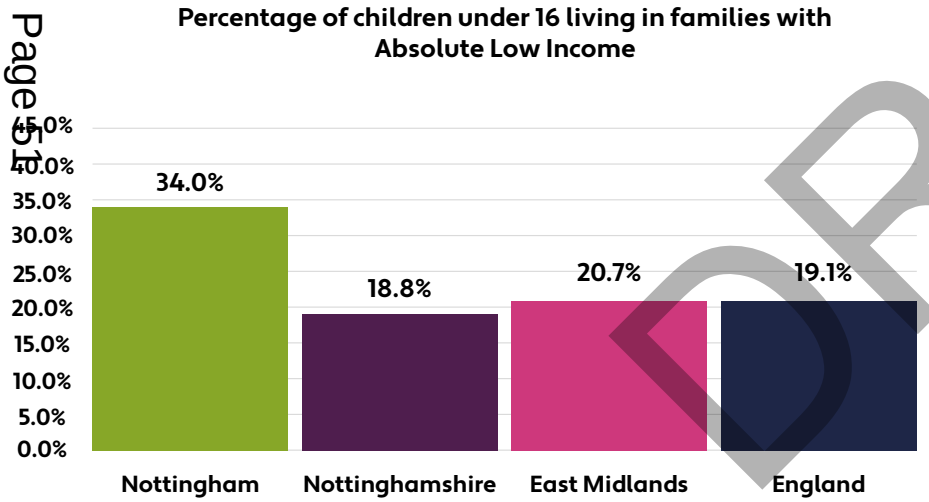
One of our ambitions is to improve the lives of our children and young people and improve the education outcomes for disadvantaged young people. Through our model we will ensure that prevention and early intervention is targeted and accessible, giving the best opportunity for a brighter future for the next generations.

In 2023/24, 34 percent of children in Nottingham City were in households experiencing absolute low incomes (60 percent below the inflation-adjusted 2010/11 baseline median UK income) compared to 18.8 percent across the Nottinghamshire County Council footprint. Across Nottingham City the rate of children raised in households at absolute lower income levels was below the average of the regional neighbours (20.7 percent) and just under the England average rate of 19.1 percent. A similar pattern is experienced with the relative measure of low income (income below 60 percent of the median in that year), with Nottingham City experiencing the highest rate at 38.8 percent with the Nottinghamshire County rate of 22.2 percent below the regional average (24.17 percent and in line with the national average (22.1 percent).

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Indicator	Nottingham City Council	Nottinghamshire City Council	East Midlands
Number of children under 16 living in families with Absolute Low Income	20,439	28,183	186,816
Percentage of children under 16 living in families with Absolute Low Income	34.0	18.8	20.7
Number of children under 16 living in families with Relative Low Income	23,350	33,276	217,155
Percentage of children under 16 living in families with Relative Low Income	38.8	22.2	24.1

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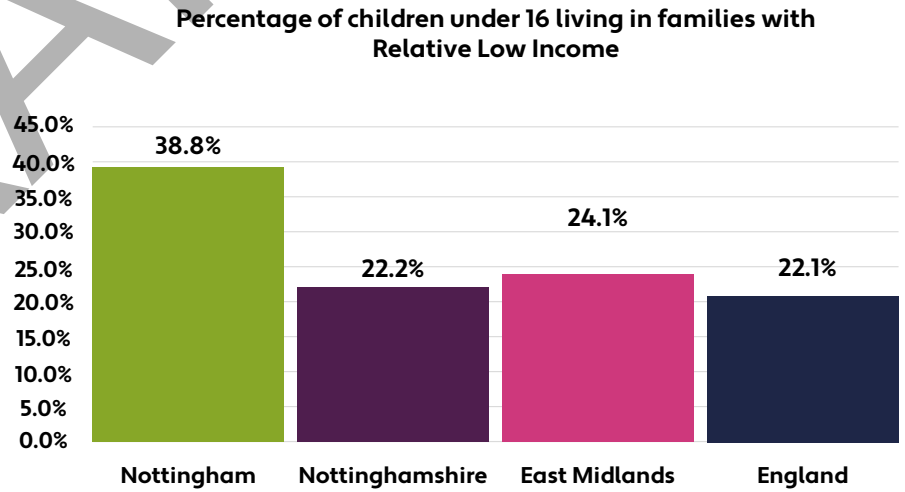


Figure 6: *Illustration of indicators of children living in low-income families across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and compared to the East Midlands average.*

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Our north-south model reflects the structure of existing partnerships across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire such as those with health, education, the police, and the voluntary sector. The new councils will be better positioned to coordinate care, reduce demand pressures, and promote wellbeing. They will be able to prioritise dignity, personal choice, and access to support within communities, strengthening local resilience and reducing inequalities. This will be discussed further in criteria four.

Strategic links to existing partnerships and opportunities for further reform

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire already have a strong foundation of mature partnerships across health, community safety, housing, and public service delivery. LGR offers the opportunity to simplify and strengthen these arrangements to achieve better outcomes and value for money.

Building on health Place-Based Partnerships

The local focus of our north-south model aligns well with the NHS's ongoing reforms, particularly the shift to a neighbourhood-based model of health. Nottinghamshire has a number of existing Place-Based Partnerships[4] (Bassetlaw, Mid, South Nottinghamshire, and Nottingham City). These could be more easily streamlined into north-south structures, improving consistency and coordination across health, social care, and public health services.

The NHS's ongoing reforms, including larger Integrated Care Boards (ICB) and neighbourhood-based Primary Care Networks, align more closely with our proposed north-south model and provides the best opportunity for betterment. Existing Place-Based Partnerships (Bassetlaw, Mid, South Nottinghamshire, and Nottingham City) could be streamlined into north-south structures, improving consistency and coordination across health, social care, and public health services.

We see this as an opportunity to rationalise and reset our health partnerships, to ensure that they reflect our 'sensible geography' and are rooted in the communities they serve.

Other proposed options create fragmentation, are more complex and have a resource intensive geography that will create duplication across health care, with staff being required to service local area committees across multiple administrative boundaries.

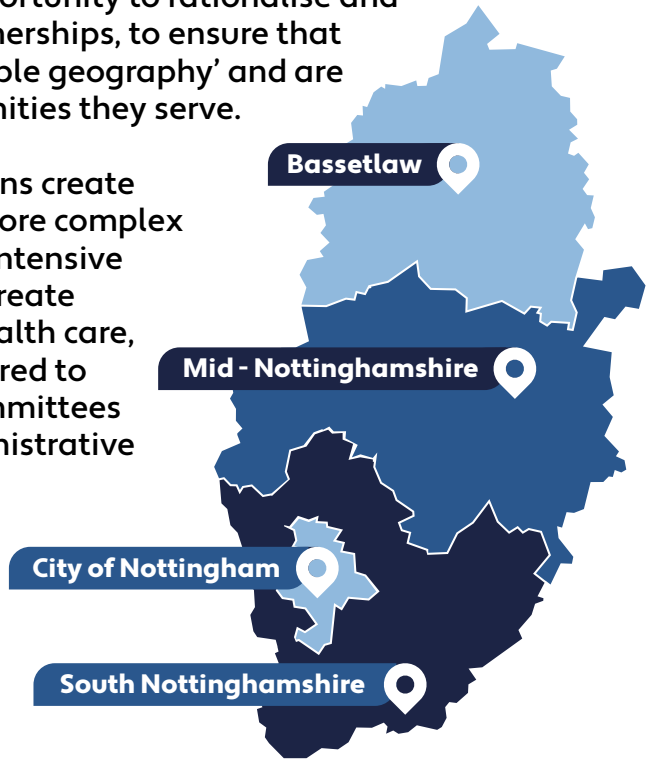


Figure 7: *Map showing the health Place-Based Partnerships across the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System (ICS).*

4 www.healthandcarenotts.co.uk

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Joint delivery and co-commissioning

Current collaborations on areas such as homelessness, building control, and transformation demonstrate the benefits of shared working. The new north-south authorities would build on these successes, creating coherent geographies for joint service delivery and co-commissioning with health, police, and fire partners. This would enable more responsive, locally connected, and cost-effective services.

Some examples include the City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's Economic Prosperity Committee[5] , Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)[6] , Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP)[7] and Local Resilience Forum (LRF)[8] .



Incident control room, Newark during an episode of flooding, utilising our LRF partnership.

5 www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings-and-committees/economic-prosperity-committee

6 www.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/news/major-boost-for-a-joined-up-visitor-economy-strategy-for-the-east-midlands/

7 https://nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

8 www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/police-forces/nottinghamshire-police/areas/about-us/about-us/additional-services/nottinghamshire-local-resilience-forum-lrf/

Community safety

Similarly, the Safer Nottinghamshire Board[9] brings together councils and blue-light services to deliver community safety. Our two-unitary structure would enhance coordination across both, reducing duplication and aligning strategic priorities.

Nottinghamshire Police, under the Police and Crime Commissioner[10] , leads on law enforcement and community safety, while Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)[11] , governed jointly by the county and city councils, delivers prevention, response, and resilience.

NFRS's 'Futures 25' programme[12] has delivered £1.1 million in savings and modernised governance and workforce structures but continues to face cultural and resource challenges. Nottinghamshire Police is implementing national reforms that emphasise intelligence-led, community-based policing, showing early success in reducing antisocial behaviour but requiring sustained leadership and partnership working.

We know that community safety is a major concern to local communities. Pooling our resources with the Police and other partners can provide additional support. 64 percent of respondents to the joint LGR Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Engagement[13] said crime and anti-social

9 www.nottinghamshire.pcc.police.uk/Document-Library/Our-Work/Our-Partners/Safer-Nottinghamshire-Board.pdf

10 www.nottinghamshire.pcc.police.uk

11 www.notts-fire.gov.uk

12 www.notts-fire.gov.uk/about-us/service-plans/2023-24-annual-delivery-plan/

13 See Appendices

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behaviour are priorities for improvement, it was the third top cited factor in making somewhere a good place to live .

> "All I want my council to do is get the basics right - keep the streets clean, pick up my bins, get rid of potholes and keep me and my family safe."
> *- Urban participant, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's LGR engagement exercise.*

The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector

We will continue to build on the great foundations that already exist in the north and south.

The VCSE comprises over 230 active organisations, plays a vital role in early intervention, advocacy, and place-based support. The VCSE sector is adapting to tighter funding and increased demand for support to vulnerable residents.

In summary, existing partnerships are strong and continuing close collaboration between unitary councils and partners will be essential. Many current partnerships are organised on a north-south basis; none are organised on the geography of the alternative proposals. Our proposal builds on the strengths and shared purpose of current collaboration enabling more coherent local leadership, streamlined decision-making, and more effective delivery for residents across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

THE CURRENT MODEL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire operate under a two-tier local government system, comprising Nottinghamshire County Council and eight district, city and borough councils:

- Ashfield District Council
- Bassetlaw District Council
- Broxtowe Borough Council
- Gedling Borough Council
- Mansfield District Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Rushcliffe Borough Council

THE OPPORTUNITY

The current two-tier system has served Nottingham and Nottinghamshire well but needs reform if we're to deliver stronger outcomes for communities, rebuild public confidence and withstand financial shocks.

We are ambitious for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and for the residents and businesses who are proud to call it home. We are keen to embrace this opportunity to establish a new system of local government that

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delivers financial efficiencies and resilience, empowers communities, and best positions Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to deliver sustainable economic growth.

Within the East Midlands, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire face a unique set of regional challenges and opportunities that highlight the need for a more streamlined and effective model of local governance. The overlapping responsibilities between tiers often lead to inefficiencies, fragmented service delivery, and confusion amongst residents and stakeholders about where accountability lies. Reorganisation presents an opportunity to build on the strengths of the existing system while addressing these structural challenges.

To fully unlock these opportunities, effective regional collaboration and strategic planning are essential. Fragmentation of inconsistent policies, duplication and slower decision making make it harder for place-based economic development and long-term investment. Our streamlined north-south model would enable Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to speak with a stronger, unified voice in regional partnerships and negotiations – particularly in critical areas such as transport, housing, homelessness, and skills.

In addition to nine local authorities, the delivery of public services in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is shaped by a wide network of statutory and voluntary organisations that deliver coordinated services across health, public safety, and community support.

It is important to ensure that through the creation of larger unitary authorities, we do not lose the local community focus that current local councils provide and our north-south option reflects this.

Rising financial pressures on local councils also highlight the need for change, with unitary authorities bringing together services with opportunities for future transformation, a pathway to improved stability, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability.

Real life case example – Chris from Newark

Chris receives an Environment Agency flood alert warning that flooding is possible in his area. Thanks to the multi-agency flood partnership, he contacts local volunteer flood wardens who have been trained by the unitary council's single point of contact flood team and the EA and equipped through grant funding. The flood warden, aware of Chris's previous flooding, provides aqua-sacs and guidance to protect his home. While the wider community faces rising water, Chris feels prepared with resilience measures and access to emergency support.

As conditions worsen, a rest centre opens, staffed by housing and social care teams to provide food, personal care, medication, and welfare checks for displaced residents. After the flood, the council visits affected areas to assess damage, connect residents to recovery grants, and gather insights on local flood causes. These findings feed into the partnership's joint action planning to reduce future risk. For Chris, the Unitary Council will be efficient and effective, bringing all services together in one place.

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NORTH - SOUTH

OPTIONS



28

JUBILEE CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, NOTTINGHAM

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Developing the options appraisal

From the outset, leaders and mayors across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire collaborated to develop and agree upon a set of local criteria to guide the consideration of any future unitary arrangements. These criteria provided a clear framework for shaping the interim plan and evaluating potential options. Importantly, they were closely aligned with the government's criteria for LGR, which were formally announced by MHCLG in February 2025.

Locally agreed criteria:

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire leadership agreed that any future governance model should:

- Reflect how people live their lives, ensuring services are designed around real communities.
- Demonstrate financial and fiscal sustainability, with robust long-term planning.
- Enable public service reform that improves outcomes and experiences for residents.
- Support strong accountability and maintain meaningful connections to communities and neighbourhoods.

Government's LGR criteria:

- **Government criterion 1:** a proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single-tier of local government.
- **Government criterion 2:** unitary government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
- **Government criterion 3:** unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high-quality, innovative, and sustainable public services to citizens.
- **Government criterion 4:** proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
- **Government criterion 5:** new unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.
- **Government criterion 6:** new unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

The strong alignment between the local and national criteria has been a positive foundation for the development of this proposal. Following the MHCLG's announcement, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire leaders have focused on embedding the government's criteria into the options appraisal process, ensuring that all engagement with residents, partners, and stakeholders is framed around these principles. This approach has helped build a shared understanding and fostered support for the emerging proposals.

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INITIAL APPRAISAL

All Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities agreed to jointly commission PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to conduct an independent appraisal of eight initial options for LGR. To support this evaluation, a comprehensive dataset was compiled and analysed across all councils, covering geographic, economic, demographic, political, organisational, financial, technological, and asset-related factors.

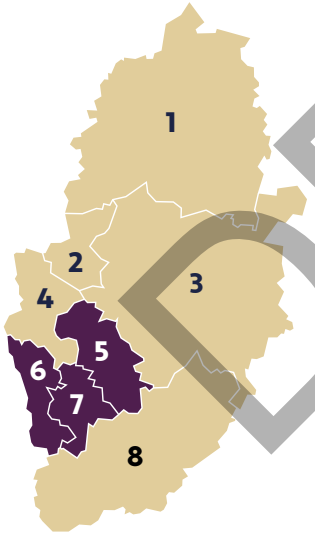
The process was highly collaborative, ensuring that the appraisal reflected a shared understanding of the opportunities and risks associated with each option against the government's criteria. This assessment, combined with detailed financial modelling of viability, resulted in three options known as 1b, 1e, and 2, being selected for progression and inclusion in the joint interim plan, submitted on 21 March 2025.

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Key

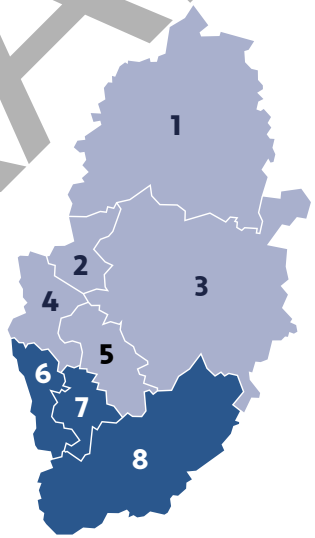
1. Bassetlaw
2. Mansfield
3. Newark and Sherwood
4. Ashfield
5. Gedling
6. Broxtowe
7. Nottingham
8. Rushcliffe

1b **Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Gedling**



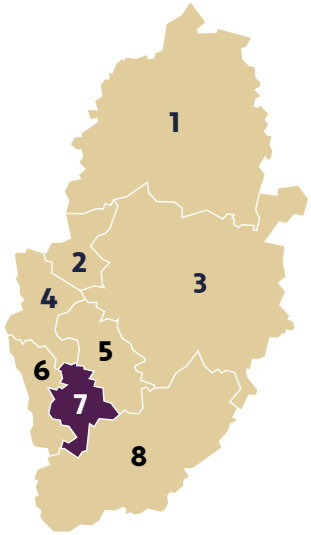
1. Nottingham City conurbation to include **Broxtowe** and **Gedling**
2. The rest of Nottinghamshire becomes a new unitary authority

1e **Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Rushcliffe**



1. Nottingham City conurbation to include **Broxtowe** and **Rushcliffe**
2. The rest of Nottinghamshire becomes a new unitary authority

2 **Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City**



1. Nottingham City remains the same
2. The rest of Nottinghamshire becomes a new unitary authority

Figure 8: *Maps of the three options, 1b, 1e and 2.*

For the purposes of transparency and to demonstrate the collaborative nature under which these options were selected and appraised, while very high level, we have included the outputs from this work undertaken by PwC below.

Criteria	Key Factors	Option 1b	Option 1e	Option 2
1 Sensible single tier of local government	Establishes a single tier of Local Government for the whole of the area concerned	Medium	High	Low
	Sensible economic breakdown: with a tax base which does not create undue inequalities			
	Sensible geographic breakdown: which will help increase housing supply and meet local needs			
2 'Right-sized' local government	A population of 500,00 or more (unless specific scenarios make this unreasonable)	High	High	Low
	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	Improves local government and service delivery, avoiding unnecessary service fragmentation	High	Medium	Medium
	Opportunity for public service reform including where this will lead to improved value for money			
	Improves delivery of, or mitigates risk to negative impacts on crucial services			
4 Meets local needs	Meets local needs and is informed by local views	High	Medium	Medium
	Improves/mitigates risk to issues of local identity, cultural and historic importance			
	Addresses local concerns			
5 Supports devolution arrangements	Helps to support devolution arrangements/unlock devolution	High	High	Low
	Sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority			
6 Local engagement and empowerment	Enables stronger community engagement	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Delivers genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment			

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Figure 9 : *Table showing the detailed analysis of the three shortlisted options - 1b, 1e, 2.*

In the late summer of 2025, once further detailed options appraisal work had been undertaken jointly by all councils, it was concluded that option 2 failed to meet a number of the government criteria and was thus discounted.

Therefore, options 1b and 1e were taken forward as the two final options for LGR in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Shortlisted Options

1b **Two Unitary Authorities:** Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Gedling

1e **Two Unitary Authorities:** Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Rushcliffe

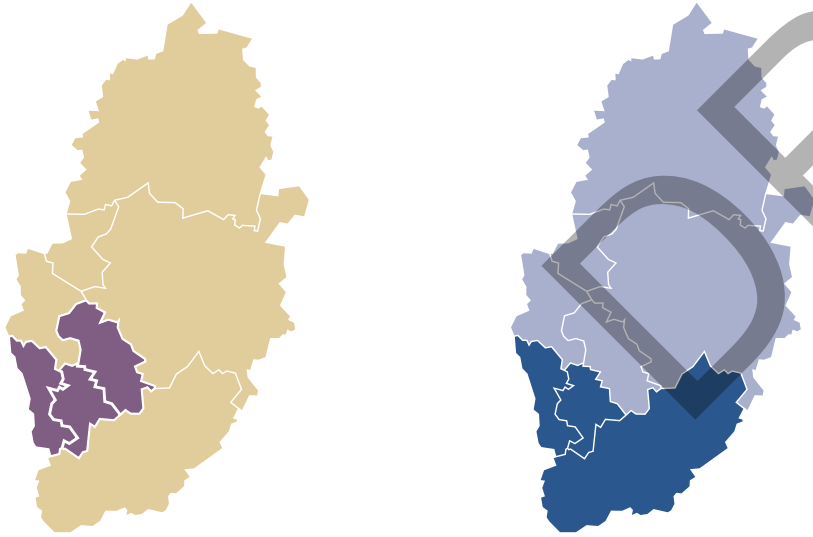


Figure 10 : *Maps showing the geographies and local authority boundaries of the two shortlisted options arising from the interim plan.*

Nottingham City – Option Bii

It should be noted that at a late stage in the process, Nottingham City Council expressed an interest in exploring a third option, known as option Bii, which involves extending Nottingham City's boundaries into three conurbation authorities. This proposal moves away from using districts as building blocks and would necessitate complex boundary changes.

bii **Two Unitary Authorities:** Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Conurbation

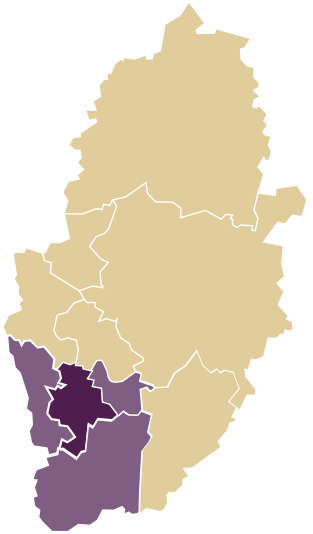


Figure 11 :
Map of option Bii.

Nottingham City Council have only recently shared the appraisal for this option. It was received on 9 October 2025, and there has been insufficient time for partner councils to consider it. Also, the Directors of Finance/ Section 151 Officers have not had the opportunity to review the financial analysis undertaken by Nottingham City Council. This analysis has not been independently validated by PwC as part of the scope of the collaborative financial exercise undertaken across all Nottinghamshire authorities. We have therefore been unable to include this proposal within this options appraisal.

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PROGRESSING THE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Once the two options were shortlisted, recognising the need for a more in-depth evaluation than the high-level appraisal provided by PwC, the four councils supporting this proposal commissioned Peopletoo[14], a consultancy with extensive experience in supporting LGR, to undertake a more rigorous analysis.

This additional work placed particular emphasis on critical services, notably ASC and children's services. While all council services are essential to residents, these areas were prioritised due to their complexity, scale, financial implications, and the potential risks associated with disaggregation under new governance arrangements.

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CRITERIA 1 Single-tier of local government.	
Option 1b	**Option 1e**
Meets the criteria for the establishment of a single-tier of local government.	Meets the criteria for the establishment of a single-tier of local government and is in line with the guidelines for the proposed population size. Our north-south model aligns with sensible economic geographies but also enables more effective collaboration on large-scale priorities such as housing, infrastructure, and transport. Our proposed new councils are evidence-based and respond to lived experience, and incorporate shared

Figure 12: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option - 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page..*

14 https://peopletoo.co.uk

CRITERIA 1

Single-tier of local government.

Option 1b

Option 1e

infrastructure, places of employment, and existing partner service areas within their boundaries. They also support representative constituent membership of the EMCCA, enhancing strategic coordination across the region.

Our model creates a fair, effective governance arrangement, enabling community representation and empowerment, while ensuring that our councils are close to communities and align to lived geographies.

Deprivation

Option 1b clusters high-deprivation areas (Nottingham City, Broxtowe, Gedling) into one 'expanded city' unitary authority. This results in:

- 60 percent of LSOAs in the south being in the most deprived half nationally.
- A deep deprivation profile with fewer affluent areas to balance demand.
- The other unitary is significantly less deprived, creating inequity in service need and funding pressure.

Deprivation

In accordance with recent IMD published figures, option 1e achieves a far more balanced deprivation split, with only a 3.1 percent imbalance compared to 12.3 percent under option 1b.

2024 IMD figures	LSOAs in the 50% more deprived areas
1b - Rest of Nottinghamshire	47.6%
1b - Expanded City	59.9%
1e – North Nottinghamshire	52.1%
1e – South Nottinghamshire	55.2%

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 1

Single-tier of local government.

Option 1b	Option 1e
	Option 1e is not just a better structural fit, but given its 'sensible geography' it provides the best platform for community cohesion, growth and sustainable transformation.

CRITERIA 2

Achieves efficiencies and withstands financial shocks.

Option 1b	Option 1e
It was agreed at an early stage by all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Section 151 Officers, that PwC would be engaged to create a common set of assumptions that all Councils would use as a baseline for each bid development. The analysis undertaken by PwC identified that both options, including aggregation and related further transformation were financially viable, with a sustainable net five-year benefit and recurring net benefit from year five onwards.	It was agreed at an early stage by all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Section 151 Officers, that PwC would be engaged to create a common set of assumptions that all councils would use as a baseline for each bid development. The analysis undertaken by PwC identified that both options, including aggregation and related further transformation, were financially viable with a sustainable net five-year benefit and recurring net benefit from year five onwards.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 2

Achieves efficiencies and withstands financial shocks.

Option 1b	Option 1e
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) financial resilience, including the risk assessment, has identified no major issues with either bid. Council tax harmonisation has been undertaken and there is no significant difference between the two options.	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) financial resilience, including the risk assessment, has identified no major issues with either bid. Council tax harmonisation has been undertaken and there is no significant difference between the two options. Under option 1e we have taken a cautious approach to the phasing of transformation costs as set out in scenario C, within appendix 1, which we feel better presents the timing of when costs will be incurred.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 3

Prioritise the delivery of high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services to citizens.

Option 1b	Option 1e
Critical Services **Adults social care and health** Proposed authorities under option 1b create demographic and demand imbalance.	**Critical Services** **Adults social care and health** Option 1e creates two unitary councils with more evenly distributed ageing populations and closer alignment to national growth rates. Option 1e enables: • **£2.8 million annual savings** in ASC by reducing admissions into residential care for older people, embedding a 'home first' approach and developing alternatives to bed-based care in the local community, working closely with partners and providers. • **£20.8 million savings** for working-age adults through reducing bed-based care and developing community-based models working with partners, housing, and providers. • More targeted market development aligned to local needs.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 3

Prioritise the delivery of high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services to citizens.

Option 1b	Option 1e
The geography of option 1b will make collaboration with partners, efficiency, and productivity for both internal and external workforce much harder, given the 60 miles from the north to the south of the proposed 'rest of Nottinghamshire' unitary. The geographic challenges will also: • Reduce opportunities for targeted community-based prevention models. • Impact accessibility, particularly for vulnerable individuals who rely on vital services.	The '**more sensible**' geography of 1e: • Supports greater integration with partners. • Fosters closer connections with community assets. • Ensures improved accessibility for vulnerable people accessing services. • Creates greater opportunity for the sharing of best practice across providers and partners. • Supports stronger community identity encouraging neighbouring communities to work more closely together. • From an efficiency and cost perspective, it reduces travel time for the workforce and for providers.
Children's services Option 1b creates a significant disparity in Children Looked After (CLA) demand between the two proposed unitaries. This could lead to: • Uneven financial pressure. • Increased reliance on high-cost placements in the southern authority.	**Children's services** Based on the detailed analysis of the Nottinghamshire LGR options appraisal, option 1e is demonstrably stronger than option 1b for the delivery of children's services. Option 1e achieves a more equitable split of CLA demand. Reducing pressure on one authority. Option 1e provides better alignment between population and placement capacity:

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 3

Prioritise the delivery of high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services to citizens.

Option 1b

- Reduced capacity and available investment for early help.

Option 1b places Nottingham City (20th most deprived nationally) with Gedling and Broxtowe in a southern footprint authority. This results in:

- 60 percent of LSOAs in the south being in the most deprived half nationally.
- A deep deprivation profile with fewer affluent areas to balance demand.

Under option 1b, 59 percent of placements are in a northern footprint, but high demand is concentrated in the southern footprint.

Option 1e

- 61 percent of placements and 57 percent of children's homes are in the north, matching 51.6 percent of the under 18 population.

This reduces the need for out-of-area placements and supports reunification.

Option 1e enables **£26–28 million annual savings** in CLA expenditure, through:

- More targeted and local market development and commissioning.
- Fostering greater collaboration with partners.
- Targeted early help and edge-of-care to meet the needs of the individual communities.

Driving this efficiency will enable greater investment in early help and prevention, which is critical to reducing future demand.

Option 1e proposes a **single practice model** across both unitaries:

- Trauma-informed, strengths-based approaches.
- Shared training and standards.
- Regional workforce academy.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 3

Prioritise the delivery of high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services to citizens.

Option 1b	Option 1e
The proposed geography of option 1b will make collaboration with partners, as well as effiency and productivity for both internal and external workforce, much harder.	This improves recruitment, retention, and practice consistency, especially critical given Nottingham City's historic reliance on agency staff. The '**sensible geography**' of option 1e also enables greater collaboration with partners and fosters further integration.
Education Option 1b clusters the strongest and weakest performing districts together, Rushcliffe (high attainment) with Ashfield and Mansfield (low attainment). • This polarisation reduces opportunities for peer learning and shared improvement. • Makes it harder to close attainment gaps and raise standards system-wide.	**Education** It distributes the schools with the highest-rated performance more evenly. • By combining Rushcliffe's higher performing schools alongside Nottingham City and Broxtowe, it strengthens the south. • By including Gedling in the north, it balances Ashfield and Mansfield and shares borders, enabling easier collaboration and sharing of best practice.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 3

Prioritise the delivery of high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services to citizens.

Option 1b	Option 1e
Other key services and activities **Housing and homelessness** • Option 1b does not align well with existing joint working arrangements. This reduces: · Economies of scale. · Shared access to accommodation and outreach teams. · Continuity of care across district boundaries.	**Other key services and activities** **Improved housing and homelessness coordination** • Homelessness is a cross-cutting issue requiring joined-up working. Option 1e: · Aligns with existing countywide homelessness partnerships. · More effectively supports regional strategies with neighbouring counties (e.g. Leicestershire, North Yorkshire). · Enables shared access to accommodation and outreach teams.
Public safety delivery • Crime and harm patterns vary significantly across districts. • Option 1b's fragmented geography: · Makes it harder to tailor public safety strategies. · Reduces effectiveness of community safety partnerships. · Limits coordination with police, fire, and health services.	**Enhanced public safety and community cohesion** • Option 1e allows: · Tailored strategies for urban violence and rural isolation. · Localised community safety partnerships. · Better coordination with police, fire, and health services.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 3

Prioritise the delivery of high-quality, innovative and sustainable public services to citizens.

Option 1b	Option 1e
Place-based services • The geography of 1b leads to: · Duplication of assets and services across the proposed northern geography, which spans a significant north-south area. · Less flexibility in deploying staff and resources. · Smaller, less efficient contracts. · Makes it harder to align strategies across areas, which can impact both internal operations and external service delivery.	**Place-based services** • Option 1e supports: · Greater and more efficient rationalisation of depots and assets (for example highways and waste). · Cohesive deployment of resources for rural and market towns. · The opportunity for greater efficiency across key contracts such as waste and recycling, given the '**sensible geography**'.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 4

How councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.

Option 1b	Option 1e
There was a shared ambition to create a more effective, accountable, and locally connected governance model.	There was a shared ambition to create a more effective, accountable, and locally connected governance model.
Working collaboratively All Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities have continued to work collaboratively and to share data while developing our options. All nine councils participated in joint workstreams on finance, governance, and engagement. Option 1b has the support of two councils.	**Working collaboratively** All Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities have continued to work collaboratively and to share data whilst developing our options. All nine councils participated in joint workstreams on finance, governance, and engagement. Option 1e has the greatest support from the majority of existing councils across Nottinghamshire.
Informed by local views The engagement exercise attracted over 11,000 responses, making it one of the largest of its kind in the county. Strong local engagement undertaken collaboratively, recognised by the Local Government Association (LGA), as a model of best practice for whole-area collaboration.	**Informed by local views** The engagement exercise attracted over 11,000 responses, making it one of the largest of its kind in the county. Strong local engagement undertaken collaboratively, recognised by the Local Government Association (LGA), as a model of best practice for whole-area collaboration. Option 1e received more public support than option 1b during the extensive engagement process. Around one-third of respondents viewed option 1e

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 4

How councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.

Option 1b	Option 1e
Approximately half of respondents raised concerns about the way the boundaries are drawn and the associated geography in the proposed new councils under option 1b.	positively or as the better of the two, citing its clearer geographic logic and alignment with local identities. Focus groups reinforced this preference, describing it as a 'more natural split' between the north and south of the county.
Urban vs rural communities	**Urban vs rural communities** Option 1e proposes a north-south model, which better reflects the geographic and socio-economic diversity of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
The average rural/urban population split between the two authorities proposed under option 1b is 34.4 percent, indicating a noticeable difference in their geographic and demographic profiles. Under option 1b, the southern unitary would be heavily urban, dominated by Nottingham City and its surrounding conurbations. This could lead to: • Resource prioritisation skewed towards urban needs. • Reduced visibility and influence for rural communities. • Challenges in tailoring services to rural contexts (for example transport and health access).	The average rural/urban population split between the two authorities proposed under option 1e is 18.3 percent. This model avoids concentrating urban areas into a single authority (as in option 1b), which could risk marginalising rural voices. Focus groups, including urban participants, described 1e as 'more logical and fair', suggesting broader appeal across both urban and rural populations. Option 1e includes place-based service teams and devolved powers to maintain local accountability. This helps ensure that rural areas are not overshadowed by urban centres in decision-making or service delivery.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 5

New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

Option 1b	Option 1e
Strategic alignment with EMCCA Option 1b risks creating fragmented unitary boundaries that do not align well with the seven spatial development clusters identified by EMCCA. This fragmentation would: • Complicate the delivery of EMCCA's Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). • Require multiple local planning authorities to coordinate on single growth zones (e.g. the 'Trent Arc'), reducing efficiency and slowing delivery.	**Strategic alignment with EMCCA** Option 1e aligns closely with EMCCA strategic priorities. The geographic boundaries of the proposed north and south unitaries mirror EMCCA's spatial zones and development clusters, enabling seamless integration and delivery of regional strategies. The proposed population split (approx. 611,000 in the south and 653,000 in the north by 2035) supports balanced representation and operational capacity within EMCCA. This avoids the urban-heavy imbalance seen in option 1b, where the southern authority would be disproportionately urban, potentially marginalising rural needs.
Economic interventions Under option 1b, economic opportunity zones like the 'Trent Arc' and 'Heartlands' would be split across different authorities, making it harder to: • Deliver cohesive economic strategies. • Coordinate infrastructure investment.	**Targeted economic interventions** Option 1e enables bespoke responses to local economic challenges: • The north can focus on revitalising areas like Bassetlaw and Mansfield, which face low productivity and earnings. • The south can drive growth in the 'Trent Arc' and 'Heartlands', aligning with EMCCA's investment priorities.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 5

New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

Option 1b	Option 1e
Transport and connectivity Option 1b's geography does not reflect commuting patterns or economic travel corridors, which are essential for effective transport planning. This could lead to: • Disjointed transport strategies. • Missed opportunities for EMCCA investment in place-based mobility solutions. • Slower progress on decarbonisation and inclusive access.	**Transport and connectivity** The model reflects real commuting patterns and economic geography, allowing for place-based transport planning. It supports EMCCA's goals for inclusive mobility, decarbonisation, and access to jobs and services. Option 1b's fragmented geography would hinder strategic transport planning and investment alignment.
Skills and employment The model risks duplicating efforts across multiple authorities and weakening partnerships with colleges, training providers, and employment boards.	**Skills and employment** Option 1e supports coherent delivery of skills and employment initiatives, leveraging existing partnerships and aligning with EMCCA's devolved adult skills budget. It enables hyper-local responses to issues such as youth unemployment, skills gaps, and rural access to education–challenges that are harder to address under option 1b's geographic structure.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 5

New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

Option 1b	Option 1e
Housing and environment Option 1b would disrupt existing joint planning arrangements, such as the 'Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan', by splitting collaborating districts across different authorities. The fragmented structure under option 1b would make it harder to coordinate green infrastructure, a waste management system, and to deliver on net zero ambitions.	**Housing and environment** The south unitary 1e builds on the 'Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan', enabling continuity in housing delivery and planning. The model supports shared Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) and coordinated waste management, advancing net-zero goals and attracting green investment. It builds on mature partnerships and existing delivery infrastructure, making it future-ready and cost-effective.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 6

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

Option 1b	Option 1e
Town and Parish councils 1b would create an 'expanded city' in which the Town and Parish council representation is significantly weakened. The new authority would represent only 9 percent of Nottinghamshire's 233 parishes, considerably weakening the 'rural voice'.	**Stronger role for Town and Parish councils** 1e presents a fair and equitable representation of Town and Parish councils. Under option 1e, the southern authority (Broxtowe, City, Rushcliffe) would include 30 percent of Nottinghamshire's 233 parishes, compared to just 9 percent under option 1b. This gives greater voice and representation to rural and parish communities, preserving local identity and influence.
Neighbourhood empowerment Option 1b risks fragmentation, underrepresentation, and slower progress in delivering the government's and EMCCA's ambitions for community engagement and local empowerment.	**Supports neighbourhood empowerment** Option 1e will create Area Committees that will bring together elected councillors, residents, the police, NHS, and other local partners to create a more joined-up and responsive model of local governance. Area committees provide enhanced opportunities for local communities to influence the decisions that affect their lives and better co-ordinate local services. These committees will: • Embed local priorities into council decision-making. • Enable devolved decision-making and funding at the neighbourhood level.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 6

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

Option 1b	Option 1e
Local identity 1b would create an authority of over 60 miles in length, stretching from South Yorkshire to Leicester. These communities have little or no connections and it makes '**no sense**' to the public. It would put significant City landmarks, such as the Trent Bridge cricket ground and the home of Nottingham Forest football club, outside of a Nottingham-based council which would '**make no sense**' to our communities. It combines district/borough councils that have weaker connections and relationships, which means there is a lack of shared identity. This could make it harder to focus efforts in local areas where all communities are engaged equally.	**Reflects local identity, natural communities and 'sensible geographies'** Option 1e is built around existing interrelationships and organisational boundaries, which residents already identify with. It brings together the northern districts/boroughs of Gedling, Ashfield, Newark and Sherwood, Bassetlaw and Mansfield steeped in shared history in coal mining, rural market towns and manufacturing. It will put communities together that resonate with significant landmarks/famous figures, such as Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood, as was demonstrated as being important by residents throughout the engagement process. This alignment enables faster implementation of neighbourhood engagement structures and avoids the disconnect that could arise under option 1b, which does not reflect natural communities and would require time to build trust and new relationships.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e. Continued on the following page.*

CRITERIA 6

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

Option 1b	Option 1e
	Alignment with national and regional policy Option 1e aligns with: • The government's 'Pride in Place' strategy. • The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. • EMCCA's corporate plan to reduce inequality and empower communities. Option 1e provides a more community-rooted, inclusive, and operationally ready model for neighbourhood empowerment. It aligns with national policy, builds on existing structures, and ensures that local voices - especially in rural and parish areas - are heard and represented.

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Figure 12 continued: *Table of analysis of government criteria against each viable option – 1b and 1e.*

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive options appraisal clearly demonstrates that option 1e – a two unitary model split north-south – is the most robust, balanced, and future-ready solution for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

When assessed holistically against the government's six criteria, option 1e consistently outperforms option 1b across all the key areas, including service delivery, community engagement and the strategic alignment with regional devolution.

Our model strikes the optimal balance between strategic scale and local responsiveness. It enables:

- **The most financially sustainable and resilient solution,** through driving transformation through its geography and target operating model for social care.
- **Efficient and integrated public services,** particularly in complex areas like adult social care and children's services.
- **Stronger alignment with EMCCA's spatial and economic priorities,** unlocking investment and accelerating delivery of regional growth strategies.
- **Fairer representation and community empowerment,** with a structure rooted in natural geographies and existing partnerships.
- **Resilience and equity,** with a more balanced distribution of deprivation and demand across both authorities.

The remainder of this proposal sets out how our approach meets each criterion in detail, presenting a clear, credible, and community-focused path forward for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, while ensuring safe delivery of statutory duties.

Option 1e is not just a technically sound proposal - it is a community-driven, evidence-based, and strategically aligned model that reflects how people live, work, and access services. It builds on existing relationships, respects local identity, and provides a platform for transformation that is both ambitious and achievable.

In contrast, option 1b does not offer 'sensible geography' or a 'sensible economic area' but introduces fragmentation, risks service inefficiencies, and weakens rural representation–making it harder to deliver the outcomes that matter most to residents. Nottingham City's 'boundary change option' (option Bii) includes some but not all of Nottingham's conurbation and involves a level of complexity that pose significant risks to the disaggregation of services and finances, and to meeting the Government's timetable.

Our north-south model is the only option that truly 'makes sense' to partners, to professionals, and most importantly, to the people of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It is the right model for today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.

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NORTH - SOUTH

OUR VISION

SHERWOOD FOREST, NEWARK AND SHERWOOD

OUR VISION FOR UNITARY LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Our vision is for a brighter future for driving growth and improving lives. Rooted in community. Connected by place.

We will build two modern and accessible councils for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, at the cutting edge of public service reform and with a deep commitment to transforming the quality of peoples' lives. Our aim is to exploit the efficiency opportunities presented by LGR to put local government services on a firmer financial footing, and build places where everyone feels empowered, and can achieve their full potential.

Working closely with our East Midlands Mayor and being aligned with EMCCA's Spatial Development Zones, our proposed two new north-south councils will enhance the delivery of economic growth, housing and infrastructure.

They will be better positioned to provide co-ordinated, easy to access and high-quality services that meet the everyday needs and expectations of residents. This means focusing on what matters most: keeping communities clean and safe, and supporting people to live healthy, happy, and independent lives.

What our residents want

> "All I really want my council to do is get the basics right – keep the streets clean, pick up my bins without leaving a mess, fix potholes, and keep me and my family safe. Anything else on top of this is a bonus."
>
> *- Urban participant, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's LGR engagement exercise.*

Through the public engagement, around 80 percent of respondents emphasised the importance of delivering good value and reliable core services. These include maintaining roads and pavements, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, keeping streets clean, and ensuring effective travel and transport. Value for money and meeting local needs were also key priorities.

The two councils will help to simplify and unify public services across our whole area and enable greater service integration and innovation, while building on the strengths of the current nine councils and other public and voluntary and community sector partners.

The new councils will value our local identity, recognise what makes our different communities unique, and celebrate the qualities that connect them. Engagement will be at the heart of what we do, so that everybody has a voice.

Stronger together, both new councils have an opportunity to shape a brighter future for all.

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OUR CORE VALUES

These values underpin our aspirations for how our new unitary councils will operate - they will shape culture, behaviours and ethos of our new unitaries:

ACCOUNTABILITY	Replacing the current two-tier system with a single point of democratic and service accountability in each area. This will make it easier for residents and partners to know who is responsible for what, with simpler decision-making and clearer leadership.
TRANSPARENCY	We operate openly, with accessible information, clear performance data and meaningful community engagement.
INCLUSION	We are committed to serving all citizens, promoting equal opportunities, and ensuring no one is left behind.
RESPECT FOR LOCAL IDENTITY	We value the distinctiveness of neighbourhoods, towns and villages, and ensure that local voices are heard and matter.
SUSTAINABILITY	We deliver services in a financially and environmentally sustainable way, planning for the long term.
SERVICE-FOCUS	Our priority is delivering high-quality services to residents and businesses, continuously improving and being responsive to change.
RESPECTFUL AND CARING	We treat everyone with compassion, dignity, and kindness. We listen with empathy, value diverse perspectives, and act with compassion, especially when supporting those who need us most.
PROFESSIONAL AND TRUSTWORTHY	We deliver on our promises and take pride in our work. We act with integrity, follow through on commitments, and provide reliable, high-quality services that people can trust and depend on.

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OUR PRINCIPLES

Our principles will guide our behaviour and decision-making; they are aspirational and ambitious. These principles are also reflected in our proposed target operating model, outlined later in this proposal.

CUSTOMER-FIRST

We put people at the heart of everything we do. We listen actively, respond promptly, and design services around the needs of our residents, ensuring every interaction is helpful and respectful.

COLLABORATIVE: WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE MORE

We build strong relationships across teams, communities, and partners, sharing knowledge, supporting one another, and co-creating solutions that make a difference. Adopt a 'Team Nottinghamshire' approach to issues that cross boundaries, such as economic strategy, transport, and climate action. Our model provides closer alignment with the EMMCA to support the delivery of devolution ambitions.

DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

By working with businesses, creating conditions for inclusive growth, aligning services with local strengths and opportunities that support employment, skills and investment.

DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY, EFFICIENT, AND SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

Our model will be underpinned by financial resilience and innovation.

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OUR PRINCIPLES CONT.

ROOTED IN COMMUNITIES

To improve outcomes for residents, through more responsive, place-based, and preventative service delivery.

PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION, AND JOINED-UP SERVICES

By bringing services under one roof councils can, through a holistic view, intervene earlier (for example, connecting housing, social care and health) and reduce duplication or gaps. Through working with partners, VCSE and community assets to deliver targeted prevention tailored to priority needs and ambitions. This approach will deliver a long-term reduction in the reliance on public services - developing community capacity to self-serve. Early prevention prevents cost escalation.

LOCAL IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

To protect and celebrate the distinctive identities of our city, towns, and rural communities. Local communities are engaged, empowered and supported; decisions are taken closer to people, services are responsive to local needs, and residents feel a strong sense of ownership and identity.

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One of our most important priorities for reorganisation is that the services from the new councils are 'safe and legal' from day one. As we transition to the new councils, we will ensure that everyone currently receiving support from services continues to do so and will not fall through any gaps during this period of change.

Whilst service continuity will be the primary focus for vesting day, our vision goes beyond this; we are also looking ahead to the transformation opportunities. We believe that reorganisation is the foundation for extensive transformation in the longer-term including, driving closer regional collaboration, more efficient use of funds and assets, enhanced community empowerment and engagement, and new ways of working, exploiting digital advantages.

We believe we have set out a strong vision for the two new councils to progress. This includes the principles and values which we recommend the new authorities work to, aligned with our proposed target operating model.

NORTH - SOUTH

CRITERIA



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BESTWOOD COLLIERY, GEDLING

GOVERNMENT CRITERION 1:

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

This section outlines that we are seeking to replace the existing two-tier system across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with two single unitary authorities, one for the north and one for the south. We propose each unitary assumes full responsibility for services currently delivered by both district, city, and county councils.

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We acknowledge that the current two-tier structure creates duplication, confusion over responsibilities, and inefficiencies in service provision. We firmly believe, in line with the government's ambition, that a single-tier model will enable clear leadership, streamlined decision-making, and coherent strategic planning across the entire area.

Being based on sensible economic geographies, that incorporate shared infrastructure and places of employment, our proposal will enable more effective collaboration on, and delivery of, large-scale priorities such as housing and transport.

LGR provides an unparalleled opportunity to design a system of local government that is aligned to our functional economic geographies and connects people and places in a way that meets their everyday lives. In utilising their new powers over these wider geographies, the new unitary authorities will deliver on government's national ambitions to improve housing development, accelerate infrastructure delivery, and drive economic growth.

OUR PROPOSED MODEL

Our north-south model leverages the unique economic identities and connectivity of the north and south, driving sustainable development, maximising local growth - and critically - best serving our local communities.

Our north-south model offers a clear and coherent structure:

- **Local representation and identity** - maintaining strong urban and rural representation, ensuring governance is responsive to diverse communities and supports inclusive growth.

- **Clear and accountable governance** - establishes a single-tier structure with the scale and capacity to deliver improved services and devolved powers efficiently.
- **Aligned with economic geographies** - reflects functional economic areas but also supports inclusive growth in the East Midlands.
- **Accelerates housing delivery** - better aligns with housing market areas, enabling more responsive planning, unlocking stalled development, addresses localised housing need and supports the national ambition to build 1.5 million homes.
- **Improved public service integration** - facilitates joined up working across health, social care, public protection, housing and neighbourhood services, enhancing coordination and accountability, and enabling a more targeted local response.
- **Connectivity** - aligns travel geographies with unitary boundaries to enable integrated transport planning which improves connectivity and mobility.
- **Evidence-based and engaged** - built on robust analysis and stakeholder engagement, with clear outcomes and demonstrable benefits.

LOCAL REPRESENTATION AND IDENTITY

Our north-south model provides a balanced single tier solution offering a sensible economic area and a sensible geographic area.



Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Rushcliffe



Testing for Gas Monument, Silverhill Wood, Ashfield

The South

The vibrant City of Nottingham and suburb of Broxtowe is home to our two esteemed universities; the bustling suburb of West Bridgford, which forms part of Rushcliffe is home to Premier League Nottingham Forest and the internationally renowned Trent Bridge cricket ground; the tranquil Vale of Belvoir nestling in the far south of Nottinghamshire also forms part of Rushcliffe and borders Leicestershire.

The North

The northern boroughs of Gedling, Ashfield, Newark and Sherwood, Bassetlaw, and Mansfield are steeped in a shared history of coal mining, rural market towns and manufacturing, and borders Derbyshire, South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, which share rural characteristics and shared historical and economic ties.

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CONNECTIVITY

Our north-south model aligns more effectively with Nottinghamshire's geography and transport connectivity, supporting smarter planning and more impactful delivery. The map below illustrates areas of the county that can be reached within a 30-minute drive from West Bridgford (Rushcliffe).[15] It clearly demonstrates that the southern part of the county enjoys significantly better access to the city, with higher volumes of residents commuting for work, education, shopping, and leisure. This reflects a well-established pattern of movement and economic integration that supports the case for a South Nottinghamshire authority.

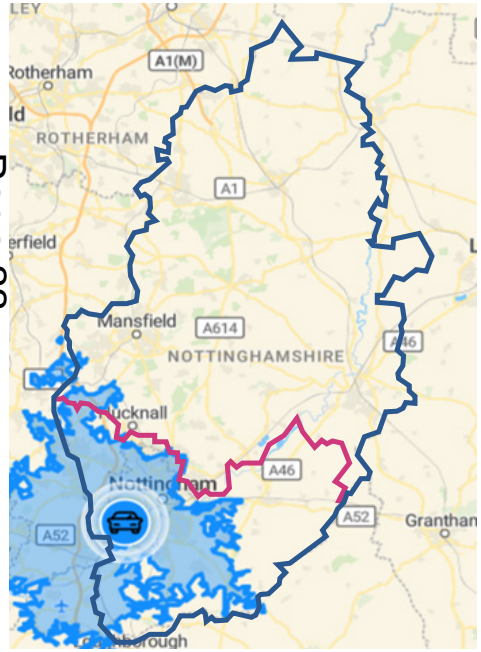


Figure 13 : *Map showing the 30-minutes driving time from West Bridgford, emphasising the link with this area, the city, and wider south region.*

15 App.traveltime.com

In the northern part of the county, areas such as Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood serve as major employment centres, with 55 percent of Mansfield's workforce and 59 percent of Newark and Sherwood's workforce employed locally. These figures highlight the presence of self-contained, localised economies, with more modest cross-district commuting flows. This reinforces the rationale for a North Nottinghamshire authority that can focus on enhancing connectivity between dispersed communities and supporting inclusive growth in more rural and post-industrial areas.

By aligning travel geographies within their respective unitary authorities, our north-south model, enables targeted investment in transport infrastructure, supports efforts to reduce congestion and carbon emissions, and fosters greater mobility, particularly in areas at risk of rural isolation. It also allows for more coherent planning around public transport, active travel, and strategic road networks, ensuring that connectivity improvements are tailored to the distinct needs of each part of the county.

Other options attempt to plan transport and connectivity across a proposed urban vs rural geography that spans the extremes of Nottinghamshire, from the northernmost villages in Bassetlaw to the southern edge of Rushcliffe. It would be inefficient, fragmented, and misaligned with existing travel patterns.

Our north-south model offers a more logical and effective framework for delivering integrated, place-based connected transport solutions that support economic growth and community wellbeing.

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ALIGNED WITH ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHIES AND SUPPORTS EAST MIDLANDS GROWTH

Economic geographies

Our north-south model would better support local growth within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's communities by aligning governance with distinct economic geographies and settlement patterns. The northern districts such as Mansfield, Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood, and mid/north Gedling share a common industrial heritage, infrastructure, labour market characteristics, and easier workforce mobility, while the southern area including Nottingham City, Broxtowe and key parts of Rushcliffe, are more urbanised and service-orientated.

By creating two unitary authorities, each can focus on the specific growth drivers, challenges, and opportunities within their area, enabling more targeted investment, responsive planning, and effective critical infrastructure and employment initiatives. This structure also reduces fragmentation, simplifies decision-making, and importantly strengthens strategic alignment with the EMCCA.

Real life case study - Ellie from Newark



Community engagement on regeneration scheme, Newark

Ellie is a Senior Regeneration Officer who works with communities and partners to identify systemic challenges. Ellie will be able to work with Council colleagues to ensure priorities and approaches are aligned, including engagement with partners and community leaders. The two unitary councils in the north and south will leverage common shared challenges across similar geographies and market towns to drive regeneration outcomes, ultimately removing barriers and improving lives for residents and businesses.

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East Midlands growth

The Inclusive Growth Commission[16] has developed a spatial framework to guide inclusive growth across the East Midlands, shaping decisions on industrial policy, skills development, spatial planning, and social policy. Our model offers a closer alignment between the boundaries of the proposed unitary authorities and these strategic growth areas, ensuring that governance structures are fit for purpose and capable of delivering on regional priorities.

Our proposed north-south model also mirrors the geographical logic of LGR proposals in Derbyshire, creating a coherent north-south structure across the wider region. Our model ensures that the 'Trent Arc' growth corridor is fully contained within the South Nottinghamshire unitary, allowing a single Local Planning Authority (LPA) to lead on the mayor's growth agenda for this area. In contrast, other options would fragment the 'Trent Arc' across multiple LPAs, requiring complex joint-working arrangements that risk slowing down delivery and diluting accountability. By consolidating strategic growth zones such as the 'Canal Corridor' and 'Super Cluster' within clearly defined unitary boundaries, our proposal provides the governance clarity and operational capacity needed to unlock investment and drive inclusive growth across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and the wider East Midlands.

Priority	New Council	Growth Opportunities
Trent Arc	South Nottinghamshire	• Nottingham City Centre • Toton and Chetwynd • Ratcliffe Power Station (Freeport)
	South Derbyshire	• Infinity Park Investment Zone and South Derbyshire Growth Zone • Willington Power Station • East Midlands Intermodal Park (EMIP) • Derby City Centre
Canal Corridor	North Nottinghamshire	• Explore Park Investment Zone
	North Derbyshire	• Explore Park Investment Zone • Markham Vale Enterprise Zone • Chesterfield Town Centre • Hartington and Staveley Investment Zone
Super Cluster	North Nottinghamshire	• West Burton Power Station • Cottam Power Station • High Marnham Power Station

Figure 14 : *Table showing the alignment of strategic growth priorities in north-south proposals for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.*

16 https://www.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/what-we-do/the-economy/the-igc/

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ACCELERATES HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Our north-south model offers a more effective framework for planning and delivering housing growth across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Under our proposal, Nottingham City will have a longer-term housing land supply to grow, supported by a high volume of planning permissions and a strong track record of brownfield redevelopment. This capacity provides a solid foundation for meeting local housing needs and reducing pressure on greenbelt land surrounding the city.

As shown in figure 15, the unitaries created within option 1b and 1e that include Nottingham City have a positive supply of housing. This reflects the plentiful supply of permissions and the estimated level of windfall development which reflects the high-level of brownfield land redevelopment in the city. The removal of the uplift from Nottingham City's housing target has also provided headroom in the city's housing land supply. Under our proposal, South Nottinghamshire has a greater supply because of the inclusion of the allocations within Rushcliffe around the south of Nottingham built-up area. This, combined with the joint 'Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan'[17] already being developed by Broxtowe, Nottingham, and Rushcliffe, provides a coordinated approach to managing growth across the wider urban area.

17 www.gnplan.org.uk/

1b 'Expanded City' and 1e South Nottinghamshire have undersupply against local housing need over the 15-year period. However, this reflects the increase in requirements which has occurred following the review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), a new standard methodology for housing, and the current progress various authorities have made in their plan making.

In terms of the long-term potential to increase housing supply, our north-south model provides the best opportunity to plan appropriately for new housing. While it is anticipated that Nottingham City will continue to deliver growth, reflected in the windfall allowances in both 1e and 1b options, significant growth will need to be accommodated beyond this. This will be harder to achieve in 1b as it is smaller and constrained by tighter boundaries and significant physical constraints such as the flood plain and ridge lines.



Aerial shot of Broxtowe.

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Authority	Local housing need (dw/pa)	15-year need	Known housing supply over next 15-year (dw)				Difference
			Permitted	Windfall	LP Allocations	Total	
1b Expanded City	2,562	38,430	20,400	15,300	8,000	8,000	+7,395
1b Rest of Nottinghamshire	3,186	47,790	17,400	7,100	20,290	20,290	-3,000
1e South Nottinghamshire	2,787	41,805	21,800	16,400	12,400	12,400	+8,795
1e North Nottinghamshire	2,961	44,415	16,000	6,000	15,890	15,890	-6,525

Figure 15 : *Table showing housing need and supply in the proposed new councils - Option 1b and 1e.*[18]

Looking ahead, our north-south model offers the best opportunity to plan for long-term housing delivery. The scale and geographical coherence of these new authorities allow for strategic planning across a polycentric region, with growth potential in key settlements such as Mansfield, Worksop, and Newark, as well as in former mining communities. These areas are well-positioned to accommodate future development, supported by infrastructure investment and aligned with the EMCCA's 'Inclusive Growth Strategy.'

18 *It should be noted that figure 15 is a snapshot in time, based on a range of data which changes on a yearly basis including commitments, completions and windfall assessments. The undersupply shown against local housing need over the 15-year period reflects the increase in requirements which has occurred following the introduction of a new standard methodology for the calculation of local housing need, and the current point in plan making that the various authorities are at.*

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Importantly, the EMCCA's emerging 'Heartlands Strategy' recognises the diversity of the region and advocates for a community-led, place-based approach to planning. This aligns with our proposal, which enables tailored housing strategies that reflect local character, capacity, and ambition, rather than a one-size-fits-all model.

In summary, our north-south model provides the scale, flexibility, and strategic alignment needed to accelerate housing delivery, unlock stalled sites, and support inclusive, sustainable growth across Nottinghamshire. Looking ahead, our north-south model offers the best opportunity to plan for long-term housing delivery, and in turn, addressing housing need. The scale and geographical coherence of these new authorities allow for strategic planning across a polycentric region, with growth potential in key settlements such as Mansfield,

EVIDENCE-BASED AND ENGAGED

Our north-south proposal is underpinned by an evidence-led approach that draws on extensive data analysis, strategic modelling, best practice, and local insights. It reflects a deep understanding of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's functional economic geographies, service delivery patterns, and community needs.

The development of our north-south model has been informed by quantitative assessments including housing supply, transport flows, employment patterns, and public service integration, as well as qualitative engagement with stakeholders across the region. Councils, community groups, service providers, and residents have contributed to shaping a model that is not only technically sound but also locally supported.

The outcomes of this engagement are reflected in our proposal's alignment with lived geographies, its responsiveness to local identity, and its capacity to deliver demonstrable benefits in terms of efficiency, accountability, and inclusive growth. This is a proposal that has been co-designed with communities and stakeholders, ensuring it is both credible and deliverable.

CONCLUSION

This proposal presents a compelling and deliverable solution to LGR across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. By replacing the current two-tier system with two new unitary authorities, one for the north and one for the south, we meet the government's requirement to establish a single tier of local government for the whole area.

Developed through extensive engagement and grounded in local insight, our proposal reflects the voices and priorities of local communities and is built on functional economic and 'sensible geographies' that support the future growth of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Unlike alternative options, which risk fragmentation and delay, our proposal is ready to implement, using existing boundaries and relationships to ensure a smooth transition. It avoids artificial restructuring and instead builds on established connections, maximising impact, minimising disruption, and delivering value from day one.

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GOVERNMENT CRITERION 2:

Unitary government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

This section outlines our financial business case development, which has been through a rigorous process with the engagement of all councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including Section 151 Officers, representing each option.

It was agreed at an early stage by all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire section 151 Officers that PwC would be engaged to create a common set of assumptions that all councils would use as a baseline for options 1b and 1e. We have engaged CIPFA to develop detailed financial schedules, review our assumptions and assess risk and financial sustainability by applying CIPFA's financial resilience index.

As part of CIPFA's support, they used their experience from supporting previous reorganisations, their template, and supporting guidance to assess the reasonableness of the draft financial considerations in proposals. This included applying modelling principles, tolerances and an assessment of materiality in determining what was proportionate and should be included. It also included determining the reasonableness of the base information needed to consider costs and savings from transition to new councils and the incremental costs and differences between options. The MHCLG approved template produced by CIPFA has been completed for the proposals to provide a further sense check.

Independent consultant

In addition, we engaged Peopletoo who have substantial sector experience and are working with many other LGR footprints, to undertake a detailed analysis of the critical demand services in ASC and Children's services (including Special Educational Needs) to assess future cost and risk but critically how a local offer can mitigate those costs and risks and be truly transformational.

There is minimal difference between the baseline financial position of the options being proposed for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. However, the 'sensible geography', together with the delivery model for future services, in this north-south proposal will drive through realisable efficiencies along with real service transformation, ensuring that both unitary authorities deliver improved services and outcomes to our residents that are financially sustainable over the long term.

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OUR APPROACH

We have created a shared financial baseline across both proposals (options 1b and 1e) as developed by PwC that assesses:

1 Baseline LGR year 1 position:

- Utilised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projections for each council for income, expenditure, reserves, grants and Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).
- Added in funding pressures known for 2025/26 in ASC for Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council totalling £25 million.
- Additional costs for staff pay alignment included as an approximation.

2 Impact of LGR:

- Recurring benefits through aggregation of staff including senior leadership, third party spend, property running costs, councillors and elections.
- Transition costs including organisational change, redundancy costs and capacity and expertise required.
- Staff on-costs and terms and conditions changes are not included.
- No benefits from Nottingham City Council aggregation are included.

3 LGR transformation:

- Post re-organisation transformation including harmonisation of ICT technology and systems and new operating models impacting staff and third party spend.

4 Assessment of financial balance for new unitary authorities:

- Assessment of assets (general fund and housing revenue account (HRA)) and liabilities being long term and borrowing costs.

5 Council tax harmonisation:

- Analysis to project impact of different scenarios for council tax harmonisation.

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The same set of financial assumptions has been applied consistently to both proposals. As both options involve the creation of two unitary authorities comprising the same set of councils differing only in their geographic configuration, the overall baseline financial benefits and costs are broadly comparable. Any variation between the two is minimal and not considered material in the context of the wider proposal. As a result, we have not compared 1e to 1b in this financial section for the core financial baseline outcomes. The detailed analysis carried out by PwC of both proposals is set out at appendix 1 alongside the CIPFA financial analysis – the key points from these documents are referred to in this section.

We are seizing the opportunity of LGR, to explore transformation opportunities beyond the standard organisational and corporate metrics used by PwC. We believe that LGR is an enabler for greater change to positively impact resident outcomes as well as deliver significant financial benefits.

We have added further financial opportunities from detailed analysis of ASC and children's services across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire as outlined in criteria three and appendix 2. However, we have not quantified the range of further transformation opportunities referenced throughout this proposal. The opportunities already proposed and referred to in criteria three of this proposal, will support the financial sustainability and mitigating financial risk for our north-south model whilst improving services and outcomes for our residents, enabling future investment in our communities.

KEY FINANCIAL CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Collectively, the lower-tier district and borough councils, alongside the upper-tier Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City councils, account for a significant share of public sector spending across the region with MTFS 2025/26 forecasts showing gross income of £1.13 billion and expenditure of £1.16 billion across all councils, leaving a forecasted shortfall of £25 million.

1e Proposal North-South-Outturn 2024/2025

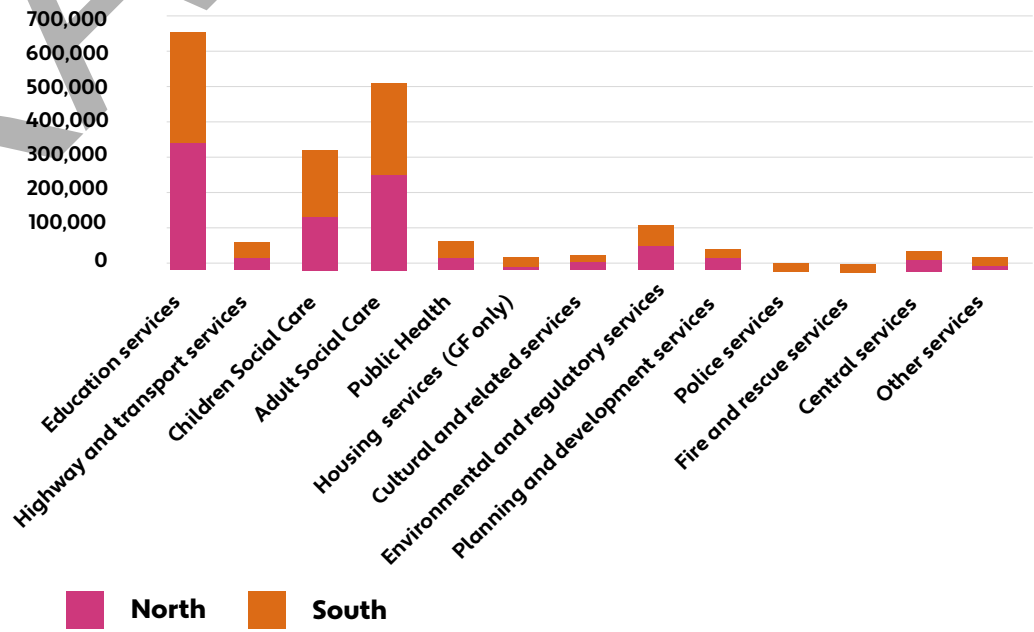


Figure 16: *Graph showing the revenue outturn summary 2024/25.*

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Councils have financial challenges over the four-year MTFS period to 2028/29 amounting to a potential cumulative deficit of £234 million and an annual deficit run rate of £83 million. Of this, Nottingham City Council has a cumulative deficit of £147 million and an annual deficit by 2028/29 of £55 million.

Furthermore, the analysis shows an increasing reduction in reserves, inheriting the EFS position of Nottingham City Council of £100 million potentially over the base MTFS period. The financial model prepared by PwC includes levels of reserves and debt as per the approved 2025/26 MTFS period. The most recent 2026/27 MTFS position for Nottingham City Council shows a significant improvement in reserves and debt. Nottingham City Council have confirmed that their EFS position will have used only £25.5 million over three years, all comfortably met from capital receipts with no further requirement. This has allowed reserves to increase and debt to reduce.

The approach and aims of our financial business case:

- Deal with financial challenges and become more efficient and move to financial sustainability including across people-based services over a five-year period.
- Address the current challenges in ASC and children's services through a more localised and integrated offer, achieving real transformation working with partners and focusing on the needs of those that depend upon these services.
- Be evidenced-based on what has worked in the sector and instil best practice, balance ambition with pragmatism of what can be achieved but foster an environment of innovation and continuous improvement.
- Recognise that the new unitary authorities and democratic process will inform the financial strategy and make key decisions that will impact on the financial business case but believe that this represents a strong baseline from which new unitary authorities can plan.
- Assumes 'safe and legal' authority from day one.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Whilst this proposal focuses on General Fund Services, six of the nine authorities within Nottinghamshire have Housing Revenue Accounts, each currently with a sustainable 30-year business plan. These documents describe how they will maintain, improve and provide services to the circa 54,000 Council houses across the County, over the short, medium and longer terms. This includes forecasting future demand and ensuring that current and future tenants' needs can be met through the maintenance of the existing stock and delivery of new build Council House programmes.

Rushcliffe and Gedling are the only authorities in Nottinghamshire without Housing Revenue Accounts. Under our option, Gedling is included in the northern authority and Rushcliffe in the southern authority; under Option 1b, this arrangement is reversed. Consequently, the initial impact of the creation of the two new authorities would remain constant in either option.

As with the General Fund, it is expected that proportionate similar efficiencies will be generated within the Housing Revenue Account, which would be ringfenced solely to delivering better quality services for tenants, ensuring future government legislation is implemented to safeguard tenants and ensuring the provision of decent homes for those that require them.

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SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL BUSINESS CASE

Our north-south model will deliver a cumulative positive net benefit of £485 million over the first five years post-vesting day and annual net positive recurring benefits of £148 million from year five onwards. This excludes the real and substantial transformation opportunities that we have identified in our business case and set out below in our financial business case. Critically, both new unitary authorities under our north-south proposal have a very positive net benefit position.

North (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood)					
Financial Year	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Year after vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Aggregation Benefit	£7,028,146	£11,713,577	£23,427,154	£23,427,154	£23,427,154
Transition Costs	£6,470,685	£6,470,685	£6,470,685	£2,156,895	£0
Net Aggregation Benefit	£557,461	£5,242,892	£16,956,469	£21,270,259	£23,427,154
Transformation Benefit (Base and Scenario c)	£8,466,544	£16,933,088	£33,866,175	£33,866,175	£33,866,175
Transformation Cost (Base and Scenario c)	£6,499,186	£6,499,186	£1,624,796	£1,624,796	£0
Net Transformation Benefit	£1,967,358	£10,433,902	£32,241,379	£32,241,379	£33,866,175
Adult Social Care/Children's Social Care Savings Benefit	£4,586,400	£11,466,000	£22,932,000	£22,932,000	£22,932,000
Net Benefit	£7,111,219	£27,142,794	£72,129,848	£76,443,638	£80,225,329
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	£7,111,219	£34,254,031	£106,383,861	£182,827,498	£263,052,827

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Figure 17: *Table showing the financial summary for north-south model.*

South (Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe)					
Financial Year	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Year after vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Aggregation Benefit	£2,143,676	£3,572,794	£7,145,588	£7,145,588	£7,145,588
Transition Costs	£4,136,932	£4,136,932	£4,136,932	£1,378,977	£0
Net Aggregation Benefit	-£1,933,256	-£564,138	£3,008,656	£5,766,611	£7,145,588
Transformation Benefit (Base and Scenario c)	£8,440,250	£16,880,501	£33,761,001	£33,761,001	£33,761,001
Transformation Cost (Base and Scenario c)	£6,509,521	£6,509,521	£1,627,380	£1,627,380	£0
Net Transformation Benefit	£1,930,729	£10,370,980	£32,133,621	£32,133,621	£33,761,001
Adult Social Care/Children's Social Care Savings Benefit	£5,333,600	£13,334,000	£26,668,000	£26,668,000	£26,668,000
Net Benefit	£5,271,073	£23,140,842	£61,810,277	£64,568,232	£67, 574,589
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	£5,271,073	£28,411,915	£90,222,192	£154,790,424	£222,365,013

Total North - South					
Financial Year	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Year after vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Net Benefit	£12,382,293	£50,283,635	£133,940,124	£141,011,870	£147,799,918
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	£12,382,293	£62,665,928	£196,606,052	£337,617,922	£485,417,840

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Figure 17 continued: *Table showing the financial summary for north-south model.*

The summary agreed financial business case assumptions from PwC has been built on three key elements:

1. Year one new unitary authorities' model which is in effect 2028/29 and year four of the current MTFS for each council.
2. Benefits and costs of aggregation.
3. Benefits and costs of further transformation through operating models and technology.

We have considered the opportunities and benefits of a more targeted and local offer for ASC and children's services and have included the quantifiable elements within our financial analysis.

We have also identified a range of true transformation opportunities that will add significant financial benefits and enhance our financial business case, ensuring long term financial sustainability and improved outcomes for our residents. This includes factoring in the benefits of aggregating Nottingham City Council into the north-south proposal. No benefits have been attributed to Nottingham City Council in the aggregation and further transformation analysis by PwC.

We have not included the potential to rationalise our property estate other than some reduction in revenue running costs. The balance sheet value of our combined assets is £6.4 billion and based on sector evidence post LGR, we would be targeting a capital rationalisation and repurposing of between 15-30 percent with a similar reduction in property operational costs.

Council tax harmonisation impact has also been assessed as has debt and reserves.



Nursery school children on a trip out in Nottingham.

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YEAR 1 NEW UNITARY AUTHORITIES' BASELINE 2028/29

Some adjustments have been made for in-year cost pressures in 2025/26 in ASC of £25 million across Nottingham City, which are due to issues with the ICB and could be avoided in future years.

Council	Income -2025/26	Expenditure -2025/2026	Net Difference	Income -2028/2029	Expenditure -2028/2029	Net Difference
Nottinghamshire County	£668,400,000	£668,408,000	-£8,000	£771,500,000	£776,900,000	-£5,400,000
Bassetlaw	£24,757,900	£24,757,900	£0	£19,027,600	£22,014,900	-£2,987,300
Ashfield	£17,764,000	£22,017,000	-£4,253,000	£14,899,000	£24,837,000	-£9,938,000
Broxtowe	£14,182,000	£15,429,000	-£1,247,000	£15,147,000	£17,395,000	-£2,248,000
Gedling	£15,527,921	£15,584,200	-£56,279	£14,913,015	£15,043,858	-£130,843
Mansfield	£17,334,000	£17,572,000	-£238,000	£17,703,000	£20,948,000	-£3,245,000
Newark and Sherwood	£20,647,000	£20,647,000	£0	£19,950,000	£22,629,000	-£2,679,000
Rushcliffe	£19,888,700	£16,338,900	£3,549,800	£15,445,800	£16,263,200	-£817,400
Nottingham City	£331,800,000	£355,068,000	-£23,268,000	£354,307,000	£409,835,000	-£55,528,000
Total	**£1,130,301,521**	**£1,155,822,000**	**-£25,520,479**	**£1,242,892,415**	**£1,325,865,958**	**-£82,973,543**

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Figure 18: *Table showing the current baseline MTFS financial year 2025/26 before LGR impact and the projected year one financial baseline for 2028/29.*

AGGREGATION BENEFITS AND COSTS ANALYSIS

The detailed calculations and assumptions can be found in appendix 1.

The aggregation benefits include savings from senior leadership and staff reductions, economies of scale across third party spend, property operational running cost savings and democratic savings.

Transition costs are well established categories covering closedown of existing councils and setting up of new unitary authorities, IT and systems costs, external and internal transition, design and implementation support, staff redundancy costs and salary alignment and a contingency buffer.

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North Nottinghamshire (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood)					
Financial Year	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**2031/32**	**2032/33**
Year after vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Annual Benefit	**£7,028,146**	**£11,713,577**	**£23,427,154**	**£23,427,154**	**£23,427,154**
Yearly Cost	**£6,470,685**	**£6,470,685**	**£6,470,685**	**£2,156,895**	**£0**
Cumulative Benefit	**£7,028,146**	**£18,741,723**	**£42,168,877**	**£65,596,032**	**£89,023,186**
Cumulative Cost	**£6,470,685**	**£12,941,371**	**£19,412,056**	**£21,568,951**	**£21,568,951**
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	**£557,461**	**£5,800,353**	**£22,756,821**	**£44,027,080**	**£67,454,234**
Payback period	**0.92 years**				

Figure 19: *Table showing the summary of the benefits, costs of aggregation and the phasing assumptions, based on the PwC analysis and numbers.*

South Nottinghamshire (Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe)					
Financial Year	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**2031/32**	**2032/33**
Year after vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Annual Benefit	**£2,143,676**	**£3,572,794**	**£7,145,588**	**£7,145,588**	**£7,145,588**
Yearly Cost	**£4,136,932**	**£4,136,932**	**£4,136,932**	**£1,378,977**	**£0**
Cumulative Benefit	**£2,143,676**	**£ 5,716,470**	**£12,862,058**	**£20,007,645**	**£27,153,233**
Cumulative Cost	**£4,136,932**	**£8,273,864**	**£12,410,797**	**£13,789,774**	**£13,789,774**
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	**-£1,993,256**	**-£2,557,394**	**£451,261**	**£6,217,871**	**£13,363,459**
Payback period	**2.85 years**				
Total: North and South Cumulative Net Benefit	**-£1,435,795**	**£3,242,959**	**£23,208,082**	**£50,244,951**	**£80,817,693**
Aggregation benefits profile	**30%**	**50%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Aggregation cost profile	**30%**	**30%**	**30%**	**10%**	**0%**

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Figure 19 continued: *Table showing the summary of the benefits, costs of aggregation and the phasing assumptions, based on the PwC analysis and numbers.*

The table above shows a positive net benefit of £81 million over five years across both unitary authorities and an annual benefit of £31 million from year five onwards. The payback period in the north unitary being 0.92 years and in the south unitary 2.85 years. This represents a marginal improvement for the south compared to option 1b where the pay back is 0.91 years for the north unitary and 3.03 years for the south unitary.

FURTHER TRANSFORMATION THROUGH OPERATING MODELS AND TECHNOLOGY: BENEFITS COST ANALYSIS

There are additional benefits which the new unitary authorities could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models. These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above.

The scope of transformation savings would need to be defined by the new unitary authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

Benefits are drawn from three areas:

- **Staffing** - aggregation of roles including senior leadership, realisable through operating model transformation and digital investment.
- **Third party spend** - reduced reliance on third party spend through transformation of commissioning, procurement and digital estate.
- **Income** - transformation of commercial capabilities to derive more income (for example from assets).

The costs are calculated based on transformation programme costs from other local authorities and public sector organisations.

In terms of the phasing of financial benefits and costs from these transformation activities, PwC developed the modelling under three scenarios of phasing costs. Our model has selected the scenario C option, as outlined in appendix 1, which defers transformation costs more in line with benefits. We feel this better reflects the timing that benefits will be derived from digital technology and related costs. This would be aligned with realising aggregation benefits and our plans for more radical and innovative transformation. Other scenarios applied costs earlier including 100 percent in year one or between that and our option as shown below.

The modelling also considers a 'base' case and a 'stretch' target. For the same reasons of being cautious, we have used the 'base' not 'stretch' in our summary financial model.

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Benefit Area	Base Savings Assumption	Stretch Savings Assumption	North - Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood		South - Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe	
			100% of Base benefits	100% of Stretch Benefits	100% of Base benefits	100% of Stretch Benefits
Front of office FTE reduction	6.00%	10.00%	£14,943,213	£22,038,343	£15,029,340	£22,165,364
Service Delivery FTE reduction	3.00%	5.00%				
Back office FTE reduction	7.00%	8.00%				
Third Party Spend (TPS) reduction	2.50%	3.00%	£10,627,682	£12,753,218	£10,869,340	£13,043,208
Income uplift (SFC,commercial) uplift	1.30%	1.70%	£8,295,280	£10,847,674	£7, 862,321	£10,281,497
Cost Area						
IT investment costs			£4,550,000	£9,100,000	£4,550,000	£9,100,000
Operating Model Construct and Change			£4,550,000	£5,850,000	£4,550,000	£5,850,000
Programme Support Costs			£1,300,000	£1,950,000	£1,300,000	£1,950,000
Contingency			£1,365,000	£2,242,500	£1,365,000	£2,242,500
Redundancy costs			£4,482,964	£6,611,503	£4,508,802	£6,649,609

Figure 20: *Table showing the core benefits and cost assumptions of the assumed transformation of the north-south model.*

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Net Summary base					
Financial Year	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Year after vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Total Benefits	£16,906,794	£33,813,588	£67,627,176	£67,627,176	£67,627,176
North (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood)	£8,466,544	£16,933,088	£33,866,175	£33,866,175	£33,866,175
South (Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe)	£8,440,250	£16,880,501	£33,761,001	£33,761,001	£33,761,001
North Total Costs	£6,499,186	£6,499,186	£1,624,796	£1,624,796	£0
South Total Costs	£6,509,521	£6,509,521	£1,627,380	£1,627,380	£0
Transformation benefits profile	25%	50%	100%	100%	100%
Transformation costs profile	40%	40%	10%	10%	0%
Payback period North	Less than 1 year				
Payback period South	Less than 1 year				

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Figure 21: *Table to show the impact of applying the lowest phasing of benefits and costs.*

Net Summary stretch					
Financial Year	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Year after vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Total Benefits	£22,782,326	£45,564,652	£91,129,304	£91,129,304	£91,129,304
North (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood)	£11,409,809	£22,819,618	£45,639,235	£45,639,235	£45,639,235
South (Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe)	£11,372,517	£22,745,035	£45,490,069	£45,490,069	£45,490,069
North Total Costs	£10,301,601	£10,301,601	£2,575,400	£2,575,400	£0
South Total Costs	£10,316,844	£10,316,844	£2,579,211	£2,579,211	£0
Transformation benefits profile	25%	50%	100%	100%	100%
Transformation costs profile	40%	40%	10%	10%	0%
Payback period North	Less than 1 year				
Payback period South	Less than 1 year				

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Figure 21 continued: *Table to show the impact of applying the lowest phasing of benefits and costs.*

TRANSFORMATION OF ADULTS' AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES THROUGH THE LOCAL OFFER

Peopletoo have undertaken detailed analysis of current ASC and children's services demand and care costs across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Further information is outlined in criteria three with further detail at appendix 2.

Peopletoo have an extensive knowledge of ASC and children's services, and have worked with many counties, unitary authorities and recently formed unitary authorities such as Cumbria and North Northamptonshire post LGR. We know that the creation of the north-south model presents a significant opportunity to reduce both the demand and cost of care in these new authorities.

In ASC by addressing longstanding gaps in service provision across Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, which undoubtedly contributed to the high reliance on residential care, we can prevent or delay admissions to residential care, enabling vulnerable adults to remain within their communities:

- Bringing residential admissions for older age adults back in line (allowing for growth) with 'NHS nearest neighbours' will provide a gross annual saving of £2.8 million.
- Bringing residential admissions for working age adults back in line (allowing for growth) with 'NHS nearest neighbours' will provide a gross annual saving of £20.8 million.

In children's social care we would target our early help and edge of care services to the demographics and challenges that each unitary authority face. We will work on a regional basis across services such as adoption, complex placements and cross border strategies working with some of our most vulnerable families. It will improve outcomes, maximise efficiency and deliver value for money.

By adopting this approach, we firmly believe that we can reduce the current expenditure on CLA in line with other unitary authorities of the same size. Using national benchmarking undertaken by Peopletoo which identifies that the average unit cost for a unitary authority with a population of 500-650k is £1,949 in comparison to the current unit costs in Nottingham City Council of £2,125 and Nottinghamshire County Council £2,475.

If the north-south model achieves what we firmly believe it will, then the weekly CLA costs across the two unitary authorities will reduce by £26 million per annum.

Within the summary financial analysis, we have profiled both the ASC and children's social care savings as 20 percent in year one post-vesting, then 50 percent in year two, and 100 percent in year three allowing time for the new target operating model and commissioning approaches to be embedded.

To mitigate the current in year Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire of £32 million and rising, we believe that by addressing the issues identified in recent inspections, particularly around inclusion, early identification, and access to local services,

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we can improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) while ensuring long-term financial sustainability. The north-south model will enable tailored, localised strategies based on assessed needs and gap analysis, ensuring that young people receive the right support and, wherever possible, are educated within their own communities.

ALIGNMENT TO RESIDENT VIEWS

We have undertaken extensive resident, wider stakeholder and staff engagement to ensure that we focus on what matters in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

We have taken account of specific views expressed through the engagement, in particular:

Residents:

- Calls for efficiency, fairness and a local voice.
- "Getting the basics right" – this has shaped our key principles including ensuring services remain responsive and locally grounded while benefiting from strategic co-ordination and economies of scale.
- Mitigating financial risk of neighbouring councils.
- Minimising service disruption during transition.
- Job losses and staff uncertainty.
- Keeping residents informed.

Wider stakeholders' comments:

- The value of local connection.
- Simplify arrangements for example coordinating funding resources and information sharing.
- Partnership working with the VCSE.



People value their local place and connections. Photograph shows residents playing pentanque outside Titchfield Tea House, Mansfield.

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FAIR FUNDING, DEBT, RESERVES AND FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

Council	Included Fair Funding impact to Income?	Receiving Exceptional Financial Support	Anticipated use of reserves through life of MTFS?	Description
Nottinghamshire County Council	No	No	Yes	The impact of business rates reform, the Fair Funding Review and reforms to social care funding are all acknowledged as risks within the MTFS, but assumed impacts of these changes have not been built into the base budget or MTFS. The 2025/26 budget proposes to directly utilise £46.5 million of reserves over the MTFS period.
Ashfield	Yes	No	Yes (only 2025/26)	Ashfield's MTFS acknowledges the uncertainty from the proposed Fair Funding Review and wider changes to local government finance from 2026/27. As a result, the MTFS models a 'worst case' scenario which projects an annual reduction in income from 2026/27-2027/28 based on the LG Futures financial model. No use of reserves is forecast beyond 2025/26 where £4.253 million reserves is projected to be used to meet an identified funding gap.
Bassetlaw	Yes (in supplementary data return)	No	Yes	Bassetlaw's position reported to its cabinet and budget council in February identified a decline in income over the course of the MTFS which has been confirmed as reflecting anticipated impacts of the Fair Funding Review which will require further identification of savings and/or additional use of reserves. The MTFS sets out an intention to reduce revenue reserves up to March 2029 whilst maintaining a minimum general fund balance of £3 million and a minimum general fund working balance of £1 million over the life of the MTFS.
Broxtowe	No	No	Yes	Broxtowe's MTFS does not model a decrease in revenue support grants from government and presupposes a continuation of current business rate retention mechanisms. While the MTFS assumes a reduction in reserve balance from £4.347 million to -£2.856 million in 2028/29. However, this does not factor in savings and efficiencies set out in the authority's business strategy which sets an expectation of an anticipated budget underspend.

Figure 22: *Table showing the MTFS impact of Fair Funding Settlement, EFS and use of reserves for each council.*

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Council	Included Fair Funding impact to Income?	Receiving Exceptional Financial Support	Anticipated use of reserves through life of MTFS?	Description
Gedling	Yes	No	Yes	Gedling's MTFS does reflect assumed impacts of the Fair Funding Review but this has minimal impact on income, but it does acknowledge outcomes of Fair Funding Review and business rates retention as risks to the MTFS projections. The MTFS assumes transfers from reserves budgets totaling £3.74 million to balance the shortfall between income and expenditure and identifies a need to identify £4.467 million of efficiencies to maintain a balanced MTFS.
Mansfield	Yes (in supplementary data return)	No	No	While Mansfield's published MTFS does not model the impact of fair funding reforms, subsequent data provided by finance leads estimates an increase in income for 2028/29 arising from this. The MTFS does not use reserves to achieve a budget balance (but acknowledges the need to increase reserve balances as a result of depletions over recent years).
Newark and Sherwood	Yes	No	Yes	The MTFS assumes a reduction in government grants from 26/27 as a result of the outcomes from the Fair Funding Review. The MTFS shows a gap in funding from 2025/26 to 2028/29 of £8.882 million. The council has mitigation plans that will deliver savings and generate additional income of £3.186 million. The balance of the shortfall of £5.696 million will be funded by use of the MTFS reserve. This reserve was specifically set up for the purpose of bridging the gap in funding resulting from the Fair Funding Review and the business rates baseline re-set. By the end of 2028/29 it is forecast that this reserve will have a balance remaining of £2.566 million.
Rushcliffe	Yes	No	Yes	The business rates reset has been built into the budget from 2026/27 and assumes no loss due to fairer funding. From 2027/28 the budget includes the effect of a reset and some growth (two percent).
Nottingham City Council	No	Yes	No	A request for EFS was made on 31 December 2024 in accordance with MHCLG deadline for up to a further circa £35 million, being £25 million for 2025/26 and a further £10 million for 2026/27 bringing the total EFS to £100 million. The MTFS does not assume additional use of general fund reserves to balance budgets over and above earmarked reserves over the life of the MTFS.

Figure 22 continued: *Table showing the MTFS impact of Fair Funding Settlement, EFS and use of reserves for each council.*

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As can be seen from the above table, there is an inconsistency in the treatment of the potential impact of the Fair Funding Review with some authorities building it into their MTFS assumptions, whilst other authorities have taken the view that there is too much uncertainty about the impact and the timing of the implementation of the finance reform.

No substantial risks have been identified as regards levels of reserves, although the majority of councils intend to use a level of reserves as part of their current MTFS. **The current aggregated general fund usable reserves position for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire totals £130.5 million.**

Debt analysis shows that there no significant levels of debt that pose a financial risk. LG Improve analysis of 2024/25 debt gearing for the north-south model identified 38 percent and lower than the unitary authority average of 42 percent.

This financial business case evidences that the north-south model will deliver a cumulative positive net benefit of £485 million over the first five years post-vesting day and annual net positive recurring benefits of £148 million from year five onwards. This excludes the real and substantial transformation opportunities that we have identified elsewhere in our propsal.

The CIPFA analysis shows that there is little difference in the financial resilience and risk assessment between the 1b proposal and our north-south unitary authority bid, this is while including the Nottingham City Council's approved 2025/26 MTFS and use of reserves position which has subsequently improved in the 2026/27 revision. The CIPFA resilience index is shown in the table below.

Scenario	New authority	Comprised of	Risk score	Top 3 risk metrics
1b	Expanded City	Broxtowe, Gedling, Nottingham City and 27% of Nottinghamshire County Council	8.18	Reserves/Income, Growth Above Baseline, Overspend (£000)
1b	Rest of Nottinghamshire	Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe and 73% of Nottinghamshire County Council	7.07	Reserves Sustainability Measure, Unallocated Reserves, Change in Reserves
1e	South Nottinghamshire	Broxtowe, Nottingham, Rushcliffe and 28% of Nottinghamshire County Council	8.35	Change in Unallocated Reserves, Growth Above Baseline, Reserves/Income
1e	North Nottinghamshire	Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood and 72% of Nottinghamshire County Council	5.89	Change in Earmarked Reserves, MRP/CFR, Change in HRA Reserves

Figure 23a: *Table showing the resilience and risk assessment undertaken by CIPFA.*

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All proposed unitary authorities face the most strain from adults' and children's social care. The 'top three risk metrics' column captures unitary authorities' relative risk, compared to the group average on each metric. The difference between the two proposals in respect of financial resilience is marginal, as seen in the table above. The southern authority in both options shows a higher risk score than the northern authority due to the impact of Nottingham City Council. To demonstrate this, the table below, taken from CIPFAs resilience index, shows Nottingham City Council's current financial risk score based on their 25/26 MTFS.

		Comprised of	Risk score	Top 3 risk metrics
Present day	Nottingham City	Nottingham City	14.28	Council Tax to expenditure ratio. Level of external debt. Interest payable to expenditure ratio.
	Seven District and Borough Councils	Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe	7.09	Earmarked reserves. Change in HRA reserves. Level of reserves.

Figure 23b: *Table showing the resilience and risk assessment undertaken by CIPFA (current local government arrangements)*

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Nottingham City Centre

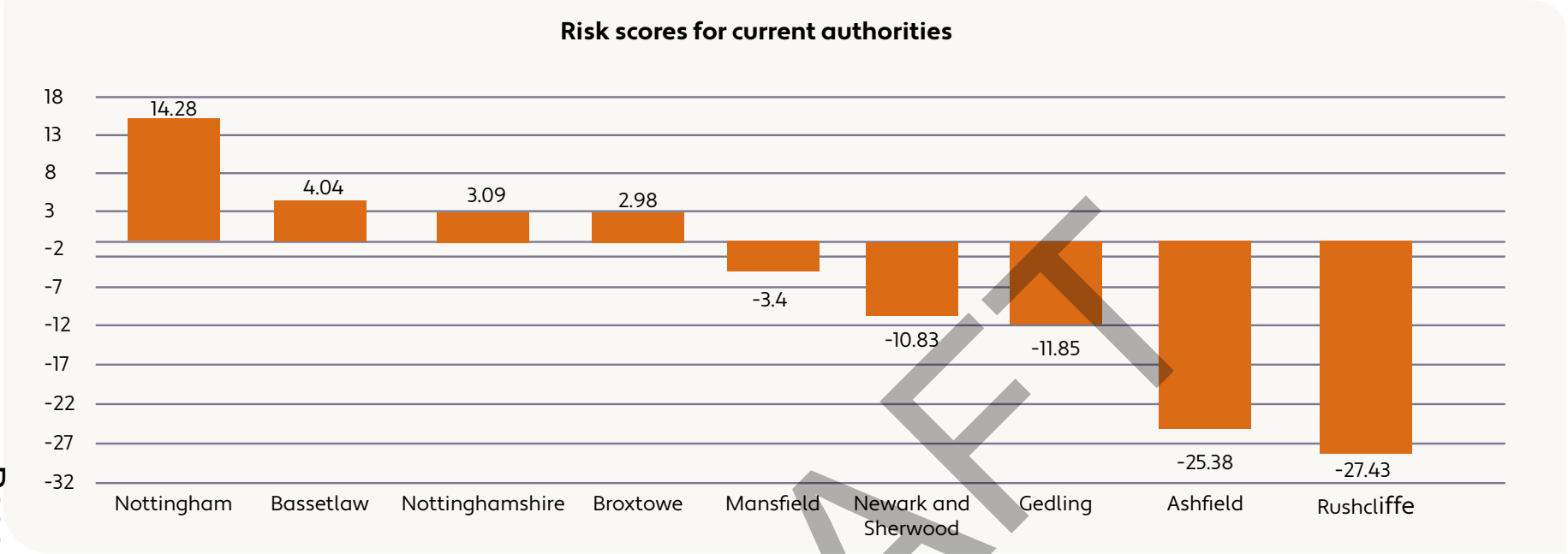


Figure 24: *Graph showing the 2023/24 risk scores for the current authorities.*

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Key points to note:

- **Variation in financial risk** - there is a notable spread in financial risk scores across the current authorities, with Nottingham City Council showing the highest level of financial strain. This is partly influenced by its status as a unitary authority, which means it bears full responsibility for both adult and children's social care - services that typically carry higher expenditure.
- **Contextual benchmarking** - while Nottingham City Council's financial pressures are evident; it is important to note that the average risk score for unitary authorities across England is 21. In this context, Nottingham is performing relatively well, though it remains under financial pressure.
- **Data timeliness** - the analysis is based primarily on the 2023/24 revenue outturn summary (general fund revenue account outturn) publication, which may now be slightly outdated. However, risk scores tend to remain relatively stable year-on-year, so the insights are still considered relevant and indicative of current conditions.

In addition, we would point out that the PwC financial model and CIPFA resilience index have been based on reserve and debt levels set out in the approved 2025/26 MTFS and the latest published set of accounts for each of the authorities.

Nottingham City Council have made representations that they have subsequently updated their 2025/26 MTFS which shows a significantly improved reserves and debt position compared to that document which has been used as a baseline for our submission.

Nottingham City Council has indicated that its EFS requirement over the three-year period has been modest and fully funded through capital receipts, with no additional borrowing. This approach has supported this increase in reserves and a reduction in overall debt exposure, strengthening the Council's financial position.

It is essential to acknowledge that the Nottingham City Council option (Bii), which now incorporates these revised figures and underlying assumptions, has not been independently validated by PwC as part of the scope of the collaborative financial exercise undertaken across all Nottinghamshire authorities. While the updated position suggests significant improvements in reserves and debt, until external validation is completed, these assumptions remain provisional and unconfirmed. This improved position would have a consistent impact on the Southern authority and hence improve the CIPFA Risk and Resilience index score, in both of the proposals set out in this financial business case.

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COUNCIL TAX HARMONISATION

Following LGR there is a requirement to harmonise council tax rates, to ensure that all parts of a new unitary authority area are paying the same rate within a maximum of seven years. An alternative approach used in some areas follows a 'weighted average' method to harmonise rates from day one.

The weighted-average option is modelled on the projected 2028/29 band D rate for each local authority. The weighted B and D charge is calculated by dividing total council tax by the total tax base.

This sets the single rate equal to the weighted average of existing rates, so there is no material change to aggregate council tax income (unlike phasing over several years, which changes timing and distributional impacts).

Option 1e	Area	2028/29 Rate	Weighted Average Rate	Impact on the Resident
North Nottinghamshire	Bassetlaw	£2,418	£2,414	-£4
	Ashfield	£2,419	£2,414	-£5
	Gedling	£2,406	£2,414	£8
	Mansfield	£2,419	£2,414	-£5
	Newark and Sherwood	£2,410	£2,414	£4
South Nottinghamshire	Nottingham City	£2,619	£2,501	-£118
	Broxtowe	£2,405	£2,501	£96
	Rushcliffe	£2,393	£2,501	£108

Figure 25: *Table showing the weighted average analysis, which also identifies the significant potential impact on residents in Rushcliffe given its particularly low level of current council tax.*

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Three scenarios have been modelled – these have been included at appendix 1:

- Harmonisation after one year (i.e. 2029/30)
- Harmonisation after three years (i.e. 2031/32)
- Harmonisation after seven years (i.e. 2035/36).

These scenarios show the impact on harmonisation on the final average Band D level, the income foregone or received within the system, and the average change in council tax rate.

Average change rates above 4.99 percent would exceed the trigger for a referendum on council tax. This is especially pertinent for "mid" and "high" scenarios. While some flexibility is available in setting rates using an 'alternative notional amount' this would require the approval of MHCLG.

The decision on the method and period of harmonisation will be made by the new unitary authorities, however, given the comparative impact on our residents in the north and the south, the intention would be to harmonise council tax in the northern unitary authority within one year and in the southern authority within three years.

OUR TRANSFORMATION IS WHAT SETS US APART

While each new unitary authority will develop its own Target Operating Model (TOM) in collaboration with key stakeholders, including residents, the councils supporting this proposal are united around a set of core design principles as outlined in the TOM section of this business case. These principles, **shaped by community and partner engagement**, will underpin the development of each council's TOM and serve as the foundation for building stronger communities and driving inclusive economic growth.

Our transformation strategy goes well beyond the normal organisational change and aggregation/disaggregation assessment. Further transformation will also provide a contingency against financial risk of demand led services and provide opportunities for investment in services.

Areas we have incorporated within this business case which as well as having a positive service impact on our residents also have a financial benefit include:

Adult social care transformation

- **Localised commissioning** - shift to place-based models to reduce long-term care costs and improve outcomes.
- **Market development** - support micro-providers and community-based care to reduce reliance on residential care.
- **Financial opportunity** - estimated savings of £20.8 million (working-age adults) and £2.8 million (older adults) by aligning residential admissions with NHS benchmarks.
- **Integrated care** - merge social care with housing, public health, and community services for better coordination and prevention.

Children's services transformation

- **Targeted early help** - tailored strategies for north and south unitaries to address local demographics and deprivation.
- **Cost reduction** - potential £26 million annual savings by reducing CLA costs through better commissioning and regional collaboration.
- **Performance improvement** - address Ofsted concerns and fragmented systems through unified service delivery.

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SEND

- **Strategic oversight -** improve identification, assessment, and provision for children and young people (CYP) with SEND.
- **Financial sustainability -** address rising DSG deficits (Nottinghamshire: £30.3 million; Nottingham City: £1.5 million)
- **Localised inclusion:** enable education within communities and reduce reliance on external placements.

Housing and homelessness

- **Integrated housing strategies** - align housing with health and social priorities.
- **Homelessness coordination** - regional strategy to pool resources, share data, and ensure continuity of care.
- **Operational efficiencies** - economies of scale and joint commissioning across north-south unitaries.

Other key services

- **Highways and transport** - rationalisation of assets and investment in strategic infrastructure (for example, Toton Link Road)
- **Neighbourhood services** - cohesive deployment for waste, street cleansing, and grounds maintenance.
- **Planning and tourism** - align planning authorities with economic zones; develop tourism hubs.
- **Waste and recycling** - aggregating collection and disposal to not only become more efficient but to support recycling and national policy including net zero.
- **Home to school transport** - meeting the needs of those that depend upon the service but ensuring that the policy is rigorous and applied. The service is efficient and offers multiple channels including independent travel and parent/relative supporting travel. Consider how these fits with wider transport needs including non-profitable routes.

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Key enablers

Digital transformation - expand digital platforms, automation, and AI-enabled tools to improve resident experience and workforce productivity and turn data into business intelligent data to inform decision making and organisational and service improvement.

Deliver value for money - thinking differently, while some level of savings has been included in the financial model, there is greater opportunities to review third party expenditure, contract and commissioning functions, developing and shaping the local market and prioritise the local economy whether buying goods or services including agency staff. We note that in 2024/25, the combined spend on recruitment and agency staff across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire was £60.4 million. Reorganisation provides an opportunity to off-set redundancies and target employment locally. This includes creating permanent positions and offering opportunities for trainees and apprenticeships, with any remaining agency requirements targeted within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Asset and estate rationalisation - review and optimise the public estate across not just councils but the wider public sector estate and VCSE. Co-locate services and release surplus assets to realise capital receipts or repurpose assets, deliver further revenue savings and mitigate backlog maintenance risks. This can be done as placed-based and aligned with service delivery and resident access. Capital value is not included in the financial assumptions and modelling but based on balance sheet property asset values of £6.4 billion across all councils. The evidence from Peopletoo based on previous LGR would suggest a range of between 15-30 percent could be achievable. This would enable debt and EFS challenges to be met, allow for improvement in reserves and facilitate investment in strategic priorities.

We recognise that there will be a number of quick wins particularly in areas such as third-party expenditure through consolidation and procuring of new contracts. We also know that some areas which require policy change, harmonisation, asset rationalisation and digital transformation will take longer. In line with the financial modelling the councils need to be able to deliver some financial benefits in year one with full effect by year three. Thus, ensuring they deliver on the benefits of LGR and secure financial sustainability moving forward.

Further financial considerations

The financial business case has been through a rigorous process, however there are further considerations that will need to be developed in detail. We have set out below some of the key points arising from our financial business case.

The assumptions agreed by both proposals are neutral, but as outlined in the Transition and Transformation section of our proposal we would:

- Accelerate transformation and start as soon as the decision on the LGR footprint was made and run in parallel with transition. Lessons from previous LGR programmes suggest that transformation is not started until year one post-vesting day.
- Similarly, we believe that transition costs may be incurred earlier to accelerate transition and lay the foundations for transformation. This would mean costs incurred earlier than the plan, but benefits would be accelerated to compensate.
- The further transformation identified by PwC report requires validation given the high technology

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investment costs to deliver staff reductions and understand timing and service impact.

- The PwC analysis of benefits has not included aggregation opportunities with Nottingham City Council which we believe will be significant in terms of property optimisation, third party spend and environmental services.
- Pay harmonisation will be critical and whilst some consideration has been given in the staff reduction savings, on-cost and terms and conditions have not been considered and the full HR legal pay harmonisation impact which could be both an opportunity and a risk.
- We have outlined our transformation focus alongside the financial baseline. We would immediately develop these opportunities into detailed financial and return on investment business cases.

CONCLUSION

The biggest financial risk facing the sector is the demand and cost of care in a fragile supplier market across ASC and children's services, with rising demand in SEND and home to school transport adding strain to an already DSG deficit position. Our detailed analysis, conducted in partnership with Peopletoo clearly evidences that the current system is under severe strain. The risk of maintaining the status quo is simply too great, as demonstrated by the ongoing financial pressures and a £25 million in-year 2025/26 overspend to date.

In contrast, our north-south model offers a more coherent, practical, and cost-effective framework for service delivery along with real transformational change. It eliminates inefficiencies associated with fragmented geographies, reduces duplicated infrastructure and maximises operational efficiency. Our model enables smarter commissioning, stronger local partnerships, and more responsive services rooted to community needs. Critically, it provides the best opportunity to manage future demand and cost pressures across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, supporting both financial sustainability and improving the lives and outcomes for our residents.

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GOVERNMENT CRITERION 3:

Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality, innovative and sustainable public services to citizens.

This section outlines how our proposal for reorganisation will deliver high-quality, innovative, and sustainable public services tailored to local needs.

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Our north-south model aligns more closely than other proposals with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's geographies and places. The new councils will be best placed to provide high-quality services and deliver economic growth. We demonstrate how our model addresses local needs through a more targeted and responsive approach to critical people services, effectively managing demand and cost to ensure financial sustainability, and driving transformational opportunities through public sector reform.

Local authorities face spiralling demand and increased costs across all services if they continue to deliver based on their current approaches. The system needs transformation, not simply structural reform for its own sake, and a fundamental shift in how services are designed, commissioned, and delivered, supporting the future financial sustainability of the new unitary councils while improving outcomes.

Our model provides benefits for people services.

The new unitary authorities will:

- Build on local identity and reflect local demographics, ensuring services are developed and commissioned effectively and meet the needs of their local community.
- Achieve financial stability through transformation – reducing the demand and cost for services in parallel to improving outcomes.
- Develop the local market and build micro providers, ensuring the right capacity at the right price and the right quality, keeping vulnerable people in their communities.
- Ensure a strong emphasis on reducing demand through localised targeting of prevention and early intervention, working closely with the voluntary and community sector.
- Bring together key services such as housing, public health, leisure, green spaces and social care to ensure maximisation of community assets and a place-based approach to prevention and early intervention.

- Benefit from building closer relationships with schools and developing the local offer to ensure inclusion in mainstream schools, reducing the expenditure on independent schools and the costs of transitions, ensuring young people remain in their communities through to adulthood.

Our north-south model consolidates critical services such as social care, education, housing, and community safety under each unitary authority, reducing fragmentation whilst offering much wider cross cutting support in areas such as ASC and housing. It simplifies oversight for county-wide services and critically supports place-based delivery tailored to local needs, integrated health and care models, and improved local partnerships.

Our proposal is not just a response to structural complexity, but a strategic commitment to public service excellence, equity of access, and stronger place-based leadership.

Engagement shows that residents want local government to focus on the basics – reliable services, value for money, and clear accountability.

We have reflected this in our proposed target operating model and ambitions for the two new councils. This is not only a transformation of structure; it is a transformation of ethos. By centring services around people and place in areas that communities care about and recognise, and by empowering our new councils to lead with clarity and purpose, we can create a system that delivers on what matters most to our residents: excellent outcomes, greater confidence, and a stronger sense of belonging.

INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

To ensure that our case for people services is rooted in the current local context, we commissioned Peopletoo to undertake extensive analysis of these services, how they currently operate, and opportunities available under our model.

ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Appreciating that ASC and children's services equate to 60 to 70 percent of a unitary council's budget, we need to ensure that both north and south councils are ready to maximise the opportunity that a single tier of local government provides.

National benchmarking undertaken by Peopletoo shows that on average unitary/ metropolitan councils are achieving lower long term care costs than county councils.



Assisted living care home resident, Fiona, receives her Careline personal alarm from Council officer, Newark.

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Average unit cost comparison	S251 LAC unit cost	S251 Residential unit cost	S251 SEN unit cost	2028/29 Rate	Weighted Average Rate	Impact on the Resident
County average	£2,076	£6,466	£128	£1,104	£1,186	£1,163
Unitary and Metropolitan average	£1,786	£7,252	£105	£1,049	£1,079	£1,064

Figure 26 : *Table showing comparison of county against unitary and metropolitan councils for achieving long term care costs.*[19]

19 Peopletoo analysis of 23/24 ASCFR (Adult Social Care Data and 23/24 LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) data

Our north-south model creates a more localised approach to commissioning and market development based on a local assessment of needs, along with closer working with key partners and of course communities.

Our new unitary authorities will have larger footprints than existing unitaries and metropolitan councils. With this scale our proposed authorities will have the strategic capacity to ensure we are well-equipped to drive more ambitious outcomes, deliver broader services, and meet complex demands/achieve lower long-term care costs more effectively.

The greatest opportunity lies in shaping and developing local care markets that respond directly to community needs. A locality-based delivery and commissioning model – one that operates close to people and partners – enables more responsive services, stronger prevention, and more effective use of resources. This approach can reduce long-term care expenditure, support financial sustainability, and improve outcomes.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Peopletoo's full analysis can be found in appendix 2.

We are very much aware of the challenges Nottingham and Nottinghamshire currently face in relation to children's social care:

- High and rising CLA costs.
- Real variations in demographics with pockets of high deprivation requiring tailored and targeted approaches.
- Variable sufficiency of placements across the county and city.
- Current performance issues recognised by Ofsted within the City Council.
- Current fragmented system limits targeted localised prevention, early intervention, and local responsiveness.

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Nottingham City:

- The rate per 10,000 for children looked after (CLA) in Nottingham City has remained consistently high at 100 across the three years, and well above the national (70) and East Midlands (65) averages.
- Nottingham City's weekly CLA costs have risen steadily across the three years, reaching approximately £2,100-£2,200 per week in 2023–24.
- This is 30 percent higher than the statistical neighbour (SN) average and 14 percent higher than the England average.

Nottinghamshire County Council:

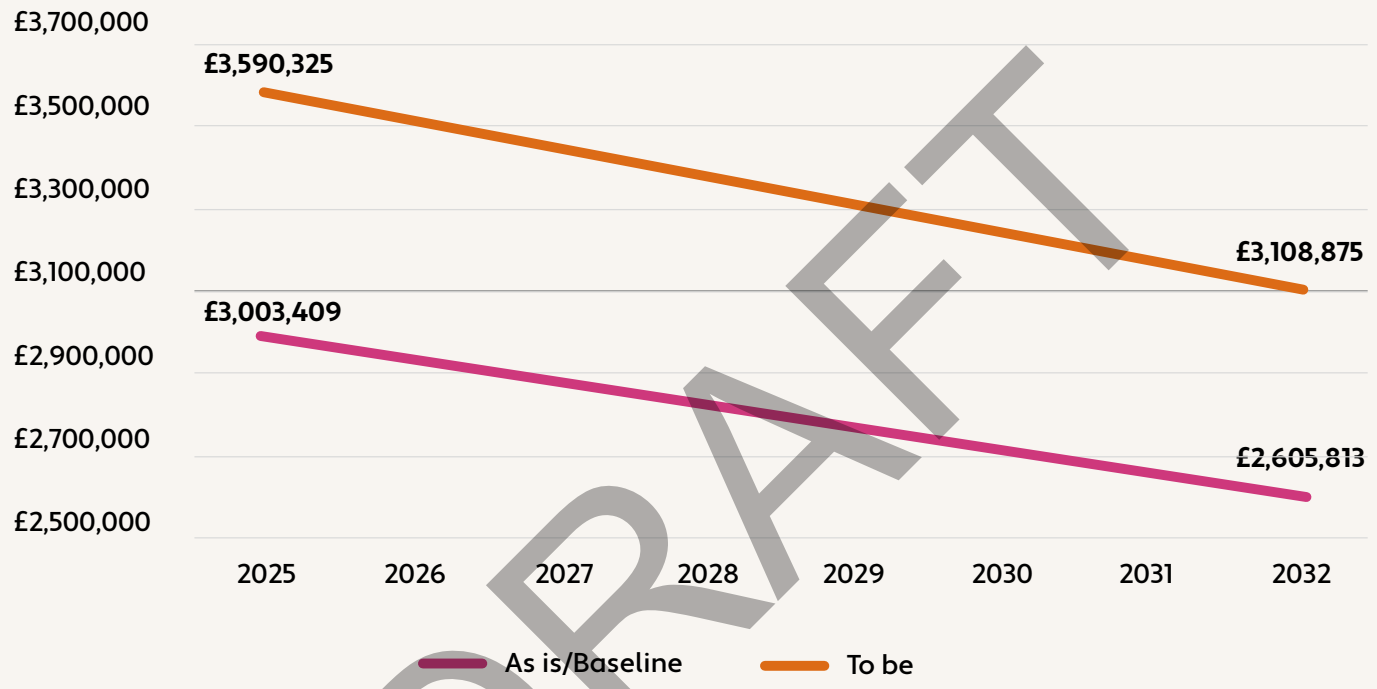
- Nottinghamshire's CLA rate is significantly lower at 57 than Nottingham City and is broadly aligned with the England average and below the East Midlands average.
- Nottinghamshire County Council's CLA weekly cost has risen steadily over the past three years, reaching approximately £2,300-£2,500 per week in 2023-24.
- This is 22 percent higher than the statistical neighbour average and 33 percent higher than the England average, showing a sharp escalation in cost intensity.

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Working as a north-south model, we would target our early help and edge of care services to the demographics and challenges that each unitary face. We will work on a regional basis where this makes absolute sense to do so, in areas such as adoption, complex placements and cross border strategies working with some of our most vulnerable families.
By adopting this approach, our model gives the best opportunity to reduce the current expenditure on CLA. If we consider national benchmarking undertaken by Peopletoo, which identifies that the average unit cost for a unitary council with a population of 500-650k is £1,949, compared with the current unit costs in Nottingham City Council of £2,125 and Nottinghamshire County Council £2,475[20].

Projected growth in demand was calculated by first working out the annual percentage change in the numbers of CLA for each year from 2021 to 2025 and then taking the average of these annual changes. If the north-south model achieves what we firmly believe it will, then the weekly CLA costs, across the two unitaries, will reduce by £500,000 per week equating to £26 million per annum.

20 CLA costs are from 2023/24 LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) nationally published data



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Figure 27 : *Graph showing the projected reduction in cost for CLA under our north-south model.*

Any reorganisation should account for divergent baseline pressures and a joint approach to establishing the new social care functions must equalise capacity, ensuring workforce, placement sufficiency, and early help systems are rebalanced and aligned to the demographics of the new unitary. We must also build on good practice maximising the opportunity to share learning such as Nottinghamshire County Council's family support model and Nottingham City Council's experience with complex care coordination.

SEND

The last full SEND inspection for Nottingham City Council, published in January 2022[21], identified strengths in collaborative working and early years provision. However, inspectors also found areas requiring improvement in how the local area partnership identifies, assesses, and meets the needs of children and young people (CYP) with SEND. Key recommendations included strengthening strategic oversight, improving communication with parents, and ensuring better coordination of services.

The SEND inspection for Nottinghamshire County Council, published on May 2023[22], raised significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of CYP with SEND across the local area partnership (including Nottinghamshire County Council and NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire). As a result, the partnership was required to develop a priority action plan focused on two critical areas:

- Improving identification, assessment, and provision for CYP with SEND.
- Addressing delays and gaps in access to health services.

In addition to these systemic challenges, both councils face growing financial pressures. Nottingham City Council projects an in-year DSG deficit of £1.5 million by 2026–27. Nottinghamshire County Council faces a more severe DSG deficit of £30.3 million by the end of 2025–26[23].

Nationally published SEND data[24] further highlights the challenges. Nottingham City's EHCP rate was significantly below national and regional averages in 2023, at around 2 to 3 percent, raising concerns about late or crisis-stage identification. In contrast, the city's SEND support rate is relatively high at 14 to 16 percent, aligning with or slightly exceeding the England average and comparable to other urban authorities such as Manchester, Bradford, and Salford.

Nottinghamshire's EHCP rate stood at approximately 3 percent in 2023, with projections suggesting a rise to just under 5 percent by 2025, still below the national average of around 5.5 percent. Its SEND support rate stands at 10 to 12 percent, slightly below the England average, but has shown a gradual increase, indicating growing identification of additional needs in mainstream settings.

Any significant increase in demand will further strain the high needs block of the DSG. In this context, LGR presents a vital opportunity to address both performance and financial challenges. Maintaining the status quo is not an option. The creation of a north-south model offers a chance to work more closely with schools, parent/carer forums, and key partners.

21 https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50175127

22 https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50216722

23 www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait

24 www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait

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We firmly believe that by addressing the issues identified in recent inspections - particularly around inclusion, early identification, and access to local services–we can improve outcomes for CYP with SEND while ensuring long-term financial sustainability. The establishment of north-south unitaries will enable tailored, localised strategies based on assessed needs and gap analysis, ensuring that young people receive the right support and, wherever possible, are educated within their own communities.

EDUCATION

Peopletoo's full analysis can be found in appendix 3.

Good education is fundamental to Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's future, underpinning economic growth, social equity, and long-term sustainability. Its impact is felt across multiple dimensions:

Economic growth and workforce development

- A well-educated population attracts investment, supports local businesses, and reduces unemployment.
- Higher educational attainment increases earning potential and boosts the local economy.

Social mobility and equity

- Education is a key driver in breaking cycles of poverty and disadvantage.
- This is especially critical in areas with high deprivation, such as the north and parts of Nottingham City.

Health and wellbeing

- Higher levels of education are strongly linked to better health outcomes.
- Educated populations tend to rely less on public services, reducing long-term demand on health and social care systems

The proposed creation of north-south unitary authorities would reshape the distribution of schools and educational outcomes.



James, age 4, just starting his primary education. Newark.

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Ofsted Ratings by District – Primary Schools	Option 1b		Option 1e	
	Rest of Nottinghamshire	Expanded City	North Nottinghamshire	South Nottinghamshire
Proportion of primary schools found to be Good/Outstanding	68%	71%	66%	75%
Proportion of primary schools that Require Improvement to be Good	3%	2%	4%	1%
Proportion of primary schools with no inspection outcome record	29%	27%	31%	24%

Figure 28 : *Table showing Ofsted rating comparison for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire primary schools – Options 1b and 1e.*

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Ofsted Ratings by District – Secondary Schools	Option 1b		Option 1e	
	Rest of Nottinghamshire	Expanded City	North Nottinghamshire	South Nottinghamshire
Proportion of secondary schools found to be Good/Outstanding	75%	67%	75%	67%
Proportion of secondary schools that Require Improvement to be Good	4%	10%	4%	10%
Proportion of secondary schools with no inspection outcome record	21%	23%	21%	23%

Figure 29 : *Table showing Ofsted rating comparison for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire secondary schools – Options 1b and 1e.*

Option 1e	Estimated Total Population	Estimated 'School Age' Population	Free School Meals in the last 6 years FSM6
North Nottinghamshire	615,712	86,474 (51.6%)	Primaries – 26.9% Secondaries – 32.5%
South Nottinghamshire	572,378	81,006 (48.8%)	Primaries – 30.6% Secondaries – 37.2%

Figure 30 : *Table showing the estimated population, school aged population and percentage breakdown of pupils who are eligible for free school meals under option 1e.*

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Option 1b	Estimated Total Population	Estimated 'School Age' Population	Free School Meals in the last 6 years FSM6
Rest of Nottinghamshire	622,269	88,409 (52.8%)	Primaries – 24.9% Secondaries – 32.5%
Expanded City	565,821	79,071 (47.2%)	Primaries – 33.2% Secondaries – 37.2%

Figure 31: *Table showing the estimated population, school aged population and percentage breakdown of pupils who have eligible for free school meals under option 1b.*

Key performance insights by district

- **Lowest performing areas:** Ashfield, Mansfield, and Nottingham City - high levels of disadvantage, SEND needs, and weak attainment.
- **Strongest performing areas:** Rushcliffe (highest attainment, but widest disadvantage gap), Gedling (strong primaries, weaker secondaries) and Broxtowe (solid secondary performance).
- **Mid-tier areas:** Newark and Sherwood and Bassetlaw - good inspection outcomes, but performance affected by SEND/disadvantage.

Strategic implications of options 1b vs 1e

- Option 1b clusters the strongest (Rushcliffe) and weakest (Ashfield, Mansfield) districts, creating a polarised profile that is geographically fragmented, limiting opportunities for shared practice.
- Option 1e distributes strengths more evenly and shows a clear north-south divide:
    - Gedling balances Ashfield/Mansfield in the north and shares borders, enabling easier collaboration and sharing of best practice.
    - Rushcliffe strengthens the south alongside Nottingham City and Broxtowe.

The new unitaries must balance raising standards in the weakest areas while closing gaps in attainment in the strongest schools. To mitigate these risks and ensure the best outcomes for young people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, the new unitaries will commit to developing targeted strategies for their own areas, but will ensure cross unitary working with the establishment of a school improvement partnership, which will:

- Share best practice through peer mentoring, leadership secondments, and federation models.
- Ensure consistent accountability and shared improvement standards across both unitarity authorities.
- Provide additional SEND and alternative provision support to schools at risk of underperformance.
- Share strategies on preventing exclusions and address attendance/behaviour challenges.

The education system across the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire footprint reflects a clear north-south divide. Our model presents a unique opportunity to:

- Raise standards in underperforming areas.
- Close attainment gaps in high-performing schools.
- Build a more equitable and sustainable education system for all young people.

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ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Peopletoo's full analysis can be found in appendix 2.

Working-age adults: Demand, cost, and strategic opportunities

Nottingham City: high demand, cost-efficient delivery

Analysis of demand and cost dat[25]a reveals that Nottingham City experiences significantly higher service demand for working-age adults compared to comparator areas, with support requests 46 percent above the England average. Despite this elevated demand, the city demonstrates strong cost efficiency, with an average long-term care cost of £30,305 per person, 30 percent below the national average and 20 percent lower than nearest neighbours.

A notable 73 percent of support requests are resolved through universal or preventative services. However, the city records a high rate of residential placements (168 per 100,000), which is 85 percent above the England average, indicating continued reliance on institutional care. Conversely, lower nursing care usage may suggest limited availability of complex community-based alternatives.

25 www.gov.uk/government/statistics/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report-england-2023-24/

Nottinghamshire County Council: stable demand, strong prevention focus

In contrast, Nottinghamshire County Council operates within a lower demand environment, with support requests among adults aged 18 to 64, 11 percent below the NHS nearest neighbour average and 15 percent below the England average.

The average long-term care cost is £37,056, which is 18 percent lower than nearest neighbours and 6 percent below the national average. Outcomes data shows that 76 percent of requests are resolved through universal or preventative services, and only 3 percent result in long-term care, highlighting a well-functioning prevention and reablement model.

Nottinghamshire County Council also records homecare usage 11 percent above nearest neighbours, reflecting investment in community-based support. However, residential care usage stands at 120 per 100,000, which is 38 percent higher than nearest neighbours and slightly above the England average. Nursing care usage is 27 percent above nearest neighbour levels, suggesting a higher reliance on bed-based care.

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Comparative insights and strategic implications

The analysis highlights distinct but complementary profiles between Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council in meeting the needs of working-age adults:

- Nottingham City Council faces greater demand pressures, driven by higher levels of deprivation and complexity within an urban population. Despite this, it delivers cost-efficient care and maintains a strong focus on early intervention. However, the high residential care rate signals a need to expand community-based alternatives for complex needs, if we are to keep people within their communities.
- Nottinghamshire County Council benefits from lower demand, tight cost control, and a strong emphasis on reablement and prevention. Yet, its higher-than-average use of residential and nursing care suggests opportunities to further shift towards community-based models.

Opportunity through LGR

LGR presents a strategic opportunity to:

- Align high-performing prevention models across both authorities.
- Balance demand pressures and share commissioning efficiencies.
- Expand community-based provision to reduce reliance on residential care.
- Linked to the above working with local providers to ensure the right type of community-based support is accessible.
- Establish a coherent, sustainable ASC system across the new unitary authorities.

By leveraging the strengths of each system and addressing areas of over-reliance on institutional care, the new authorities can deliver improved outcomes for working-age adults while ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

Older adults: demand, cost efficiency, and strategic opportunities

Nottingham City: high demand, strong cost control

ASCFR 23/24 data identifies social care demand among older adults (OA)[26] in the Nottingham City Council area is significantly higher than both regional and national averages, with support requests 54 percent above the England average. This elevated demand reflects the city's urban deprivation, complex health conditions, and high levels of frailty, all contributing to increased care needs.

26 www.gov.uk/government/statistics/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report-england-2023-24

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Despite these pressures, Nottingham City Council demonstrates strong cost control, with the average long-term care cost, per person, at £24,625 – 14 percent below the England average.

- 59 percent of support requests are resolved through universal or preventative services, with 13 percent of older adult's progress to long-term care, reflecting the depth and complexity of need within the population.
- Service user data shows strong investment in community-based care, yet residential care usage is 37 percent higher than NHS nearest neighbours, suggesting continued reliance on institutional bed-based care.

Nottinghamshire County Council: stable demand, prevention-led model

In contrast, Nottinghamshire County Council experiences a stable demand profile, with support requests just 1 percent above NHS nearest neighbours[27].

- The average long-term care cost per person is £26,741, which is 18 percent lower than comparator areas and 6 percent below the England average.
- 60 percent of requests are resolved through universal or preventative support, slightly above comparator benchmarks, with only 6 percent of cases progressing to long-term care, significantly lower than peers, highlighting the success of early help and reablement.
- Homecare usage is six percent above comparators, while residential and nursing care usage aligns with NHS nearest neighbour averages.

Comparative insights and strategic implications

The analysis highlights distinct but complementary strengths across the two systems:

- Nottingham City Council faces higher demand pressures, driven by urban deprivation and complex health needs. Despite this, it delivers cost-efficient care, with a strong emphasis on prevention and homecare. However, its residential care usage remains high, suggesting opportunities to expand community alternatives.
- Nottinghamshire County Council operates within a controlled demand environment, with lower progression to long-term care and strong performance in prevention and reablement. Its balanced use of residential and nursing care supports a sustainable model.

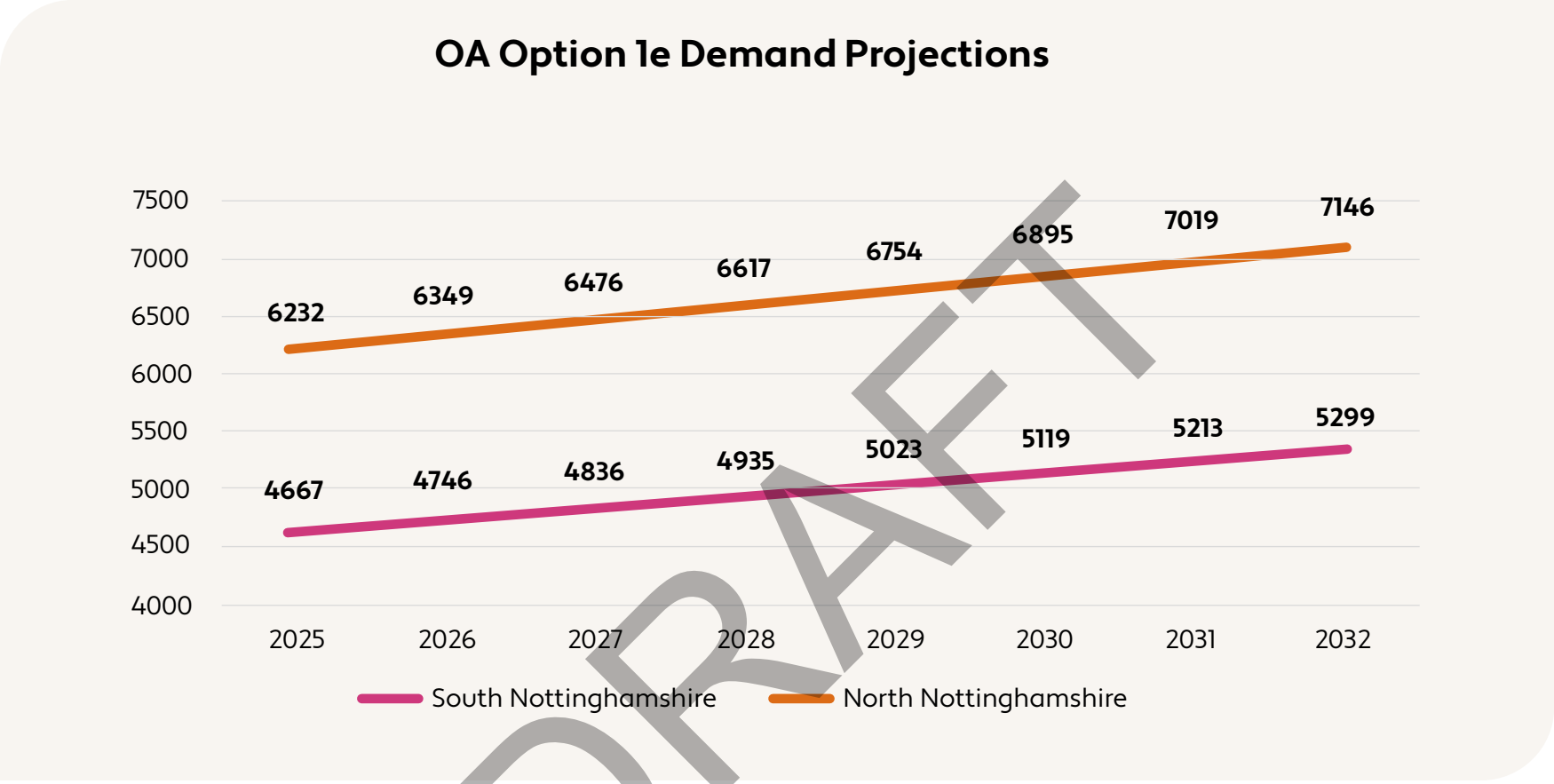
Opportunity through LGR

Across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in line with national trend, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is forecasting an increase in the over 65 population[28] . With rising demand, it is essential that the north-south unitaries are established to better manage demand and cost.

27 www.gov.uk/government/statistics/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report-england-2023-24

28 www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections

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Figure 32 : *Graph showing the demand projections for older adults in our north-south model.*

Our proposed model offers a unique opportunity to create a single-tier ASC system, drawing on the combined strengths and resources of district, county, and city councils. This integration will not only streamline service delivery but also enable targeted prevention activity at a much more localised level, working closely with communities and local providers.

LGR presents a strategic opportunity to:

- Integrate Nottingham City Council's expertise in managing high-complexity urban demand.
- Leverage Nottinghamshire County Council's strengths in prevention and reablement.
- Critically reduce reliance on residential care by expanding community-based provision, this will not only reduce expenditure but will also ensure a better outcome for vulnerable older age adults, enabling them to remain within their own homes / communities.
- Linked to the above, develop the local market, working with local providers to ensure sufficient access to high quality community-based support.
- Establish a sustainable, equitable care model across both new unitary authorities.

By embedding needs assessment and gap analysis within local geographies, the system can ensure that when statutory services are required, they are commissioned appropriately to support vulnerable individuals to remain in their own homes, or at the very least, within their own communities.

The north-south geography supports the effective delivery of health and social care services by:

- Reducing travel times for providers.
- Improving accessibility for vulnerable people needing to access vital services.
- Aligning service footprints with existing community and health networks.

Gedling's existing connections with the north of Nottinghamshire further strengthen the case for their inclusion in a northern unitary. This configuration enables the development of voluntary and community-based services that span the natural geography.

Placing Rushcliffe in the south of Nottinghamshire within a northern alignment ('rest of Nottinghamshire') as proposed by 1b, will create logistical and strategic challenges.

THE FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY – A LOCAL RESPONSE

Our north-south model presents a significant opportunity to address longstanding gaps in service provision across Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. These gaps have undoubtedly contributed to the high reliance on residential care.

By assessing needs at a more local level and developing robust commissioning strategies, the new unitary authorities can engage effectively with the market and collaborate with local providers. This will help ensure that alternatives to residential care, such as supported living and extra care housing, are available to prevent or delay admissions, enabling vulnerable adults to remain within their communities.

We are also committed to ensuring high-quality domiciliary care is accessible, even in our more rural areas. This includes working closely with communities to foster the growth of the micro-provider market,

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supporting the recruitment of personal assistants through training and development initiatives.

By addressing longstanding gaps in ASC across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire, we can reduce reliance on residential care and help vulnerable adults remain in their communities:

- Aligning residential admissions for older adults with NHS nearest neighbours (allowing for growth) could save £2.8 million annually.
- Aligning residential admissions for working-age adults with NHS nearest neighbours (allowing for growth) could save £20.8 million annually.

HOUSING

As single-tier authorities, we can integrate housing support with related services such as ASC, public health, and homelessness prevention. This reduces duplication and improves coordination, making it easier for residents to access support.

As discussed in our proposal, a north-south model will enable each local authority to work with local partners to better plan affordable housing to meet local needs, developing housing strategies that align with each area's economic, health, and social priorities.

HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is not simply a housing issue, but instead, a multi-faceted challenge spanning various public and local government services and other key stakeholders across the system- including the county council's and city council's public health, NHS services, district housing and public protection teams, third sector providers, specialist support services, probation and Department for Work and Pensions.

It is important to recognise the good work that is already taking place in this area, and we will commit that the north-south unitaries will work together and build on the progress to date. There are similar operational advantages to be gained from consolidating services in terms of economies of scale, sharing best practice, service resilience, alignment and consistency.

There are a number of countywide specialist groups in place, and there are already strong links geographically between the northern authorities. Recognised socio-economic similarities around the local authority areas within our final proposal (including deprivation and health) will provide greater resilience and efficiencies for the service and structuring it around a 'sensible geography' is paramount.

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Opportunities from a north-south unitary model

The factors detailed below highlight some of the benefits and opportunities to come through LGR and the north-south model.

Strategic coordination

- Joined-up thinking – currently each district, borough and city have their own homelessness strategy, the benefits of bringing this together under a northern and southern authority are significant. The north-south model allows for closer regional working with neighbouring counties such as Leicestershire in south and North Yorkshire in the north.
- Greater understanding and awareness across the wider system, for example between housing and social care, enabling improved pathways across homelessness and social care.
- Easier to align with county-wide services like health, social care, and policing.

Resource pooling

- Combining budgets and staff expertise can lead to better value for money.
- Shared access to accommodation, outreach teams, and support services.
- Economies of scale in commissioning services (for example, night shelters and mental health support).

Mobility of homeless individuals

- Homelessness doesn't respect district boundaries; people often move between areas.
- A regional strategy ensures continuity of care and avoids gaps in support.
- Prevents 'postcode lotteries' where support varies depending on where someone is located.

Data and intelligence sharing

- A unified strategy enables better data collection and analysis across the region.
- Helps identify trends, hotspots, and emerging needs more effectively.
- Supports evidence-based decision-making and targeted interventions.

Innovation and best practice

- Encourages sharing of successful models such as the 'Housing First model in Mansfield[29]' and pilot projects across districts.
- Reduces siloed working and fosters collaboration among frontline teams.

It is vital that we take the once in a lifetime opportunity of LGR to ensure that we have strong joint preparation and planning to ensure the most effective, efficient homelessness prevention and support offers.

29 www.mansfield.gov.uk/news/article/12986/new-scheme-to-offer-vital-stepping-stone-to-former-rough-sleepers

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PUBLIC SAFETY

We know from local engagement that public safety is a top priority for residents across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, underpinning their ability to live safe, fulfilling lives. Public safety in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is delivered through a framework of statutory functions and duties placed upon local authorities and partner agencies.

We are committed to continuing the good work of the Nottingham Community Safety Partnership (NCSP) and the agreed Strategic Priorities (2025–2028)[30]:

- Prevention and early intervention.
- Tackling serious violence and domestic abuse.
- Supporting victims and vulnerable groups.
- Strengthening community cohesion.
- Enhancing neighbourhood safety through collaborative enforcement and support.

We firmly believe that by bringing much local insight into the partnership to shape more targeted place-based strategies in collaboration with key stakeholders, it can only enhance the work of the partnerships.

Crime, harm and risks vary significantly across the different districts/boroughs in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, reflecting diverse socio-economic conditions, population densities, and local challenges.

In urban areas like Nottingham City and West Bridgford (part of Rushcliffe), higher population density and greater economic disparity contribute to elevate levels of violent crime, drug-related offences, and anti-social behaviour. These areas often face complex issues such as gang activity and higher rates of domestic violence, necessitating robust law enforcement presence and community safety initiatives. The concentration of nightlife venues and commercial areas also increases the likelihood of public order offences and alcohol-related crimes.

In contrast, more rural districts experience different crime patterns. These areas may see lower overall crime rates but can be more vulnerable to specific issues like rural crime and other public safety issues such as flooding. Additionally, rural areas may face challenges related to domestic abuse and substance misuse, often exacerbated by reduced access to support services and increased social isolation.

Understanding these varying crime harms and risks is crucial for tailoring public safety strategies to the specific needs of the north and south unitaries. Effective crime prevention and intervention require a nuanced approach that considers local socio-economic conditions, community dynamics, and the unique challenges faced by urban, suburban, and rural areas alike.

30 https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/documents/s173758/Appendix%201.%20Nottingham%20Community%20Safety%20Partnership%20Strategy%202025%20-%202028.pdf

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OTHER KEY SERVICES

Whilst we will ensure continuity of critical services from day one, it is also essential that other key local government services deliver for the people of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

We know from extensive engagement that neighbourhood services such as highways maintenance, refuse collection, caring for parks and play areas, cleaning the streets and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, clean streets, and travel and transport are key priorities for our residents.

We will integrate currently separate functions to generate efficiencies and a better customer experience. Waste disposal and waste collection; trading standards and public protection; highway maintenance and grounds maintenance; youth services and leisure services; flood mitigation and flood response. There are numerous opportunities to bring together currently fragmented services in way that saves money and delivers better outcomes.

Early opportunities include:

Rationalisation/improvement of operational depots - modernisation plan based on the rationalisation of assets already underway through a full depot review/construction of new sites in mid and north Nottinghamshire offering opportunities for enhanced collaboration under our proposal. It should be noted that Rushcliffe Borough Council already share depot facilities with Nottingham City Council, allowing existing operations to be maintained under our proposal and an indication of the close connection between Nottingham City and Rushcliffe.

Route optimisation - bringing together currently separate waste collection, housing repairs and other key frontline services based on 'sensible geography' carries the opportunity to deliver financial savings through reduced vehicle usage and fleet maintenance

Planning and highways - single tier arrangements carry the potential to speed up the planning applications process, creating multi-disciplinary teams working to shared goals of delivering housing and economic growth

Heritage, culture, leisure and tourism - the geographical distribution of heritage and cultural assets allow for the development of strategic tourism hubs, aligning with EMCCA's vision to connect Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire through initiatives like the 'Canal Corridor' and 'Trent Arc'. By operating as a single tier, we have the opportunity to better integrate the leisure and well-being offer currently being delivered by district and borough councils, to provide positive and structured outcomes for our young people and encourage them to turn to sport, which supports an early intervention and preventative approach to public health, youth justice, and social care.

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PLACE BASED SERVICE DELIVERY

'Sensible geography' is not a pre-requisite for service improvement and public service reform, but it certainly helps. Consider the significant cost of emergency and temporary accommodation for homelessness. Joint working across a meaningful geographic area, where common housing demands have already been identified, and where stock and nomination rights can be shared, will aid more people to access accommodation more quickly.

These place-based benefits can only be delivered most effectively where the new unitary authority aligns with a coherent and functional geography. While there will continue to be individual local needs and considerations, place-based working across a cohesive unitary area has the potential to provide significant real benefits for organisational efficiency, local opportunities, and residents and communities.

We will use this opportunity to ensure the new councils are well placed to build relationships and mobilise resources within their area, convening local partners and stakeholders from across the system to deliver systemwide collaboration and reform. Central to this will be the opportunity provided to the new councils to align strategy, services and resource allocation to public sector partners: the police, fire service, integrated care partnerships and ICBs, and the wider health sector.

The evidence shows us that the co-commissioning of services with key partners, such as health, is more effective when all partners have a close connection with, and understanding of, local and recognised communities.

These partnership arrangements provide a platform from which to work with communities and system partners, to develop voluntary and community sector led services to support local resilience and the delivery of statutory services.



Working across sensible geography can better support our homeless residents. Photograph showing Nottingham City.

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Real life case example – Claire from Gedling

A neighbour reports persistent anti-social behaviour and noise, raising concerns for the children next door, including poor school attendance and frequent police callouts. A local multidisciplinary team involving community safety, environmental health, police, safeguarding, and education, works together from the beginning. Noise is investigated, safeguarding referrals are made, and police share relevant information to build a full picture of the family's situation. The school and Schools Officer address attendance and a range of unmet needs. The team identifies the mother needs practical and emotional support, not enforcement. Claire, the mother, needs the Family Hub for parenting help, cooking sessions, and wider family assistance. The children are assessed and get the support they need and become re-engaged with school. The family receives support from food banks with food and uniforms are also provided, and the risks reduced.

Coordinated, place-based working improves the home environment and neighbourhood impact.

CONCLUSION

Our north-south model for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is built on a bold yet pragmatic operating framework that balances scale, flexibility, and local responsiveness. By combining shared capabilities with tailored local delivery, this model empowers each new authority to meet the distinct needs of its communities while unlocking system-wide efficiencies. Through the innovative use of digital tools, data, neighbourhood governance, and modern service design, it creates a platform for transformation aligned with both regional ambitions and national priorities. Above all, it ensures that public service delivery remains collaborative, resident-focused, and resilient to future challenges.

Aligning the new authorities with functional economic areas, strengthening existing partnerships, and prioritising prevention, integration, and community empowerment will enable the region to deliver high-quality, sustainable services for all residents. Our north-south model offers not only geographical coherence but also a strategic advantage, balancing disadvantage, distributing strengths, and creating clear pathways for improvement. Key benefits include improved service quality, financial resilience, stronger accountability, enhanced early intervention, and better alignment with wider policy agendas.

While we recognise the challenges of disaggregation and transition, we are firmly committed to collaborating with existing councils, services, and partners.

Together, we will develop robust plans and clear mitigation strategies to ensure the new authorities are fully operational, safe, and legally compliant on vesting day, with the platforms in place to design and deliver real transformational change.

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GOVERNMENT CRITERION 4:

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

This section outlines how we have engaged and worked collaboratively with our residents, partners and stakeholders to inform and develop our north-south model.

Our north-south model has been co-designed by the majority of councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and directly reflects the feedback gathered through public engagement.

To support the development of this proposal, we undertook extensive engagement with partners, including residents and local service providers, to understand how LGR could affect their priorities and service needs across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

A county-wide community engagement exercise jointly led by all nine authorities revealed that our preferred model, proposing a north and a south unitary, received more support than the alternative. Approximately one-third of respondents viewed it positively or "as the better of the two", particularly due to its clearer geographic logic and alignment with local identities.

Our methods included a cross-county resident engagement programme, which was recognised by the LGA as a model of best practice for whole-area collaboration. The engagement exercise attracted over 11,000 responses, placing it among the highest response rates nationally. This level of participation demonstrates strong public interest and validates our proposal's responsiveness to local views.

> "I believe Rushcliffe should at least partly be within Nottingham, especially West Bridgford which has close links to the city."
>
> *- Urban participant, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's LGR engagement exercise.*

Our proposal reflects a cross-authority consensus and a shared ambition to establish a more effective, accountable, and locally connected system of governance.

Full details of the independent engagement findings can be found in appendix 4.

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WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

Since submitting our interim proposal, all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities have continued to work collaboratively and to share data whilst developing our options. For the authorities behind this proposal, there have been focused workstreams that have been meeting since July 2025. These have comprised of officers from the authorities involved in this proposal, along with colleagues who are looking at the other options being submitted. This approach has been part of our ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability throughout the process. It has also ensured that our proposal is based on a comprehensive analysis and robust peer assessment of the evidence available.

Despite differing views on which model best serves Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, we all agree that creating financially sustainable unitary authorities is of fundamental importance. It is only through creating sustainable, resilient, and efficient authorities that we will be able to address the challenges we collectively face.

In addition to financial robustness, local authorities must also reflect the distinct local identity of our place and the people, businesses, and communities within it. We believe local leaders should be empowered to act not only as leaders of their councils, but of their communities, and of the wider system, bringing together stakeholders and partners to create conditions for growth, and improve outcomes for residents.

Key collaborative activities included:

- **Leadership engagement** - leaders and chief executives worked together to guide the process and test ideas.
- **Appraisal process** - three unitary options were assessed, including one developed by Nottingham City with PwC support.
- **Joint workstreams** - coordinated efforts across councils on engagement, finance, governance, and service design.
- **Democratic review** - councillor ratios and neighbourhood governance were evaluated to ensure effective representation.
- **Financial analysis** - all nine councils jointly assessed costs, savings, and resilience, confirming long-term savings and transformation potential.
- **Section 151 Officers** - coordinated financial data and developed a robust financial case with PwC and CIPFA.
- **Monitoring officers and electoral teams** - explored future governance and democratic arrangements.
- **Directors and service leads** - shaped transformation opportunities with specialist advisers.

This structured collaboration across leadership and service tiers has ensured a technically robust and democratically grounded proposal.

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We believe that our local communities and stakeholders have deep insights into what works and what doesn't, and their input can help shape reforms that are more responsive to local needs and realities.

Our investment in partner engagement early on in this process will also help foster cross-sector collaboration, enabling shared resources, innovative solutions, and coordinated service delivery.

Critically, we want to ensure a sense of shared ownership in the future of the new unitaries - essential if we are going to achieve our ambitions for LGR.

We have engaged extensively with residents, staff, public sector providers including health, police, education and fire services, the voluntary sector, local businesses, Town and Parish councils, environmental organisations, community groups, and other councils.

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

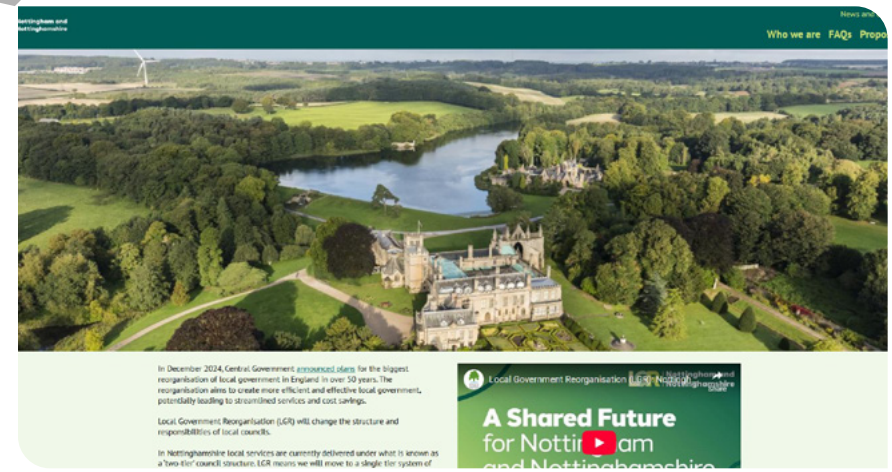
To shape this proposal, we carried out a comprehensive engagement programme[31] to ensure that the voices of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's residents and stakeholders informed the development of this preferred model.

This included a six-week online survey, focus groups, and a communications campaign supported by councils' websites, social media, and local networks. The survey was open to all interested parties and available in accessible formats, with additional routes via email, telephone, and community sessions.

The survey was targeted and promoted directly to different groups of stakeholders, including residents, staff, community groups, community leaders, partners, and, underrepresented groups. This means that the engagement results, and therefore our proposal, could be informed by an inclusive set of views.

The online survey was commissioned by all nine councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and conducted independently by Public Perspectives using documented quantitative and qualitative methods.

A more detailed analysis of the findings from this survey is included in appendix 4.



A single approach to engagement in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Image shows our dedicated website.

31 See Appendices

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Our joint social media and digital campaign gained thousands of impressions across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

- In total, 11,483 survey responses were received – representing one of the largest engagement exercises of its kind across our area.
- Our proposal, a north-south unitary council, received more support than others, with around a third of respondents viewing it positively or as the better of the two, particularly for its clearer north-south model and perceived geographic logic. Focus groups and comments made during the engagement reinforced this:

> "On the face of it this seems like a more logical and fair option, a more natural split between the north and the south of the county."
>
> "Parts of Rushcliffe are a long way from some of the other areas – doesn't make sense geographically."
>
> "Better – South Notts and North Notts."
>
> "A much fairer split between North and South."
>
> "This makes more sense geographically, especially for the city area."
>
> "This option seems better – a cleaner cut geographically."
>
> *- From a range of participants, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LGR engagement*

- Responses were well distributed across all districts and Nottingham City, with Rushcliffe (26 percent), Broxtowe (22 percent), and Gedling (16 percent) contributing to the highest volumes. This further highlights that the areas most affected by our north-south model were well represented.
- 80 percent of respondents cited providing good value, reliable services, followed by 72 percent noting meeting local needs and being fair to all parts of the area, as factors that should be most important when designing a new council.

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The engagement exercise evidenced broad public support for a north-south model, underpinned by calls for improved efficiency, fairness, and local voice.

Respondents consistently emphasised the importance of "**getting the basics right**" - reliable services, fair representation, and local accountability. These are embedded in our proposed governance model and will form part of the key principles of the target operating models for the new unitary councils - ensuring services remain responsive and locally grounded while benefiting from strategic coordination and economies of scale.

In addition to an online questionnaire, promotional/ marketing activity, a dedicated website[32], outreach events, and engagement with stakeholders were undertaken. Focus groups were conducted involving local residents, reflecting the diversity of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and organised by urban and rural areas. These focus groups allowed the emerging findings from the engagement process to be unpacked and views about the proposals to be discussed in depth, both adding further insight as well as validating the findings from the engagement survey.

CONCERNS AND MITIGATIONS

It is important to note that some concerns about the prospect of change were raised through the engagement. A key principle for the new unitaries will be openness and transparency, with two-way communication critical not only at design and implementation stage, but ongoing, to keep residents fully informed and comfortable with the positive changes we know LGR can bring.

We have carefully considered and acknowledged their concerns, and we recommend that the new unitary authorities consider a robust communications approach to working with residents and all stakeholders over the implementation stage.

> "If reorganisation does go ahead, it must be done properly, with clear leadership and minimal disruption to residents."
>
> "Any restructure must not interrupt essential services. Residents shouldn't notice a negative difference."
>
> *- Urban participant, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's LGR engagement exercise.*

32 www.lgrnotts.org

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You said	We will
Urban-rural imbalance	• Create local area committees to ensure rural/local voices are heard and involved in decision-making. • Use service delivery 'satellite hubs' or 'mobile outreach' in rural areas to maintain local access.
Financial risk of neighbouring councils	• Publish a detailed financial impact/transition cost analysis and a risk mitigation plan (contingencies, phased implementation). • Ensure transparent reinvestment of savings into local services. • Use transitional funding or guarantee mechanisms to isolate any existing financial deficits. • Put monitoring and auditing mechanisms in place to track delivery of identified efficiencies, ensuring mitigating action is taken where required.

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Figure 33: *Table showing how we will respond to the concerns raised in the engagement survey. Continued on the following page.*

You said	We will
Loss of local representation	• Create two councils of the 'right' size • Maintain community/local councillor roles with devolved powers. • Use place-based service teams that stay rooted in communities. • Continue to work closely with Parish and Town councils and explore opportunities for devolution of functions, retaining their powers and precepts.
Service disruption during transition	• Build a robust transition plan with service continuity guarantees. • Use phased implementation and agree priorities with stakeholders. • Have dedicated 'transition teams' whose sole remit is to ensure the safe transition of services and prevent any breaks in service delivery. • Communicate clearly which services will change, when, and widely communicate and provide support measures (for example hotlines and contingency support).

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Figure 33 continued : *Table showing how we will respond to the concerns raised in the engagement survey. Continued on the following page.*

You said	We will
Staff uncertainty	• Provide redeployment, retraining, HR support and clear staff transition paths. • Maintain open communications with staff throughout, with Q&A sessions. • Stage changes gradually, so staff disruption is minimised. • Engagement with trade unions.
Distrust or perception of political motivation	• Be transparent about decision-making criteria, evidence base, and cost/benefit analysis. • Publish consultation findings, feedback, and how proposals were adapted in response. • Offer ongoing stakeholder engagement and oversight (for example using independent panels). • Provide clear accountability lines (who is responsible, where people can complain or appeal).

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Figure 33 continued : *Table showing how we will respond to the concerns raised in the engagement survey. Continued on the following page.*

You said	We will
A gap in clarity and trust: residents feel underinformed.	• Run a continuing communications campaign including FAQs, infographics, public exhibitions/ talks, leaflets, and more. • Share baseline service-data and projections openly. • Hold community quality and assurance (Q&A) sessions in all localities. • Publish regular progress updates and feedback loops, so residents see responses to their queries.

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Figure 33 continued : *Table showing how we will respond to the concerns raised in the engagement survey.*

PARTNER AND KEY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We have collectively held numerous engagement sessions to ensure that our proposal reflects the views and insights of those who deliver, use, and are affected by local government services.

We have held meetings and webinar sessions with Nottinghamshire MPs, Parish and Town councils, Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue, Nottingham City commissioners, NHS stakeholders including representatives of our Integrated Care Board, local BID groups, larger businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and representative groups within the local economy, environment, voluntary, and third-sector community. In addition, we have engaged in a series of constructive and collaborative discussions with EMCCA regarding our north-south model, focusing on shared priorities and exploring opportunities for alignment that will strengthen regional outcomes and support the ambitions of the devolution agenda.

The following feedback summarises the comments and common themes identified. These have been acknowledged and have been incorporated into the proposed target operating model for the new councils:

- **The value of local connection**, particularly keeping services close to communities and preserving local economic identity.
- **Striking a balance between financial and strategic concerns,** and the potential for coordinating funding resources, information sharing, and the opportunity to simplify and streamline arrangements.
- **Taking on learning from other areas** that have undertaken LGR.
- **Partnership working** - how voluntary and community organisations work would be supported by the new structure, noting the importance of third sector in preventative services and the opportunity for better integration in a new unitary model.



Preserving local identity and valuing local connections is delivered by our north-south model. Image shows the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest.

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STAFF ENGAGEMENT



Staff engagement session, Mansfield District Council

A series of dedicated webinars and in-person sessions have been delivered across the respective councils, giving staff the opportunity to deepen their understanding of LGR and engage directly with senior leaders. These sessions have enabled open dialogue, encouraged questions, and provided clarity on the implications of the proposed changes.

All staff have been invited to participate in these sessions, with further events planned to ensure staff remain informed and involved throughout the LGR process. In addition to live engagement, there has been a steady stream of internal communications, including frequently asked questions (FAQs), newsletters, and updates shared via email and council intranets - reinforcing our commitment to transparency and inclusion.

These efforts reflect our belief that successful reorganisation depends not only on structural reform but also on the active involvement and understanding of the people who deliver public services every day.

CONCLUSION

Our Nottingham and Nottinghamshire joint stakeholder engagement has been fundamental in shaping our proposal that is both grounded in local feedback and informed by operational experience. We have identified key themes, including the importance of preserving local identity, concerns around service continuity, and strong support for integrated and responsive service delivery.

Importantly, the engagement confirmed that our north-south model is the best for establishing two unitary authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Respondents highlighted its clearer geographic logic and stronger alignment with local identities as key advantages.

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GOVERNMENT CRITERION 5:

New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

This section outlines how our north-south model will significantly advance the devolution agenda for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It supports the ambitions of both the Mayor of the East Midlands and EMCCA for inclusive growth termed the 'East Midlands Way'[33] , while aligning with the government's broader objectives for regional empowerment and reform.

Our proposed structure offers a coherent and strategic framework for planning and delivering growth across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's distinct economic geographies. It enables targeted interventions and streamlined governance that reflect the unique strengths and challenges of the north-south areas.

This section explores how our north-south model will better support EMCCA's emerging strategic programme, which is built around five interconnected priorities:

- Investment and economic growth
- Skills and employment
- Transport and connectivity
- Housing and environment
- Collaboration and infrastructure

In addition to these priorities, the progression of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill will expand EMCCA's remit to include public safety, further reinforcing the need for effective delivery mechanisms and strong alignment between regional and local governance.

The timing of LGR presents a unique opportunity to build on EMCCA's momentum since its establishment in March 2024. Our north-south model facilitates a reorganisation that is not only responsive to regional priorities but also capable of delivering EMCCA's ambitions for growth and wider quality of life improvements.

Importantly, the creation of two new unitary authorities will represent just over half of EMCCA's total population, with projections by 2035[34] of:

- 611,518 residents in the south authority.
- 653,127 residents in the north authority.

This balanced population distribution supports a sensible and scalable governance structure, ensuring proportional representation and operational capacity within EMCCA.

33 https://democracy.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/documents/s1837/App%20A%20-%20Draft%20EMIZ%20Strategy%20and%20Investment%20Plan.pdf

34 www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections

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Furthermore, EMCCA's new powers under the Planning and Infrastructure Bill will include responsibility for producing a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), which will guide housing distribution and land use across the region. The proposed unitary boundaries align closely with EMCCA's seven development clusters, enabling more effective delivery of targeted growth and ensuring that local planning authorities are well-positioned to implement the SDS.

In summary, our north-south model offers a future-ready governance solution that strengthens regional collaboration, enhances delivery of devolved functions, and positions Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to lead the way in shaping the next phase of devolution in the East Midlands.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

LGR will play a pivotal role in the growth of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's economy by providing a platform for enhanced regional influence, securing greater levels of investment, promoting Nottingham and Nottinghamshire as desirable locations for business, and importantly streamlining and clarifying the distinct and complementary remits of EMCCA and the two new unitary councils.

EMCCA will lead regional relationships with government, lobby for further devolution of powers and funding to drive strategic growth priorities, and champion a systems approach to collective leadership. The north-south unitary authorities will build on existing strong delivery foundations, mature strategic relationships, and a deep understanding of local business communities and stakeholders. It is therefore critically important that the emerging EMCCA strategic framework is acknowledged as a bedrock of future system design.

The EMCCA strategy programme defines four interconnected projects:

- An Inclusive Growth Commission to support the development of a long-term 'Inclusive Growth Strategy'.
- A Local Growth Plan, within the 'Inclusive Growth Strategy', setting out both short- and long-term sectoral priorities for the region, and supporting the incoming National Industrial Strategy.
- A Spatial Development Plan, also within the 'Inclusive Growth Strategy', that sets out the overall strategic approach to land use in the region, including for meeting the government's stretch housing target for the East Midlands.
- Building on a systems approach to collective leadership to enable these key projects to be delivered through a similarly systemic approach to regional governance.

Our north-south model presents a significant opportunity to make a step-change in the realisation of these projects, building on existing successful sub-regional partnerships.

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INVESTMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Inclusive Growth Commission was established to develop a 10-year strategy for improving economic, social, health, and environmental conditions across the region.

The commission launched its final report on 15 September 2025[35] . The final report brings together new ideas for skills, health, housing, and transport. It introduces an evidence-based 'opportunity escalator' which is designed to help residents within the EMCCA area to access good jobs, better opportunities and develop stronger communities. It looks beyond 'superstar' sectors to support job growth and improve access, pay, and conditions in a wider range of key industries, such as logistics, construction, health and social care, and the visitor economy. It is the first regional model of its kind in the UK - practical, scalable, and designed to influence national debates on growth, levelling up, and the future economy.

The commission has developed a spatial framework[36] for approaching inclusive growth in the East Midlands which will guide the choices that the combined authority will seek to make across industrial policy, skills, spatial planning, and social policy. The diagram on the right shows the five spatial zones identified. Each of the five spatial zones the commission has identified different strengths and needs to achieve inclusive growth.

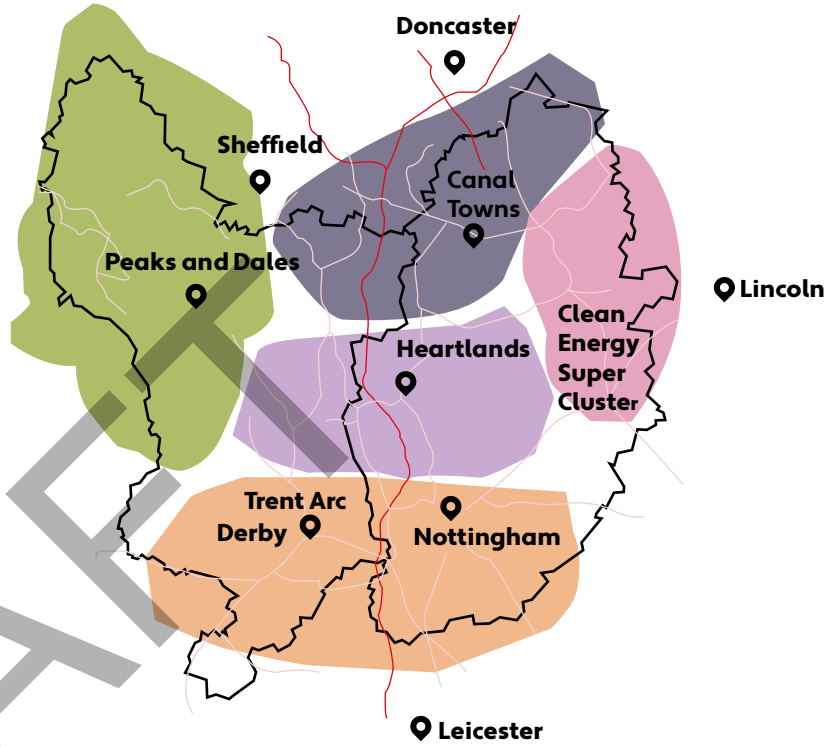


Figure 34 : *Map showing the EMCCA growth spatial zones, and how they align to the north-south model of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.*

LOCAL GROWTH PLAN

The Local Growth Plan aims to grow the regional economy by bringing together national policy and investment, local levers and capability, and the particular economic and social conditions that exist in the EMCCA region.

The regional profile presents opportunities for growth in sectors with high growth potential alongside interlinked challenges which must be addressed to enable growth.

35 www.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/what-we-do/the-economy/the-igc

36 www.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/what-we-do/the-economy/vision-for-growth

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ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND PROGRESSING THE OPPORTUNITIES

Cities as Engines of Growth	A focused investment approach could enhance Derby and Nottingham's role as a major economic hub, generating wider benefits for the region. However, it is crucial that people in more rural areas aren't excluded from accessing growth opportunities. **Challenge: Leveraging agglomeration to capitalise on our cities as the highest potential for productive growth versus a spatially distributed approach to growth across the whole region.**
Diversification	Our growth plan supports investing in the sectors with the greatest potential for growth to achieve both quick wins and long-term persistent growth. However, specialisation can create a more fragile economy. Investing in smaller 'challenge' sectors distributes opportunity and risk. **Challenge: Creating the right economic mix that builds resilience while driving growth.**
Large and small firms	We are home to global industrial giants providing a stable economic and employment base. We also have a uniquely high proportion of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which are key to diversification, adaptability, and innovation. **Challenge: Leveraging the growing of the SME business base while also ensuring the continued investment of large firms in the region.**
Goods and Services	The East Midlands is a heavily goods-based economy. This presents a risk of prioritising goods businesses over the service sector at a time of globally declining goods experts. Reprofiling the economy could also be a significant risk compared to investing in our strengths. **Challenge: Making a choice to grow a goods-based economy in the context of a shifting focus towards expanding service sectors.**
Nuclear Energy	Nuclear energy has been identified as a key growth opportunity for the East Midlands, however nuclear remains a politically sensitive issue, with concerns around nuclear energy generation. **Challenge: Focusing on the opportunity of nuclear energy generation in the East Midlands given the perception of the industry.**
Jobs and Productivity	Expanding key sectors has the potential to drive economic growth, attract investment, and create jobs. However, the challenge around ensuring that the jobs created are high quality and offer sustainable career pathways, rather than reinforcing low-wage, low-skill employment patterns. **Challenge: Balancing a focus on increasing accessible employment opportunities with pursuing highly productive, well-paying jobs in a tight labour market, where the supply of skilled workers is limited.**
Prosperity over our Borders	In the north of our geography the centres of the economy, and people's identities, are more aligned over the borders into other regions. Aligning skills in the north of the region with economic needs beyond our borders may lead to stronger resident prosperity, but it may displace GVA growth and create a further pipeline of residents leaving the region. **Challenge: Balancing where prosperity in some parts of our geography may stem from GVA growth beyond EMCCA's borders.**

Figure 35 : *Table showing EMCCA's opportunities versus the challenges for the region.*

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Our north-south model presents the opportunity to work alongside EMCCA in addressing these challenges, and to support the targeted interventions through focused funding, programmes, and partnership collaboration to support the region.

We are aware of the existing skills gap and attainment levels and those required for the future. This will be a priority for the new unitary councils to generate career opportunities, retain our top graduates and foster career progression for all our young people in these exciting new industries.

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

This work identifies seven priority clusters covering the whole of the region. In line with the polycentric nature of the EMCCA region, each cluster has its own distinctive characteristics, derived from the geography, industry, culture, and natural history of the places within it. It builds on existing site-based programmes, including the East Midlands Growth Strategy, emerging proposals for the 'supercluster' of power station-related opportunities linked to the development of the STEP Fusion site in West Burton, East Midlands Investment Zone, and the East Midlands Freeport. The opportunity areas identified present a significant benefit of our north-south model, with clear geographic alignment with the growth opportunity clusters, as opposed to other options which would see fragmentation across the unitaries.

Our north-south model better reflects the spatial extent and growth opportunities of the 'Trent Arc', which would be contained in the south authority, and this would result in one Local Planning Authority delivering the mayor's 'Trent Arc' growth aspirations in Nottinghamshire. While the 'Heartlands' and 'The Loop' concepts have not yet been fully developed, the 'Heartlands' would sit predominantly in the north authority.

EMCCA's recently published Inclusive Growth Commission report calls for improved transport connections across the 'Trent Arc' as key to achieving inclusive growth. It is recognised that there are some existing fast public transport routes but there are gaps and some areas with a lack of affordable bus and rail services. Also identified as an opportunity at the north of the arc is to maximise a combined urban conurbation of Ashfield and Mansfield which would require improved transport connectivity, providing a real growth opportunity for the north unitary, supporting connectivity and mobility.

The mayor has given a mandate to partners in the proposed north unitary to develop a 'Heartlands Economic Strategy'. While this is still in the early stages of development the strategy will present a clear, investable vision for inclusive and innovation-led growth, fully aligned with the EMCCA Growth Plan and wider national objectives on levelling up, productivity, and net-zero.

The strategy will be underpinned by strong public-private collaboration and a growing skills infrastructure, including the Nottingham Trent University, West Notts College, and the Lincoln College Group/Newark College

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partnerships. Together, these institutions are addressing local skills gaps and creating clear pathways into technical and professional careers. The 'Heartlands' central location offers strong connectivity to regional economic centres, although further infrastructure investment is required to unlock its full potential.

By 2035, the area aims to contribute £1.5 billion to the local economy, create 6,000 new sustainable jobs, deliver over 100 higher- and degree-level apprenticeships annually, and reduce involuntary economic inactivity below national levels. This increased economic output is expected to generate around £500 million in returns to the Treasury[37].

To deliver this growth, however, systemic challenges must be addressed. Transport connectivity within the central 'Heartlands' remains poor, and persistent skills gaps, low post-16 attainment, limited land supply, and electricity capacity constraints all act as barriers. Health-related economic inactivity also remains a key concern, requiring a coordinated response across government, local authorities, the education sector, and health services.

To support delivery, there is a need for targeted investment in strategic transport improvements, electricity infrastructure, and increased local planning capacity.

In summary, this emerging strategy offers a compelling opportunity to advance national priorities while delivering local transformation. With targeted support through the establishment of the north-south unitary, opportunities such as 'Trent Arc' and 'Heartlands' can become flagships, not only for regional growth but for the respective unitaries where they reside, promoting and demonstrating both innovation and opportunity in the East Midlands and beyond.

Real life case study - Sanjiv's investment in Nottinghamshire

Sanjiv, an international investor plans to build a new factory in the area, creating hundreds of jobs. The Council will be able to welcome and support this opportunity by involving a multi-disciplinary internal team. This team will include planning, business rates, business support and intelligence, labour market pipeline, property, and highways to secure the investment. Aligned with the EMMCA's spatial zones, and liaising with one Unitary Authority, makes Sanjiv's investment in the local economy simple.

37 www.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk

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SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT – STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND TRANSFORMATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Our north-south model ensures strategic alignment with EMCCA's skills and employment priorities by:

- Embedding EMCCA priorities within local service design and delivery – for example building on and developing apprenticeship hubs, employer skills banks, and improved careers outreach linked to local labour market needs.
- Fostering more effective partnerships with educational institutions, to provide relevant training and development opportunities.
- Using EMCCA frameworks as guiding principles for local investment and interventions.
- Contributing to the implementation of region-wide strategies through integrated delivery mechanisms – utilising existing skills and employment boards that operate across the area.
- Effective engagement and working relationship with local colleges, higher education institutes, and private training providers.
- Effectively utilising EMCCA's devolved adult skills funding, currently allocated to providers, including unitary and upper tier authorities, and create bespoke contracts with localities based on need.

Implementation of our north-south model will allow a more joined-up approach to tackling cross-cutting local issues such as:

- Skills mismatches and low adult qualification levels in specific wards.
- Youth unemployment and 'not in education employment or training' (NEET) levels.
- Under-utilisation of local training providers.
- Fragmented support for those furthest from the labour market.
- Geographic inequalities in access to skills provision and economic opportunity, with particular consideration for rural communities and access to higher education.
- Low productivity and GVA.
- Transport barriers.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

It is critically important that hyper-local needs are carefully considered. In relation to skills and employability, it is important that services can be adapted to meet local needs to encourage engagement with those that are hardest to reach and offer continuity and effective multi-agency working to address socio-economic challenges.

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Our north-south model is rooted in and builds on strong existing partnerships. It provides a framework for seamless evolution to ensure effective engagement and alignment with the governance arrangements of the EMCCA.

This approach will strengthen collaboration, avoid duplication, and enable targeted delivery of skills and employment priorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Key partnership mechanisms include:

- **EMCCA skills and employment committee**[38] - this committee will continue to operate with revised member representation from the two new unitary authorities, ensuring that Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's voice is fully integrated into regional decision-making on skills and employment.
- **N2 employment and skills group** - officer representation from the two unitary authorities will remain critical, given the way EMCCA commissions skills, employability provision, and allocates funding across a wider geography. In addition, a dedicated group focused on the north-south unitaries will be established to manage and monitor local skills and employment priorities, ensuring alignment with community needs.
- **Technical officer groups for skills and employment** - these specialist officer groups will continue to provide expert advice and technical input to EMCCA's Skills and Employment Committee. Their role will be to ensure that decisions are informed, accurate, and consistent with best practice, regulations, and technical standards. Representation from both unitary authorities will guarantee that Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's priorities are embedded in regional strategies.

By maintaining and strengthening these partnerships, our north-south model will create a coherent, collaborative structure that supports inclusive growth, maximises funding opportunities, and delivers a workforce equipped for the future economy.

TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

Our north-south model provides a governance structure that is better aligned with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's travel patterns and economic geography, enabling more effective delivery of the mayor's Transport Plan and EMCCA's Inclusive Growth Framework. By creating two authorities that better reflect commuting flows and connectivity hubs, our model ensures that transport planning is place-based, responsive to local needs, and strategically integrated with regional priorities.

In the south, proximity to Nottingham City and the 'Trent Arc' growth corridor means transport investment can focus on urban mobility, public transport enhancements, and reducing congestion in high-demand areas. In

38 https://democracy.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=141

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the north, where Mansfield and Newark act as major employment centres, the emphasis can be on improving inter-town connectivity, tackling rural isolation, and supporting sustainable travel options. This targeted approach allows each authority to prioritise infrastructure that reflects its unique economic drivers and settlement patterns.

Aligning transport planning within these two coherent geographies will:

- Enable access to EMCCA investment streams by demonstrating clear strategic alignment.
- Support decarbonisation goals through tailored solutions for urban and rural contexts.
- Improve integration with health and economic agendas, reducing inequalities in access to jobs and services.
- Accelerate delivery by reducing fragmentation and avoiding the inefficiencies of planning across an overly broad, disconnected geography.

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

Our north-south model builds on a network of close engagement already in place between existing councils. It provides opportunities for significant sources of future housing supply in the combination of Nottingham, Rushcliffe, and Broxtowe which will help offset historic under delivery, and the ability to deliver housing growth in line with strategic targets already in motion through the 'Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan.'

The proposed north unitary would have a sizeable housing need, and while each new authority would be at different stages of plan-making, they share common evidence bases currently constrained by existing administrative boundaries. The combination of these unitary authorities provides a wide geographic area to accommodate housing need. Further detail showing how the north-south model represents a 'sensible geography', which will help increase housing supply and meet local needs is presented earlier in this proposal against the criteria one.

In terms of engagement with EMCCA, a new institutional framework for developing the SDS will need to be created between EMCCA and the LPAs. This will to some extent be driven by legislation and regulation on how SDS's should be produced, however the mayor will need to engage with the constituent principal authorities to encourage them to use their planning, housing, and regeneration powers to deliver growth.

Currently LPAs work together in a range of formal and informal partnerships to deliver housing growth. Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership and the districts which will form the south unitary are currently preparing a joint plan, and our proposal will enable continuity in plan making.

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KEY ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

Collaborative working through our north-south model and EMCCA presents a powerful opportunity to advance the region's environmental ambitions. By jointly developing a shared Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)[39], partners can strengthen energy security, improve sustainability, and align efforts across boundaries.

A coordinated approach will enable the delivery of low-carbon transport solutions in strategic locations such as the STEP project and major investment zones. This includes expanding public electric vehicle charging infrastructure, electrifying bus fleets, and ensuring sustainable access to employment and training hubs.

These initiatives will not only support the transition to a net-zero economy but also attract green investment, helping to deliver on the ambitions set out in Nottinghamshire's net-zero framework.

Additionally, our north-south model facilitates more efficient and integrated sub-regional waste management systems, enhancing recycling rates, and reducing landfill dependency. Through shared planning and delivery, councils can create a more resilient and environmentally responsible infrastructure that benefits communities across the region.

CONCLUSION

Our proposal for reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire offers a transformative opportunity to redefine relationships between local and regional government, unlocking significant benefits for residents, the economy, and wider society. Our north-south model stands out as the most strategically aligned and operationally effective structure to support EMCCA's devolution arrangements and deliver on its ambitious regional agenda.

Why our north-south model is the strongest option:

- **Strategic alignment with EMCCA** - the geographical boundaries of the proposed north-south authorities mirror the spatial zones and development clusters identified in EMCCA's Inclusive Growth Commission and emerging SDS. This alignment ensures seamless integration of local planning with regional priorities, accelerating delivery, reducing duplication, and enabling efficient resource deployment.
- **Built-in delivery infrastructure** - the model builds on existing mature partnerships across education, skills, environment, and public health. It provides a ready-made framework for the joint commissioning and delivery of EMCCA priorities, particularly in high-growth sectors such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and health innovation.

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39 www.eastmidlands-cca.gov.uk/news/east-midlands-mayor-gives-green-light-to-countrys-largest-local-area-energy-plan/

CONCLUSION CONT.

- **Targeted economic intervention** - our north-south configuration allows for bespoke responses to local economic challenges. For example, the north unitary can focus on revitalising areas like Bassetlaw and Mansfield, where productivity and earnings lag, while the southern authority can drive growth in the 'Trent Arc'.
- **Environmental leadership** - the model supports coordinated delivery of low-carbon transport, EV infrastructure, and waste management systems. It enables the creation of a shared LAEP, advancing the region's net-zero ambitions, and attracting green investment.
- **Transport and connectivity** - by reflecting actual commuting patterns and economic geographies, the model allows for place-based transport planning. It supports EMCCA's goals for inclusive mobility, decarbonisation, and improved access to jobs and services.
- **Skills and employment transformation** - the model enables coherent, cross-boundary delivery of skills and employment initiatives, leveraging existing networks such as the North Notts Skills and Employment Board (NNSEB), Skills and Employment Partnership (NNSEP), and the North Notts Careers Hub. It ensures that EMCCA's devolved funding and strategic frameworks are embedded in local service design.
- **Governance and efficiency** - reducing tiers of government will streamline decision-making and enhance strategic coordination. Our north-south model balances regional leadership with strong local engagement, ensuring decisions are both informed and inclusive.

Our north-south model is not only the most practical and future-proof option, with its geographic and cultural alignment, it is the one most capable of delivering successful devolution. It aligns with EMCCA's vision, supports inclusive and sustainable growth, and provides the institutional strength needed to realise the full potential of devolution in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. '**It makes sense**'.

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GOVERNMENT CRITERION 6:

New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

This section sets out how our proposal will strengthen community engagement and deliver neighbourhood empowerment by:

- **Delivering a neighbourhood-based approach to the planning and delivery of services, based on 'sensible geographies' that our residents relate to and feel connected with.**
- **Creating a new structure of Area Committees to provide enhanced opportunities for local communities to influence the decisions that affect their lives and better co-ordinate local services.**

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OUR APPROACH TO LOCALISM AND DELIVERING NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE AND EMPOWERMENT

The opportunity to work with and invest in communities; to strengthen, build, and empower them, is a fundamental part of our approach to managing the demand on public services. Building social cohesion and social capital enables individuals to live their best lives and creates more resilient communities.

Many arrangements already exist across our area to encourage and support local communities to have an active involvement in society, including tenant engagement boards, youth and seniors' councils, town centre partnerships, friends of parks groups, citizen panels, interfaith forums, festivals, and community events.



Empowering local communities is fundamental to this proposal. Image showing Edwinstowe.

Across our area, some of the ingredients are already in place to revitalise local neighbourhoods, including:

- Regenerating high streets and improving public spaces, such as parks and play areas.
- Supporting the birth and growth of local businesses and community organisations through use of local assets and community-led funding.
- Investing in social infrastructure and fostering community cohesion.

Our proposal envisages a further shift of power to local people, moving beyond engagement to co-design, collaboration, and input to decision-making. At the heart of our approach is a commitment to organise and deliver with as much knowledge, input, and connection with local communities as possible.

There are already some examples of excellent practice in terms of a local and community focused approach, with family hubs and joint service centres operating with integrated teams at a local level. However, for the most part, key services such as housing and health and social care are currently split across different organisations and geographies, meaning that, the opportunities for beneficial synergies, greater efficiencies, and joined-up service delivery are not fully realised. 'Sensible geography' is important for ensuring a genuine neighbourhood approach to planning and delivering services. Our north-south arrangement is recognised by the residents who live within our communities, and it reflects how many services are currently organised.

Real life case example – Betty from Rushcliffe

Betty, 80 and living alone, is admitted to hospital after a fall. From admission, discharge needs are assessed, and the occupational therapist completes an early integrated assessment linked with a multi-disciplinary team through the unitary authority's single 'hospital-to-home' pathway. A stairlift and level-access shower are recommended; the stairlift is considered critical and is installed by the Councils adaptations team before discharge, and the shower is scheduled. Betty can return home without the need for a care plan but is signposted to community hubs and age-appropriate exercise classes, to aid recovery and prevent social isolation. Integrated working between health, social care, and community services ensures rapid turnaround, reduces costs, and supports Betty's health and wellbeing.

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Empowered neighbourhoods

Our unrelenting focus on residents recognises that local neighbourhoods are where the most impactful interventions can be made, either in collaboration with communities, or by catalysing their capacity. Working with residents, rather than 'doing to' them, is key to empowering local communities, giving them more autonomy, encouraging active community participation, and enhancing social infrastructure that results in multiple beneficial outcomes for individuals, communities, and places.

The '**Pride in Place Strategy**' [40] shows that strong and empowered neighbourhoods and communities are significant factors in driving growth. Strong social capital contributes to improved socio-economic outcomes in wellbeing, education, crime, and health, which in turn positively impact productivity.



Creating a strong sense of place. Breck Hill mural, Gedling.

40 www.gov.uk/government/publications/pride-in-place-strategy/pride-in-place-strategy

Connected partnerships – improving outcomes

Aligned with this strategy, our proposal sees the establishment of programmes that empower and engage residents, supported by locality partnership working in neighbourhoods and effective neighbourhood governance through Area Committees.

For example, the North Nottinghamshire Place Partnership (NPP)[41], has developed plans for six Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) that will drive local engagement and transformation at a neighbourhood level for the Place Based Partnerships. These INTs capitalise on the combined expertise and resources of health, local government, and the VCSE to ensure proactive, strengths-based support with a strong emphasis on non-medical, community-led approaches that reduce health inequalities, improve wellbeing, and support economic growth.

These models far more closely align with our north-south model and provide a platform for our neighbourhood model.

Our vision is to create genuine empowered neighbourhoods, where local councillors, communities, and service providers work together across 'sensible geographies,' driving broader outcomes, greater efficiency, and resilient communities.

41 www.healthandcarenotts.co.uk

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TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

Nottinghamshire has a proud history of Town and Parish Councils, which have their own legal status in the hierarchy of local government. Outside of the city most, but not all, of Nottinghamshire is covered by over 230 Town and Parish Councils. We recognise the unique role they play at the heart of their communities and the potentially important contribution that they can make to neighbourhood empowerment and engagement in the life of the two new unitary councils.

Unlike other options, our proposal presents **a more balanced and equitable representation of Town and Parish councils, ensuring that the voices of all communities are heard.**

At our engagement events with Town and Parish Councils, it was clear that there is an appetite for them to work closely and effectively with the new councils. The precise nature of that engagement will vary depending on the capacity and capability of different Town and Parish Councils, with some expressing an interest in being part of a new Area Committee set up, and others interested in exploring opportunities for taking on additional devolved functions.

For those Town and Parish councils that are able and do wish to engage more fully, we see a strengthened role. Facilitating parishes to work more closely together, and with the new unitary councils, will assist with the capacity challenges some of them face. Area Committees will provide an important setting for formal representation of parishes in local areas, as well as providing opportunities for Town and Parish Councils to play a fuller role in wider partnerships. This will help to ensure that resident voices of particularly dispersed, smaller, multiple rural communities, are not lost in larger council structures.

AREA COMMITTEES

Recognising the need to ensure that larger councils remain in touch with the local communities that they serve and in line with the government's clear desire to see local communities have more power and control over their areas, we propose the establishment of Area Committees to function alongside cabinet, overview and scrutiny, and regulatory arrangements.

New warding arrangements will form the building blocks for these Area Committees, which will bring together democratically elected representatives with residents, the police, NHS, and other local partners.

The creation of a new and modernised structure of Area Committees provides an opportunity to better co-ordinate current community engagement and partnership working, and to simplify and join-up what has become a confusing and disjointed landscape of local public service provision.

It is recognised that across the country, there are various models of Area Committees, some with advisory/

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consultative roles only, others with extensive decision-making powers. Over time, and consistent with our ambition for genuine neighbourhood empowerment, we would expect to see devolution of some decision-making and funding to Area Committees.

Determining the precise number, geography, role, and remit of these Area Committees will be a matter for the new unitary councils, but set out below is our thinking at this stage.

Purpose of Area Committees

In line with 'Pride in Place', Area Committees will have three core objectives:

- To build stronger communities.
- To create thriving places.
- To empower people to take back control.

They will achieve these by:

- Enhancing the local leadership role and positive profile of councillors.
- Contributing to democratic renewal and ensuring confidence in public services.
- Providing a mechanism for embedding local needs and priorities in the life of the new unitary councils.
- Providing a structure for enabling local communities to engage with local councillors and public service providers, and for them to shape and influence decisions and services that affect their lives.
- Providing a forum to oversee and hold to account the performance of public services.
- Facilitating better planning and coordination of local services and the development of a neighbourhood focus to service delivery.

Number and geography of Area Committees

We recognise that there is a balance to be struck between creating a structure of Area Committees that best aligns with local communities and one that is also sustainable in terms of the capacity and resource required to support it.

The precise number and geography of Area Committees will be a matter for each of the proposed new unitary councils to determine. However, to demonstrate our thinking and commitment to neighbourhood engagement and empowerment, we have developed a map of an illustrative proposed structure of the Area Committees in the north-south model, which can be found in appendix 5.

We have also developed a detailed breakdown of the Area Committee numbers alongside our warding arrangements to demonstrate their linkages, emphasising our approach to keeping our communities connected. Details can be found in appendix 6.

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One feature of our proposed structure of Area Committees reflects the strong adherence to 'sensible geographies' and results in the clustering of some wards that currently sit within separate councils. This will align Area Committees with local neighbourhoods and identified communities, and seek to achieve as close to coterminous boundaries as possible with neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood health arrangements.

Membership and composition of Area Committees

Elected ward councillors will play a critical role in Area Committees, acting both as the democratic representatives of the new unitary councils in localities and in making local decisions, but also as local conduits into the new unitary councils for local priorities, issues, and matters of concern to local areas. The next section (Governance) sets out further details of the proposed elected member composition for the new unitary authorities.

In addition to the core membership of elected ward councillors, we would anticipate a broad spectrum of representation, including Town and Parish councils, other community organisations, the local business community, and other public service providers (including the police and NHS) being involved in Area Committee work and meetings. Such arrangements will ensure that Area Committees are well-placed to act as a point of co-ordination between public services, other agencies, local businesses, and local communities.

Functions of the Area Committees

Function	Example
Informing and influencing strategic priorities	Providing input on local needs and priorities to inform the budget and Council-wide priorities. Allocation of small grants to community groups and local projects. Management of devolved budgets for neighbourhood improvements.
Allocating funding	Allocation of community grants; determining allocation of Section 106 funding. Informing the strategic priorities of the new unitary councils.
Agreeing local priorities	Informing the setting of work programmes such as highway maintenance, street cleaning, parks maintenance and playgrounds.
Oversight and scrutiny	Acting as a critical friend, providing local insight and constructive feedback on the performance of local services.
Local engagement and consultation	Acting as a forum for feedback from local communities and partners on a wide range of potential topics, such as major planning applications and proposed disposals of land.

Figure 36: *Table showing illustrative examples of the types of functions and responsibilities for our proposed Area Committees.*

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Busy street in Stockwell Gate, Mansfield.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT WITH EMCCA

EMCCA has set out ambitions through its corporate plan which include 'reducing inequality' and 'empowering local communities'. The mayor's placed-based strategy will see the development of a 'place framework'. This commits to local authority collaboration and targeting deprived communities, and advocates tailored interventions based on local characteristics and deprivation data.

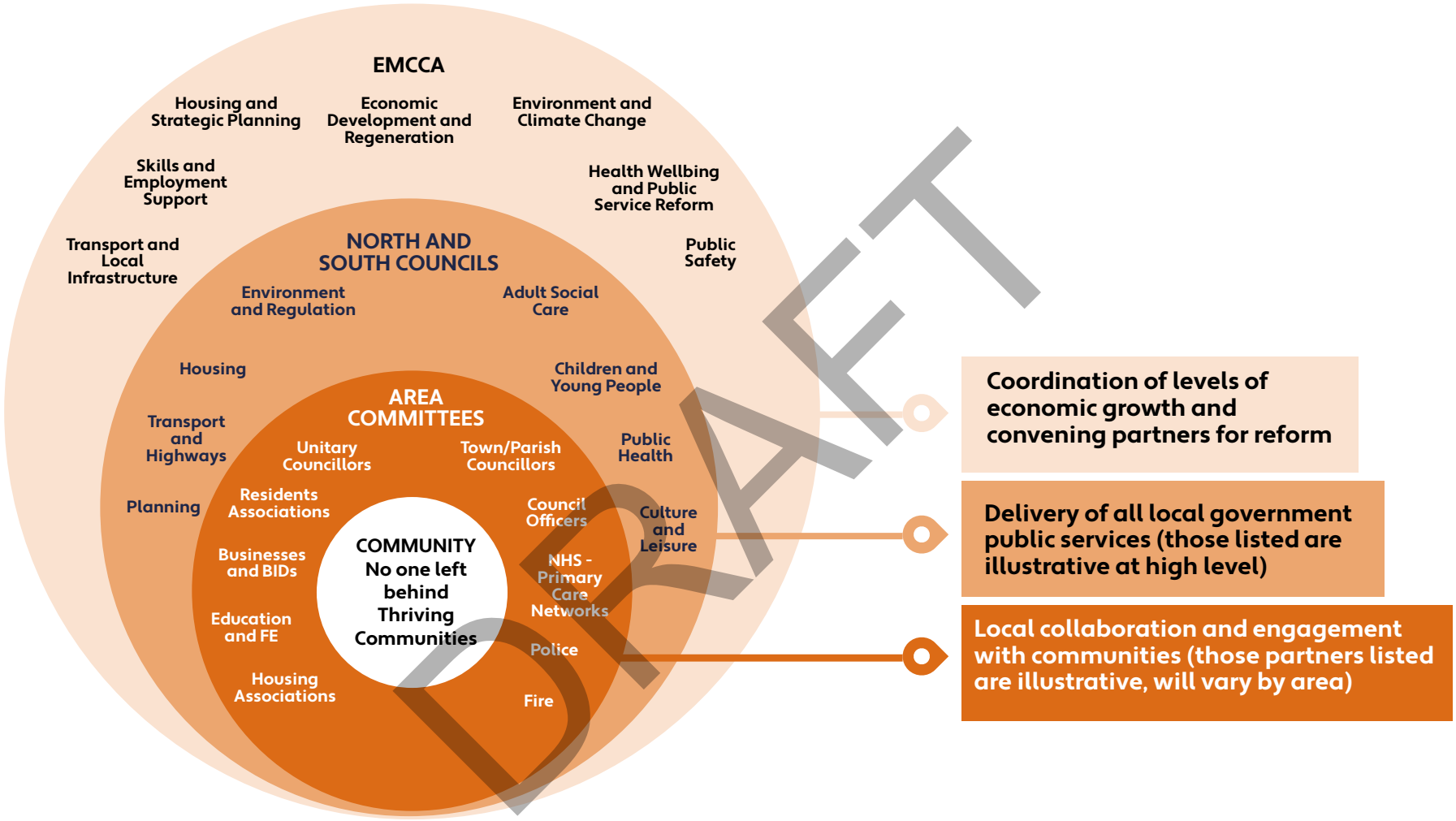
As our north-south model more closely reflects existing interrelationships and organisational boundaries, it enables the acceleration of new and innovative participative methods that will improve local decision making and community engagement at a neighbourhood level across the new authorities, in support of the EMCCA mayoral ambitions.

The image on the next page illustrates our comprehensive approach to localism and delivering neighbourhood governance and empowerment.

There is transparency and clarity around functions and responsibilities at different community levels for all agencies, communities, individuals, and partners. Additionally, the interrelated and interdependent nature of the functions and responsibilities, require high levels of communication, collaboration, partnership, and trust.

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Community Engagement Model



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Figure 37: *Image of our proposed community engagement model*

Our model for community engagement and empowerment sets out a bold and transformational approach, which strongly aligns with the government's ambitions for community renewal and the EMCCA mayoral ambitions for our communities.



TOWN VIEW, MANSFIELD

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NORTH - SOUTH

GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE

This section sets out how our proposal will revitalise local democracy by:

- **Providing the right number of councillors in the right places to deliver simpler, more effective representation.**
- **Supporting the development of future councillors as leaders and representatives in the new councils.**

PROPOSED DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS

Under the current two-tier system, local accountability is diluted, with county councillors responsible for some services and borough and district councillors responsible for other services. Being passed from one council to another, one councillor to another, is a frequently expressed frustration.

Our proposal seeks to rebuild confidence in public services and local government. Councillors elected to two new unitary councils will oversee all principal council functions within their areas, effectively becoming 'one stop shops' for the people they represent.

Residents told us that they have fears that decision-makers will feel distant, local voice lost, and accountability diluted.

> "We need local representation that understands our issues, specific to our area."
>
> "I'm worried a larger council will be more detached from local people and local areas. How will they make sure that they understand and respond to the specific local concerns."
>
> *- Two participants, LGR Nottingham and Nottinghamshire engagement exercise.*

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Our proposal addresses the concerns raised by residents over feeling distant by:

Enhancing local democracy and empowering community involvement

The creation of north-south unitary councils provides an opportunity to redesign current governance arrangements to:

- Enhance the role and profile of democratically elected councillors.
- Increase the resilience, influence and engagement of local communities.
- Restore confidence in public services and institutions, bringing decision-making closer to the people served.
- Drive public service reform, through more effective co-ordination and holding to account of decision-makers and service providers and drawing on the local knowledge, creativity, and ingenuity of local communities.

In determining the appropriate size for each council, we have taken into account the following key considerations:

Strategic leadership:

- The number of councillors that will be needed to discharge the Executive functions of the unitary council and contribute to the leadership and oversight of EMCCA.

Accountability:

- The number of councillors that will be needed to scrutinise council decisions and hold local service providers to account for performance.
- The number of councillors that will be needed to support the regulatory functions of the new authorities, including planning and licencing.

Community leadership:

- The number of councillors that will be needed to represent and engage with local people and communities.
- The number of councillors that will be needed to respond to casework demands of the electorate.

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Current council size

Current local authority area (district / borough)	Number of councillors	Electorate as of 1 June 2025	Average number of electors per councillor	Number of county council divisions	Number of county councillors	Average number of electors per councillor
Ashfield	35	94,770	2,692	10	10	9,423
Bassetlaw	48	92,350	1,924	9	9	10,261
Gedling	41	92,642	2,260	6	9	10,294
Mansfield	36	82,709	2,297	5	9	9,190
Newark and Sherwood	39	96,602	2,478	10	10	9,663
Nottingham City	55	205,611	3,738			
Broxtowe Borough	44	86,299	1,961	7	9	9,589
Rushcliffe Borough	44	95,969	2,181	9	10	9,594

Figure 38: *Tables showing the current electoral arrangements for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils.*

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Having the right number of councillors, in the right places, is crucial to fulfilling the strategic and decision-making roles of the new unitary councils and for ensuring effective representation and engagement with local communities.

In developing our proposal, we have engaged with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and sought their guidance to help ensure that our approach to council size and electoral arrangements is as future proof as possible, notwithstanding the interest in some future boundary changes, for example, to align unitary boundaries within parliamentary constituencies. Our aim is to minimise the extent of change arising from the first electoral reviews following reorganisation. Our consideration of council size has factored in the different roles and responsibilities required of local councillors and the different levels at which they operate, from national and regional, to neighbourhood and street level. We've had regard to executive and scrutiny arrangements; to regulatory responsibilities; to the casework and other demands of different communities and to the extensive partnership arrangements that local councillors support, including EMCCA and Town and Parish councils.

At present, there are 66 county councillors, 287 district and borough councillors and 55 city councillors representing Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. A total of 408 councillors representing an electorate of 846,952 with the average councillor: elector ratio being 2,075 but varying significantly from council to council as indicated above.

Our proposed council sizes

The number of councillors proposed for our two new unitary councils are shown in the table below.

It is higher than the average number of councillors within existing unitary councils (58 as at February 2025)[42]. However, this reflects our larger than average population sizes and extensive and diverse geography.

	Proposed number of councillors	Current Electorate	Average councillor:elector ratio
North Nottinghamshire Council	96	459,073	1:4,782
South Nottinghamshire Council	88	387,879	1:4,407

Figure 39: *Tables showing the proposed ward and councillor numbers in our north-south model.*

This approach will result in an overall reduction of 224 councillors, striking an appropriate balance between having a sufficient number of councillors to fully discharge council functions and engage with local communities without being too unwieldly or diluting accountability.

Indicative electoral/warding arrangements

From discussions with the LGBCE, it is understood that the detail of warding arrangements will be a matter for further consideration. However, we are conscious of the limited amount of time between the Statutory Order being approved and elections to the shadow unitary councils in May 2027 and have therefore sought to make as much progress as possible at this stage. In addition, warding arrangements are fundamental to our thinking about neighbourhood empowerment and community engagement, forming the basis of a new system of area committees and emphasising why our proposal offers the most 'sensible geography', as evidenced in the public engagement exercise.

Our indicative warding/electoral arrangements, which are outlined in criteria six, use a combination of county divisions and city/borough/district wards. Where appropriate, existing wards have been combined to provide more equitable representation and stronger community identity.

We have developed a map to illustrate our thinking at this stage on warding arrangements in the north-south model, which can be found in appendix 7.

As mentioned previously, we have also developed a detailed breakdown of the Area Committee numbers alongside our warding arrangements to demonstrate their linkages, emphasizing our approach to keeping our communities connected. Details can be found in appendix 6.

42 www.lgbce.org.uk/electoral-data

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Governance

To ensure strong and visible leadership, it is proposed that each new authority adopts the cabinet and leader model. This model provides clarity in decision-making, enables swift and accountable leadership, and supports the delivery of strategic priorities. Councillors will play a dual role – acting as influential community leaders and contributing to strategic decision-making that reflects the needs and aspirations of their local areas. This approach also provides a clear and accessible structure for partners and stakeholders to engage with, supporting collaborative delivery across the region.

Enhancing the role of elected members

The creation of our model, and the end of two-tier local government, will simplify local democratic structures. It will give residents more clarity on who their councillors are and enable members to champion all the needs of their communities, unfettered by the constraints that members operate under in the two-tier system.

If we are to avoid creating a democratic deficit, then it is vital that this smaller group of elected councillors are supported to perform their role effectively. We envisage a skilled group of members, more visible to their residents, both in-person and online, and better able to amplify their voice on key matters of local concern. Key to this will be:

- Ongoing investment in councillors' training and development.
- Investment in technology to support councillors.
- Investments in the development of localised information reporting systems.

Making this shift, it is important that the new authorities can:

- **Enhance member support structures** – giving them better access to council officers, policy briefings, casework management tools etc.
- **Enhance pathways for councillors** – new authorities will have the scale, capacity and reach to develop clearer pathways for councillors to progress into leadership roles, or to transition into non-executive roles in other areas of public service.

Positioning the role of councillor as a better supported role may attract a more diverse range of candidates, helping to ensure that future councillors reflect the increasing diversity of our communities.

Civic and ceremonial arrangements

We recognise the historic and civic importance of the roles of Lord Lieutenant, High Sheriff, and mayors in representing local identity, promoting civic pride, and supporting community engagement. As part of the transition to the new north-south unitary authorities we will ensure that such ceremonial roles are appropriately championed and supported.

The county's ceremonial roles Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff will continue unchanged, as they have in other areas. In Cheshire, for example, the Lieutenancies Act 1997 was amended to reflect new unitary authorities, while the ceremonial county remained intact. The same principle applies here. Nottinghamshire will remain a single ceremonial county, with continuity in historic offices and functions. Alongside this, each new unitary council will be able to establish or retain its own civic identity, through mayors, chairs, or other traditions, ensuring both county-wide heritage and local pride are safeguarded.

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NORTH - SOUTH

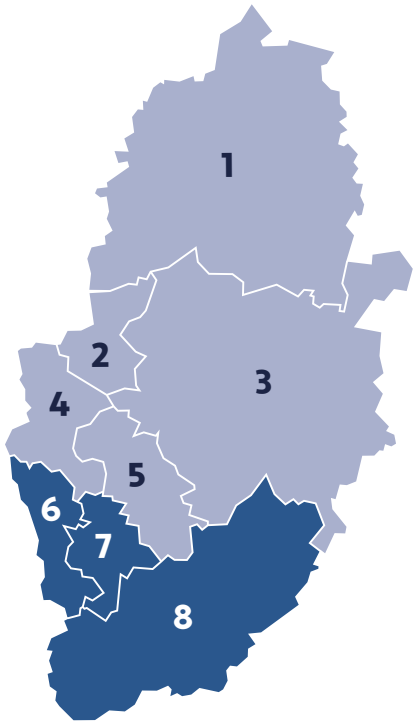
OPERATING MODEL



NOTTINGHAM CITY FOOTBALL GROUND, RUSHCLIFFE

TARGET OPERATING MODEL

Our structure reflects local identities, enables tailored service delivery, supports housing and economic growth and will deliver operating efficiencies. '**It makes sense.**'



Key

1. Bassetlaw
2. Mansfield
3. Newark and Sherwood
4. Ashfield
5. Gedling
6. Broxtowe
7. Nottingham
8. Rushcliffe

Figure 40 : *Map showing the two new unitary councils under our north-south model.*

While each new unitary council will develop its own Target Operating Model (TOM) in collaboration with key stakeholders, including residents, the councils supporting this proposal are united around a set of core design principles. These principles, shaped by community and partner engagement, will underpin the development of each council's TOM and serve as the foundation for building stronger communities and driving inclusive economic growth.

The design principles presented, in their practical application to the new unitaries, provide strong and numerous inter-relationships and dependencies. For instance, working with businesses in neighbourhoods to develop training programmes that meet skills gaps, which in turn drive growth in employment and GVA, or co-designing with residents or service users' digital applications that enable them to make choices and decisions that have a preventative impact.

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Real life case example – Sally from Ashfield

Sally is leaving school this year and is unsure about her next steps. To simplify what can be a complex landscape of career and learning options, schools, colleges, and businesses will work with the unitary councils to create a one-stop-shop. This will help Sally understand and access a range of opportunities, whether that's employment, further education, or an apprenticeship. The new Unitary Authority will work with businesses to develop the right training programmes that meets skills gaps and will support Sally in finding the right opportunity for her to establish a strong career in the area she grew up.

Realising the beneficial transformational opportunities and outcomes brought about by the design principles will be a key priority of the new unitary councils.



Air and Space Training Institute, Newark providing training opportunities in aerospace and aviation.

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CORE DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Figure 41 : *Our north-south proposed core design principles.*

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Designing and adopting a future TOM will be an important step in enabling the new unitary councils to manage the mobilisation, transition and transformation stages in a coherent way.

The future TOM, built on our design principles, will enable unitary councils to act proactively, embrace innovation, and adopt predictive and transformative approaches. These principles ensure responsiveness to local needs and trends, driving better outcomes through targeted, community-informed interventions.

They will also support the delivery of national policy including devolution, addressing local priorities and driving strong collaborative partnerships, both within the unitary footprint and regionally to ensure long-term sustainability.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

We know that managing demand and reducing cost whilst ensuring quality outcomes is essential for ASC and children's services. The overarching TOM is essential for delivering on our ambitions and goals to achieve financial sustainability.

Delivering these services is a statutory duty of the new unitaries. They are essential to our most vulnerable residents, their families and carers. To achieve our transformational objectives in these areas, services need to be rooted in the communities they serve, which our model achieves.

Our proposed TOM for ASC is aligned to the overarching design principles of the councils' TOM, and we propose that we will operate as a locality plus model. Whilst many ASC services operate locality teams for delivery (as is the case currently with Nottinghamshire County Council), we will go further with locality plus in line with our ambitions for ASC and achieving our aim of 'home first.'

Under locality plus we will assess need, commission and deliver at a local level, supporting and empowering our communities to have healthy, happy and independent lives.

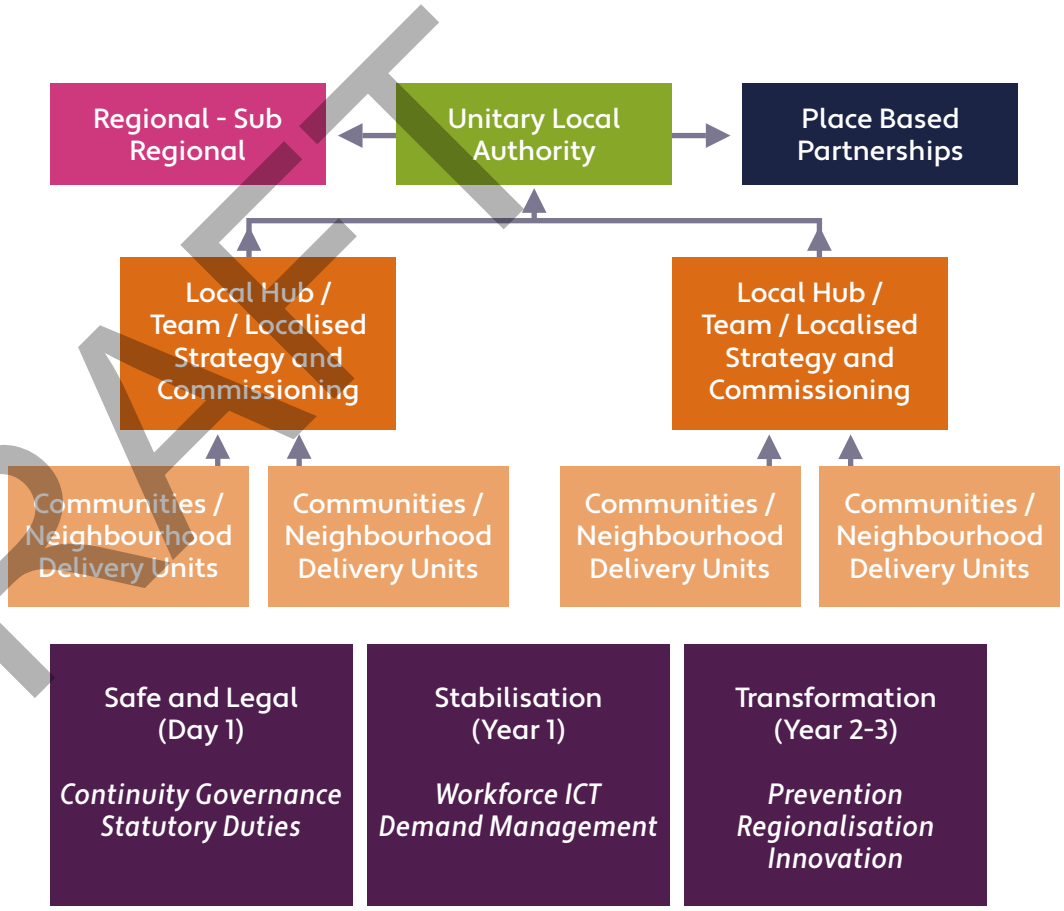


Figure 42 : *The proposed locality plus structure.*

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Figure 43 : *The proposed core features of our north-south ASC target operating model.*

We propose that each unitary delivers children's services using a locality-plus model. Having services and providers centred around the local communities will be crucial if we are to tackle rising demand and costs across both the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council footprint. In addition, rebuilding the trust of parents and schools is essential if we are to successfully educate children and young people with SEND within the communities where they live.

Some services will be best provided at a regional level, and we are committed to doing so where it makes sense.

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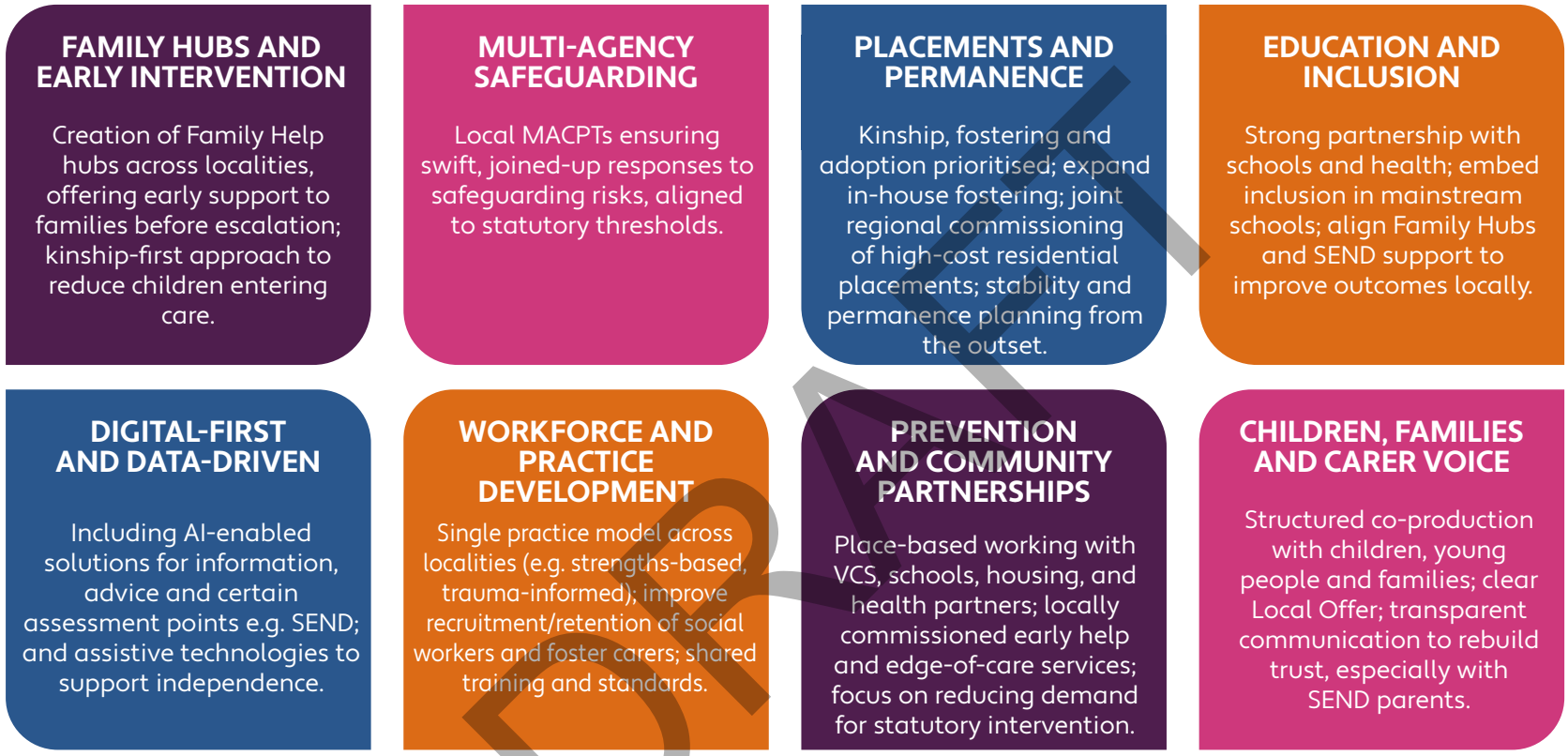


Figure 44 : *The proposed core features of our north-south children's services target operating model.*

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The proposed TOMs for the north-south unitary councils are central to unlocking the full potential of public service reform across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. While each TOM will evolve to reflect the unique priorities of its communities, they will be built on a shared foundation of values, design principles, and a commitment to transformation.

These models are not just operational frameworks; they are enablers of change. They will provide the structure and clarity needed to:

- Drive inclusive economic growth, by aligning services with local strengths and opportunities.
- Improve outcomes for residents, through more responsive, place-based, and preventative service delivery.
- Deliver high-quality, efficient, and sustainable services, underpinned by financial resilience and innovation.

By embedding the locality plus model in critical areas such as ASC and children's services, the new councils will ensure that services remain rooted in communities, while benefiting from strategic coordination and economies of scale. This approach will help manage demand, reduce costs, and most importantly improve the lives of the residents we serve.

Our north-south model is not only deliverable, it is desirable. It reflects local identity, builds on existing partnerships, and offers a pragmatic, future-focused pathway to local government reorganisation. With strong leadership, collaborative governance, and a clear vision, the new councils will be well-positioned to lead a new era of local government, one that is more connected, more accountable, and more capable of meeting the challenges and opportunities ahead.



Our model reflects local identity. Photograph taken in Bingham, Rushcliffe.

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ARBORETUM, NOTTINGHAM

NORTH - SOUTH

TRANSITION AND TRANSFORMATION

TRANSITION AND TRANSFORMATION

By aligning to existing district/borough boundaries and building on established partnerships, our proposal enables more straightforward and efficient implementation and service continuity, reducing the risk of disruption during transition.

While this phase will be facilitated by the shadow councils to ensure the safe and legal transfer of functions, services and duties on vesting day (1 April 2028), our proposal and work to date will very much support this.

It should be noted that the work to date by all our stakeholders may not feature in our proposal in its entirety, however it will help with the preparations, design and implementation of the new unitary authorities going forward.

LGR presents the opportunity for so much more than just reorganising boundaries. While it will be for the new unitary councils to determine, our proposal envisages reorganisation as the foundation for extensive transformation in the longer-term. We suggest this is likely to include:

- Wider public service reform, engaging health, police, business, and the voluntary sector.
- Enhanced resident engagement and empowerment, and stronger local democracy.
- Renewed neighbourhood and locality partnership working
- Greater collaboration across the region with closer working between the two proposed single tier councils.
- Enhanced preventative, early help and demand management activities.
- Development of local markets, through a 'commissioning local' approach, supporting local economic growth.
- More efficient use of public funds and assets.
- Radically different new ways of working, exploiting digital advantages.
- Capitalising fully on devolved powers, aligned with EMCCA strategies.

Our north-south model will avoid the need for complex boundary changes, by aligning to existing district boundaries. This approach also benefits from building on established partnerships within both the north and south, helping to maintain service continuity and avoid fragmentation.

LGR demands meticulous planning and adequate resourcing. Ambitious transformation programmes must be grounded in realism, acknowledging the constraints of available resources and time. Insufficient resourcing and a lack of necessary capabilities are frequent causes of organisational change failures. Implementing change effectively, including the iterative process of testing, refining, and reinforcing new processes, often proves more demanding and time-consuming than initially anticipated.

Leadership and management teams within each council will play a crucial role in facilitating the reorganisation, supporting staff and fostering the necessary cultural shift. The effort required to achieve wide scale cultural change should not be underestimated.

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A PHASED APPROACH

There will be three phases through our journey in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to deliver LGR: mobilisation, transition, and transformation.

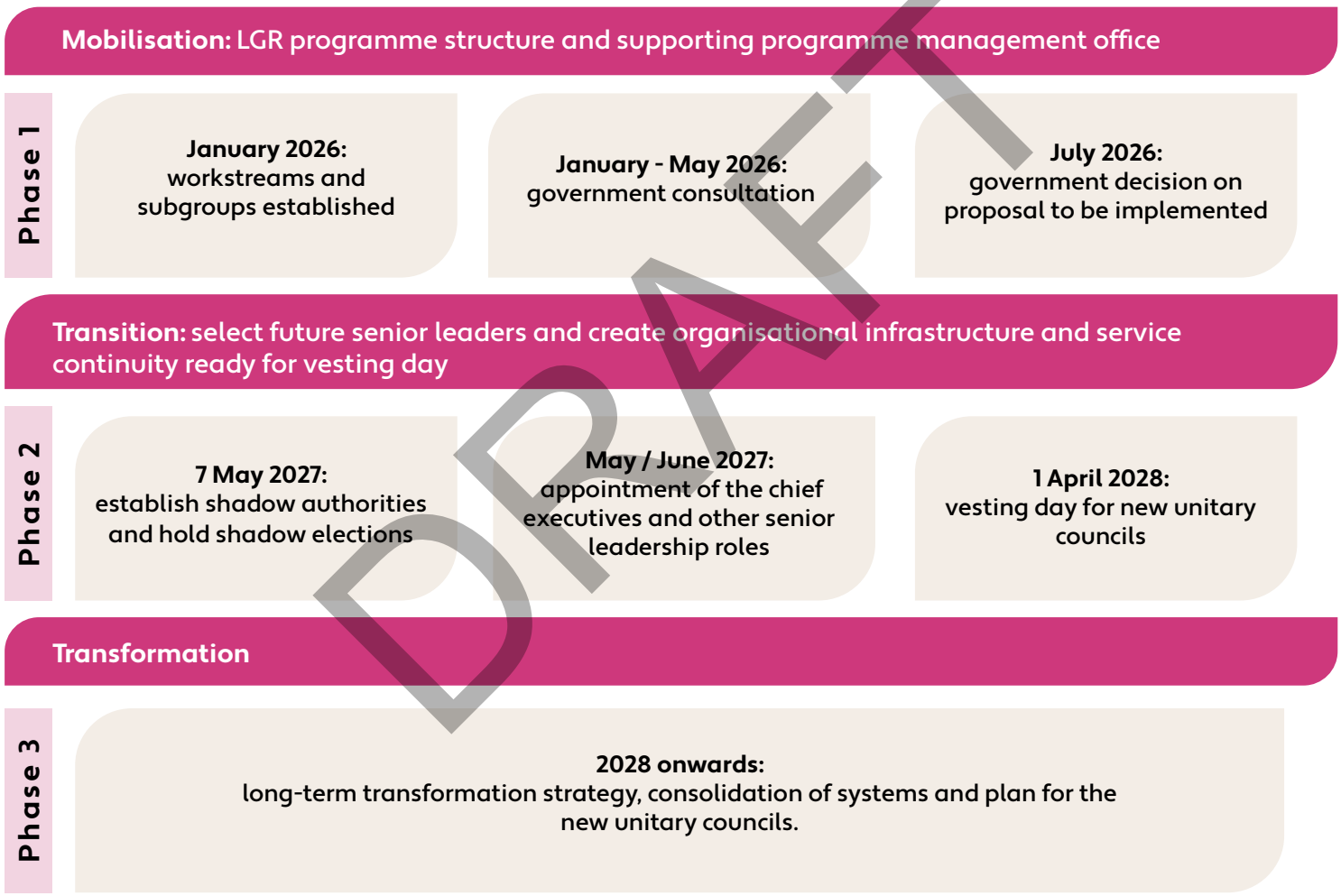


Figure 45: *Proposed timetable.*

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PHASE ONE: MOBILISATION

Following the final submission to government on 28 November 2025, a devolution and LGR programme structure and supporting programme management office (PMO) will be established to oversee and drive delivery whilst ensuring oversight of the entire programme's progress. There will be continued collaborative working by all councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with pooled resources from all districts, boroughs, the city, and the county council.

The programme group will be working on sub-areas and workstreams and build on foundational data activity undertaken through the interim and full proposal submissions, as well as the MHCLG list of preparatory activities.

No matter the decision from government on which proposal will be implemented, work will need to be carried out regardless.

We will continue our stakeholder engagement to increase awareness and build cooperation and relationships. We will continue to promote and engage with residents and businesses across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to ensure we are taking our stakeholders with us on the journey. Through facilitating regular drop-in sessions, in person events and partner briefings, we will baseline our current position as well as leading our stakeholders through the strategic vision and direction of the reorganisation.

Following a decision from government in summer 2026, the programme will commence more detailed planning work.

We propose that new governance arrangements are put in place under a Nottingham and Nottinghamshire leader's implementation group, ensuring representation from each council and an accurate reflection of the political make-up of the area. We will also continue to build on the strong collaboration established in the preparation stage and on the strong governance, methods and relationships that are being developed with EMCCA that are already in place.

The reorganisation is the largest and most complex reorganisation attempted anywhere in the UK since 1974. We share the view of the government that it's essential to minimise the risks of the safe transition to a successful implementation: the highest operational risk is around the disaggregation and transition of social care and education. It is essential that a form of governance is agreed through the Statutory Change Order that reflects the reality of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire system and minimises transition risks to ensure a successful implementation. This can only be done through proportionate representation of both tier authorities of government through the formal governance arrangements.

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Workstreams and sub-groups within the programme will be fully established and supported with resource across the councils. The key workstreams and tasks that will be required are outlined below:

- Planning and delivery of the elections to the shadow authorities in May 2027.
- Cross-council working and coordination of delivery of formal governance and programme management arrangements that will be taken forward into new shadow authorities. This builds on work established as part of phase one pre-planning.
- Cross-council collaborated and agreed detailed programme implementation plan to help establish clear parameters, deadlines, decision points and critical path for delivery of a safe and legal day one.
- Design and agree the future planned target operating model including detailed plans for disaggregation and aggregation of service areas including the high-risk areas of SEND, ASC, children's social care, homelessness and public safety. But, as we know from our stakeholder engagement, services such as highways and waste collection services are also critical, and we are committed to ensure detailed plans are in place and resourced sufficiently to mitigate risk and minimise service delivery disruption.
- Collaborative design and plan for baseline of IT infrastructure to support and deliver a safe and legal day one.
- Design and agreement of a clear external and internal communications strategy to support the delivery of a safe and legal day one.
- Working sub-group to help deliver and design the baselining of the capital asset property portfolio.
- To identify current procurement and contract arrangements.
- To conduct a HR baseline review, including establishment list, policies and practices, job descriptions.

Working together sharing service data, structure and systems information we will develop a deeper understanding of the potential to protect key front line service delivery, consolidate duplication, explore shared services, maximise transformation opportunities and minimise risks as we move into the design phase.



Front line services affect all our residents. Photograph taken in Broxtowe.

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PHASE TWO: TRANSITION

The transition phase is crucial to support a streamlined delivery of the new unitary structures of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The shadow authority will facilitate and ensure delivery of a safe and legal vesting day on 1 April 2028.

The shadow councils will lead and have ownership of the transition phase which will include:

- Detailed integration planning and transition of all services, including both disaggregation and aggregation of service areas.
- Appointment of the chief executives and other senior leadership roles including the early appointment of the Directors of ASC, children's services and public health.
- Planning for Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment (TUPE) of staff to new councils to support the retention of the workforce.
- Developing and agreeing a comprehensive workforce strategy for all tiers, with the necessary arrangements in place to support a smooth day one transition.
- Collaboratively define the culture, values, and identity of the new authorities, fostering a unified organisational ethos from inception.
- Delivering the implementation of agreed operating models (aligned to the overarching councils' TOM) and supporting infrastructure, enabling effective service delivery from day one.
- Completing system and user acceptance testing across all platforms and access channels for core systems, ensuring residents and partners can seamlessly access services and critical information from go live.
- Creating detailed budgets for 2028/29 and develop a medium-term financial plan, including transformation plans to support long-term financial sustainability.
- Budget setting for new authorities outlining funding arrangements including council tax harmonisation.
- Develop practical, actionable proposals for day one activities covering buildings, systems, data, and staffing, ensuring operational readiness
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement.

The joint programme team will build on the existing foundations in change and programme management. We will approach the implementation phase with a structured methodology that leverages and enhances existing capabilities using specialist support where required. The programme team will drive momentum, ensure partner alignment, and deliver sustainable outcomes.

Throughout this phase, robust programme governance will remain firmly in place to ensure delivery is consistently supported, with an implementation executive established to provide clear and timely formal decision-making on behalf of the new unitary councils. We will also work with current employees from

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across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to design the culture, values and identities of the new unitary authorities.

Following the elections to the shadow authorities in May 2027, the proposed arrangements and operating models developed for each of the new unitary authorities will need to be reviewed and formally adopted by the shadow councils. Our proposals outlined above will support the new authorities to start with clear plans for transformation and continued public service reform.

PHASE THREE: TRANSFORMATION

Following the delivery of **safe and legal** councils on vesting day in April 2028, the focus will turn to delivering a long-term transformation.

As we move toward becoming two unitary authorities, we are presented with a rare and exciting opportunity to fundamentally reshape how we serve our communities. By consolidating district and county functions, we can unlock the full potential of shared platforms, pooled resources, and integrated systems. This is our moment to create two data-driven organisations that use insight to anticipate need, allocate resources more effectively, and deliver services that are not only efficient but also deeply responsive to the residents who rely on them. Our ambition is to embed digital thinking across the councils, ensuring that transformation is not just about technology, but about people, equity, and outcomes.

These are not isolated ambitions; they are part of a broader shift toward services designed around real user needs, informed by real-time data, and delivered with empathy and precision. We are learning from peers who have pioneered AI-driven innovations in areas like infrastructure and environmental monitoring, and we are eager to build on these foundations to deliver smarter, safer, and more sustainable services. Our approach aligns with the principles of the 'Blueprint for Modern Digital Government'[43] , which calls for joined-up services that are proactive, transparent, and designed to meet people where they are - making public services easier to access and more effective in practice.

We recognise that not all residents engage with services in the same way, and we are determined to ensure that no customer is left behind. Bridging the digital divide, promoting digital literacy, and ensuring that our digital initiatives reflect the diversity of our communities.

There will be a separate working group for each new unitary during the mobilisation period which will be focused on looking ahead, identifying opportunities for transformation and greater efficiency.



We will ensure no customer is left behind with ICT and AI advancements.

43 www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-blueprint-for-modern-digital-government

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Key opportunities include:

- **Service redesign** – redesign services that are user-centric, efficient and reflect new geographies, resident needs, and digital capabilities. Focus on prevention, early intervention, integration, and outcomes.
- **Asset and estate rationalisation** - review and optimise the public estate across the authorities. Co-locate services and release surplus assets.
- **Digital transformation** - expand digital platforms, automation, and AI-enabled tools to improve resident experience and workforce productivity.
- **Delivering value for money** – review third party expenditure, contract and commissioning functions, developing and shaping the local market.
- **Strategic partnerships** - strengthen collaboration with health, police, education, and voluntary sector partners to deliver integrated outcomes, and explore opportunities for shared services.

We recognise that there will be a number of quick wins particularly in areas such as third-party expenditure through consolidation and reprocuring of new contracts. We also know that some areas which require policy change, harmonisation, asset rationalisation and digital transformation will take longer. In line with the financial modelling within our proposal, the councils need to be able to deliver some financial benefits in year one with full effect by year three. Thus, ensuring they deliver on the benefits of LGR and secure financial sustainability moving forward.

RISKS AND MITIGATION DURING TRANSITION

Challenges

The continuity of service delivery will be critical, however from a transition and transformation perspective, the key challenges that must be addressed in moving to our recommended model are covered here.

Challenge 1 – Variable transition and transformation capacity and capability.

The new unitary authorities will need to address the variable levels of transformation capacity and capability across the nine councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and enhance where appropriate. Transformational one-off costs have been added to the financial modelling to ensure adequate resource and capability is assigned to the programme.

Challenge 2 – Managing the joint challenges of disaggregation and aggregation in relation to LGR in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Due to the unique nature of local government configuration, including the existence of seven district/borough councils, one unitary authority, and one county council, transition and transformation will be complex and challenging. Critically, the design of our north-south model mitigates a number of these but will require careful and considered planning and delivery.

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Challenge 3 – Supporting continued transformation and reform from pre-implementation through to the realisation of the future model.

With the above challenges in mind, LGR can quickly become an inhibitor for transformation and innovation in advance of implementation. Our transition and transformation approach delivers a clear and realisable plan for prioritising and maximising transformation as we move through the pre-implementation period.

Furthermore, we also see this as an opportunity to maximise the benefits of LGR as the single most exciting proposition for delivering system-wide transformation of local government in a generation. The opportunity to build new authorities from the ground up creates the perfect conditions to design services around residents and their needs. Through our model, we will aim to break down professional silos and barriers to change that have built up organically across organisations, accelerating the deployment of best practice, innovation, and transformation.

As such, our approach to transition and transformation will be a strategic and proactive one. Wherever possible, we have identified through our categorisation of services those areas of current delivery which can be transformed in advance of LGR. The services that will require initial transition and stabilisation will be designed from the bottom up to deliver better outcomes for the future.

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Designing services around local needs. Photograph taken at a local business support event, Gedling.

Risks

We recognise the risks associated with LGR and are proactively addressing them through a structured programme approach. Transitioning to new structures in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire involves disaggregating and reorganising county, unitary, and district/borough council services, as well as redefining boundaries. To navigate this complexity, we will work closely with the LGBCE, drawing on lessons from previous reorganisation programmes, and commence day one planning to ensure readiness.

We appreciate the scale and speed of change are unprecedented, particularly given ongoing pressures on health and other public services, and that is why we will carefully manage this through a clear mobilisation, transition, and transformation plan.

ICT is central to every aspect of the programme and essential for the legal and operational integrity of the new councils. We will bring together ICT managers from across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to share data, licences, and infrastructure insights, streamlining preparations and reducing pressure on capacity. This builds on an existing data-sharing agreement across the nine councils.

Successful reorganisation requires strong collaboration across councils, government tiers, and political lines.

We are building on established partnerships, identifying initiatives that can be delivered now, and setting clear protocols for joint working. Our approach ensures current services remain strong while laying the foundations for successful new authorities. We have incorporated lessons from previous programmes, such as North Northamptonshire and Cumbria, including the importance of dedicated PMO teams, allocated programme managers, early shadow boards to support service development, and regular monitoring of delivery plans through a day-one board.

Importantly, our north-south model significantly reduces transition risks compared to alternative proposals, making it a safer, more resilient option for implementing reorganisation successfully. It achieves this because:

It reduces the degree of change

It keeps the number of authorities at two (reflecting our current two upper tiers) and therefore avoids layering on top the significant added risks that come from increasing the number of unitary authorities.

It reduces the timescale for transition

Less change means that new services will be able to transition to new operating models quicker. This will ensure less uncertainty for our service users, partners and wider communities, who will also be able to experience the benefits of LGR more quickly. It will also be good for staff, reducing the risk that prolonged uncertainty leads to issues with staff retention and exiting of experienced and valued members of staff.

It also creates new authorities with the scale and resources to better manage the risk

As we have established, the two new authorities in our proposal will be financially resilient and will have the financial and workforce capacity and capability to better absorb and manage risk and financial shocks.

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Mitigations

We will work together and individually to ensure we have an up to date and live business continuity plan, which will form a key part of our governance.

Furthermore, we have identified key risks alongside mitigations for those challenges, arising from disaggregation and aggregation in our LGR proposal. These are set out in the tables below.

LGR risk	Transition mitigation actions
Disaggregation of service delivery models.	A critical role of the PMO, which will form part of the transition stage, will be to operate a comprehensive and live risk register. We do not underestimate the risk involved in the disaggregation and aggregation of services, especially high dependency services such as ASC and children's services. While both areas will have their own dedicated working groups and transition leads, we do not walk into this blindly. We have been working with Peopletoo as part of the development of our proposal and have already started to draft outline transition plans that we can build upon as a shadow authority.
Loss of economies of scale in central support functions (for example in HR, IT or procurement).	Maximise the potential use of shared services and sharing arrangements as set out in our TOM, ensuring that shared service establishment is a core deliverable of the LGR transformation programme.
Complex contractual unwinding for third-party contracts.	Establish a single contract register and procurement forward plan for LGR in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It is acknowledged that there are a significant number of long-term contracts currently let by Nottinghamshire County Council which in some cases last to 2030 and beyond. This presents the challenge of delivery needing to unwind at pace, while also allowing ample time for the new unitary authorities to design future commissioned services, to deliver better-targeted local outcomes aimed at growth, prevention, and demand management. We will establish joint legal/commissioning governance structures, to negotiate exits or redesign contracts locally or, through multi-unitary authority partnerships.
Financial risks arising from different starting points (for example reserves, liabilities or debt exposure).	Thorough and full analysis has been undertaken on behalf of all the councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire on financial viability and resilience by PwC and CIPFA, to establish the financial starting point for each of the new unitary authorities.
Disruption to key operational data systems and performance management.	Build upon the already established data-sharing infrastructure hosted by Bassetlaw and Ashfield to establish an LGR implementation data sharing hub and framework for implementation.
Workforce retention risks and challenges.	Build upon the learning already established through the devolution priority programme to establish common and consistent workforce transition principles and strategies, joint staffing protocols, and phased transfers aligned with organisational change support.

Figure 46: *Table showing key risks and corresponding mitigations from disaggregation and aggregation.*

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LGR risk	Transition mitigation actions
Public confusion and trust erosion due to service disruption or perceived duplication.	Establish a coordinated change management and public-facing communications campaign supported by common deployment of communications assets at all resident-facing digital and physical front doors across the unitarity authorities.
Potential duplication or fragmentation if shared arrangements are not delivered.	Common commitment to sharing of capabilities, data, and services (as per our TOM) has been established as part of our journey to developing this proposal and will be delivered as a key priority of the LGR transition.
ICT and data interoperability between councils.	Where strong ICT capabilities exist across the north-south councils, these will be deployed proactively to establish clear future technology architectures for each unitary authority. Shared capabilities will be proactively explored as a priority in implementation.
Transition cost and complexity of setting up new shared arrangements.	Transition costs have been fully incorporated into our financial model for our north-south proposal and have been fully accounted for in the overarching financial business case that sits at the heart of this proposal.

Figure 46 contuined: *Table showing key risks and corresponding mitigations from disaggregation and aggregation.*

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Our approach to the effective implementation of LGR is grounded in strong leadership, meaningful engagement, proactive risk management, and disciplined programme governance. These are underpinned by a shared set of values and principles that guide the transition and ensure alignment across all participating councils. This foundation is essential, particularly given the significant financial, operational, and workforce-related risks associated with the implementation phase.

Importantly, our proposed north-south model offers a realistic and deliverable pathway for service aggregation. It builds on established partnerships in the south and strengthens already robust relationships in the north, providing a solid platform for transformation.

We are fully committed to working collaboratively with all councils, partners, and key stakeholders across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, as well as our neighbouring authorities, to secure the best possible outcomes for our residents. This is a unique opportunity to deliver meaningful local government reorganisation, and we are determined and committed to maximise its potential for real long-term benefit.

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CONCLUSION



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LANGOLD COUNTRY PARK, BASSETLAW

CONCLUSION

Our proposal for LGR in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is bold, evidence-led, and rooted in the lived realities of our communities.

We are confident that the creation of two new councils - one for the north and one for the south - offers the most pragmatic and future-ready solution. This model reflects sensible, balanced geographies that combine strategic scale with strong local identity. It enables governance that is more efficient, more accountable, and more responsive to the diverse needs of our residents.

By aligning fully with the government's six criteria for reorganisation, our north-south model ensures continuity of the high-quality services that people rely on, while unlocking the potential for transformation. It empowers communities through stronger local leadership, avoids the risks of over-centralisation, and supports tailored, place-based solutions to complex challenges such as housing, social care, and economic growth.

Unlike alternative options, our model provides a coherent framework for growth. It enables the alignment of urban regeneration and strategic development within a single authority, particularly in the proposed south unitary area, where the built-up corridor south of the River Trent represents the region's most significant growth opportunity. Other proposals risk fragmenting these opportunities, undermining the ability to deliver at pace and scale.

Moreover, our north-south model offers a more practical and cost-effective approach to service delivery. It avoids the inefficiencies associated with sprawling geographies, reducing the need for duplicated infrastructure, excessive travel, and additional operational overheads.

In addition, our proposal creates the opportunity for the formation of new and effective arrangements for engaging with and empowering residents at a neighbourhood level.

Most importantly, our model has the trust and support of our residents. Public engagement has shown that people recognise the logic of our north-south model. They see it as a model that reflects how communities live, work, and connect - a model that "**makes sense**."

Through extensive collaboration, robust evidence, and a clear roadmap for transition and transformation, our proposal lays the foundation for a new era of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver lasting change, creating two strong, sustainable councils that will **drive growth, improve lives, and be truly rooted in the communities they serve.**



Our north-south model, our bridge to a brighter future for driving growth and improving lives. Rooted in Community. Connected by place. Photograph taken at Clumber Park near Worksop in Nottinghamshire.

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FINAL PROPOSAL

FOR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

APPENDICES

A brighter future for driving growth and improving lives.
Rooted in community. Connected by place.

NORTH - SOUTH

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – PwC financial appraisal

The report provides a financial forecast for both 1b and 1e, including detailed estimates regarding transition costs and predicted payback periods, as well as the estimated financial balance of each organisation, across both income and expenditure and asset and liabilities.

Appendix 2 – Nottinghamshire LGR options appraisal of children's services, SEND and adults social care– Peopletoo

The report sets out the diagnostic and options appraisal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The analysis assesses how alternative governance models could improve service efficiency, resilience and outcomes in both children's services and adult social care.

Appendix 3 – Nottinghamshire LGR options appraisal of education services – Peopletoo

The report explores the impact of LGR in Nottinghamshire on education outcomes, comparing options 1b and 1e. The analysis looks at school quality, attainment, pupil outcomes, and institutional profiles.

Appendix 4 – The future of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire engagement report – Public Perspectives

Public Perspectives undertook an engagement exercise for all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils, over a six-week period, ending 14th September 2025. The report presents the findings from this engagement.

Appendix 5 – Map of illustrative structure of area committee

Appendix 5 maps our proposed area committee breakdown across both proposed unitaries in our north-south model.

Appendix 6 – Detailed breakdown of warding and area committee proposals

Appendix 6 outlines a detailed breakdown of the warding and area committees proposed in our north-south model.

Appendix 7 – Map of illustrative warding arrangements

Appendix 7 maps the warding arrangements proposed in our north-south model, aligning with pre-existing district boundaries and electoral wards, to minimise socio-geographic disruption.

NORTH - SOUTH

APPENDIX 1

PWC FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Councils

Financial Case Option 1b and 1e

November 2025

Nottingham City Council

Nottinghamshire County Council

Bassetlaw DISTRICT COUNCIL — North Nottinghamshire —

Ashfield DISTRICT COUNCIL

Broxtowe Borough COUNCIL

Gedling Borough Council

Mansfield District Council

NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Rushcliffe Borough Council

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1. Overview of approach

Purpose of the Financial Analysis

This document provides an overview position for each unitary option detailing the estimates for transition costs as well as the benefits from aggregation and implementation. It sets out the estimated financial balance of each organisation across income and expenditure and then asset and liabilities.

The output covers:

- A “day 1” budget forecast derived from the above and from income and expenditure projections on the basis of our agreed assumptions and inputs
- A “day 1” financial balance factoring in apportionments of assets, associated liabilities and borrowing commitments according to geography and function
- An updated view of the estimated cost and benefit of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and potential subsequent transformation for each proposed configuration of unitary authorities

Note: this is an estimated financial position for the new unitary authorities developed using current financial data and assumptions. It does not, therefore, take into account decisions that might be taken during the transition phase that might have an impact on costs, realisation of benefits, or wider elements that could impact the Day 1 position e.g the outcome of the Fair Funding Review, changes in the local government finance settlement, inflation, or political developments at both local and national levels.

Components of the Financial Analysis

The analysis undertaken and assumptions applied provides an estimated forecast of “Year 1” budgets and financial balance for the new Unitary Authorities (UAs) options, the projected impact of LGR and Transformation. Separately, an analysis of potential scenarios for council tax harmonisation is provided to demonstrate the impact of this fiscal lever for the new authorities.

Forecast Budgets for new Unitary Authorities

Existing MTFS projections

- **Income including Council Tax**
  - Exceptional Financial Support
  - MTFS Business Rates, Council Tax, Grants
  - Use of earmarked and General Fund Reserves
- **Expenditure**
  - Efficiency Savings
  - Additional demand pressures overspend
  - Additional costs from staffing pay alignment

Impact of LGR (benefits and costs)

- **Recurring LGR aggregation benefits**
  - FTE consolidation (including senior leadership)
  - Third party and property spend reduction
  - Elected member and election cost reduction
- **One off transition costs**
  - Redundancies and salary alignment; IT migrations; contingency
  - Engagement, design, transition and programme support
  - Organisation closedown and establishment

- **Transformation**
  - Staffing and operating model transformation benefits
  - Third Party Spend reduction
  - Transformation costs

Existing transformation (factored into MTFS) → Planned transformation (but not factored into current MTFS) → **Transformation activity *following* reorganisation**

Financial Balance for new Unitary Authorities

- **Assets (HRA/Non-HRA)**
  - Long Term Assets
- **Liabilities**
  - Long Term Liabilities
  - Borrowing Interest

Together, these outputs form the basis of the initial financial position (eg. FY 2028/29) for the new unitary authorities following their establishment.

Council Tax Harmonisation

Alongside the outputs above, analysis has been undertaken to project the impact of different scenarios for Council Tax Harmonisation that the new authorities would be responsible for agreeing and implementing.

- **Weighted average method**
- **High, low and average harmonisation scenarios**

Timeline to the financial analysis

Set out below is the methodology and logic for assumptions applied. The additional complexity involved in creating multiple unitary authorities has been taken into account in the form of increased transition costs and reductions in economies of scale. To note, transformation costs and benefits are applied after reorganisation based on an assumed level of ambition and implementation of further change to realise the full benefit.

Reorganisation Benefits and Costs

Reorganisation Benefits

Recurring Aggregation Benefits: Savings achieved through consolidation e.g. management, systems and support functions. These are ongoing efficiencies generated through removing duplication and streamlining processes.

These benefits are phased over the initial years following vesting (30% in year 1; 50% in year 2), before being 100% realised in year 3 (2030/31).

Reorganisation Costs

One-off Transition Costs: Upfront investment needed to create new authorities.

These costs are incurred incrementally in the four years following vesting (30% in year 1; 30% in year 2; 30% in year 3, 10% in year 4). The cumulative percentage of costs add to 100%.

Transformation
Post-Vesting Day

Transformation Benefits

Efficiency and productivity improvements realised once new authorities are established and operating effectively.

Reflect long-term service redesign, innovation, and better outcomes for residents.

These benefits begin to realise in Year 1 (28/29) following vesting (25% in year 1; 50% in year 2), before being 100% realised in year 3 (2030/31).

Transformation Costs

Investment required to modernise and redesign services (e.g. digitalisation, workforce reform, asset rationalisation).

These are incurred after reorganisation and are distinct from transition costs. These are short-term costs intended to unlock longer-term service and financial improvements.

Different scenarios for the phasing of costs of transformation have been developed to inform the cost-benefit analysis.

2. Estimated Day 1 Position

Estimated Year 1 income and net expenditure position is set out on this page for Option 1B.

MTFS figures from the most recent published versions as of 31 March 2025 have been used to estimate forward-looking income and net expenditure for the purposes of developing the Year 1 position. This baseline position was agreed with S151 Officers for all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities in September.

The Year 1 position is not intended to predict the outcome of national funding reforms or new grant schemes. A significant number of elements could impact the Year 1 position, including the Fair Funding Review, future settlements from government, inflation, political change nationally and locally. The government is expected to provide more detail on the Fair Funding Review outcome in Autumn 2025.

Option 1B | Estimated Year 1 Position

Modelling indicates that the proposed new councils will begin operations in the following financial position.

- **Opening deficits:** The combined opening position across the new UAs shows significant core funding pressures. All will start with an operating deficit, which is not unexpected as local government is operating in a challenging financial context.
- **Efficiency requirements:** To achieve a balanced budget, savings are required across multiple councils, with many needing recurring efficiency gains over the next 5 years. These are outlined in the notes below.
- **Strategic trade-offs:** Councils will face early policy choices: draw further on reserves, amend Council Tax, or accelerate service transformation. Longer-term gains from LGR aggregation and longer-term transformation integration are potential offsets.

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	Option 1b	
	North *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe*	**South** *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling*
28/29 Core Funding	£648,520,241	£594,372,174
28/29 Net Cost Operating Expenditure	£672,117,041	£653,748,917

28/29 "Year 1" Budget Gap	**£23,596,800**	**£59,376,743**
Cumulative Budget Gap from 25/26-28/29 inc. demand pressures	**£80,016,112**	**£178,755,555**
Cumulative Budget Gap from 25/26-28/29 inc. demand pressures net of savings, Exceptional Financial Support, Reserves from MTFS	**£43,483,641**	**£70,906,860**

Authority	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark & Sherwood	Rushcliffe	Nottingham City	Nottinghamshire County
Year Used	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29
Source	Annual Budget And Council Tax 2025/26 And Medium Term Financial Strategy Update Pg 15	Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2029-30 Pg 18	Medium Term Financial Strategy	General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26 Pg 20	Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 To 2027/28 Pg 17	Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting for 2025/26 Pg2	Budget Setting Report And Associated Financial Strategie Pg 43	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Budget 2025/26 – Proposals For Submission To Full Council Pg 22
MTFS Note	Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget.General and Embarked reserves have been used to achieve a net 0 for 2025/26	The Budget highlights the need for the implementation of savings and efficiencies in order to balance the budget. Both general and other reserves are required	The MTFS includes a Business Strategy that sets out initiatives to reduce costs and generate additional income.General fund will be used to balance the budget	Most efficiencies have been built in the budget. Additional efficiencies are yet to be identified.General fund will be used	The Council has a programme of savings that it needs to deliver in order to balance its budget.	Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget.General and Embarked reserves have been used to achieve a net 0	The budget includes Transformation and Efficiency Plan savings of £1.7m over the 5-year period helping to reduce the deficit to more manageable levels	Successful delivery of transformational change and efficiency savings will be fundamental to the elimination of deficit	The progress of all savings and efficiencies will be monitored as part of the budget monitoring processes.This budget report is proposing to utilise £46.5m of reserves

As a result of using the consistent baseline of published revenue budgets and MTFS as of 31 March 2025, the projected income and expenditure position does not forecast the impact of updated in-year outturn figures or revised MTFPs prepared as part of the 2026/27 budget-setting process. These may indicate an improved financial position - particularly in the South's net income and expenditure positions and thereby reduce pressure on general fund reserve balances.

An estimated Year 1 Assets and Liabilities position is set out on this page for Option 1B.

The Year 1 Balance Sheet analysis incorporates data which includes:

- Long Term Assets on the current Statement of Accounts
- Long Term Liabilities on the current Statement of Accounts
- Capital Financing Requirements from 25/26 to 28/29
- Capital Programme Budget to from 25/26 to 28/29

Option 1B | Balance Sheet

Modelling indicates that the proposed new councils will begin operations in the following financial position.

- **Assets:** Set out below is an evidence-based estimate of what each new authority would be accountable for on Year 1, drawn from existing Statement of Account asset values, taking in planned and additional disposals of surplus assets into account. The apportionment of assets assumes that asset value follows population across the proposed new unitaries.
- **Liabilities:** Also below is the long term financial obligations that would transfer into any new unitary councils, which are allocated following the same distribution profile as assets. In reality, the apportionment of debt will be worked through in detail as part of the implementation of any new authority.

	Option 1b	
	North *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, and Rushcliffe*	**South** *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling*
Assets		
Long Term Assets (28/29)	£4,307,432,202	£4,701,904,337
Liabilities		
Long Term Liabilities (28/29)	£1,126,998,351	£1,228,619,592
Net Assets		
Net Long Term Assets (28/29)	£3,180,433,851	£3,473,284,745

Authority	**Ashfield**	**Bassetlaw**	**Broxtowe**	**Gedling**	**Mansfield**	**Newark & Sherwood**	**Rushcliffe**	**Nottingham city UA**	**Nottinghamshire County**
Sources (Asset)	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 9*	*Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/2025 Financial Year Pg 30*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 33*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 42*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 pg 55*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 pg 32*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 53*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 20*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025s Pg 39*

The use of Draft Statement of Accounts for 2024-25 was agreed as a baseline position by Section 151 officers for all authorities. As such, this analysis does not factor in any in-year changes to the asset and liability position for individual authorities (e.g. additional repayment of long-term debt or asset disposal), which could affect the net asset position for the new authorities.

Estimated Year 1 income and net expenditure position is set out on this page for Option 1E.

MTFS figures from the most recent published versions as of 31 March 2025 have been used to estimate forward-looking income and net expenditure for the purposes of developing the Year 1 position. This baseline position was agreed with S151 Officers for all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities in September.

The Year 1 position is not intended to predict the outcome of national funding reforms or new grant schemes. A significant number of elements could impact the Year 1 position, including the Fair Funding Review, future settlements from government, inflation, political change nationally and locally. The government is expected to provide more detail on the Fair Funding Review outcome in Autumn 2025.

Option 1E | Estimated Year 1 Position

Modelling indicates that the proposed new councils will begin operations in the following financial position.

- **Opening deficits:** The combined opening position across the new UAs shows significant core funding pressures. All will start with an operating deficit, which is not unexpected as local government is operating in a challenging financial context.
- **Efficiency requirements:** To achieve a balanced budget, savings are required across multiple councils, with many needing recurring efficiency gains over the next 5 years. These are outlined in the notes below.
- **Strategic trade-offs:** Councils will face early policy choices: draw further on reserves, amend Council Tax, or accelerate service transformation. Longer-term gains from LGR aggregation and longer-term transformation integration are potential offsets.

	Option 1e	
	North *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Gedling*	**South** *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe*
28/29 Core Funding	£638,098,497	£604,793,918
28/29 Net Cost Operating Expenditure	£660,939,524	£664,926,434

28/29 "Year 1" Budget Gap	**£22,841,027**	**£60,132,516**
Cumulative Budget Gap from 25/26-28/29 inc. demand pressures	**£84,269,495**	**£174,502,172**
Cumulative Budget Gap from 25/26-28/29 inc. demand pressures net of savings, Exceptional Financial Support, Reserves from MTFS	**£42,231,311**	**£72,159,190**

Authority	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark & Sherwood	Rushcliffe	Nottingham City	Nottinghamshire County
Year Used	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29	2028/29
Source	Annual Budget And Council Tax 2025/26 And Medium Term Financial Strategy Update Pg 15	Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2029-30 Pg 18	Medium Term Financial Strategy	General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26 Pg 20	Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 To 2027/28 Pg 17	Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting for 2025/26 Pg2	Budget Setting Report And Associated Financial Strategie Pg 43	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Budget 2025/26 – Proposals For Submission To Full Council Pg 22
MTFS Note	Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget.General and Embarked reserves have been used to achieve a net 0 for 2025/26	The Budget highlights the need for the implementation of savings and efficiencies in order to balance the budget. Both general and other reserves are required	The MTFS includes a Business Strategy that sets out initiatives to reduce costs and generate additional income.General fund will be used to balance the budget	Most efficiencies have been built in the budget. Additional efficiencies are yet to be identified.General fund will be used	The Council has a programme of savings that it needs to deliver in order to balance its budget.	Efficiency savings required to set a balanced budget.General and Embarked reserves have been used to achieve a net 0	The budget includes Transformation and Efficiency Plan savings of £1.7m over the 5-year period helping to reduce the deficit to more manageable levels	Successful delivery of transformational change and efficiency savings will be fundamental to the elimination of deficit	The progress of all savings and efficiencies will be monitored as part of the budget monitoring processes.This budget report is proposing to utilise £46.5m of reserves

As a result of using the consistent baseline of published revenue budgets and MTFS as of 31 March 2025, the projected income and expenditure position does not forecast the impact of updated in-year outturn figures or revised MTFPs prepared as part of the 2026/27 budget-setting process. These may indicate an improved financial position - particularly in the South's net income and expenditure positions and thereby reduce pressure on general fund reserve balances.

An estimated Year 1 Assets and Liabilities position is set out on this page for Option 1E.

The Year 1 Balance Sheet analysis incorporates data which includes:

- Long Term Assets on the current Statement of Accounts
- Long Term Liabilities on the current Statement of Accounts
- Capital Financing Requirements from 25/26 to 28/29
- Capital Programme Budget to from 25/26 to 28/29

Option 1E | Balance Sheet

Modelling indicates that the proposed new councils will begin operations in the following financial position.

- **Assets:** Set out below is an evidence-based estimate of what each new authority would be accountable for on Year 1, drawn from existing Statement of Account asset values, taking in planned and additional disposals of surplus assets into account. The apportionment of assets assumes that asset value follows population across the proposed new unitaries.
- **Liabilities:** Also below is the long term financial obligations that would transfer into any new unitary councils, which are allocated following the same distribution profile as assets. In reality, the apportionment of debt will be worked through in detail as part of the implementation of any new authority.

	Option 1e	
	North *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, and Gedling*	**South** *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe*
Assets		
Long Term Assets (28/29)	£4,218,402,048	£4,790,934,491
Liabilities		
Long Term Liabilities (28/29)	£1,082,073,042	£1,273,544,901
Net Assets		
Net Long Term Assets (28/29)	£3,136,329,005	£3,517,389,591

Authority	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark & Sherwood	Rushcliffe	Nottingham city UA	Nottinghamshire County
Sources (Asset)	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 9*	*Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/2025 Financial Year Pg 30*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 33*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 42*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 pg 55*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 pg 32*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 53*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 Pg 20*	*Draft Statement of Accounts FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025s Pg 39*

The use of Draft Statement of Accounts for 2024-25 was agreed as a baseline position by Section 151 officers for all authorities. As such, this analysis does not factor in any in-year changes to the asset and liability position for individual authorities (e.g. additional repayment of long-term debt or asset disposal), which could affect the net asset position for the new authorities.

Breakdown of MTFS Income & Expenditure

The cumulative deficit shown in the summary analysis reflects the year-on-year differences in income and expenditure shown in each respective council published MTFS (as of 31 March 2025) from 25/26 to 28/29. As a result, the projected income and expenditure position does not forecast the impact of updated in-year outturn figures or revised MTFPs prepared as part of the 2026/27 budget-setting process.

Council	Income - 2025/2026	Expenditure - 2025/2026	Net Difference	Income - 2026/2027	Expenditure - 2026/2027	Net Difference	Income - 2027/2028	Expenditure - 2027/2028	Net Difference	Income - 2028/2029	Expenditure - 2028/2029	Net Difference	Cumulative Difference
Nottinghamshire County	£668,400,000	£668,408,000	-£8,000	£701,400,000	£711,500,000	-£10,100,000	£735,400,000	£741,700,000	-£6,300,000	£771,500,000	£776,900,000	-£5,400,000	**-£21,808,000**
Bassetlaw	£24,757,900	£24,757,900	£0	£22,158,700	£22,158,700	£0	£20,589,000	£22,196,000	-£1,607,000	£19,027,600	£22,014,900	-£2,987,300	**-£4,594,300**
Ashfield	£17,764,000	£22,017,000	-£4,253,000	£15,361,000	£23,484,000	-£8,123,000	£14,826,000	£24,668,000	-£9,842,000	£14,899,000	£24,837,000	-£9,938,000	**-£32,156,000**
Broxtowe	£14,182,000	£15,429,000	-£1,247,000	£14,471,000	£16,137,000	-£1,666,000	£14,805,000	£16,956,000	-£2,151,000	£15,147,000	£17,395,000	-£2,248,000	**-£7,312,000**
Gedling	£15,527,921	£15,584,200	-£56,279	£14,633,691	£16,206,649	-£1,572,958	£14,717,620	£16,753,607	-£2,035,987	£14,913,015	£15,043,858	-£130,843	**-£3,796,067**
Mansfield	£17,334,000	£17,572,000	-£238,000	£17,304,000	£19,928,000	-£2,624,000	£17,703,000	£20,948,000	-£3,245,000	£17,703,000	£20,948,000	-£3,245,000	**-£9,352,000**
Newark & Sherwood	£20,647,000	£20,647,000	£0	£19,337,000	£21,618,000	-£2,281,000	£19,639,000	£21,974,000	-£2,335,000	£19,950,000	£22,629,000	-£2,679,000	**-£7,295,000**
Rushcliffe	£19,888,700	£16,338,900	£3,549,800	£14,278,400	£15,439,500	-£1,161,100	£14,848,800	£15,906,400	-£1,057,600	£15,445,800	£16,263,200	-£817,400	**£513,700**
Nottingham City	£331,800,000	£355,068,000	-£23,268,000	£344,000,000	£372,189,000	-£28,189,000	£349,116,000	£390,103,000	-£40,987,000	£354,307,000	£409,835,000	-£55,528, 000	**–£147,972,000**

Deep dive into the MTFS figures

Outlined is the extent to which each council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has incorporated the potential impacts of the Fair Funding Review, and on any wider support or fiscal levers which could affect the projected financial position of the new unitary authorities.

Council	Included Fair Funding impact to Income?	Receiving Exceptional Financial Support?	Anticipated use of reserves through life of MTFS?	Description
Nottinghamshire County	No	No	Yes	The impact of Business Rates reform, the Fair Funding Review and reforms to Social Care funding are all acknowledged as risks within the MTFS, but assumed impacts of these changes have not been built into the base budget or MTFS. The 2025/26 budget proposes to directly utilise £46.5m of reserves over the MTFS period (see page 40).
Bassetlaw	Yes (in supplementary data return)	No	Yes	Bassetlaw's position reported to Cabinet and budget Council in February identified a decline in income over the course of the MTFS which has been confirmed as reflecting anticipated impacts of the Fair Funding review which will require further identification of savings and/or additional use of reserves. The MTFS sets out an intention to reduce revenue reserves up to March 2029 whilst maintaining a minimum General Fund balance of £3m and a minimum General Fund working balance of £1m over the life of the MTFS (page 13).
Ashfield	Yes	No	Yes (only 2025/26)	Ashfield's MTFS acknowledges the uncertainty from the proposed Fair Funding review and wider changes to local government finance from 2026/27 (page 14). As a result, the MTFS models a "worst case" scenario which projects an annual reduction in income from 2026/27-2027/28 based on the LG Futures financial model. No use of reserves is forecast beyond 2025/26 where £4.253m of reserves is projected to be used to meet an identified funding gap.
Broxtowe	No	No	Yes	Broxtowe's MTFS does not model a decrease in Revenue Support Grants from Government and presupposes a continuation of current business rate retention mechanisms. While the MTFS assumes a reduction in reserve balance from £4,347m to -£2.856m in 2028/29. However, this does not factor in savings and efficiencies set out in the authority's Business Strategy which sets an expectation of an anticipated budget underspend (pages 5-7).
Gedling	Yes	No	Yes	Gedling's MTFS does reflect assumed impacts of the Fair Funding Review but this has minimal impact on income but does acknowledges outcomes of Fair Funding Review and Business Rates retention as risks to the MTFS projections. The MTFS assumes transfers from reserves budgets totalling £3.74m to balance the shortfall between income and expenditure, and identifies a need to identify £4.467m of efficiencies to maintain a balanced MTFS (page 19).
Mansfield	Yes (in supplementary data return)	No	No	While Mansfield's published MTFS does not model the impact of fair funding reforms, subsequent data provided by finance leads estimates an increase in income for 2028/29 arising from this. The MTFS does not use reserves to achieve a budget balance (but acknowledges the need to increase reserve balances as a result of depletions over recent years).
Newark & Sherwood	Yes	No	Yes	The MTFS assumes a reduction in government grants from 26/27 as a result of the outcomes from the Fair Funding Review (page 2). The MTFS shows a gap in funding from 2025/26 to 2028/29 of £8.882m. The Council has mitigation plans that will deliver savings and generate additional income of £3.186m. The balance of the shortfall of £5.696m will be funded by use of the MTFP reserve. This reserve was specifically set up for the purpose of bridging the gap in funding resulting from the Fair Funding Review and the Business Rates baseline re-set. By the end of 2028/29 it is forecast that this reserve will have a balance remaining of £2.566m.
Rushcliffe	Yes	No	Yes	The business rates reset has been built into the budget from 2026/27 and assumes no loss due to fairer funding. From 2027/28 the budget includes the effect of a reset and some growth (2%).
Nottingham City	No	Yes	No	A request for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) was made on 31 December 2024 in accordance with MHCLG deadline for up to a further c£35m, being £25m for 2025/26 and a further £10m for 2026/27 bringing the total EFS to £100m (page 10). The MTFS does not assume additional use of General Fund reserves to balance budgets over and above earmarked reserves over the life of the MTFS.

3. Estimated impact of Local Government Reorganisation

Option 1B | Aggregation Benefits

The estimated aggregation benefits for Option 1B as a whole are set out on this page.

Table 1 quantifies the maximum annualised benefit realisable (which will be realised in 2030/31) for:

- **Staffing:** Benefits from reduction in duplicated roles across leadership, front office, service delivery, and back office internal and enabling services and strategic roles.
- **Third Party Spend (TPS):** Benefits from reduction in addressable spend across all in-scope service areas.
- **Democracy:** Benefits from changing the number of councillors and streamlining elections.
- **Property:** Benefits from reduced operational expenditure spent on rationalised assets (i.e. surplus assets).

Table 2 applies an assumed phasing of aggregation benefits agreed with section 151 officers in July 2025 to calculate the benefit realised in each year following vesting.

Table 1: Maximum annualised benefit realisable through LGR from reduced spend on staffing, third party spend, democracy and property operating costs.

		TOTAL	North *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe*	*South* *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling*
Estimated Staffing Benefits				
Senior Leadership Structures savings	**Recurring**	£8,681,498	£6,201,070	£2,480,428
Front Office Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**			
Service Delivery Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**	£7,654,170	£6,807,873	£846,297
Back Office Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**			
TOTAL FTE BENEFITS	**Recurring**	£16,335,668	£13,008,943	£3,326,725
Estimated Third Party Spend Benefits				
TPS Aggregation savings	**Recurring**	£9,018,354	£6,564,991	£2,453,363
Estimated Democracy Benefits				
Allowances+SRA savings+Election costs	**Recurring**	£1,783,602	£1,414,008	£369,595
Estimated Property Benefits				
Property OpEx savings	**Recurring**	£3,435,116	£2,520,439	£914,677
Total Aggregation Benefits (when 100% is realised from 2030/31)	**Recurring**	**£30,572,741**	**£23,508,381**	**£7,064,360**

Table 2: Gross aggregation benefit by year

Aggregation benefits					
Financial year	**28/29**	**29/30**	**30/31**	**31/32**	**32/33**
Year following vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Total Aggregation Benefits	£9,171,822	£15,286,371	£30,572,741	£30,572,741	£30,572,741
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	£7,052,514	£11,754,191	£23,508,381	£23,508,381	£23,508,381
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	£2,119,308	£3,532,180	£7,064,360	£7,064,360	£7,064,360
Aggregation benefits profile	**30%**	**50%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Option 1E | Aggregation Benefits

The estimated aggregation benefits for Option 1E as a whole are set out on this page.

Table 1 quantifies the maximum annualised benefit realisable (which will be realised in 2030/31) for:

- **Staffing:** Benefits from reduction in duplicated roles across leadership, front office, service delivery, and back office internal and enabling services and strategic roles.
- **Third Party Spend (TPS):** Benefits from reduction in addressable spend across all in-scope service areas.
- **Democracy:** Benefits from changing the number of councillors and streamlining elections.
- **Property:** Benefits from reduced operational expenditure spent on rationalised assets (i.e. surplus assets).

Table 2 applies an assumed phasing of aggregation benefits agreed with section 151 officers in July 2025 to calculate the benefit realised each year following vesting.

Table 1: Maximum annualised benefit realisable through LGR from reduced spend on staffing, third party spend, democracy and property operating costs.

		TOTAL	North *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Gedling*	*South* Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe
Estimated Staffing Benefits				
Senior Leadership Structures savings	**Recurring**	£8,681,498	£6,201,070	£2,480,428
Front Office Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**			
Service Delivery Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**	£7,654,170	£6,932,412	£721,758
Back Office Reorganisation savings	**Recurring**			
TOTAL FTE BENEFITS	**Recurring**	£16,335,668	£13,133,482	£3,202,186
Estimated Third Party Spend Benefits				
TPS Aggregation savings	**Recurring**	£9,018,354	£6,473,715	£2,544,640
Estimated Democracy Benefits				
Allowances+SRA savings+Election costs	**Recurring**	£1,783,602	£1,341,434	£442,169
Estimated Property Benefits				
Property OpEx savings	**Recurring**	£3,435,116	£2,478,523	£956,593
Total Gross aggregation benefits (when 100% is realised from 2030/31)	**Recurring**	**£30,572,742**	**£23,427,154**	**£7,145,588**

Table 2: Gross aggregation benefit by year

Aggregation benefits					
Financial year	**28/29**	**29/30**	**30/31**	**31/32**	**32/33**
Year following vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Total Aggregation Benefits	£9,171,823	£15,286,371	£30,572,742	£30,572,742	£30,572,742
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Gedling)*	£7,028,146	£11,713,577	£23,427,154	£23,427,154	£23,427,154
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£2,143,676	£3,572,794	£7,145,588	£7,145,588	£7,145,588
Aggregation benefits profile	**30%**	**50%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Option 1B | Transition Costs

The estimated transition costs for Option 1B as a whole are set out on this page.

- **New unitarites setup & closedown costs:** Spend to design the new UA and manage the change (training, comms, process redesign).
- **IT & Systems costs:** Spend on new / upgraded systems to support a single UA (e.g. finance, HR, CRM).
- **External transition, design and implementation support costs:** Resources needed to run the transformation programme (e.g. Project management)
- **Redundancy Costs:** Payments and support for staff reductions due to structural changes.
- **Salary Alignment:** Additional staffing costs to align to the same payscale
- **Contingency:** A buffer for unexpected costs, reflecting risk and **complexity.**

One off transition costs for Option 1B as a whole	**North** *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe*	***South*** *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling*
External transition/design/implementation support	£4,270,000	£4,270,000
Internal programme management	£1,903,200	£1,903,200
ICT (integration, migration, licensing)	£1,192,500	£1,192,500
Comms & rebranding	£366,000	£366,000
Public consultation	£205,875	£205,875
Organisation closedown	£152,500	£152,500
Creating the new council(s)	£610,000	£610,000
Redundancy costs	£3,902,683	£998,018
Salary alignment	£5,375,473	£1,246,258
Contingency	£3,387,927	£3,387,927
Total	£21,366,157	£14,332,277

Transition costs over a five year period (and apportionment)	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33
Total One-Off Transition Costs (£M)	£10,709,530	£10,709,530	£10,709,530	£3,569,843	£0
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	£6,409,847	£6,409,847	£6,409,847	£2,136,616	£0
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	£4,299,683	£4,299,683	£4,299,683	£1,433,228	£0
Aggregation cost profile	**30%**	**30%**	**30%**	**10%**	**0%**

Option 1E | Transition Costs

The estimated transition costs for Option 1E as a whole are set out on this page.

- **New unitarites setup & closedown costs:** Spend to design the new UA and manage the change (training, comms, process redesign).
- **IT & Systems costs:** Spend on new / upgraded systems to support a single UA (e.g. finance, HR, CRM).
- **External transition, design and implementation support costs:** Resources needed to run the transformation programme (e.g. Project management)
- **Staffing:** Redundancy payments and support for staff reductions due to structural changes and the costs of salary alignment.
- **Salary Alignment:** Additional staffing costs to align to the same payscale
- **Contingency:** A buffer for unexpected costs, reflecting risk and **complexity.**

One off transition costs for Option 1E as a whole	**North** *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Gedling*	***South*** *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe*
External transition/design/implementation support	£4,270,000	£4,270,000
Internal programme management	£1,903,200	£1,903,200
ICT (integration, migration, licensing)	£1,192,500	£1,192,500
Comms & rebranding	£366,000	£366,000
Public consultation	£205,875	£205,875
Organisation closedown	£152,500	£152,500
Creating the new council(s)	£610,000	£610,000
Redundancy costs	£3,940,045	£960,656
Salary alignment	£5,540,905	£741,117
Contingency	£3,387,927	£3,387,927
Total	**£21,568,951**	**£13,789,774**

Transition costs over a five year period (and apportionment)					
	2028/29	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**2031/32**	**2032/33**
Total One-Off Transition Costs	£10,607,618	£10,607,618	£10,607,618	£3,535,873	**£0**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Gedling)*	£6,470,685	£6,470,685	£6,470,685	£2,156,895	**£0**
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£4,136,932	£4,136,932	£4,136,932	£1,378,977	**£0**
Aggregation cost profile	**30%**	**30%**	**30%**	**10%**	**0%**

This page collates the phased benefits and costs of reorganisation to identify a total cumulative net benefit for each proposed unitary authority for Option 1B.

Option 1B | Cost/benefit overview

North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*					
Financial Year	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**2031/32**	**2032/33**
Year after vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Yearly Benefit	£7,052,514	£11,754,191	£23,508,381	£23,508,381	£23,508,381
Yearly Cost	£6,409,847	£6,409,847	£6,409,847	£2,136,616	£0
Cumulative Benefit	£7,052,514	£18,806,705	£42,315,086	£65,823,468	£89,331,849
Cumulative Cost	£6,409,847	£12,819,694	£19,229,541	£21,366,157	£21,366,157
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	£642,667	£5,987,011	£23,085,545	£44,457,311	£67,965,692
Payback period	0.91 years				

South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*					
Financial Year	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**2031/32**	**2032/33**
Year after vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Yearly Benefit	£2,119,308	£3,532,180	£7,064,360	£7,064,360	£7,064,360
Yearly Cost	£4,299,683	£4,299,683	£4,299,683	£1,433,228	£0
Cumulative Benefit	£2,119,308	£5,651,488	£12,715,849	£19,780,209	£26,844,570
Cumulative Cost	£4,299,683	£8,599,366	£12,899,049	£14,332,277	£14,332,277
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	-£2,180,375	-£2,947,878	-£183,200	£5,447,932	£12,512,293
Payback period	3.03 years				

This page collates the phased benefits and costs of reorganisation to identify a total cumulative net benefit for each proposed unitary authority for Option 1E.

Option 1E | Cost/benefit overview

North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Gedling)*					
Financial Year	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**2031/32**	**2032/33**
Year after vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Yearly Benefit	£7,028,146	£11,713,577	£23,427,154	£23,427,154	£23,427,154
Yearly Cost	£6,470,685	£6,470,685	£6,470,685	£2,156,895	£0
Cumulative Benefit	£7,028,146	£18,741,723	£42,168,877	£65,596,032	£89,023,186
Cumulative Cost	£6,470,685	£12,941,371	£19,412,056	£21,568,951	£21,568,951
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	**£557,461**	**£5,800,353**	**£22,756,821**	**£44,027,080**	**£67,454,234**
Payback period	0.92 years				

South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*					
Financial Year	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**2030/31**	**2031/32**	**2032/33**
Year after vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Yearly Benefit	£2,143,676	£3,572,794	£7,145,588	£7,145,588	£7,145,588
Yearly Cost	£4,136,932	£4,136,932	£4,136,932	£1,378,977	£0
Cumulative Benefit	£2,143,676	£5,716,470	£12,862,058	£20,007,645	£27,153,233
Cumulative Cost	£4,136,932	£8,273,864	£12,410,797	£13,789,774	£13,789,774
Total Cumulative Net Benefit	**-£1,993,256**	**-£2,557,394**	**£451,261**	**£6,217,871**	**£13,363,459**
Payback period	2.85 years				

4. Transformation scenarios following reorganisation

Transformation | Scenario overview

Local Government Reorganisation has previously been seen as a catalyst for wider transformation in order to realise additional financial and non-financial benefits in addition to those achieved through reorganisation.

This analysis sets out some different scenarios for costs and benefits available for each unitary authority through additional transformation activity. In particular, it explores different assumptions about the phasing of the costs of mobilising transformation programmes for each unitarity authority. In each scenario there is a "base" and "stretch" case (and cost assumptions).

Any estimated benefits of transformation are of course subject to effective implementation, and the analysis assumes that each authority would instigate a transformation programme rapidly following reorganisation.

Three transformation scenarios have been developed as part of this analysis.

Scenario A assumes that 100% of the cost of transformation is applied in year 1 (2028/29). This provides an illustration of the total costs of transformation for each authority (see further pages 24 and 26), but is not reflective of a programme that may, in reality, run over a number of years (for example to implement a target operating model and innovate new models of service delivery).

Scenario A	Year 1 *(2028/29)*	Year 2 *(2029/30)*	Year 3 *(2030/31)*	Year 4 -10
Benefits *(cumulative)*	25%	50%	100%	100%
Transformation costs *(one-off)*	100%			

Scenario B assumes that costs of transformation are phased over four years, with 30% of costs borne for each of the first three years, with 10% incurred in year 4.

Scenario B	Year 1 *(2028/29)*	Year 2 *(2029/30)*	Year 3 *(2030/31)*	Year 4 -10
Benefits *(cumulative)*	25%	50%	100%	100%
Transformation costs *(one-off)*	30%	30%	30%	10%

Scenario C projects a scenario where the costs of mobilising and delivering transformation are front loaded in to the first two years, with a reduced cost being borne in years 3-4 (for example for sustaining programme management capacity to assure ongoing benefit.

Scenario C	Year 1 *(2028/29)*	Year 2 *(2029/30)*	Year 3 *(2030/31)*	Year 4 -10
Benefits *(cumulative)*	25%	50%	100%	100%
Transformation costs *(one-off)*	40%	40%	10%	10%

Transformation | Scenario overview

Local Government Reorganisation has previously been seen as a catalyst for wider transformation in order to realise additional financial and non-financial benefits in addition to those achieved through reorganisation.

This analysis sets out some different scenarios for costs and benefits available for each unitary authority through additional transformation activity. In particular, it explores different assumptions about the phasing of the costs of mobilising transformation programmes for each unitarity authority. In each scenario there is a "base" and "stretch" case (and cost assumptions).

Any estimated benefits of transformation are of course subject to effective implementation, and the analysis assumes that each authority would instigate a transformation programme rapidly following reorganisation.

Three transformation scenarios have been developed as part of this analysis.

Scenario A assumes that 100% of the cost of transformation is applied in year 1 (2028/29). This provides an illustration of the total costs of transformation for each authority (see further pages 24 and 26), but is not reflective of a programme that may, in reality, run over a number of years (for example to implement a target operating model and innovate new models of service delivery).

Scenario A	**Year 1** *(2028/29)*	**Year 2** *(2029/30)*	**Year 3** *(2030/31)*	**Year 4 -10**
Benefits *(cumulative)*	25%	50%	100%	100%
Transformation costs *(one-off)*	100%			

Scenario B assumes that costs of transformation are phased over four years, with 30% of costs borne for each of the first three years, with 10% incurred in year 4.

Scenario B	**Year 1** *(2028/29)*	**Year 2** *(2029/30)*	**Year 3** *(2030/31)*	**Year 4 -10**
Benefits *(cumulative)*	25%	50%	100%	100%
Transformation costs *(one-off)*	30%	30%	30%	10%

Scenario C projects a scenario where the costs of mobilising and delivering transformation are front loaded in to the first two years, with a reduced cost being borne in years 3-4 (for example for sustaining programme management capacity to assure ongoing benefit.

Scenario C	**Year 1** *(2028/29)*	**Year 2** *(2029/30)*	**Year 3** *(2030/31)*	**Year 4 -10**
Benefits *(cumulative)*	25%	50%	100%	100%
Transformation costs *(one-off)*	40%	40%	10%	10%

4a. Transformation scenario a:
100% year 1 costs

Option 1B | Transformation Benefits

Estimated transformation benefits and costs for Option 1B are set out on this page.

The table shows what the maximum annual benefits arising from transformation would be under base and stretch scenarios (assumed to take effect in 2030/31).

Benefits are drawn from three areas:

- **Staffing:** Benefits from reduction in roles, realisable through operating model transformation.
- **Third party spend:** Reduced reliance on third party spend through transformation of commissioning, procurement and digital estate.
- **Income:** transformation of commercial capabilities to derive more income (e.g. from assets).

Costs are calculated based on experience of transformation programme costs from other local authorities and public sector organisations.

Benefit Area	Base Savings Assumption	Stretch Savings Assumption	North *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe*		*South* *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling*	
			100% of Base benefits	100% of Stretch benefits	100% of Base benefits	100% of Stretch benefits
Front office FTE reduction	6.00%	10.00%				
Service delivery FTE reduction	3.00%	5.00%	£14,707,345	£21,690,483	£15,282,639	£22,538,931
Back office FTE reduction	7.00%	8.00%				
Third Party Spend (TPS) reduction	2.50%	3.00%	£10,777,527	£12,933,033	£10,719,494	£12,863,393
Income uplift (SFC, commercial) uplift	1.30%	1.70%	£8,430,763	£11,024,844	£7,726,838	£10,104,327
Cost Area						
IT Investment Costs			£4,550,000	£9,100,000	£4,550,000	£9,100,000
Operating Model Construct & Change Management			£4,550,000	£5,850,000	£4,550,000	£5,850,000
Programme Support Costs			£1,300,000	£1,950,000	£1,300,000	£1,950,000
Contingency			£1,365,000	£2,242,500	£1,365,000	£2,242,500
Redundancy costs			£4,412,203	£6,507,145	£4,584,792	£6,761,679

Option 1B | Transformation Benefits

The estimated transformation benefits for Option 1B are set out on this page.

These are additional benefits which the new UAs could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models.

These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above.

The scope of transformation savings would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

Net Summary base				
Financial year	**28/29**	**29/30**	**30/31**	**31/32**
Year following vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4 -10**
Total Benefits	**£16,911,152**	**£33,822,304**	**£67,644,607**	**£67,644,607**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	**£8,478,909**	**£16,957,818**	**£33,915,635**	**£33,915,635**
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**£8,432,243**	**£16,864,486**	**£33,728,972**	**£33,728,972**
North Total Costs	**£16,177,203**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
South Total Costs	**£16,349,792**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Payback period North	**1.45 years**			
Payback period South	**1.47 years**			

Net Summary stretch				
Financial year	**28/29**	**29/30**	**30/31**	**31/32**
Year following vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4 -10**
Total Benefits	**£22,788,753**	**£45,577,506**	**£91,155,012**	**£91,155,012**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	**£11,412,090**	**£22,824,180**	**£45,648,360**	**£45,648,360**
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**£11,376,663**	**£22,753,326**	**£45,506,651**	**£45,506,651**
North Total Costs	**£25,754,003**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
South Total Costs	**£25,792,109**	**£0**	**£0**	**£0**
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Payback period North	**1.63 years**			
Payback period South	**1.63 years**			

Option 1E | Transformation Benefits

The component parts of the transformation benefits and costs for Option 1E are set out on this page.

The table demonstrates what the maximum annual benefits arising from transformation would be under base and stretch scenarios (assumed to take effect in 2030/31).

Benefits are drawn from three areas:

- **Staffing:** Benefits from reduction in roles, realisable through operating model transformation.
- **Third party spend:** Reduced reliance on third party spend through transformation of commissioning, procurement and digital estate.
- **Income:** transformation of commercial capabilities to derive more income (e.g. from assets).

Costs are calculated on the basis of transformation programme costs from other local authorities and public sector organisations.

Benefit Area	Base Savings Assumption	Stretch Savings Assumption	North *Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Gedling*		*South* *Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe*	
			100% of Base benefits	100% of Stretch benefits	100% of Base benefits	100% of Stretch benefits
Front office FTE reduction	6.00%	10.00%	£14,943,213	£22,038,343	£15,029,340	£22,165,364
Service delivery FTE reduction	3.00%	5.00%				
Back office FTE reduction	7.00%	8.00%				
Third Party Spend (TPS) reduction	2.50%	3.00%	£10,627,682	£12,753,218	£10,869,340	£13,043,208
Income uplift (SFC, commercial) uplift	1.30%	1.70%	£8,295,280	£10,847,674	£7,862,321	£10,281,497
Cost Area						
IT Investment Costs			£4,550,000	£9,100,000	£4,550,000	£9,100,000
Operating Model Construct & Change Management			£4,550,000	£5,850,000	£4,550,000	£5,850,000
Programme Support Costs			£1,300,000	£1,950,000	£1,300,000	£1,950,000
Contingency			£1,365,000	£2,242,500	£1,365,000	£2,242,500
Redundancy costs			£4,482,964	£6,611,503	£4,508,802	£6,649,609

Option 1E | Transformation Benefits

The estimated transformation benefits for Option 1E are set out on this page.

These are additional benefits which the new UAs could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models.

These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above.

The scope of transformation savings would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

Net Summary base				
Financial year	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
Year following vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4 -10
Total Benefits	£16,906,794	£33,813,588	£67,627,176	£67,627,176
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood,Gedling)*	£8,466,544	£16,933,088	£33,866,175	£33,866,175
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£8,440,250	£16,880,500	£33,761,001	£33,761,001
North Total Costs	£16,247,964	£0	£0	£0
South Total Costs	£16,273,802	£0	£0	£0
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Payback period North	1.46 years			
Payback period South	1.46 years			

Net Summary stretch				
Financial year	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
Year following vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4 -10
Total Benefits	£22,782,326	£45,564,652	£91,129,304	£91,129,304
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood,Gedling)*	£11,409,809	£22,819,618	£45,639,236	£45,639,236
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£11,372,517	£22,745,034	£45,490,068	£45,490,068
North Total Costs	£25,754,003	£0	£0	£0
South Total Costs	£25,792,109	£0	£0	£0
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Payback period North	1.63 years			
Payback period South	1.63 years			

4b. Transformation scenario b: *Costs phased in line with transition cost assumptions*

Option 1B | Transformation Benefits

The estimated transformation benefits for Option 1B are set out on this page.

These are additional benefits which the new UAs could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models.

These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above (previous slide).

The scope of transformation savings would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

In this scenario, the phasing of the cost of transformation over multiple years means that the authorities would see a net benefit in year 1 (hence payback periods of less than 1 year). However, it should be noted that authorities would bear a cost for transformation activity over four years rather than in one as in scenario A.

Net Summary base				
Financial year	**28/29**	**29/30**	**30/31**	**31/32**
Year following vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4 -10**
Total Benefits	**£16,911,152**	**£33,822,304**	**£67,644,607**	**£67,644,607**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	**£8,478,909**	**£16,957,818**	**£33,915,635**	**£33,915,635**
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**£8,432,243**	**£16,864,486**	**£33,728,972**	**£33,728,972**
North Total Costs	£4,853,161	£4,853,161	£4,853,161	£1,617,720
South Total Costs	£4,904,938	£4,904,938	£4,904,938	£1,634,979
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	30.00%	30.00%	30.00%	10.00%
Payback period North	**Less than 1 year**			
Payback period South	**Less than 1 year**			

Net Summary stretch				
Financial year	**28/29**	**29/30**	**30/31**	**31/32**
Year following vesting	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4 -10**
Total Benefits	**£22,788,753**	**£45,577,506**	**£91,155,012**	**£91,155,012**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	**£11,412,090**	**£22,824,180**	**£45,648,360**	**£45,648,360**
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**£11,376,663**	**£22,753,326**	**£45,506,651**	**£45,506,651**
North Total Costs	£7,694,893	£7,694,893	£7,694,893	£2,564,964
South Total Costs	£7,771,254	£7,771,254	£7,771,254	£2,590,418
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	30.00%	30.00%	30.00%	10.00%
Payback period North	**Less than 1 year**			
Payback period South	**Less than 1 year**			

Option 1E | Transformation Benefits

The estimated transformation benefits for Option 1E are set out on this page.

These are additional benefits which the new UAs could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models.

These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above (previous slide).

The scope of transformation savings would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

In this scenario, the phasing of the cost of transformation over multiple years means that the authorities would see a net benefit in year 1 (hence payback periods of less than 1 year). However, it should be noted that authorities would bear a cost for transformation activity over four years rather than in one as in scenario A.

Net Summary base				
Financial year	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
Year following vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4 -10
Total Benefits	£16,906,794	£33,813,588	£67,627,176	£67,627,176
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood,Gedling)*	£8,466,544	£16,933,088	£33,866,175	£33,866,175
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£8,440,250	£16,880,500	£33,761,001	£33,761,001
North Total Costs	£4,874,389	£4,874,389	£4,874,389	£1,624,796
South Total Costs	£4,882,141	£4,882,141	£4,882,141	£1,627,380
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	30.00%	30.00%	30.00%	10.00%
Payback period North	Less than 1 year			
Payback period South	Less than 1 year			

Net Summary stretch				
Financial year	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
Year following vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4 -10
Total Benefits	£22,782,326	£45,564,652	£91,129,304	£91,129,304
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood,Gedling)*	£11,409,809	£22,819,618	£45,639,236	£45,639,236
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£11,372,517	£22,745,034	£45,490,068	£45,490,068
North Total Costs	£7,726,201	£7,726,201	£7,726,201	£2,575,400
South Total Costs	£7,737,633	£7,737,633	£7,737,633	£2,579,211
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	30.00%	30.00%	30.00%	10.00%
Payback period North	Less than 1 year			
Payback period South	Less than 1 year			

4c. Transformation scenario c: *Alternative cost phasing profile*

Option 1B | Transformation Benefits

The estimated transformation benefits for Option 1B are set out on this page.

These are additional benefits which the new UAs could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models.

These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above (previous slide).

The scope of transformation savings would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

In this scenario, the phasing of the cost of transformation over multiple years means that the authorities would see a net benefit in year 1 (hence payback periods of less than 1 year). This is, however, a lower net benefit for years 1 and 2 when compared with Scenario B as a result of the assumed higher cost phasing for these initial years of transformation.

Net Summary base				
Financial year	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
Year following vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4 -10
Total Benefits	**£16,911,152**	**£33,822,304**	**£67,644,607**	**£67,644,607**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	**£8,478,909**	**£16,957,818**	**£33,915,635**	**£33,915,635**
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**£8,432,243**	**£16,864,486**	**£33,728,972**	**£33,728,972**
North Total Costs	£6,470,881	£6,470,881	£1,617,720	£1,617,720
South Total Costs	£6,539,917	£6,539,917	£1,634,979	£1,634,979
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	40.00%	40.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Payback period North	**Less than 1 year**			
Payback period South	**Less than 1 year**			

Net Summary stretch				
Financial year	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
Year following vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4 -10
Total Benefits	**£22,788,753**	**£45,577,506**	**£91,155,012**	**£91,155,012**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	**£11,412,090**	**£22,824,180**	**£45,648,360**	**£45,648,360**
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**£11,376,663**	**£22,753,326**	**£45,506,651**	**£45,506,651**
North Total Costs	£10,259,858	£10,259,858	£2,564,964	£2,564,964
South Total Costs	£10,361,672	£10,361,672	£2,590,418	£2,590,418
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	40.00%	40.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Payback period North	**Less than 1 year**			
Payback period South	**Less than 1 year**			

Option 1E | Transformation Benefits

The estimated transformation benefits for Option 1E are set out on this page.

These are additional benefits which the new UAs could achieve post-vesting day through transformation for example, by implementing digital technology, AI, automation, and redesigned operating models.

These potential savings are over and above aggregation benefits identified above (previous slide).

The scope of transformation savings would need to be refined by the new authorities including identifying individual opportunities and establishing programmes of work.

In this scenario, the phasing of the cost of transformation over multiple years means that the authorities would see a net benefit in year 1 (hence payback periods of less than 1 year). This is, however, a lower net benefit for years 1 and 2 when compared with Scenario B as a result of the assumed higher cost phasing for these initial years of transformation.

Net Summary base				
Financial year	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
Year following vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4 -10
Total Benefits	£16,906,794	£33,813,588	£67,627,176	£67,627,176
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood,Gedling)*	£8,466,544	£16,933,088	£33,866,175	£33,866,175
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£8,440,250	£16,880,500	£33,761,001	£33,761,001
North Total Costs	£6,499,186	£6,499,186	£1,624,796	£1,624,796
South Total Costs	£6,509,521	£6,509,521	£1,627,380	£1,627,380
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	40.00%	40.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Payback period North	Less than 1 year			
Payback period South	Less than 1 year			

Net Summary stretch				
Financial year	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32
Year following vesting	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4 -10
Total Benefits	£22,782,326	£45,564,652	£91,129,304	£91,129,304
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood,Gedling)*	£11,409,809	£22,819,618	£45,639,236	£45,639,236
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£11,372,517	£22,745,034	£45,490,068	£45,490,068
North Total Costs	£10,301,601	£10,301,601	£2,575,400	£2,575,400
South Total Costs	£10,316,844	£10,316,844	£2,579,211	£2,579,211
Transformation benefits profile	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Transformation costs profile	40.00%	40.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Payback period North	Less than 1 year			
Payback period South	Less than 1 year			

5. Summary position

This page summarises the key components of the financial case for local government reorganisation, and the impact on the two proposed new unitary authorities for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The analysis summarises:

- the inherited net budget position that each proposed unitary authority would inherit under the two options;
- projected costs and benefits realisable through reorganisation;
- financial disbenefits accrued through the transfers of services between the proposed UA areas;
- costs and benefits of post-reorganisation transformation activity in a "base" scenario.

LGR | Summary of financial case

Option 1b					
	28/29 Cumulative budget gap [1]	**One-off LGR transition Costs**	**Projected transition benefit [2]** *(recurring)*	**Projected transformation costs (base)**	**Projected transformation benefit (base) [3]**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)*	£43,483,641	£21,366,157	£23,508,381	£16,177,203	£33,915,635
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	£70,906,860	£14,332,277	£7,064,360	£16,349,792	£33,728,972

Option 1e					
	28/29 Cumulative budget gap [1]	**One-off LGR transition Costs**	**Projected transition benefit [2]** *(recurring)*	**Projected transformation costs (base)**	**Projected transformation benefit (base)**
North *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Newark and Sherwood*	£42,231,311	£21,568,951	£23,427,154	£16,247,964	£33,866,175
South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	£72,159,190	£13,789,774	£7,145,588	£16,273,802	£33,761,001

Notes:
[1] Assumes MTFS savings delivery, reserves transfer and exceptional financial support are delivered.
[2] Represents 100% of projected transition benefit *(due to take effect in year 3 - 2030/31)*
[3] Represents 100% of projected transformation benefit *(due to take effect in year 3 - 2030/31), as considered in Scenario A*

6. Council Tax Harmonisation scenarios

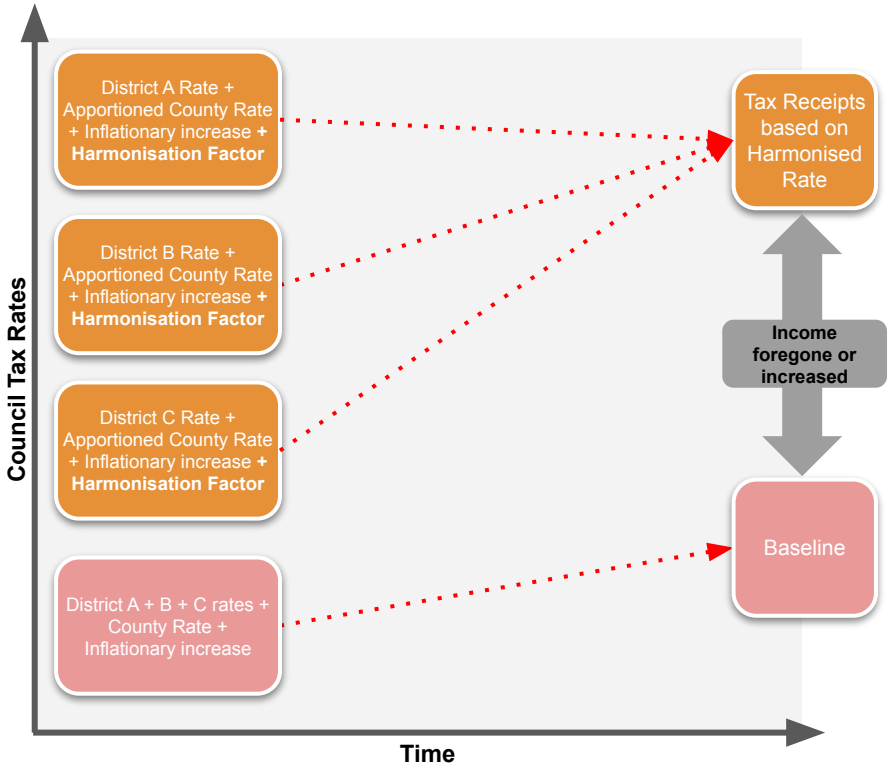
Council Tax | Low, Medium, High Approaches

Council Tax Harmonisation is the process which brings the existing bands of tax payable across districts together to form a single future set of bands for a newly formed authority.

Under the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Finance) Regulations 2008, the same level of council tax should be in payment across the whole of the new authority area within seven years of vesting day.

This therefore represents a fiscal level available to the new unitary authorities as they undertake their initial financial planning following vesting.

This may involve increasing taxes to the highest among the current rates, reducing to the lowest, or bringing taxes towards a calculated median point. Additionally, a 'weighted average' approach can be employed which prevents significant changes for taxpayers. The time taken to make the adjustment will influence the difference between the income from current rates, and the harmonised rate which may represent income foregone or increased over the harmonisation period.



Harmonising to the highest current rate is likely to lead to larger increases for citizens paying less tax currently, but is also likely to forego less income - and potentially to generate additional income in some areas.

Harmonising to the average (mean) will result in changes to all rates (as the mean is unlikely to exactly equal one of the existing rates). The overall impact will vary depending on the current tax structure.

Harmonising to the lowest current rate is likely to forego the greatest income, but has the lowest impact on rates in areas with lower taxation. This may be seen as more equitable but is more costly in terms of income

Note: The setting of council tax rates is a member function and will be exercised by either a shadow or continuing authority. These scenarios are therefore presented to demonstrate the potential implications of the various available approaches. It should also be noted that the new unitaries are not required to take the same approach to harmonisation as each other.

Council Tax | Weighted Average

Following LGR there is a requirement to harmonise council tax rates, to ensure that all parts of a new unitary area are paying the same rate within a maximum of seven years. An alternative approach used in some areas follows a "weighted average" method to harmonise rates from day 1.

The weighted-average option is modelled on the projected FY28/29 Band D rate for each local authority. The weighted weighted Band D charge is calculated by dividing total council tax by the total tax base.

This sets the single rate equal to the weighted average of existing rates, so there is no material change to aggregate council tax income (unlike phasing over several years, which changes timing and distributional impacts).

Option 1b	Area	2028/29 Rate	Weighted Average Rate	Impact on the Resident
North	Bassetlaw	£2,418	£2,411	-£7
	Ashfield	£2,419	£2,411	-£8
	Mansfield	£2,419	£2,411	-£8
	Newark & Sherwood	£2,410	£2,411	£0
	Rushcliffe	£2,393	£2,411	£18
South	Nottingham City UA	£2,619	£2,511	-£108
	Broxtowe	£2,405	£2,511	£106
	Gedling	£2,406	£2,511	£105

Council Tax | Weighted Average

Following LGR there is a requirement to harmonise council tax rates, to ensure that all parts of a new unitary area are paying the same rate within a maximum of seven years. An alternative approach used in some areas follows a "weighted average" method to harmonise rates from day 1.

The weighted-average option is modelled on the projected FY28/29 Band D rate for each local authority. The weighted weighted Band D charge is calculated by dividing total council tax by the total tax base.

This sets the single rate equal to the weighted average of existing rates, so there is no material change to aggregate council tax income (unlike phasing over several years, which changes timing and distributional impacts).

Option 1e	Area	2028/29 Rate	Weighted Average Rate	Impact on the Resident
North	Bassetlaw	£2,418	£2,414	-£4
	Ashfield	£2,419	£2,414	-£5
	Gedling	£2,406	£2,414	£8
	Mansfield	£2,419	£2,414	-£5
	Newark & Sherwood	£2,410	£2,414	£4
South	Nottingham City UA	£2,619	£2,501	-£118
	Broxtowe	£2,405	£2,501	£96
	Rushcliffe	£2,393	£2,501	£108

Council Tax | 1 year harmonisation scenarios

A summary of the projected council tax receipts for each authority under Option 1b has been provided.

Three scenarios have been modelled:

- **Harmonisation after one year (i.e. 2029/30)**
- Harmonisation after three years (i.e. 2031/32)
- Harmonisation after seven years (i.e. 2035/6)

These 3 scenarios show the impact on harmonisation on the Final Band D level, the income foregone or received within the system, and the average change in council tax rate.

Average change rates above 4.99% would exceed the trigger for a referendum on council tax. This is especially pertinent for "mid" and "high" scenarios. While some flexibility is available in setting rates using an 'Alternative Notional Amount' this would require the approval of MHCLG.

Option	Unitary Authority	Harmonisation level	Final Band D level in 2029/30	Average change in council tax rate	Income foregone/received over respective year
1b	**North** *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Rushcliffe)*	**Low**	£2,508	**4.00%**	**Low- £3.67M** **Mid- £323K** **High- £1.8M**
		Mid	£2,528	**4.81%**	
		High	£2,535	**5.12%**	
	South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**Low**	£2,521	**1.78%**	**Low- £16.8M** **Mid- £5.3M** **High- £17.7M**
		Mid	£2,597	**4.88%**	
		High	£2,750	**11.02%**	

Council Tax | 1 year harmonisation scenarios

A summary of the projected council tax receipts for each authority under Option 1e has been provided.

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Average change rates above 4.99% would exceed the trigger for a referendum on council tax. This is especially pertinent for "mid" and "high" scenarios. While some flexibility is available in setting rates using an 'Alternative Notional Amount' this would require the approval of MHCLG.

Option	Unitary Authority	Harmonisation level	Final Band D level in 2029/30	Average change in council tax rate	Income foregone/received over respective year
1e	**North** *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Newark & Sherwood and Mansfield)*	**Low**	£2,522	**4.44%**	**Low- £1.6M** **Mid- £79.7K** **High- £992.2k**
		Mid	£2,531	**4.81%**	
		High	£2,535	**5.00%**	
	South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	**Low**	£2,508	**1.46%**	**Low- £18.1M** **Mid- £4.5M** **High- £20.9M**
		Mid	£2,593	**4.88%**	
		High	£2,750	**11.22%**	

Council Tax | 3 year harmonisation scenarios

A summary of the projected council tax receipts for each authority under option 1b has been provided.

Three scenarios have been modelled:

- Harmonisation after one year (i.e. 2029/30)
- **Harmonisation after three years (i.e. 2031/32)**
- Harmonisation after seven years (i.e. 2035/6)

The 3 scenarios show the impact on harmonisation on the Final Band D level, the income foregone or received within the system, and the average change in council tax rate.

Average change rates above 4.99% would exceed the trigger for a referendum on council tax. This is especially pertinent for "mid" and "high" scenarios. While some flexibility is available in setting rates using an 'Alternative Notional Amount' this would require the approval of MHCLG.

Option	Unitary Authority	Harmonisation level	Final Band D level in 2031/32	Average change in council tax rate	Income foregone/received over respective year
1b	**North** *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Rushcliffe)*	**Low**	£2,756	**4.55%**	**Low- £7.6M** **Mid- £704.5K** **High- £3.8M**
		Mid	£2,777	**4.81%**	
		High	£2,785	**4.91%**	
	South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**Low**	£2,770	**3.80%**	**Low- £37.8M** **Mid- £11.9M** **High- £39.0M**
		Mid	£2,857	**4.88%**	
		High	£3,031	**6.96%**	

Council Tax | 3 year harmonisation scenarios

A summary of the projected council tax receipts for each authority under option 1e has been provided.

Three scenarios have been modelled:

- Harmonisation after one year (i.e. 2029/30)
- **Harmonisation after three years (i.e. 2031/32)**
- Harmonisation after seven years (i.e. 2035/6)

These scenarios show the impact on harmonisation on the Final Band D level, the income foregone or received within the system, and the average change in council tax rate.

Average change rates above 4.99% would exceed the trigger for a referendum on council tax. This is especially pertinent for "mid" and "high" scenarios. While some flexibility is available in setting rates using an 'Alternative Notional Amount' this would require the approval of MHCLG.

Option	Unitary Authority	Harmonisation level	Final Band D level in 2031/32	Average change in council tax rate	Income foregone/received over respective year
1e	**North** *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Newark & Sherwood and Mansfield)*	**Low**	£2,771	**4.69%**	**Low- £3.3M** **Mid- £193.5K** **High- £2.1M**
		Mid	£2,780	**4.81%**	
		High	£2,785	**4.87%**	
	South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	**Low**	£2,756	**3.69%**	**Low- £40.6M** **Mid- £10.1M** **High- £46.1M**
		Mid	£2,852	**4.88%**	
		High	£3,031	**7.03%**	

Council Tax | 7 year harmonisation scenarios

A summary of the projected council tax receipts for each authority under option 1b has been provided.

Three scenarios have been modelled:

- Harmonisation after one year (i.e. 2029/30)
- Harmonisation after three years (i.e. 2031/32)
- **Harmonisation after seven years (i.e. 2035/6)**

The 3 scenarios show the impact on harmonisation on the Final Band D level, the income foregone or received within the system, and the average change in council tax rate.

Average change rates above 4.99% would exceed the trigger for a referendum on council tax. This is especially pertinent for "mid" and "high" scenarios. While some flexibility is available in setting rates using an 'Alternative Notional Amount' this would require the approval of MHCLG.

Option	Unitary Authority	Harmonisation level	Final Band D level in 2035/36	Average change in council tax rate	Income foregone/received over respective year
1b	**North** *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Rushcliffe)*	**Low**	£3,330	**4.71%**	**Low- £15.9M** **Mid- £1.9M** **High- £8.7M**
		Mid	£3,353	**4.82%**	
		High	£3,362	**4.86%**	
	South *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)*	**Low**	£3,344	**4.38%**	**Low- £92.9M** **Mid- £29.1M** **High- £96.0M**
		Mid	£3,458	**4.88%**	
		High	£3,683	**5.83%**	

Council Tax | 7 year harmonisation scenarios

A summary of the projected council tax receipts for each authority under option 1e has been provided.

Three scenarios have been modelled:

- Harmonisation after one year (i.e. 2029/30)
- Harmonisation after three years (i.e. 2031/32)
- Harmonisation after seven years (i.e. 2035/6)

These scenarios show the impact on harmonisation on the Final Band D level, the income foregone or received within the system, and the average change in council tax rate.

Average change rates above 4.99% would exceed the trigger for a referendum on council tax. This is especially pertinent for "mid" and "high" scenarios. While some flexibility is available in setting rates using an 'Alternative Notional Amount' this would require the approval of MHCLG.

Option	Unitary Authority	Harmonisation level	Final Band D level in 2035/36	Average change in council tax rate	Income foregone/received over respective year
1e	**North** *(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Newark & Sherwood and Mansfield)*	**Low**	£3,346	**4.80%**	**Low- £6.7M** **Mid- £800.4K** **High- £4.9M**
		Mid	£3,356	**4.82%**	
		High	£3,362	**4.84%**	
	City UA *(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe)*	**Low**	£3,330	**4.34%**	**Low- £98.8M** **Mid- £24.4M** **High- £113.4M**
		Mid	£3,452	**4.88%**	
		High	£3,683	**5.86%**	

NORTH - SOUTH

APPENDIX 2

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LGR OPTIONS APPRAISAL OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES, SEND AND ADULTS SOCIAL CARE– PEOPLETOO

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Nottinghamshire LGR Options Appraisal

October 2025

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2. Demographics
3. Children's Services Performance
4. Adult Social Care Financial Return
5. Financial Position
6. Conclusion and Risk Matrix
7. Appendix A – Target Operating Model and Implementation Plan

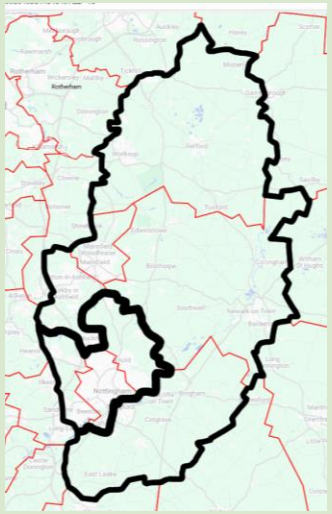
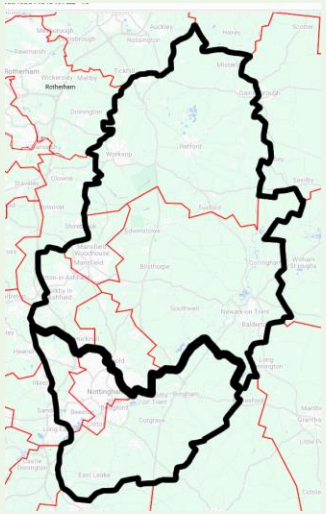
Introduction

- This business case sets out proposals for the reorganisation of local government across Nottinghamshire. The current two-tier system of governance, with Nottinghamshire County Council operating alongside seven district and borough councils, with Nottingham City operating as a unitarity Local authority, has served the area for many years . However, increasing financial pressures, a growing demand for more integrated services, and the need to simplify decision-making provide a strong case for change.
- In line with the national agenda to modernise and streamline local government, this case explores the two options proposed for establishing new unitary authorities in Nottinghamshire. The aim is to deliver more efficient, effective, and locally responsive governance, reducing duplication and ensuring that public services are delivered in a sustainable way.
- This report sets out the diagnostic and options appraisal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City. Commissioned by the Option 1E group, the analysis assesses how alternative governance models could improve service efficiency, resilience, and outcomes in both **Children's Services** and **Adult Social Care (ASC)**.
- The report draws on benchmarking data from the LAIT, ASCOF, ASCFR, Ofsted, and CQC datasets, as well as local population projections, deprivation profiles, and financial returns. The assessment compares:
- **Option 1B** – Broxtowe, Gedling, and Nottingham City (South); Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, and Rushcliffe (North)
- **Option 1E** – Broxtowe, Nottingham City, and Rushcliffe (South); Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood (North)

Maps of Proposed Split in Authorities

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The table below visualises the proposed divide in authorities and county lines based on the two options. It outlines where the borders for each proposed unitary would be, including the estimated population size of each unitary authority.

	Option 1B	Option 1E
Map of Proposed Unitary Authority Boundaries		
Unitary 1 Population	Northern Nottinghamshire – **622,269** *(Contains: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, and Rushcliffe)*	Northern Nottinghamshire – **615,712** *(Contains: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, and Newark & Sherwood)*
Unitary 2 Population	Southern Nottinghamshire & City – **565,821** *(Contains: Broxtowe, Gedling, and Nottingham City Council)*	Southern Nottinghamshire & City – **572,378** *(Contains: Broxtowe, Nottingham City Council, and Rushcliffe)*

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1. Executive Summary

Overview

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Option 1E presents the most balanced and sustainable configuration for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Nottinghamshire. It aligns demand and capacity across Children's and Adult Services, mitigates risk from demographic and cost asymmetry, and supports system-wide integration with the NHS and local partners. The model would deliver a **cohesive, prevention-led, financially sustainable platform**, enabling both unitaries to thrive while ensuring consistent outcomes for residents.

- Both Options 1B and 1E create two unitary authorities of comparable population size (approx. 600–650k), but **Option 1E achieves a more balanced distribution** of need, deprivation, and service demand across the proposed boundaries.

Analysis of:

- **Children's Services** shows Option 1E aligns Children Looked After (CLA) demand and placement capacity more evenly between the two unitaries, reducing financial pressure and improving sufficiency.
- **Adult Social Care** modelling demonstrates that Option 1E better balances an ageing population with areas of workforce supply and provider strength, allowing for sustainable commissioning and integration with health partners.
- **Option 1E therefore offers the stronger strategic case** for equitable service delivery, financial resilience, and population alignment. A more localised and targeted approach will strengthen local market sufficiency, build closer relationships with partners supporting an integrated approach, and allow investment on prevention led-services. This will create a more stable and balanced platform to better manage future cost and demand, and ensure maximum benefit from local government reform for residents and public finances alike.

Overview

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Service Area	Key Strengths	Risks / Pressures	RAG (Option 1E)	Commentary
Children's Services	Balanced CLA demand (UA1 696 vs UA2 641 by 2032); better match between population and placement sufficiency; sustainable cost reduction trajectory.	Market fragility and rising placement inflation still present; requires joint sufficiency strategy and workforce stabilisation.	Strong	Option 1E delivers the best alignment of need, capacity, and cost; supports consistent outcomes and reduces duplication.
SEND / Education	Potential for shared inclusion model; Nottingham City's strong early identification and Nottinghamshire CC's steady EHCP growth complement each other.	Differing local practices and thresholds may take time to harmonise.	Strong	Integration under LGR enables joint inclusion pathways and improved sufficiency of specialist provision.
Adult Social Care (Working Age Adults)	Nottingham City's prevention-first model + Nottinghamshire CC's cost efficiency = balanced system; 11-46% variation in demand can be levelled through LGR.	Workforce and provider fragility; high residential use in City and County.	Strong	1E enables balanced demand and scalable community-based models.
Adult Social Care (Older Adults)	Nottinghamshire CC's prevention & reablement strengths; Nottingham City's cost efficiency under high demand; shared commissioning with NHS ICB.	Ageing population growth, especially rural north, could drive demand pressure.	Strong	Combines complementary system strengths; 1E supports integrated care and long-term sustainability.
Financial Sustainability	£26 – 28m annual saving potential through balanced CLA cost base. £23m annual saving in ASC potential by reducing admissions into residential care. Developing localised strategies to reduce DSG deficits.	Transition and integration costs.	Strong	1E delivers equitable service demand and financial headroom to reinvest in prevention.

Theory of Change Children's Services

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Current Challenges	Impact of As-Is Nottinghamshire and Notts City	Solutions Delivered by 1E Model	Intermediate Outcomes Delivered by 1E Model	Long-Term Outcomes Delivered by 1E Model
High and rising CLA costs; urban complexity in City; variable sufficiency and workforce pressure.	Split system with divergent performance and pressures: Nottingham City faces very high CLA demand (well above national average), while Nottinghamshire has lower rates but rising costs.	Integrated commissioning hub across both UAs to manage high cost placement and fostering markets.	Start to realise reduction in CLA costs through focused market management and sufficiency development.	Balanced CLA demand (UA1 696 vs UA2 641 by 2032). Lower total CLA expenditure by £26–£28m per annum.
Current performance issues recognised by Ofsted across SEND systems and for the City across Social Care services.	Separate commissioning, fragmented early help and prevention models.	Merge sufficiency planning and contracting to reduce competition and stabilise market prices.	Start to realise benefits from more targeted intervention.	10–15% reduction in CLA entries through earlier intervention.
Variation in SEND thresholds and provision sufficiency.	Sustained CLA rate imbalance (City > twice national; County England average).	Create integrated Early Help and Edge of Care services under shared governance.	Greater integration with NHS and system partners, reducing duplication and improving joint outcomes.	5–10% fall in average placement unit cost via shared commissioning.
Current fragmented system limits targeted localised prevention, early intervention, and local responsiveness.	SEND systems operate with varied thresholds and accountability, leading to variable access and outcomes.	Establish unified workforce development pathways across social care and SEND.	Local services and joint strategies with key partners tailored to distinct pressures.	Stable local fostering base and reduced external dependency.
Risks of over-centralisation across the County footprint, given the variations in demographics.		Harmonise fostering payments and support structures.		System sustainability – resilient workforce, stronger local partnerships, secondary NHS savings.
		Implement single inclusion and EHCP management system across both authorities.		Increased inclusion capacity, fewer EHCP appeals, and more equitable support.

Theory of Change Adults Social Care

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Current Challenges	Impact of As-Is Nottinghamshire and Notts City	Solutions Delivered by 1E Model	Intermediate Outcomes Delivered by 1E Model	Long-Term Outcomes Delivered by 1E Model
Low demand and low cost but high usage of residential care, question how sustainable is this model in the medium to long term and is it delivering the best outcomes.	Nottingham City: very high demand (46–54% above England average) but cost-efficient model under stress.	Use predictive analytics (bringing in District data) to forecast demand and prioritise early intervention.	Flattened cost growth in ASCFR projections £23m efficiencies per annum by developing more community based support.	Stabilised finances, avoiding unsustainable Older Adults growth.
Significant variations in demand and demographics across the County, risk of applying overarching strategy.	Nottinghamshire: strong cost control but rising older population and increasing complexity.	Multi-disciplinary triage & Home First: ensuring people are supported at the "front door" and defaulting to reablement over long-term care.	Reduced admissions to long-term care; shorter lengths of stay when required.	Improved resident experience – person-centred, outcome focused, preventative, digitally-enabled care.
	Ongoing cost variation (up to 20% difference in average LTC cost per user).	Workforce transformation: standardised strength-based practice, local recruitment pipelines, improved retention.	Reduced dependency on bed based care ensuring access to quality community based support.	Financial sustainability – lower unit costs, reduced escalation of ASC spend, resilience against financial shocks.
	Urban/rural imbalance drives uneven demand pressures.	More localised carer support & co-production: structured engagement with carers and service users; peer support networks.	More resilient and competitive local provider markets.	Better outcomes for residents – more people remain independent for longer; carers supported.
	Very different demographics across the County footprint requires very different strategies.	Digital-first services: resident care accounts, AI-enabled triage, predictive analytics, online assessment/review.	Greater integration with NHS and system partners, reducing duplication and improving joint outcomes.	System sustainability – resilient workforce, stronger local partnerships, secondary NHS savings.
		Market resilience: joint commissioning embedding prevention in contracts.	Local services tailored to distinct pressures.	Democratic and community empowerment – stronger accountability and co-production with communities.

Transformation Elements Required to Deliver Savings

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- Opportunities reduced size = control for Nottinghamshire Option 1e, expanded market access
- Transformation enablers (commissioning reform, prevention, workforce, digital, partnerships, financial controls).

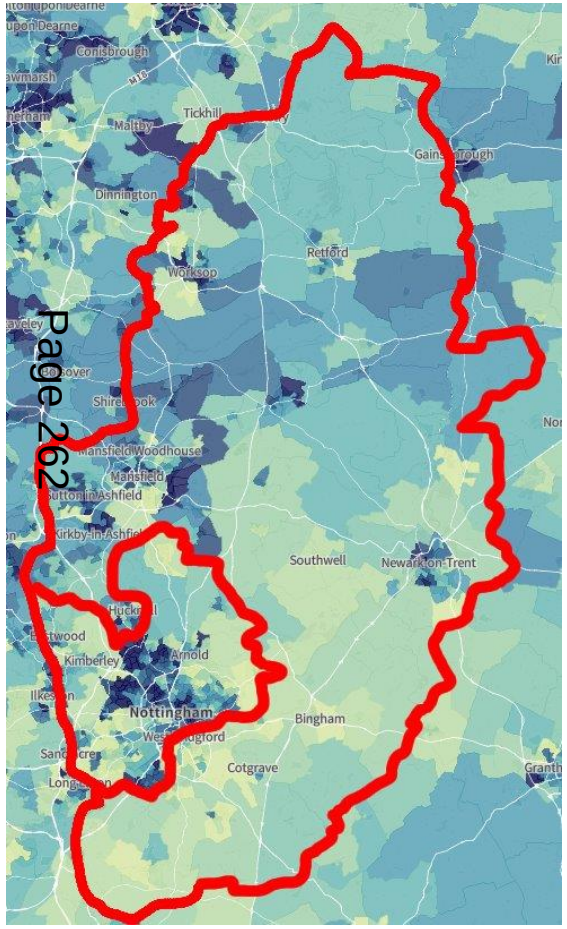
1	Commissioning & Market Reform	• Strategic market shaping ensuring quality community support reducing reliance on residential/nursing markets. • Block contracts, fostering hubs, and IFA conversion to reduce volatility. • Outcomes-based commissioning to contain costs and improve sufficiency.
2	Prevention & Reablement	• Home First and reablement-first approaches to reduce long-term admissions to bed based care. • Family hubs and early intervention in children's services to reduce demand escalation.
3	Workforce Transformation	• Joint recruitment pipelines, retention incentives, and standardised practice models. • Reduction in reliance on agency staff, with shared training and workforce strategies across both UAs.
4	Digital & Data-Driven Services	• Digital-first models: resident care accounts, AI-enabled triage, predictive analytics. • Improved transparency and quality monitoring.
5	Partnership & Integration	• Align with NHS/ICS footprints for joint commissioning in ASC, SEND and public health. • Embed stronger VCSE and community partnerships for place-based delivery.
6	Financial Management & Risk Pooling	• Recalibration of unit costs to national benchmarks (and improving on in the long term). • Pooling risks across balanced UAs to absorb demand shocks and sustain long-term financial viability.

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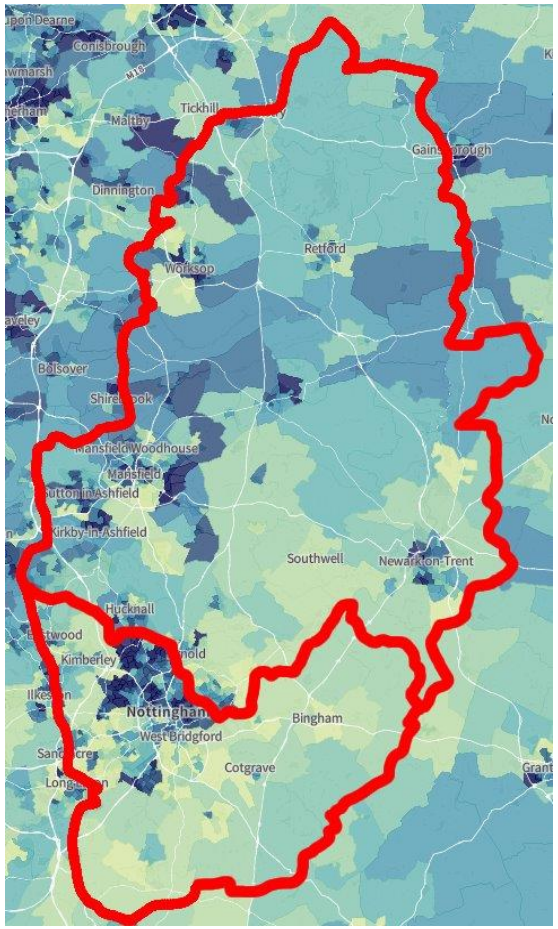
2. Demographics

IMD 2024 Deprivation: Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council

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Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County councils map of IMD deprivation by LSOA, Option 1B overlayed. Source: deprivation.communities.gov.uk



Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County councils map of IMD deprivation by LSOA, Option 1E overlayed. Source: deprivation.communities.gov.uk

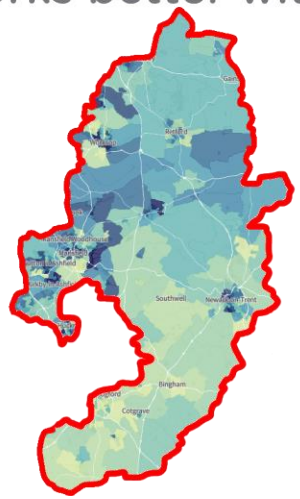
- The map (left) show deprivation areas of greatest deprivation across Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council. The levels of deprivation appear to be higher in Nottingham than Nottinghamshire county, with notable pockets of deprivation across the urban centres of Newark, Mansfield, Worksop, and Sutton-in-Ashfield
- Within Nottingham 31% of LSOAs are within the 10% of the most deprived areas nationally, leaving Nottingham City Council as the 20th most deprived of the 296 upper and lower tier councils. Whereas each of the districts within Nottinghamshire are ranked as less deprived than Nottingham.
- There districts with high deprivation scores in Nottinghamshire include Mansfield (26.9, ranked 61st most deprived) and Ashfield (25.6, ranked 74th most deprived).
- The least deprived areas according to their ranking in the most deprived councils, were Gedling (206), Broxtowe (223), and Rushcliffe (294), notably higher (thus less deprived) than Newark and Sherwood (147) and Bassetlaw (106). Rushcliffe is within the top 1% of least deprived all district councils nationally.

Demography of the Proposed Unitaries – Option 1B
Northern Unitary Authority

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Population Estimates

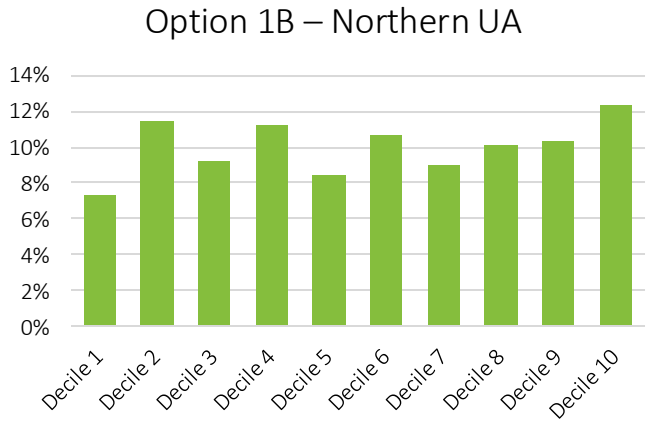
- In the most recent 2024 ONS population estimates, it was projected that 622,289 people are living in the proposed Northern unitary authority, made up of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Rushcliffe.
- The population in the Northern Unitary is expected to grow at a faster rate than the England average rate of 6.4%, rising by 7.1% between 2022 and 2032, and projected to reach a total of 648,120 citizens by 2032. Implying a growth of 43,143 more people living in the North of Nottinghamshire by 2032.
- In the 2024 ONS mid year estimates it was found that 20.3% of the population are under the age of 18, and 21.5% are 65 years old or above. Meaning that 58.2% are estimated to be working age adults (between 18 and 64 years old).
- In the 2022 ONS population estimates it was projected that 23% of the population would be over the age of 65, and the median age would rise from 42.8 to 44 by 2032. Suggesting that the population of this unitary will become an increasingly ageing population by 2032.



IMD 2024 measure for Option 1B Northern Unitary (red outline). Source: Deprivation.Communities.Gov.uk

IMD Deprivation Profile

- The overall deprivation profile, estimated by the number of LSOA (Lower Layer Super Output Areas), shows that the makeup of the Northern UA would be slightly less deprived than the national average.
- This is because, 52% of LSOAs are in the 50% of least deprived LSOAs nationally, and 48% are in the 50% least deprived areas nationally.
- Furthermore, 28% of LSOAs in the proposed northern UA are in the 30% of most deprived areas nationally, showing there is a rate of deeper deprivation lower than national averages.



Demography of the Proposed Unitaries – Option 1B
Southern Unitary Authority

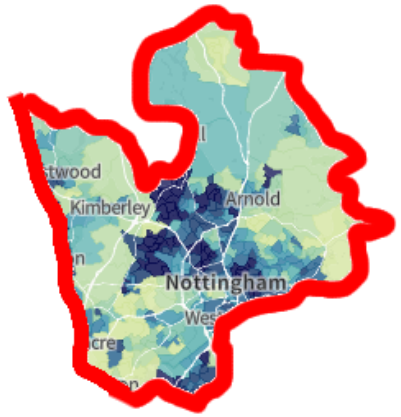
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Population Estimates

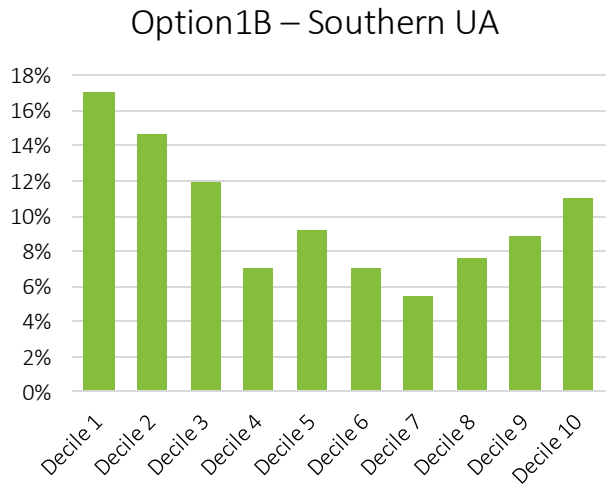
- In the most recent 2024 ONS population estimates, it was projected that 565,821 people are living in the proposed Southern unitary authority, made up of Broxtowe, Nottingham, and Gedling.
- The population in the Southern Unitary is expected to grow by 5% between 2022 and 2032, reflective of a lower rate than the national average rate in England of 6.4%, with a projected overall population of 585,483 by 2032.
- This implies that there will be 27,982 more people living in this area by 2032 when compared to the 2022 estimates, and a population increase of 19,662 from the 2024 mid year estimates.
- In the 2024 ONS mid year estimates it was found that 20.2% of the population are under the age of 18, and 15.9% are 65 years old or above, and an estimated 63.94% are working age adults (between 18 and 64 years old), in part driven by the large student population within the Nottingham City area.
- In the 2022 ONS population estimates it was projected that 16.3% of the population would be over the age of 65, and the median age would rise from 39 to 39.3 by 2032. Showing that there is a slow increase in the age profile within the proposed Southern Unitary in the next decade.

IMD Deprivation Profile

- The overall deprivation profile, demonstrates that the proposed Southern Unitary would be a more deprived area, this is evident as 60% of LSOAs in the proposed area are in the 50% most deprived areas nationally, and 40% of LSOAs are in the 50% least deprived areas nationally.
- Furthermore, 44% of LSOAs in the proposed area are in the 30% of most deprived LSOAs nationally, this suggesting there are pockets of deeper deprivation, especially in Nottingham.
- The overall deprivation profile is then an overall deprived area with a deep level of deprivation and fewer areas of lower deprivation to support these pockets of deeper deprivation.



IMD 2019 measure for Option 1B Southern Unitary (red outline). Source: Deprivation.Communities.Gov.uk



Demography of the Proposed Unitaries– Option 1E

Northern Unitary Authority

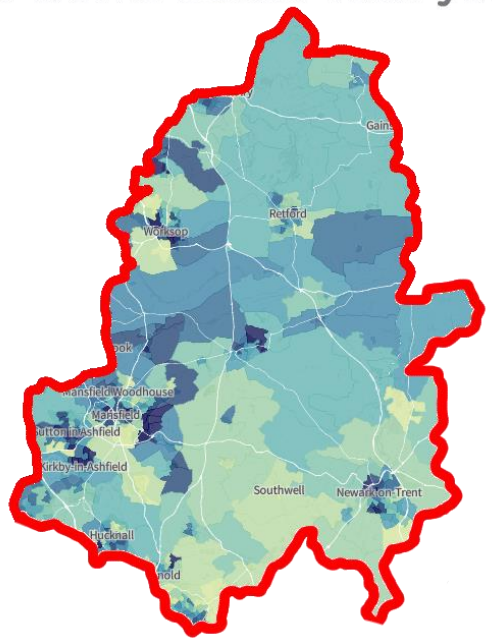
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Population Estimates

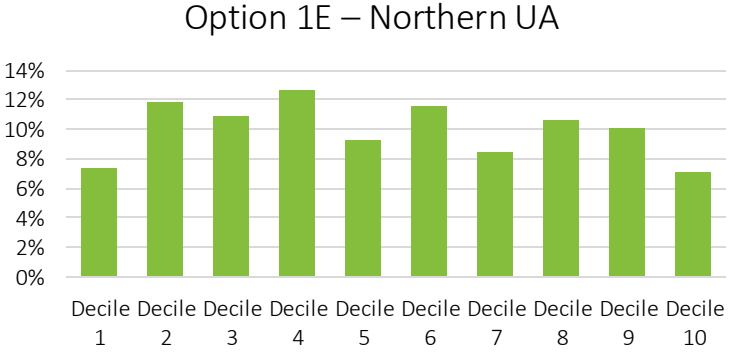
- In the most recent 2024 ONS population estimates, it was projected that 615,712 people live in the proposed Northern unitary authority, made up of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Gedling.
- The population in the Northern Unitary is expected to grow by 5.6% between 2022 and 2032, a rate slightly lower than the England average (+6.4%), with a 2032 population of 634,815 projected in 2032. In the 2022-32 projections there is a growth of 33,921 anticipated in this period.
- In the 2024 ONS mid year estimates it was found that 20.1% of the population are under the age of 18, and 21.4% are 65 years old or above. Meaning that 58.4% are estimated to be working age adults (between 18 and 64 years old).
- In the 2022 ONS population estimates it was projected that 23% of the population would be over the age of 65, and the median age would rise from 42.8 to 44 by 2032. Suggesting that the population profile of the proposed Northern Unitary is expected to become increasingly older on average.

IMD Deprivation Profile

- The deprivation profile of the proposed Northern UA proposed in option 1E is that of a slightly more deprived than the overall national distribution. This is a result of 52% of LSOAs in the proposed area being in the 50% of more deprived areas nationally and only 48% of LSOAs in the UA being within the 50% of lease deprived areas nationally.
- Additionally, 30% of the LSOAs in the Northern UA are in the 30% of most deprived areas nationally, which suggests that the distribution of households in the deepest levels of deprivation are in line with the national average.



IMD 2019 measure for 1E Southern Unitary (red outline). Source: Deprivation.Communities.Gov.uk

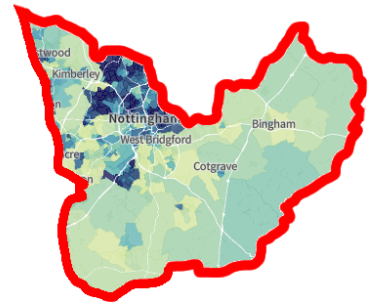


Demography of the Proposed Unitaries – Option 1E
Southern Unitary Authority

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Population Estimates

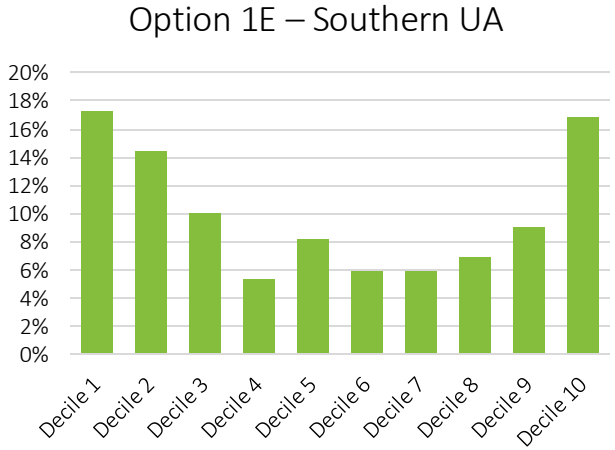
- In the most recent 2024 ONS population estimates, it was projected that 572,378 people are living in the proposed Southern unitary authority, made up of Broxtowe, Nottingham City Council, and Rushcliffe
- The population in the Southern UA is expected to grow at a faster rate than the England average rate of 6.4%, rising by 6.6% between 2022 and 2032, and projected to reach a total of 598,788 citizens by 2032. This would translate to an increase of 37,204 people between 2022 and 2032.
- In the 2024 ONS mid year estimates it was found that 20.1% of the population are under the age of 18, and 21.4% are 65 years old or above. Meaning that 58.4% are estimated to be working age adults (between 18 and 64 years old).
- In the 2022 ONS population estimates it was projected that 16.5% of the population would be over the age of 65, and the median age would rise from 39 to 39.3 by 2032. Showing that there is a marginally ageing population within the next decade for this proposed Unitary Authority.



IMD 2019 measure for 1E Southern Unitary (red outline). Source: Deprivation.Communities.Gov.uk

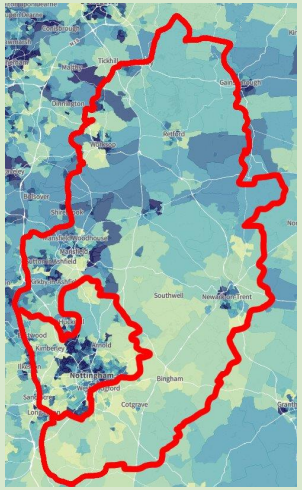
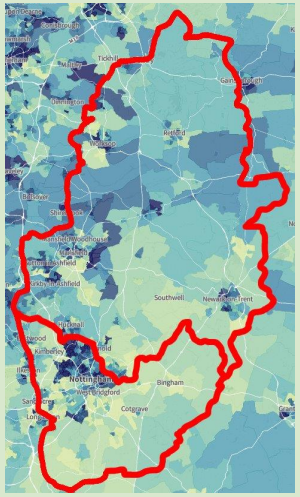
IMD Deprivation Profile

- The deprivation profile of the Southern Unitary in Option 1E, suggests that overall, the Southern UA would be more deprived than the national average, but also notably polarised with 32% of LSOAs in the 20% most deprived areas nationally, and 26% in the 20% least deprived LSOAs nationally.
- Overall, 55% of LSOAs in the proposed Southern UA would be in the 50% more deprived areas nationally, and 45% in the 50% least deprived areas nationally.
- While there would be notable disparities between pockets of deeper deprivation, notably concentrated in Nottingham, and areas of far lower deprivation such as Rushcliffe, this may represent a greater demographic basis to support the higher levels of deeper deprivation in the South.



Demography of the Proposed Unitaries - Comparison

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	Map of Proposed Authority	Strengths of Proposed Split	Weaknesses of Proposed Split
<u>Option 1B</u> Northern UA: • Ashfield • Bassetlaw • Mansfield • Newark & Sherwood • Rushcliffe Southern UA: • Broxtowe • Gedling • Nottingham		• Creates a slightly less deprived Northern authority than the overall distribution of deprivation in England as 52% of LSOAs are less deprived than the England median LSOA and 48% are in the more deprived 50% of areas. • Concentrates deprived areas into a single UA which could specialise its focus to addressing the specific needs of this cohort.	• The Southern UA would be greatly more deprived than the national average levels, with 60% of LSOAs more deprived than the England median LSOA and 40% less deprived. • Imbalance with one less deprived council and one very deprived council in comparison to UK average IMD measure. • Imbalanced population growth, largest unitary is fastest growing, 7.1% / 5%. Could destabilise the Northern UA in the future as its population increases, especially as the population is also anticipated to become increasingly aging, from 20% over 65 to 23% of the population over 65.
<u>Option 1E</u> Northern UA: • Ashfield • Bassetlaw • Gedling • Mansfield • Newark & Sherwood Southern UA: • Broxtowe • Nottingham • Rushcliffe		• Greater balance with the two unitaries having closer to national projected growth rates 6.4% nationally, 5.6% in the larger Northern UA, and 6.6% in the smaller Southern UA. • Greater balance of the most deprived areas so that the two new unitary authorities have a similar aggregate deprivation profile than in Option 1B where one is greatly more deprived than the other. • May provide a better demographic support basis for the South as the overall levels of LSOAs that are more deprived than the England median LSOA are 56% compared to 61% in Option 1B • Slightly more balanced with the projected over 65+ population in the 2032 projections, by 0.1% overall or 3000 individuals.	• Northern UA with higher-than-average levels of deprivation as 52% are more deprived than the national median, and 48% less deprived. • Southern UA to have higher-than-average levels of deprivation as 55% are more deprived than the national median, and 45% less deprived. • Southern UA may be at risk of polarisation between the most and least deprived areas. As 32% of the LSOAs in the 20% most deprived, and 26% of LSOAs in the 20% least deprived LSOAs nationally.

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3. Children's Social Care Performance: Nottingham City / Nottinghamshire County Council (CC)

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3.1 Inspections

Nottinghamshire County Council Inspections: Ofsted Summary

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Overall outcome: Good

The May 2024 Ofsted inspection of Nottinghamshire County Council's Children's Services judged the service as 'Good' overall, with 'Outstanding' leadership ("the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families") and all other judgement areas rated as 'Good'. The report highlights the strong, ambitious leadership driving improvement since the last full inspection in 2019, effective partnership working, and high-quality social work practice that builds trusting relationships with children and families. The inspectors found that most children receive timely help and protection, that children in care are well-supported and achieving well, and that care leavers benefit from strong practical and emotional support as they move into adulthood.

Highlights:

- ✓ Leadership is ambitious, child-focused, and has sustained continuous improvement since 2019.
    - ✓ "Senior leaders have created a culture of continuous improvement and high expectations that is improving the lives of children."
- ✓ There is effective partnership working which ensures that children receive the right help at the right time.
- ✓ Social workers know children well, use sensitive language, and help children feel heard and supported.
- ✓ Care leavers have also reported feeling well-supported as they move towards independence.

Areas for Improvement:

- The areas for improvement outlined in the Ofsted report included;
    - Strengthening the "effectiveness of support for care leavers to access and sustain employment, education or training."
    - Augmenting the quality of target setting in PEPs (personal education plans), with a clear focus on improvement areas or the intended outcome for the children in care.
    - Increasing the consistency in convening and undertaking strategy meetings.
    - Ensuring that there is a range of quality placements for children in Nottinghamshire.
    - Conducting strategy discussions for all children, as a few "have not taken place when the threshold was met."

Nottingham City Council Inspections: Ofsted Summary

Overall outcome: Inadequate

The July 2022 Ofsted inspection of Nottingham City Council's Children's Services judged the service as 'Inadequate' overall, with 'Inadequate' for "the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection", and 'Requires improvement to be good' for "the impact of leaders on social work practice and the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers". The report identified serious weaknesses in the timeliness and quality of responses to children at risk, particularly at the front door (MASH), where delays, inconsistent decision-making, and poor management oversight left some children without the help or protection they needed. Inspectors found that many children experienced drift and delay, that assessments were variable in quality, and that supervision and oversight were inconsistent across teams.

The Ofsted monitoring visit in November 2024 found that Nottingham City Council is making steady progress since being judged 'Inadequate' at the full inspection in July 2022. Inspectors noted continued improvement in leadership stability, the appointment of a permanent Director of Children's Services, and the successful recruitment of permanent managers and social workers, which has led to a more settled workforce and lower caseloads.

Areas for Improvement (based on full Ofsted inspection 2022):

- Nottingham City Council was described as having serious weaknesses at the Front Door and in response to children at risk. The MASH was said to not be "functioning effectively" with a "significant backlog of work in the MASH".
- There was weak management oversight, supervision, and inconsistent practice quality
- The report pointed to insufficient responses to children missing education or at risk of exploitation, stating that "children missing from education and those who are electively home educated are not tracked effectively." Further, arrangements for children who went missing from home or care were not effective.
- There was high staff turnover and reliance on agency workers which was affecting continuity of care
- Inconsistent planning, oversight and permanence for children in care
- Gaps in support and pathway planning for older care leavers
- Due to the aforementioned issues, Ofsted concluded that "too many children in need of help and protection do not receive a timely and effective response to reduce risk."

Improvements Achieved (based on Monitoring inspection 2024):

- This was the sixth monitoring visit since the full inspection in July 2022, at which time the authority was judged inadequate. Since the previous visits, Nottingham City Council has made sustained progress, despite "severe financial pressures, changes in leadership and continuous external scrutiny."
- A new permanent Director of Children's Services (DCS) has been appointed, ending a period when leadership had been split between children's and adult services. All senior and team management posts in the children-in-care service are now permanently filled.
- Key strengths include;
    - Improved entry into care and adoption pathways; workforce stability and oversight; augmented assessment, review and visiting practices; and improved support for wellbeing and education.
- Remaining areas of improvement are;
    - Assessment and care planning variability (assessment remain inconsistent with case records not always updated); permanence and placement challenges (planning for children not on adoption pathways remains weak); supervision is inconsistent, and QA/auditing sometimes focuses on compliance rather than improving outcomes; and care order management and support for carers.

Nottinghamshire County Council Inspections: SEND Summary

The full SEND inspection for Nottinghamshire CC was published on 16 May 2023 and found **"significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND"** across the Local Area Partnership (which includes Nottinghamshire County Council and NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire). As a result, the inspectors required the partnership to produce a Priority Action / Improvement Plan with two key priority areas for action detailed below.

Priority Actions	Full Action Required	Improvement Plan Actions
Identification, assessment and provision for needs of CYP with SEND	The report said the area must urgently improve how it "identifies, assesses and provides for the needs of children and young people with SEND," including ensuring that EHC (Education, Health and Care) plans are issued within statutory timescales and that plans are holistic in covering education, health and care.	In order to address the delays and quality of assessments/EHCPs, Nottinghamshire CC outlined the following actions in their Improvement Plan: • Increase capacity for EHC needs assessments so that plans can be completed more promptly. • A multi-agency QA process for EHCPs to increase consistency and quality. • Work to strengthen annual review processes and ensure holistic oversight of EHCPs, integrating education, health and care aspects. • Improvements in co-production and engagement, including the increased involvement of CYP and families in decision making about their plans and support.
Identification and addressing delays and gaps in access to health services	Inspectors required NHS leaders and commissioners to "act urgently to identify and address the delays and gaps in access to some health services, particularly speech and language therapy, neuro-developmental pathways and equipment services.	To reduce the gaps in health services and reduce delays, the Improvement Plan includes: • Urgent actions to address delays in speech and language therapy and neurodevelopmental pathways. • Pilot projects such as drop-ins, advice lines, workshops, and online resources to support CYP awaiting assessments. • Use of performance data to identify gaps and track effectiveness of interventions. • Establishment of clearer referral routes and guidance for parents, carers and professionals to improve access and transparency.

In addition to the two priority actions, the inspection also identified a few other areas of focus for Nottinghamshire CC. These included delays and backlogs in EHCP planning; a lack of clarity and consistency in health and care components of EHCPs; gaps in specialist services such as OT, equipment, and speech and language services; parents, carers and professionals lacked clarity about referral routes and accessing services; and strengthening oversight, performance data usage, and joint accountability across education, health and care.

Monitoring Inspection Findings

The July 2025 Ofsted monitoring inspection of Nottinghamshire's SEND services found that the Local Area Partnership has taken effective action to address the two priority actions set in 2023. Inspectors noted improved governance, stronger partnership working, and a rise in the proportion of EHC plans completed within the 20-week timescale, supported by a new multi-agency quality assurance process and additional early-support offers for families awaiting assessments. However, they highlighted that further work is still needed to reduce delays in speech and language therapy and EHC plan completion, and to improve communication and clarity for families accessing services.

Nottingham City Council Inspections: SEND Summary

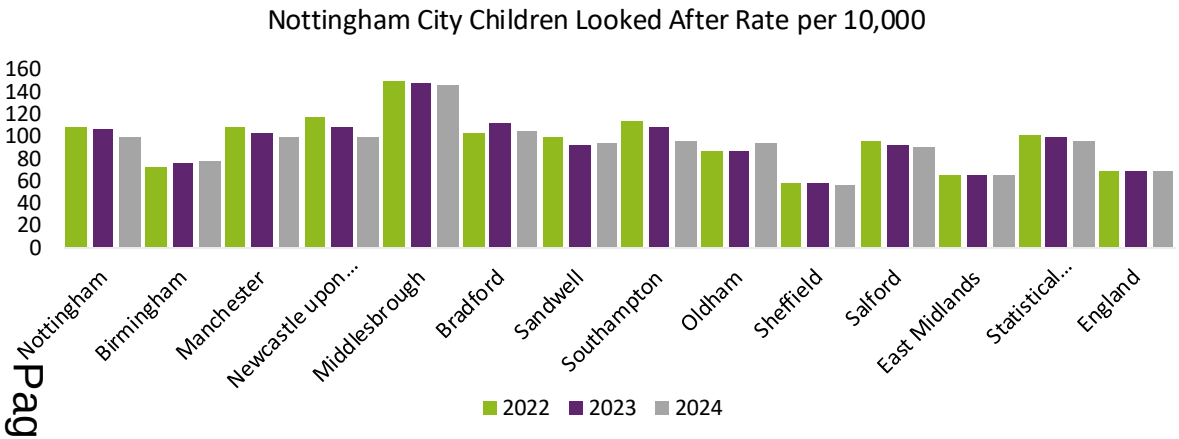
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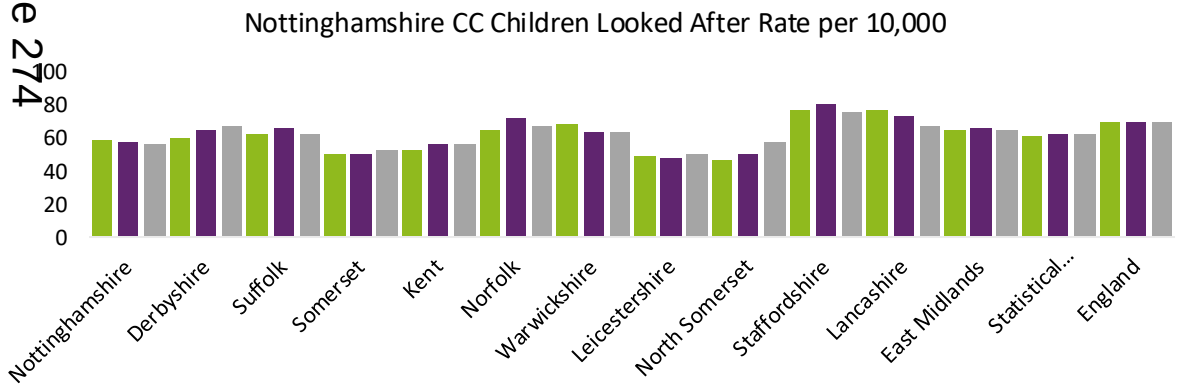
The full SEND inspection for Nottingham City Council was published on 22 December 2021 and found that while there were strengths in collaborative working and early years provision, there were also '**areas requiring improvement**' in how the Local Area Partnership identified, assessed, and met the needs of CYP with SEND. As a result, inspectors highlighted the need for the local area to strengthen strategic oversight, improve communication with parents, and ensure that services were effectively coordinated. The two key priority areas are detailed below:

Priority Actions	Full Priority Information
Improving strategic oversight and joint commissioning arrangements	• The inspection found that recent leadership changes had disrupted the strategic oversight of SEND in the area. While leaders were working to address these challenges, the lack of a comprehensive joint commissioning strategy limited the area's ability to coordinate services effectively. • "The absence of a comprehensive joint commissioning strategy limited the area's ability to use commissioning as a tool for improvement." • An external review had already made recommendations to improve commissioning arrangements, and the area was in the process of establishing structures to strengthen joint commissioning across education, health, and social care services. Improving this area was critical to ensuring that services were planned, coordinated, and delivered in a way that met the needs of children and young people with SEND.
Enhancing communication and accessibility of information	• The inspection also noted that parents and carers were not always aware of the local area's strategy for identifying, assessing, and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND. • "A large proportion of parents did not understand or appreciate the strategy, and many were unaware of where to find information and guidance to improve outcomes for their children." • Additionally, the local offer website was not sufficiently well publicised and did not capture all available services and activities. The neurodevelopmental pathway was also not communicated effectively, which could lead to unrealistic expectations about the support children would receive once a diagnosis had been confirmed. Strengthening communication and making information more accessible were therefore essential priorities for improving parent and carer engagement and ensuring families could access the right support.

Children's Social Care - Children Looked After

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Area	2024 Rate (approx.)	Trend (2022–2024)	Relative Position	Key Message
Nottingham City	110–120 per 10,000	Stable / slight dip	High vs comparators	Sustained demand, limited impact of early intervention
Nottinghamshire	60 per 10,000	Stable	Around national average	Preventive model relatively effective

What does the data tell us?

Nottingham City:

- The rate of Children Looked After (CLA) in Nottingham City has remained **consistently high** across the three years, and well above the national and East Midlands averages.
- The 2024 rate appears **slightly reduced or stabilised** compared with 2023 but still sits among the highest of comparator areas.

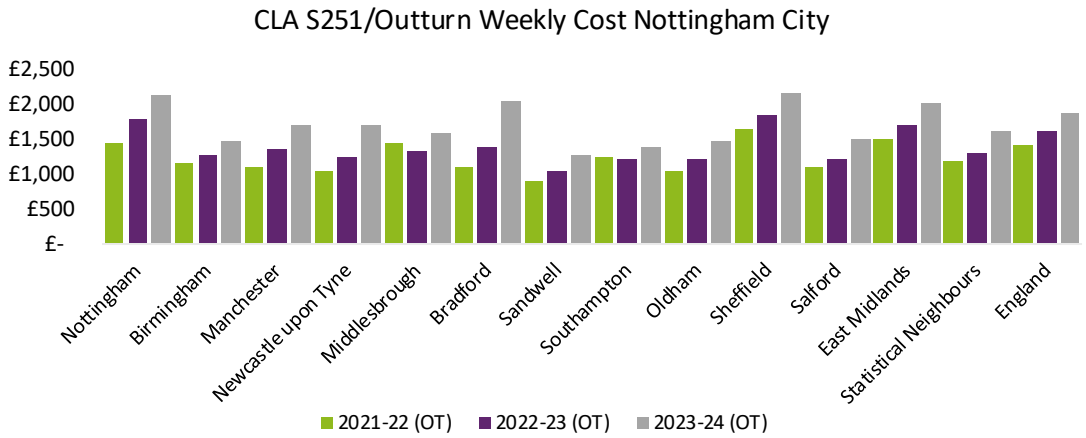
Nottinghamshire CC

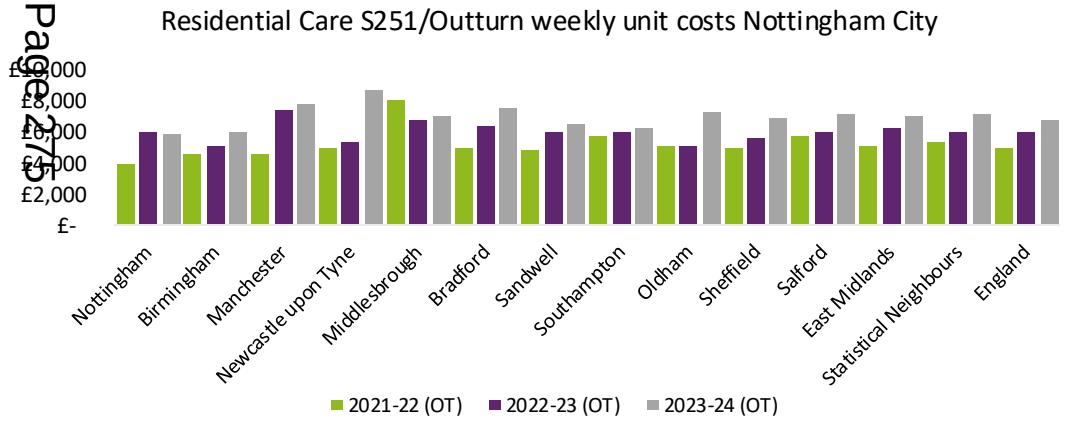
- Nottinghamshire's CLA rate is **significantly lower** than Nottingham City and **broadly aligned** with or slightly above the England average.

So What for LGR?

- Any reorganisation should account for divergent baseline pressures — Nottingham City's demand profile is urban and complex, while Nottinghamshire's is more preventative and rural in nature.
- Joint transformation must equalise capacity, ensuring workforce, placement sufficiency, and early help systems are rebalanced.
- Opportunity to share learning: Nottinghamshire's family support model and Nottingham City's experience with complex care coordination.

Children's Social Care – Finance





Metric	Nottingham City vs SN Average	Nottingham City vs England	Trend (2021–24)	Key Message
CLA S251 Weekly Cost	+30%	+14%	Rising	High demand and complexity driving cost pressure
Residential Care Weekly Cost	–17%	–12%	Gradual increase	Controlled unit costs but demand inflation risk

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What does the data tell us?

- Nottingham City's weekly CLA costs have **risen steadily** across the three years, reaching approximately **£2,100–£2,200 per week** in 2023–24.
- This is **30% higher than the statistical neighbour (SN) average** and **14% higher than the England average**.
- The increase between 2021–22 and 2023–24 is **significant**, outpacing most comparator areas.

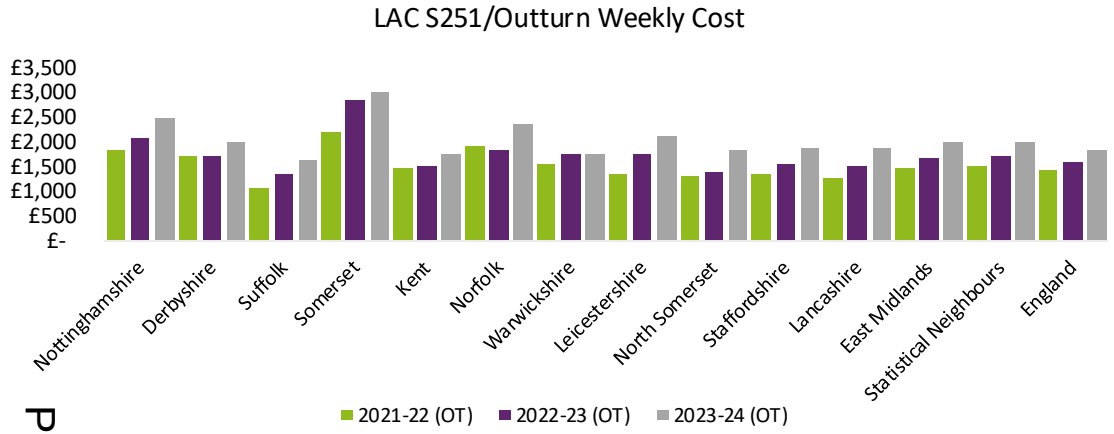
What does the data tell us?

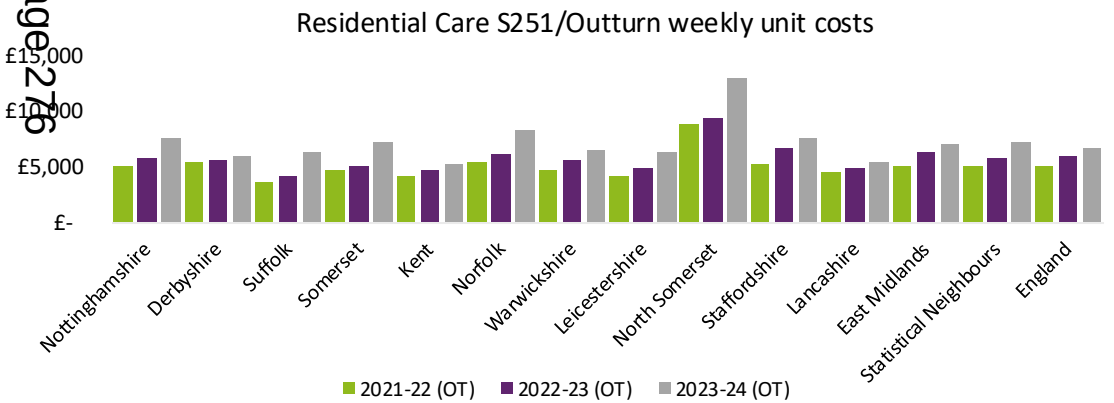
- Nottingham City's residential unit costs are **lower than both statistical neighbours and the England average**, by **17% and 12% respectively**.
- While unit costs remain lower, there has still been a **gradual increase** across the three years (2021–22 to 2023–24), in line with national inflation and workforce pressures.

So What for LGR?

- The financial data reinforces the **need to reduce overall CLA numbers** through **early help and family preservation** approaches.
- Nottingham's **residential cost efficiency** can be leveraged, but **systemic demand management** remains critical.
- Investment in **sufficiency, commissioning reform, and step-down pathways** from care could deliver medium-term savings.
- Without demand reduction, **current trajectories are unsustainable**, particularly given inflationary pressures and high external placement dependence.

Children's Social Care – Nottinghamshire CC Finance





Metric	Nottinghamshire vs SN Average	Nottinghamshire vs England	Trend (2021–24)	Key Message
CLA S251 Weekly Cost	+22%	+33%	Steady increase	Rising cost pressure, high reliance on external placements
Residential Weekly Cost	+5%	+12%	Significant inflation	Market-driven increases and sufficiency constraints

What does the data tell us?

- Nottinghamshire CC's CLA weekly cost has **risen steadily** over the past three years, reaching approximately **£2,300–£2,500 per week** in 2023–24.
- This is **22% higher than the statistical neighbour average** and **33% higher than the England average**, showing a sharp escalation in cost intensity.
- The increase is among the **steepest within the comparator set**, indicating significant cost growth pressures.

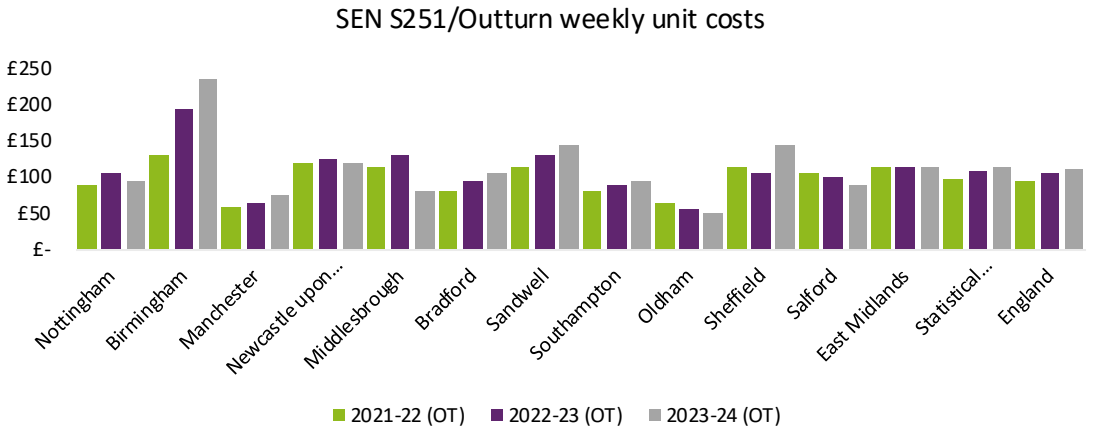
What does data tell us?

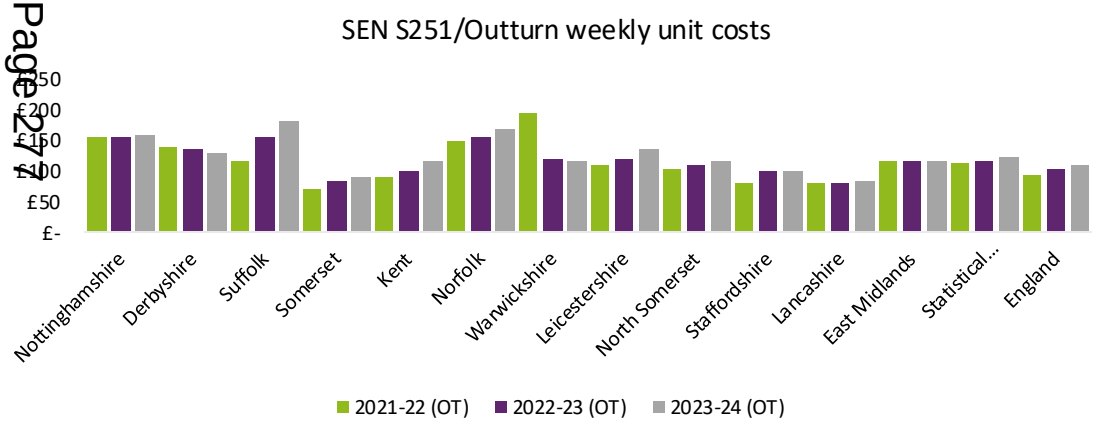
- Residential unit costs in Nottinghamshire CC are **5% higher than the statistical neighbour average** and **12% higher than the England average**.
- Nottinghamshire's residential costs are positioned in the **upper mid-range** compared to peers, reflecting market constraints but not extreme outliers.

So What for LGR?

- Nottinghamshire faces **emerging cost pressures** despite historically stable demand, driven by **market inflation and growing complexity of cases**. The 2023–24 escalation suggests a need for **commissioning reform**, **in-house capacity building**, and **regional sufficiency planning**.
- The data highlights a **critical risk to medium-term financial sustainability**, reinforcing the importance of **investment in early help and family support** to control entry into high-cost care. Without intervention, these cost trends could **erode financial headroom** and limit resources for preventative work.

Children's Social Care – Finance SEN





Area	2023–24 Position	Trend (2021–24)	Relative to England	Key Insight
Nottingham City	£200–£220	Rising sharply	Above average	Cost escalation linked to higher-need cohort and specialist placement reliance
Nottinghamshire	£130–£160	Stable	Around average	Managed growth; effective local sufficiency and commissioning

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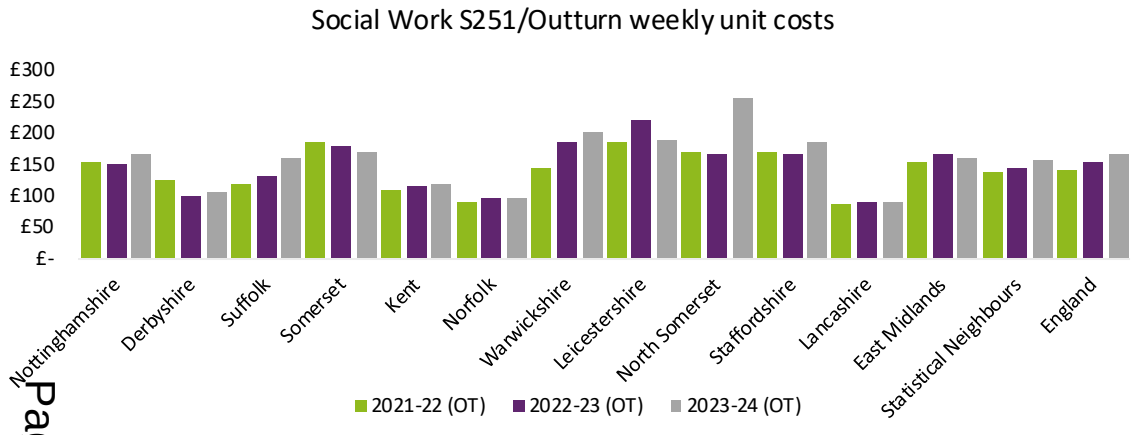
Nottingham City

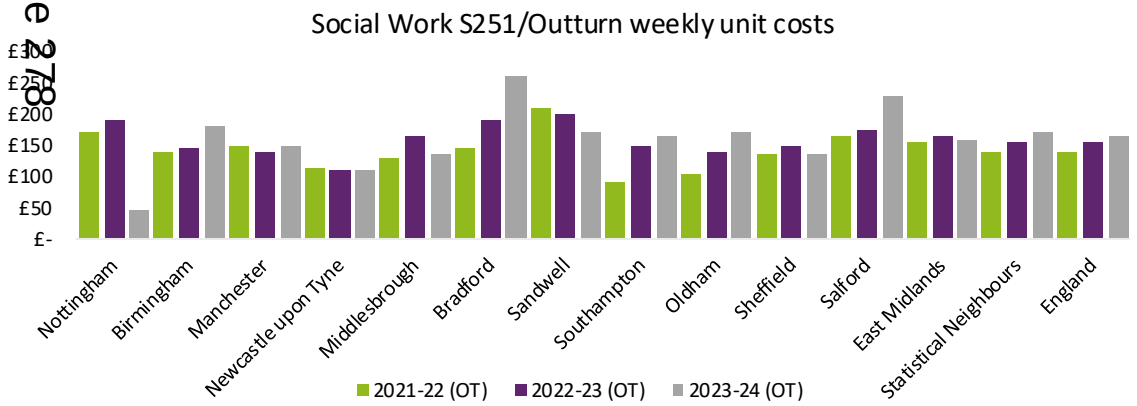
- Nottingham City's SEN weekly unit cost shows a **steady upward trend**, rising from approximately **£100 per week in 2021–22** to around **£200–£220 in 2023–24**. This increase is **more pronounced** than in most comparator authorities, including Birmingham, Sheffield, and Salford. Nottingham's 2023–24 costs are now among the **highest in the comparator group**, suggesting **above-average growth** over the period.
- The rising costs likely reflect **increasing complexity of need**, particularly among children requiring intensive support or education placements with therapeutic provision. It also signals **pressures on SEN transport, specialist staffing, and independent/non-maintained placements**. While growth aligns with national inflation, the scale suggests **sufficiency and commissioning challenges** in local specialist provision.

Nottinghamshire CC

- Nottinghamshire CC's SEN weekly costs have been **relatively stable** over the three years, remaining around **£130–£160 per week**. Although costs fluctuate slightly across years, the overall increase is **modest** compared with peers. The county's 2023–24 unit cost sits **close to or just below the England average**, and below higher-cost authorities such as Norfolk and Leicestershire.
- Nottinghamshire demonstrates **tight cost control** and a **balanced commissioning model** for SEN support. The data suggests effective management of **in-county provision**, with limited reliance on expensive external placements. However, stable costs may mask **latent pressure**, especially if EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) volumes continue to grow — a national trend likely to impact future budgets.

Children's Social Care – Finance Social Work





Area	2023–24 Weekly Cost (approx.)	Trend (2021–24)	Relative to England	Key Insight
Nottinghamshire	£100–£130	Stable	Around average	Cost stability but potential caseload pressure
Nottingham City	£160–£200	Rising	Above average	Higher workforce costs due to demand and agency use

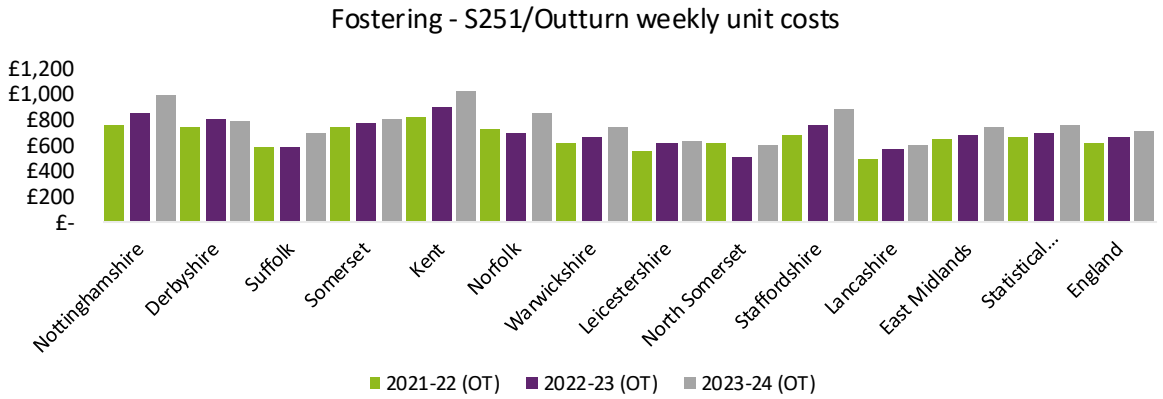
Nottinghamshire CC

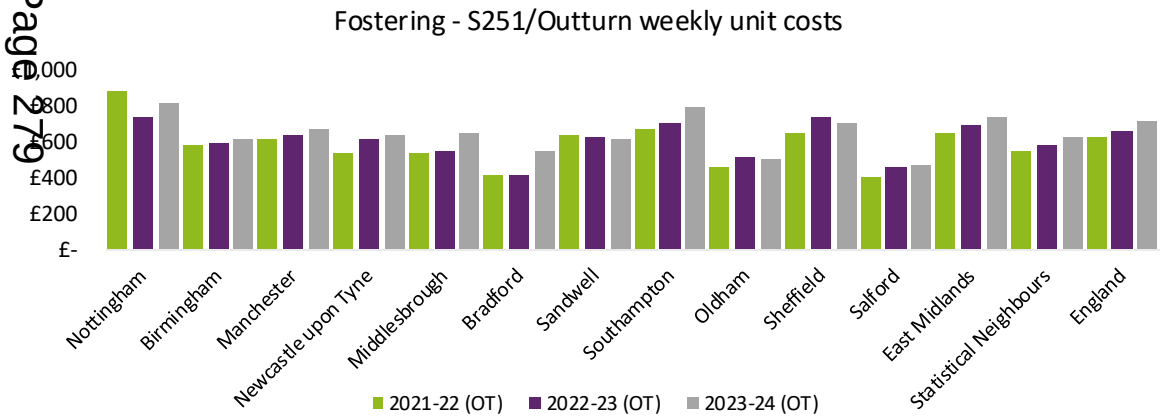
- Nottinghamshire CC's weekly social work costs have remained **relatively stable**, at around **£100–£130 per week** across the three-year period. This is **broadly in line with statistical neighbours and the England average**, showing **no major divergence** in spending levels. Some peer authorities (e.g. Somerset, Leicestershire, Staffordshire) show sharper increases in 2023–24, but Nottinghamshire's growth is more contained.
- This stability suggests **effective workforce management** and **controlled cost growth**, even amid national recruitment and retention pressures. The authority may benefit from **a balanced mix of permanent and agency staff**, maintaining service continuity without over-reliance on premium costs. However, stable unit costs may also mask underlying **capacity and caseload pressure** if staffing levels are stretched to contain expenditure.

Nottingham City

- Nottingham City's weekly social work costs are **consistently higher** than the England and East Midlands averages, at approximately **£160–£200 per week** in 2023–24.Between 2021–22 and 2023–24, costs have shown a **steady upward trend**, though not as steep as in some comparator cities such as Bradford and Sandwell. Despite increases, the cost trajectory remains **proportionate to the high demand context** and complex caseloads observed in urban areas.
- The higher spend reflects **intense service demand**, higher **case complexity**, and **workforce turnover** leading to greater reliance on agency or locum staff. Persistent cost growth indicates ongoing **recruitment challenges**, potentially exacerbated by competition for experienced practitioners across neighbouring urban authorities. Sustained investment in workforce stability and practice quality will be crucial to achieving better value for money over time.

Children's Social Care – Finance Fostering





Area	2023–24 Cost (approx.)	Trend (2021–24)	Relative to England	Key Insight
Nottinghamshire	£750–£900	Gradual increase	Around average	Stable, cost-efficient fostering market
Nottingham City	£850–£1,000	Rising steadily	Above average	High reliance on external fostering, cost pressure from demand and complexity

Nottinghamshire CC

- Nottinghamshire CC's fostering costs have remained **consistently moderate**, ranging from **£700–£900 per week** across the three-year period. The **2023–24 rate** shows a **gradual increase** but still sits **close to the statistical neighbour and England averages**, indicating **good cost control**. Some comparator areas (e.g. Kent, Somerset, Norfolk) show steeper cost growth, likely linked to higher reliance on independent fostering agencies (IFAs).
- Nottinghamshire's stability suggests a **strong in-house fostering base**, limiting dependency on high-cost external provision. Moderate cost growth reflects **national inflation and uplift in foster carer allowances**, rather than systemic inefficiency. Sustaining this position will depend on continued **recruitment and retention of local foster carers** to avoid market inflation pressures.

Nottingham City

- Nottingham City's fostering unit costs are **higher than regional and national averages**, typically around **£850–£1,000 per week** in 2023–24. The rate shows **steady year-on-year increases**, outpacing comparator cities such as Sheffield and Salford. Costs remain below residential care levels but represent a **significant financial burden** due to volume and market dynamics.
- Higher fostering costs are likely driven by **increased use of IFAs** and **placement instability**, both common in high-demand urban contexts. The city's **shortage of in-house foster carers** exacerbates competition and price escalation within the external market. There may also be **a higher concentration of specialist or therapeutic placements**, reflecting the complexity of the looked-after cohort.

Children's Social Care Finance – So What for LGR?

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Finance - SEN

- **Divergence in cost trends** reflects differences in demand profiles and provision sufficiency between the city and county.
- Nottingham City's cost trajectory indicates a **rising complexity and market dependency**, warranting investment in **local inclusion capacity** and **integrated commissioning**.
- Nottinghamshire's relative stability provides a **stronger base**, though both areas must prepare for **continued EHCP growth** and **post-16 pressures**.
- For LGR planning, aligning SEN commissioning and sufficiency strategies offers an opportunity to **balance risk, share best practice, and manage costs sustainably** across a combined footprint.

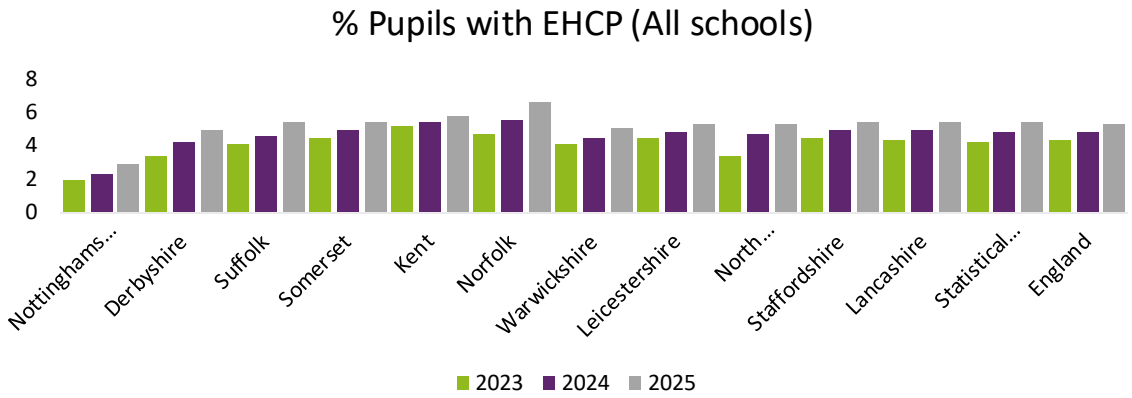
Finance - Social Work

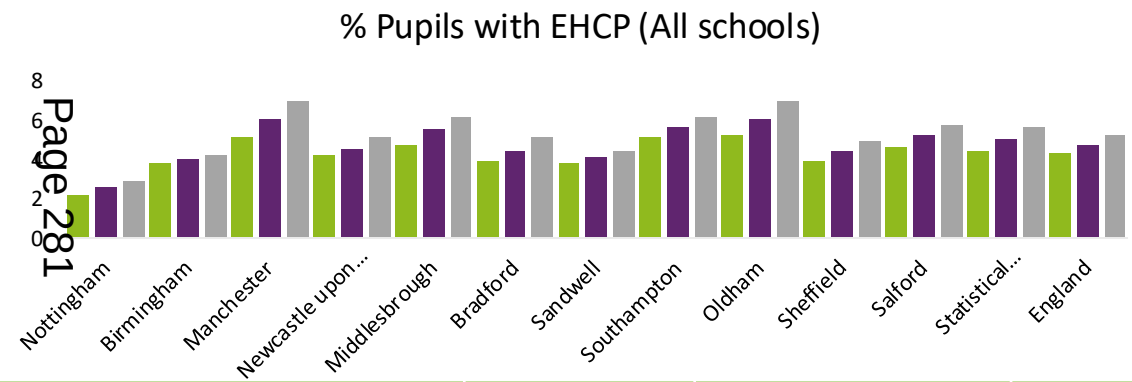
- Nottingham City's **higher per-unit costs** underline the need for sustained **workforce reform**, focusing on **recruitment, retention, and caseload management**.
- Nottinghamshire CC's **financial control** offers a **stronger base**, but resilience risks remain if workforce pressures intensify.
- An integrated workforce strategy across both areas could enable **joint recruitment pipelines, shared training investment, and reduced agency dependency**.
- Under LGR, there is a clear opportunity to **build a unified social work model**—combining Nottinghamshire's financial discipline with Nottingham City's experience managing high-complexity caseloads.

Finance - Fostering

- Nottinghamshire's **cost stability** represents a strength, a potential model for **shared sufficiency and recruitment strategy** across a combined system.
- Nottingham City's higher costs indicate the need for **targeted investment in local carer recruitment**, **retention**, and **wraparound support** to reduce IFA dependency.
- Both areas would benefit from **regional commissioning approaches**, joint frameworks, and **harmonised foster care payment structures** to balance pressures post-LGR.
- Overall, fostering remains **more cost-effective than residential care**, but sustainability relies on **strengthening in-house capacity** and **enhancing carer support offers**.

EHCP and SEN





Nottinghamshire CC

- Nottinghamshire CC's EHCP rate is **below both national and statistical neighbour averages**, starting around **3% in 2023** and projected to rise to **just under 5% by 2025**. This growth trajectory mirrors national trends but remains **slightly below the England average (approx. 5.5%)**. Comparator counties such as Suffolk, Somerset, and Norfolk consistently record higher rates.
- Nottinghamshire CC's moderate rise suggests a **controlled approach to EHCP growth**, likely supported by **early intervention and SEN support within mainstream schools**. However, the increase indicates **growing demand**, consistent with national patterns of expanding need and complexity post-pandemic. The challenge will be sustaining **quality of provision** and **timeliness of assessment** as the number of plans rises.

Nottingham City

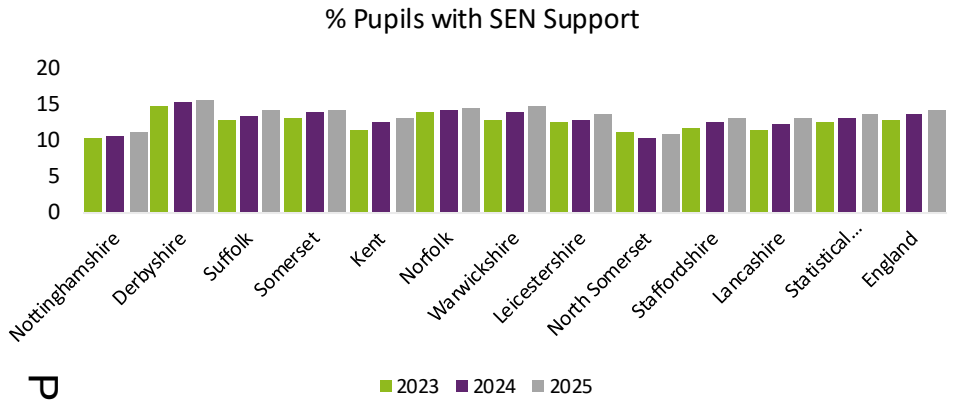
- Nottingham City's EHCP rate is **significantly below national and regional averages**, at around **2–3% in 2023**, rising modestly by 2025. The **England average** and most comparator cities (e.g., Manchester, Newcastle, Middlesbrough) are between **5–7%**, more than double Nottingham's proportion. The projected increase to 2025 remains **modest**, indicating slower local growth in EHCP issuance.
- The low EHCP rate may reflect **capacity pressures in assessment services**, **threshold management**, or **effective use of SEN Support in schools**. However, it could also signal **unmet need** or barriers to access, especially compared with similar urban authorities experiencing higher levels of complexity. If trends continue, Nottingham risks **increasing late or crisis-stage identification**, placing additional pressure on social care and alternative provision.

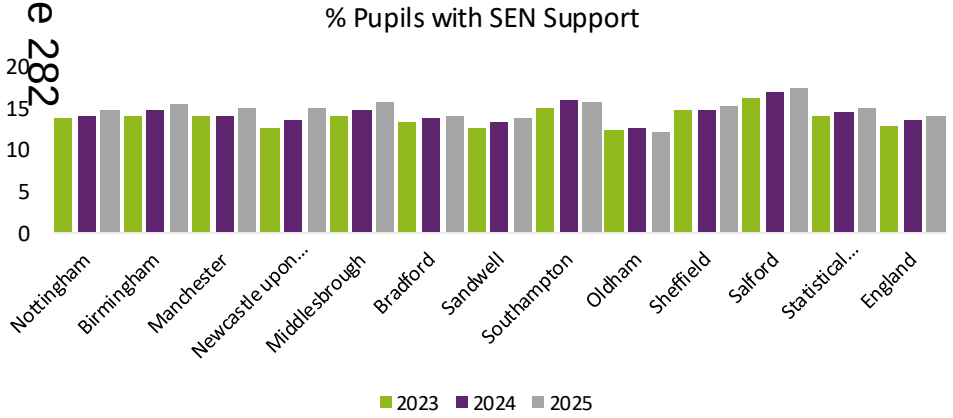
Area	2023 EHCP %	2025 Projected %	Relative to England	Trend	Key Insight
Nottingham City	2–3%	3–4%	Below average	Gradual rise	Lower identification rates may mask underlying need
Nottinghamshire	3%	5%	Slightly below average	Moderate rise	Demand increasing but still manageable

<u>So What for LGR?</u>

- **Both authorities** are below national averages, suggesting potential **capacity constraints** in SEND assessment or **strong local threshold management**. Nottingham City's particularly low rate warrants review to ensure **equitable access** to statutory plans and **alignment with national expectations**. Nottinghamshire CC's moderate but steady growth highlights the need for **expansion of local provision**, particularly **special school places and targeted inclusion support**
- For LGR, aligning SEND strategies presents a major opportunity to:
  - Develop **joint inclusion pathways**.
  - Increase **local sufficiency** of specialist placements.
  - Share **best practice** in assessment, early intervention, and post-16 transition planning.

SEN





Nottinghamshire CC

- Nottinghamshire's SEN Support rate is around **10–12% of all pupils**, slightly **below the England average (13–14%)**. The rate has shown a **gradual increase** from 2023 to 2025, indicating **rising identification of additional needs** in mainstream settings. Compared with peers, Nottinghamshire sits **towards the lower-middle range**, below areas like Suffolk and Norfolk but in line with the regional average.
- The data suggests **steady growth in early identification**, though still below national levels. The relatively modest rate may point to **tight thresholds for SEN Support** or **variability in school-level inclusion practice**. The trend indicates an **increasing recognition of need**—potentially a result of post-pandemic learning and social-emotional recovery work.

Nottingham City

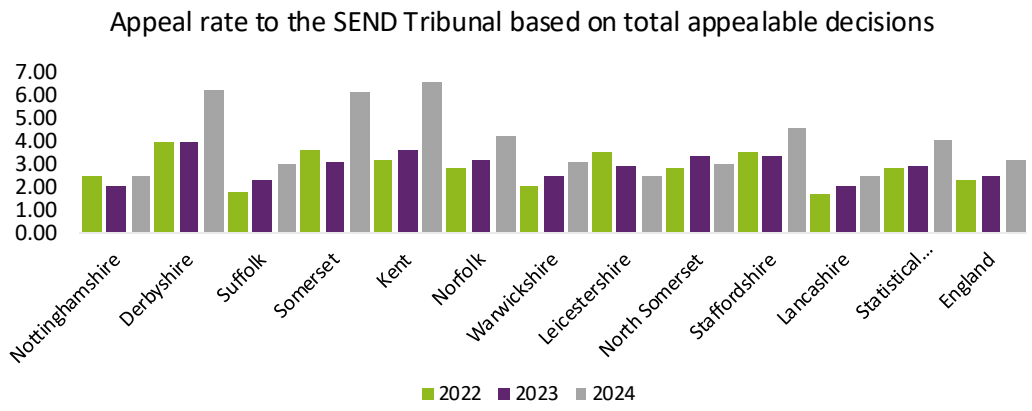
- Nottingham City's SEN Support rate is **higher than Nottinghamshire's**, at approximately **14–16%**, broadly in line with or **slightly above the England average**. This has remained **stable across the three years**, with only minimal year-on-year variation. Nottingham's rate is comparable to other urban authorities (e.g. Manchester, Bradford, Salford).
- The high rate reflects **strong identification within mainstream schools**, likely linked to **higher levels of deprivation and complexity of need**. Stability in the data suggests **consistent local practice** in identifying and supporting pupils below the statutory threshold. However, maintaining this level of support requires **sufficient specialist resource**, training, and collaboration with health and inclusion services to prevent escalation to EHCPs.

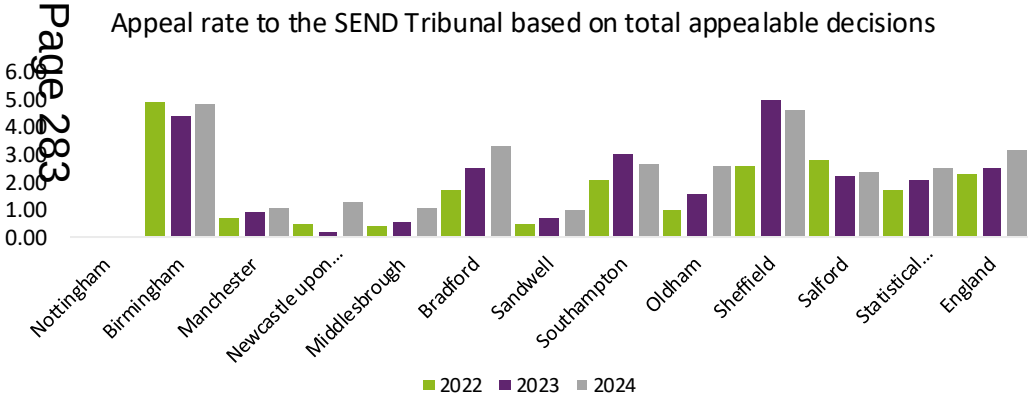
<u>So What for LGR?</u>

The data highlights **contrasting inclusion contexts**: Nottingham City demonstrates **higher levels of early identification and support**, while Nottinghamshire maintains **a more contained profile**. This presents an opportunity under **LGR** to **balance practice and resource models**, ensuring equitable access to SEN Support across both geographies.

Continued investment in **mainstream inclusion, school-based SEN expertise, and early help services** is critical to manage rising complexity without over-reliance on EHCP pathways. A **joint inclusion strategy** could align thresholds, professional development, and outreach services to achieve consistent outcomes across the new authority footprint.

EHCP and SEN





Nottinghamshire

- Nottinghamshire's SEND Tribunal appeal rate has remained **stable to moderately increasing**, ranging between **2–3%** from 2022 to 2024. The rate is **slightly below the England and statistical neighbour averages** (typically around 3–4%), but **well within expected variation**. Comparators such as Derbyshire and Somerset record **higher appeal rates (5–6%)**, indicating stronger upward pressure elsewhere.
- Nottinghamshire's moderate rates suggest **reasonable parental confidence** and **effective dispute resolution**, with families able to access due process when necessary. The stable trend demonstrates **consistency in SEND decision quality** and **communication with parents**, avoiding escalation to tribunal in most cases. This reflects a **balanced SEND system** that manages both assessment rigour and responsiveness to need.

Nottingham City

- Nottingham City records a **consistently very low appeal rate** across all three years (2022–2024), sitting **well below** both the England average (~2–3%) and all comparator cities. The rate remains close to **0%** across all years, indicating very few appeals relative to the number of decisions issued. In contrast, several comparator authorities — such as Sheffield, Salford, and Bradford — show **appeal rates between 3–5%**, significantly higher.
- The low appeal rate may reflect **strong parental engagement**, **clear decision-making**, or **effective early resolution of disputes**. However, it could also suggest **limited access to formal challenge mechanisms** or **low parental confidence** in pursuing appeals. Given Nottingham's low EHCP rate (as seen in previous charts), the combination may indicate **tight gatekeeping** within the EHCP process — potentially reducing both approvals and appeals.

So What for LGR?

Nottingham City's **very low appeal rate** should be explored to ensure it reflects **effective case resolution**, not **restricted access** or **parental disengagement**. Nottinghamshire CC's **moderate and consistent trend** indicates a **well-functioning SEND governance process** that could serve as a model for best practice in transparent communication and parental involvement.

For a future combined system under **LGR**, a **shared SEND quality and assurance framework** could:

- Ensure **consistency in EHCP decision-making**.
- Strengthen **early mediation and parental participation**.
- Monitor appeal data as a **key indicator of system health and public trust**.

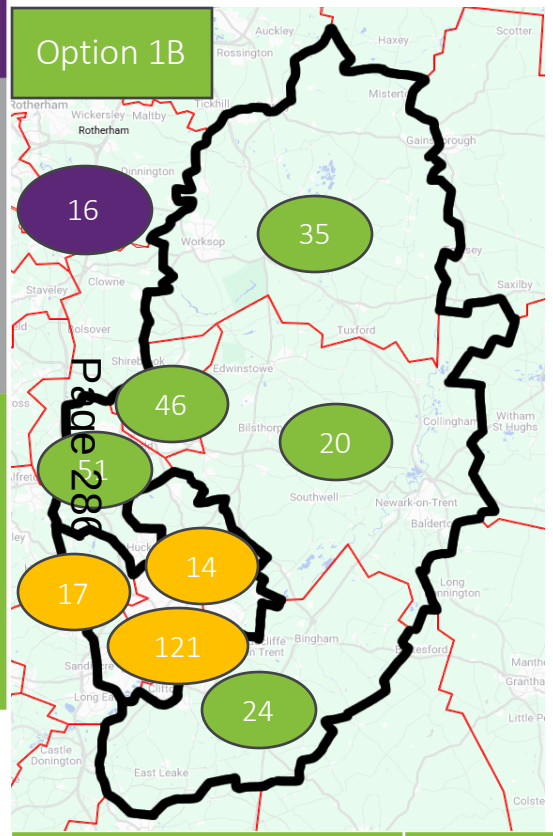
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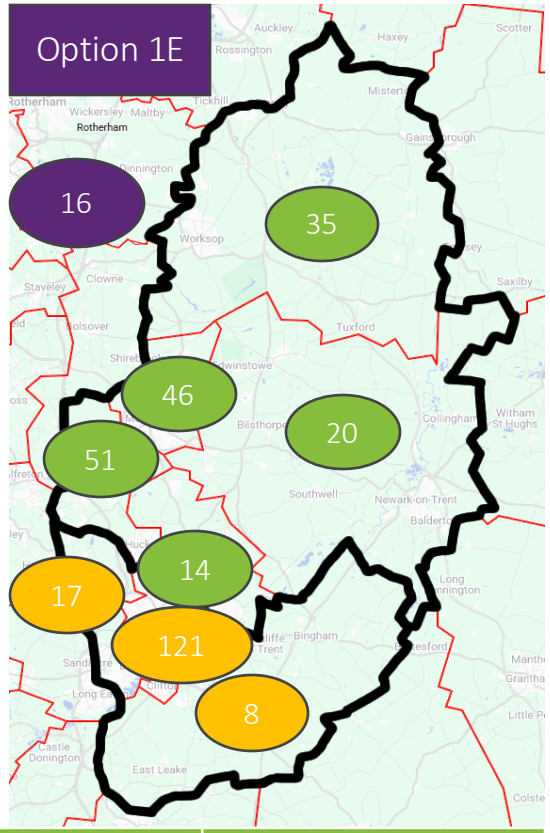
3.2 Children's Social Care: The Local Market

Residential and Placement Sufficiency - Overview

- Analysis of Ofsted-registered children's homes across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City highlights the importance of achieving balance between population need, placement capacity, and geography in the future unitary arrangements.
- Under **Option 1B**, 59% of registered placements (214 of 365) would fall within the proposed Northern authority, compared with 41% (151) in the South. While broadly aligned with the under-18 population distribution (52.5% North; 47.5% South), this option presents a mild imbalance and risks limiting sufficiency in the southern areas, particularly across Nottingham City.
- In contrast, **Option 1E** provides a stronger alignment between population and provision. Here, 61% of placements and 57% of children's homes are located within the Northern footprint, which reflects 51.6% of the under-18 population. This option delivers a more proportionate and coherent configuration of resources, enabling improved planning for local placements and reducing the need for cross-boundary or out-of-area commissioning.
- Under both options, the distribution of local authority-operated homes remains stable, though Option 1E achieves a marginally better alignment between children's original home areas and placement locations. This supports continuity of care, maintains community links, and strengthens oversight for both statutory and corporate parenting responsibilities.
- From an LGR perspective, **Option 1E provides the most sustainable foundation for future sufficiency planning**. It balances demand and capacity across the two proposed authorities, supports effective commissioning and market management, and ensures each unitary area has a viable scale of provision. It also facilitates strategic collaboration between a strong, service-rich southern authority (anchored by Nottingham City) and a well-resourced northern area, creating the conditions for consistent, high-quality residential care and improved outcomes for children.

Children's Residential Placements by their original address





Original Address by Proposed Unitary Area	1B		1E	
	Number of Children	Percentage of Children	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
Notts North Total	160	48.2%	166	50%
Notts South Total	152	45.8%	146	44%
Out of County Total	20	6%	20	6%

Note: this Table displays the original address information of children in Residential Care by Proposed UA

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Original Addreses

- Following disaggregation under both of Option 1B or 1E, would result in a greater proportion of children in residential placements having an original address from the northern unitary than from the southern unitary. With there being a greater balance under the 1B option as there is only a 2.4% difference, compared to a 6% difference under 1E.
- However, there are a greater proportion of children's homes placements within the north in 1E than 1B.
- Under 1B 52% of homes are in the North which provide 51% of the placements, thus, 48% of children's homes are within the South, offering 49% of placements. The proportion of children who are in residential care that came from the northern unitary under 1B, not including the out of county proportion, was 51%, and 49%. This represents a closer alignment to the proportion of original addresses of children in residential care and the number of children's home placements available in the area.
- Under 1E, 57% of children's homes and 54% of available residential places are in the north, with 46% of placements located within the southern unitary. The proportion of children who are in residential care that came from the northern unitary under 1E, not including the out of county proportion, was 53%, compared to 47% in the south. Therefore, there is a similar proportion of children's residential places and children's original addresses who are in residential care alignment to the

Placement Addreses:

- However, there is evidence of a sufficiency challenge due to the number of available places in both the northern and southern unitary children's homes as there are 160 places in the northern homes, and 151 in those located in the south under 1B. Similarly, under 1E the North would have 169 places and the south 142. With this sufficiency challenge appearing to be more pressing with the Southern Unitary authority within either disaggregation.
- Furthermore, this sufficiency challenge may explain why there are high rates of out of county placements. Analysis of address where children are placed show that 62% in Nottinghamshire placed out of county (and not in Nottingham), and between 47%-56%* of Nottingham City commissioned residential placements are in out of county placements.

**Note placement data was suppressed where a total number of children numbered was below 5 for a District council code so the number of OOC children is not able to be confirmed outside of a range*

4. Adult Social Care Performance

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4.1 Adult Social Care Financial Return: Working Age Adults

ASCFR Adult Social Care Demand – Working Age Adults
Nottingham City Overview

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Summary:

- Analysis of demand and cost data indicates that Nottingham City experiences **significantly higher service demand** for working-age adults than comparator areas, with requests for support **46% above the England average**. Despite this, the **average long-term care cost per person (£30,305)** is **30% lower than nationally** and **20% below nearest neighbours**, demonstrating a **cost-efficient delivery model** under high pressure.
- A large majority (73%) of support requests are resolved through **universal or preventative routes**, reflecting a strong focus on **early intervention and community resilience**. However, a relatively **high rate of residential placements** (168 per 100,000 – 85% above the England average) suggests continued reliance on institutional provision, while lower nursing care use may point to **limited availability of complex community alternatives**.

So What for LGR?

- For LGR, this presents both **strengths and challenges**. There is an opportunity to build on Nottingham City's preventative approach, while aligning commissioning models across new authorities to reduce variation and dependency on residential care. A unified, whole-system strategy—prioritising **reablement, supported living, and market stability**—will ensure consistency, sustainability, and improved outcomes for working-age adults across the new unitary footprint.

ASCFR Adult Social Care Demand – Working Age Adult Nottinghamshire CC Overview

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Summary

- Demand data for Nottinghamshire shows a **lower overall volume of support requests** compared with comparator areas, but a **moderate level of long-term care use and cost efficiency** across service types. Requests for support among adults aged 18–64 are **11% below the NHS nearest neighbour average** and **15% below the England average**, indicating a relatively **stable front door and effective demand management**.
- The **average cost of long-term care (£37,056)** is **18% lower than nearest neighbours** and **6% below the national average**, suggesting **strong cost control and commissioning efficiency**. Outcomes data shows that **three-quarters (76%) of requests** are resolved through universal or preventative services, a higher proportion than comparators, while only **3% lead to long-term care**. This reflects an **effective focus on prevention, early help, and reablement** within the local system.
- Nottinghamshire CC records **homecare use 11% above nearest neighbours**, reflecting investment in community-based models, however **residential care use (120 per 100,000)** is **38% higher than nearest neighbours** but only slightly above the England average. Nursing care use is 27% above nearest neighbour average.
- Whilst Nottinghamshire CC demonstrates a good use of community-based support for WAA and long-term care costs are below nearest neighbour average, there is also a high use of residential care which in turn is not delivering the best outcomes for working-age adults.

So What for LGR?

- For LGR, this offers a strong foundation for **shared best practice and integration** across the new unitary footprint, supporting a consistent approach to prevention, sustainable demand management, and equitable access to long-term care.

Comparative Analysis WAA

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- The analysis highlights distinct but complementary profiles between **Nottingham City** and **Nottinghamshire County** in meeting the needs of working-age adults.
- **Nottingham City** experiences **significantly higher demand**, with requests for support **46% above the England average**, reflecting greater levels of deprivation and complexity within an urban population. Despite this, Nottingham delivers **strong cost efficiency**, with the **average long-term care cost per person (£30,305)** being **30% lower than nationally**. A high proportion of support requests (73%) are resolved through **universal or preventative routes**, indicating an effective early intervention model, though the **high residential care rate** suggests continuing dependency on institutional provision for complex needs.
- In contrast, **Nottinghamshire** operates within a **lower demand environment**, with requests **15% below the England average**, reflecting a more dispersed and stable population. The county demonstrates **tight cost control**, with long-term care costs **6% below the national level**, and a **strong focus on reablement and prevention,** 76% of requests are managed through community or universal support. However, whilst service usage shows higher use of homecare, data indicates a higher dependency on bed based care and whilst not as high as Nottingham City the County is still 38% above NHS nearest neighbours.
- Together, these patterns present an opportunity through LGR to **align high-performing prevention models, balance demand pressures, and share commissioning efficiencies**, as well as build more community based provision to reduce dependency on residential care, establishing a **coherent, sustainable adult social care system across both new authorities**.

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4.2 Adult Social Care Financial Return: Older Age Adults

ASCFR Adult Social Care Demand – Older Adults Nottingham City Overview

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Summary

- Demand for social care among older adults in Nottingham City is **significantly higher than regional and national averages**, with requests for support **54% above the England average**. This reflects the city's **urban deprivation, complex health conditions, and high levels of frailty**, all contributing to greater care and support needs. Despite this demand, Nottingham maintains **strong cost control**, with the **average long-term care cost per person (£24,625)** sitting **14% below the England average**.
- The outcome profile shows that **59% of requests are resolved through universal or preventative services**, indicating a well-developed **front-door model** and robust **early intervention offer**. However, a higher proportion of older people progress to **long-term care (13%)**, reflecting the depth of need in the population.
- Service user data demonstrates **strong investment in community-based care**, with homecare rates almost **double the national average**, however there is higher dependency on residential care with rates per 100k being 37% higher than NHS nearest neighbours.

So What for LGR?

- Overall, Nottingham delivers a **high-demand but cost-efficient system**, underpinned by prevention and independence, but with a higher dependency on bed-based care. Whilst unit costs are low which is keeping long term care costs down, this does not always provide the best outcomes for service users. There is also a risk to how sustainable this is given welcomed changes to care workers salaries and increases in NI. Through LGR, there is opportunity to build on this foundation and ensure community assets are developed to keep people within their own homes/ communities for as long as it is safe to do so.

ASCFR Adult Social Care Demand – Older Adults Nottinghamshire CC Overview

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Summary

- Demand for older adults' social care in Nottinghamshire CC is **broadly in line with comparator areas**, with requests for support just **1% higher than NHS nearest neighbours**. This reflects a **stable demand profile**, underpinned by early intervention and strong community-based prevention. Average long-term care costs per person (£26,741) are **18% lower than comparator areas** and **6% below the England average**, highlighting **effective commissioning and value for money** in service delivery.
- The outcome profile shows that **60% of requests** are resolved through **universal or preventative support**, slightly above comparators, while **only 6% progress to long-term care**, significantly lower than peers. This demonstrates a **well-functioning front door**, with a clear focus on reablement (22%) and short-term interventions (12%) to maintain independence.
- Service user data further supports this, with **homecare usage 6% above comparators** but **residential and nursing care in line with NHS nearest neighbours**, indicating a **clear preference for community-based care**.

So What for LGR?

- Collectively, the data suggests Nottinghamshire delivers a **low-cost, prevention-led model**, with strong reablement outcomes and sustainable cost control, providing a robust foundation for integration and balance within a future unitary structure under LGR.

Comparative Analysis OA

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- Analysis of older adult social care demand highlights distinct but complementary system strengths across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire CC. **Nottingham City** experiences significantly **higher demand pressures**, with requests for support 54% above the national average, reflecting **urban deprivation and complex health needs**. Despite this, the city delivers **cost-efficient provision**, with average long-term care costs 14% below the England average, underpinned by **high prevention activity** and a strong **homecare offer,** although **use of residential care is 37% above** NHS nearest neighbours.
- In contrast, **Nottinghamshire** CC demonstrates a **steady and controlled demand profile**, with activity levels close to comparators and **18% lower unit costs** than nearest neighbours. The county's approach is **prevention- and reablement-led**, with only **6% of cases progressing to long-term care**, indicating strong early intervention and community resilience.
- Together, the two systems present a **balanced platform for reform under LGR**: Nottingham City's capacity to manage high-complexity urban demand complements Nottinghamshire CC's strengths in prevention and efficiency, with Nottingham exposed to Nottinghamshire's approach to keep residential care admissions down. Combining these approaches would enable a **sustainable, integrated older adult care model**, blending **cost control, prevention, and equitable access** across both new unitary authorities.

5. Financial and Demand Projections

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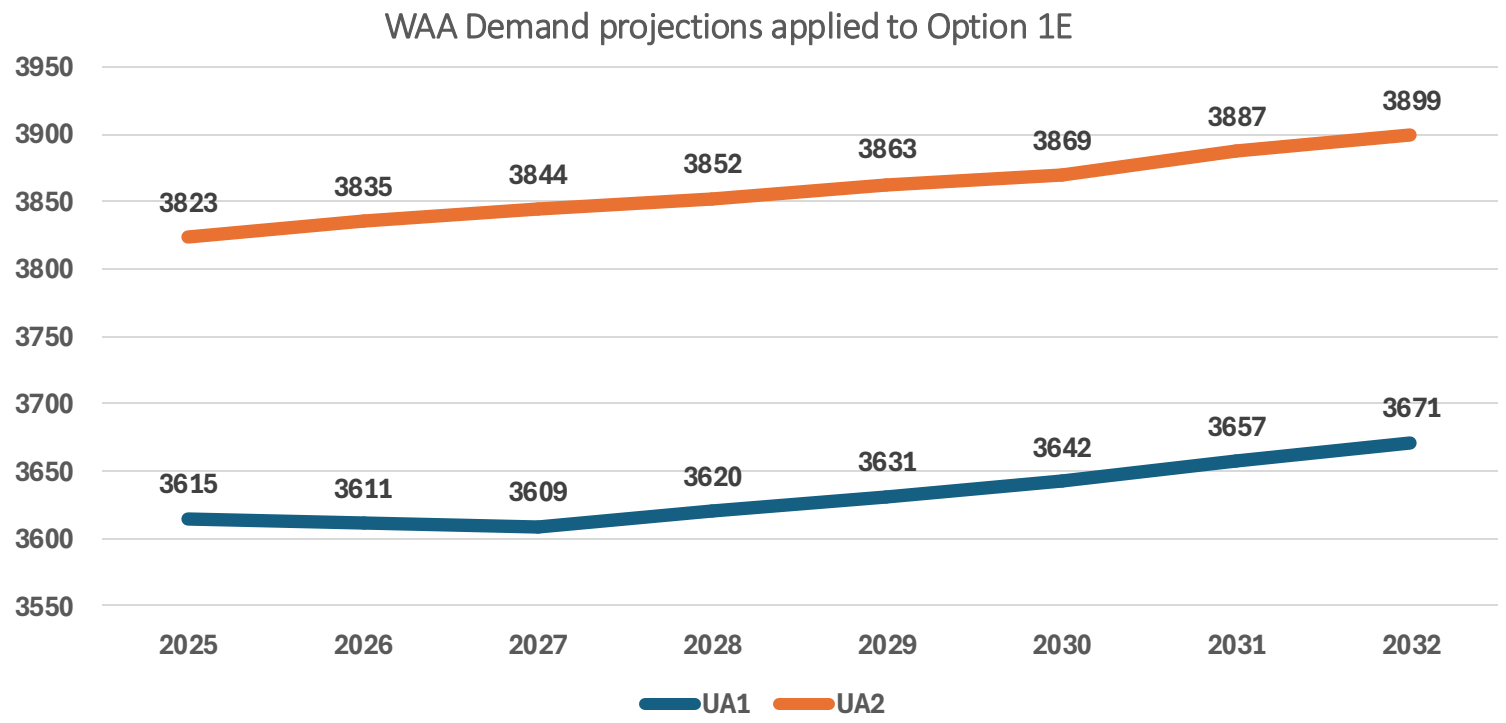
5.1 Working Age Adults – Demand Forecasting & Financial Modelling

WAA Demand projections applied to Option 1e

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Option 1E Two Unitarities Broken down:

- UA1: Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe
- UA2 : Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood



Methodology:

'As Is' – Nottingham City LGR data return WAA (2,442) in receipt of long-term care at end of the year combined with Nottinghamshire County LGR Data Return WAA (4,996) in receipt of long-term care at end of the year.

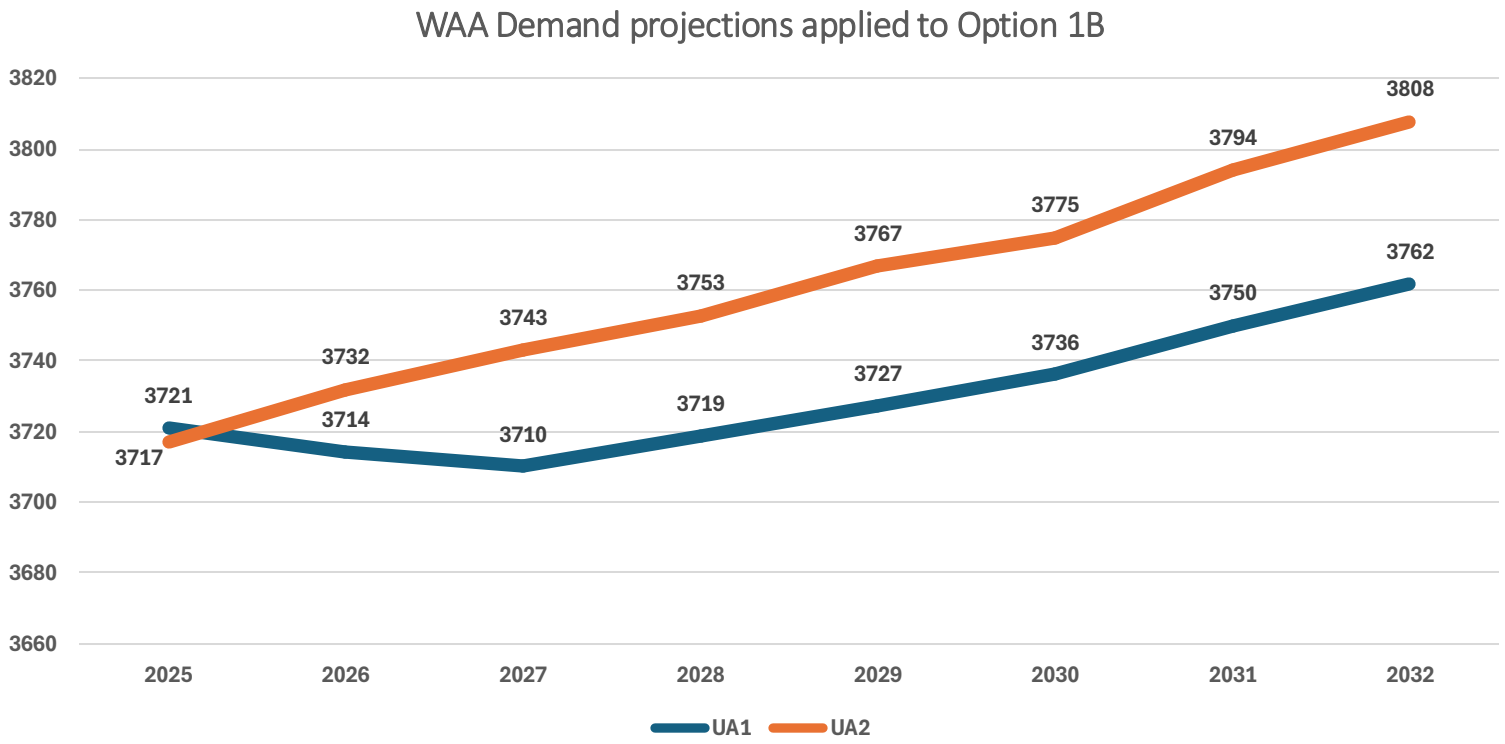
Increase projected using year on year change in ONS mid-2022 based population projections.

WAA Demand projections applied to Option 1B

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Option 1B Two Unitarities Broken down:

- UA1: Broxtowe, Gedling and Nottingham City
- UA2: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe



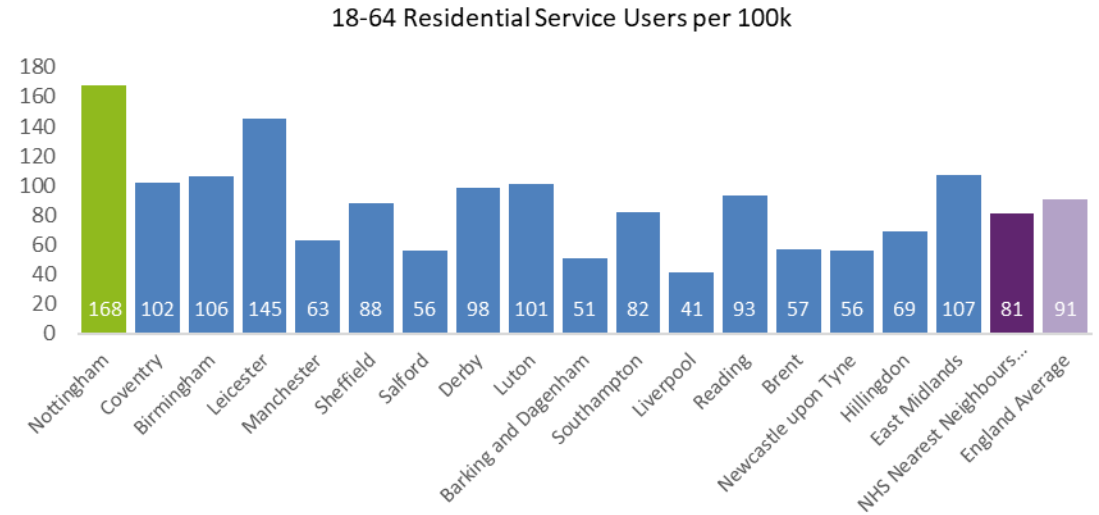
Methodology:

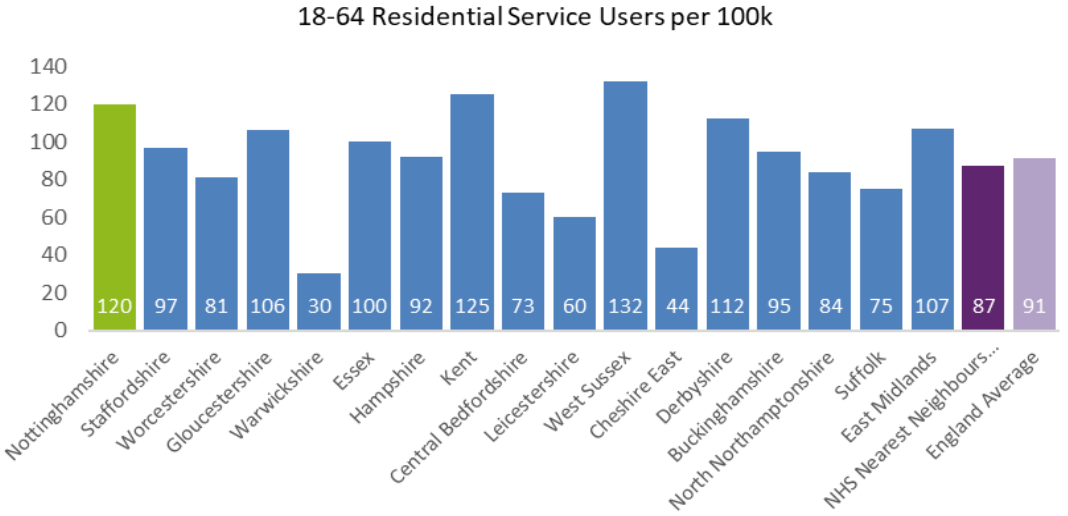
'As Is' – Nottingham City LGR data return WAA (2,442) in receipt of long-term care at end of the year combined with Nottinghamshire County LGR Data Return WAA (4,996) in receipt of long-term care at end of the year.

Increase projected using year on year change in ONS mid-2022 based population projections.

Reducing Demand into Residential Care for Working Age Adults - Financial Modelling of Opportunity through LGR

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* Source ASCFR 2023/24

Bringing demand back in line (allowing for growth) with NHS Nearest Neighbours:

<u>Nottingham City Council: 18-64 population 223k</u>
Current rate per 100k: 168 (369 actual)
Target rate 100 per 100k (220 actual) reduction 149 placements
149 x £2059 (average unit cost 23/24) £306,791 x 52.14 weeks =£15.9m
149 x £450 (proposed dom care package higher than current average) £67,050 x 52.14 weeks = £3.4m
Transformation Opportunity £12.5M

<u>Nottinghamshire CC: 18-64 population 494k</u>
Current rate per 100k: 120 (588 actual)
Target rate 100 per 100k (490 actual) reduction 98 placements
98 x £2057 (average unit cost 23/24) £201,586 x 52.14 weeks =£10.5m
98 x £450 (dom care package) £44,100 x 52.14 weeks = £2.2m
Transformation Opportunity £8.3m

<u>Gross Total Transformation Opportunity from LGR for WAA: £20.8m</u>

**note no allowance for inflation against either the baseline or proposed*

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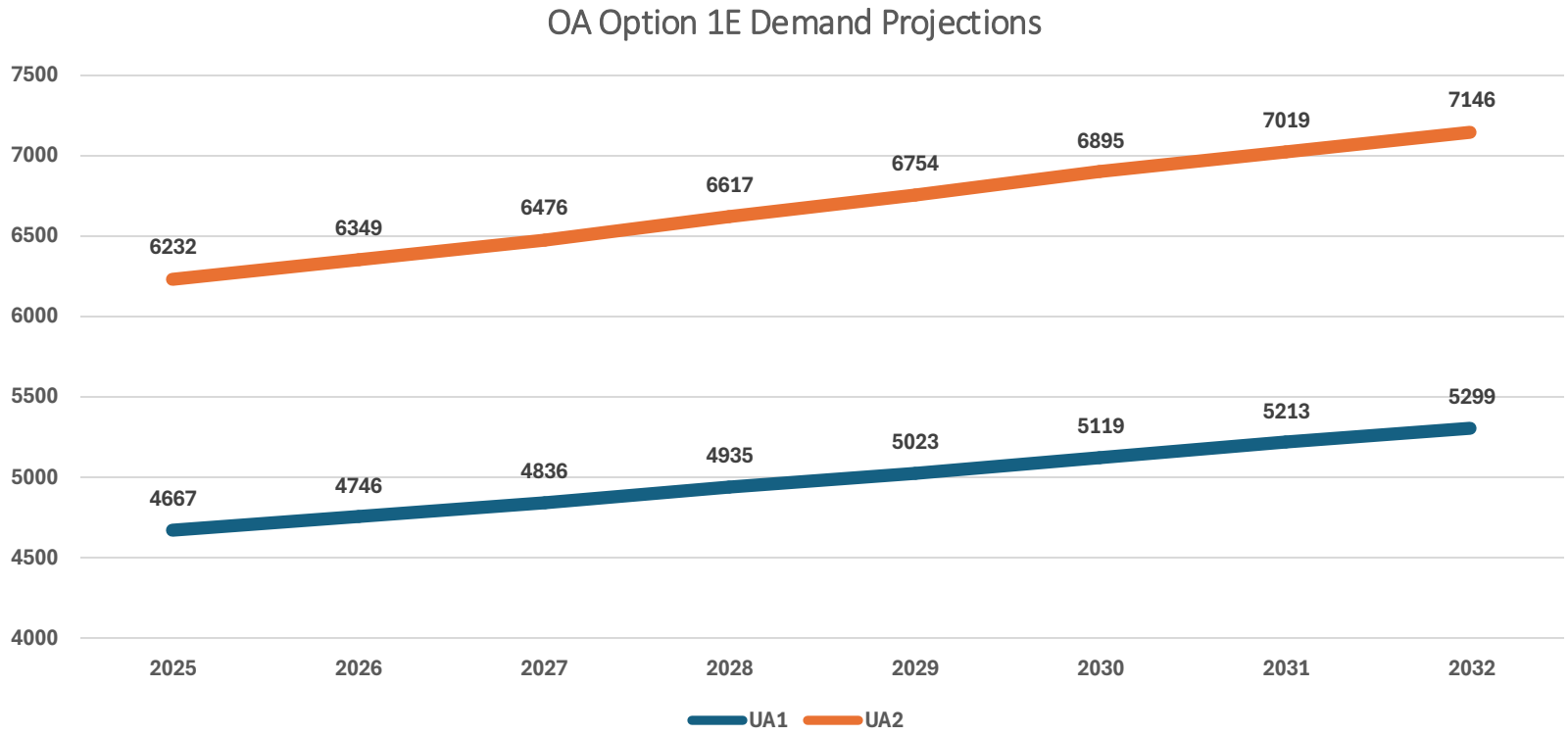
5.2 Older Adults – Demand Forecasting & Financial Modelling

OA Demand projections applied to Option 1E

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Option 1E Two Unitarities Broken down:

- UA1: Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe
- UA2 : Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood



Methodology:

'As Is' – Nottingham City LGR data return OA (2,527) in receipt of long-term care at end of the combined with Nottinghamshire County LGR Data Return OA (8382) in receipt of long-term care at end of the year.

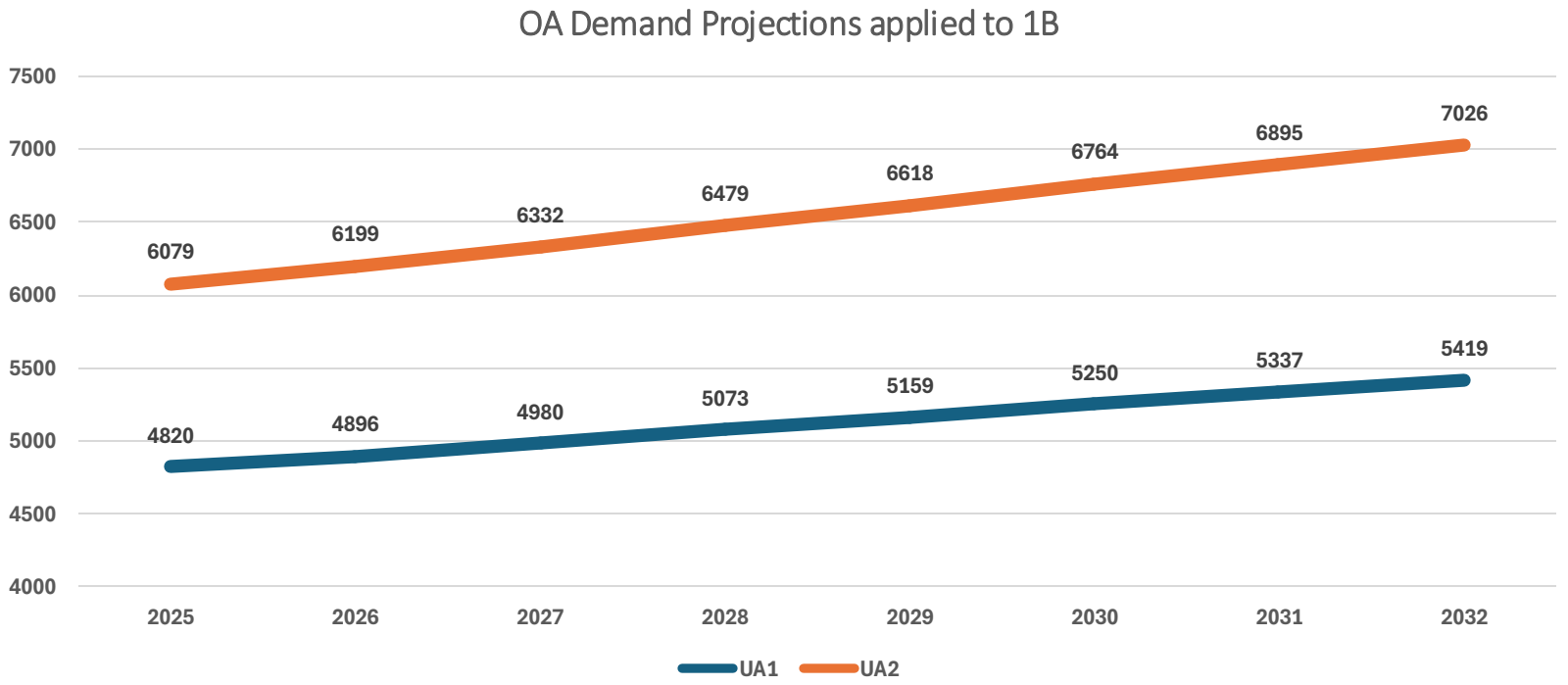
Increase projected using year on year change in ONS mid-2022 based population projections.

OA Demand Projections applied to 1B

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Option 1B Two Unitarities Broken down:

- UA1: Broxtowe, Gedling and Nottingham City
- UA2: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe



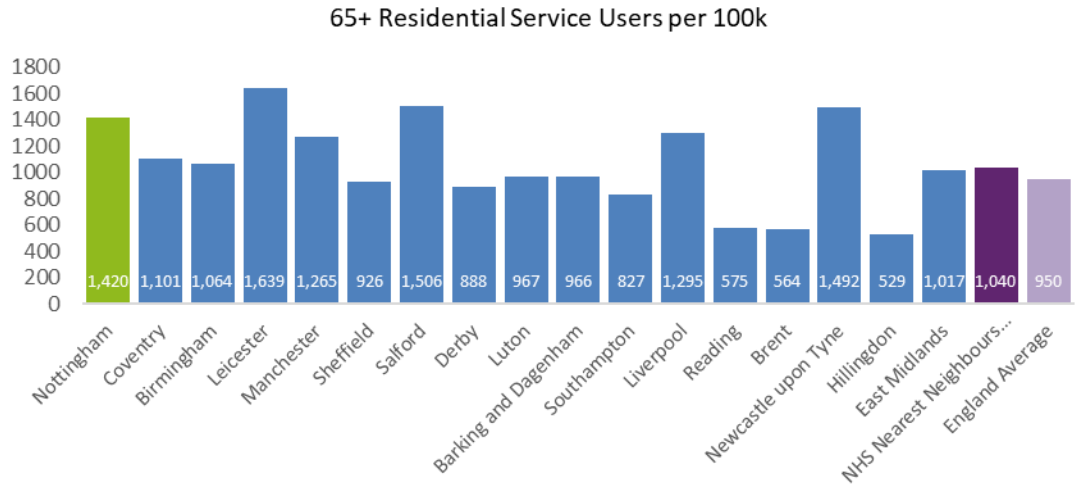
Methodology:

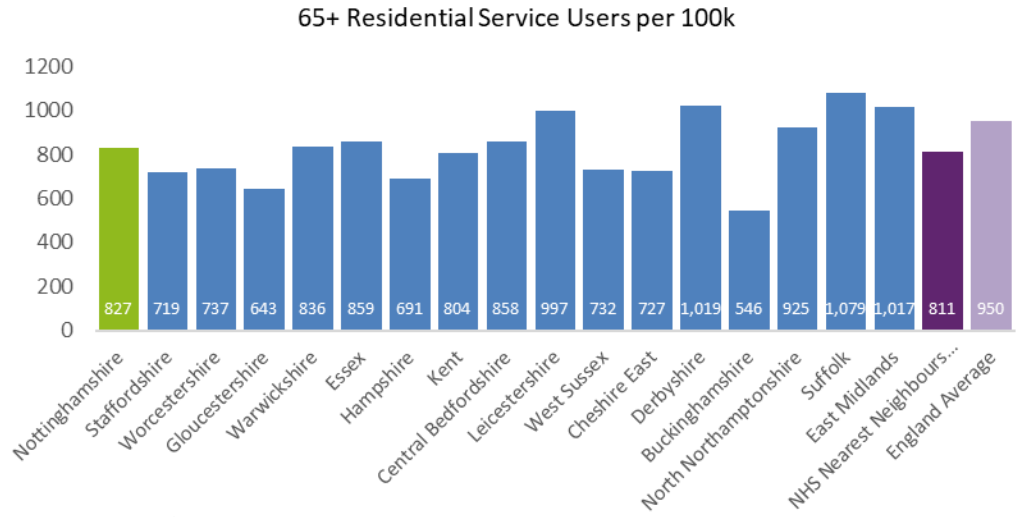
'As Is' – Nottingham City LGR data return OA (2,527) in receipt of long-term care at end of the combined with Nottinghamshire County LGR Data Return OA (8382) in receipt of long-term care at end of the year.

Increase projected using year on year change in ONS mid-2022 based population projections.

Reducing Demand into Residential Care for Older Adults - Financial Modelling of Opportunity through LGR

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* Source ASCFR 2023/24

Bringing demand back in line (allowing for growth) with NHS Nearest Neighbours:

<u>Nottingham City Council: 65+ population 38k</u>
Current rate per 100k: 1420 (539 actual)
Target rate 1100 per 100k (418 actual) reduction 121 placements
121 x £882 (average unit cost 23/24) £106,722 x 52.14 weeks =£5.5m
121 x £450 (dom care package) £54,450 x 52.14 weeks = £2.8m
Transformation Opportunity £2.8M

<u>Nottinghamshire CC: 65+ population 181k</u>
Current rate per 100k: 827 (which is in line with NHS Nearest Neighbour average)

<u>Gross Total Transformation Opportunity from LGR for OA: £2.8m</u>

**note no allowance for inflation against either the baseline or proposed*

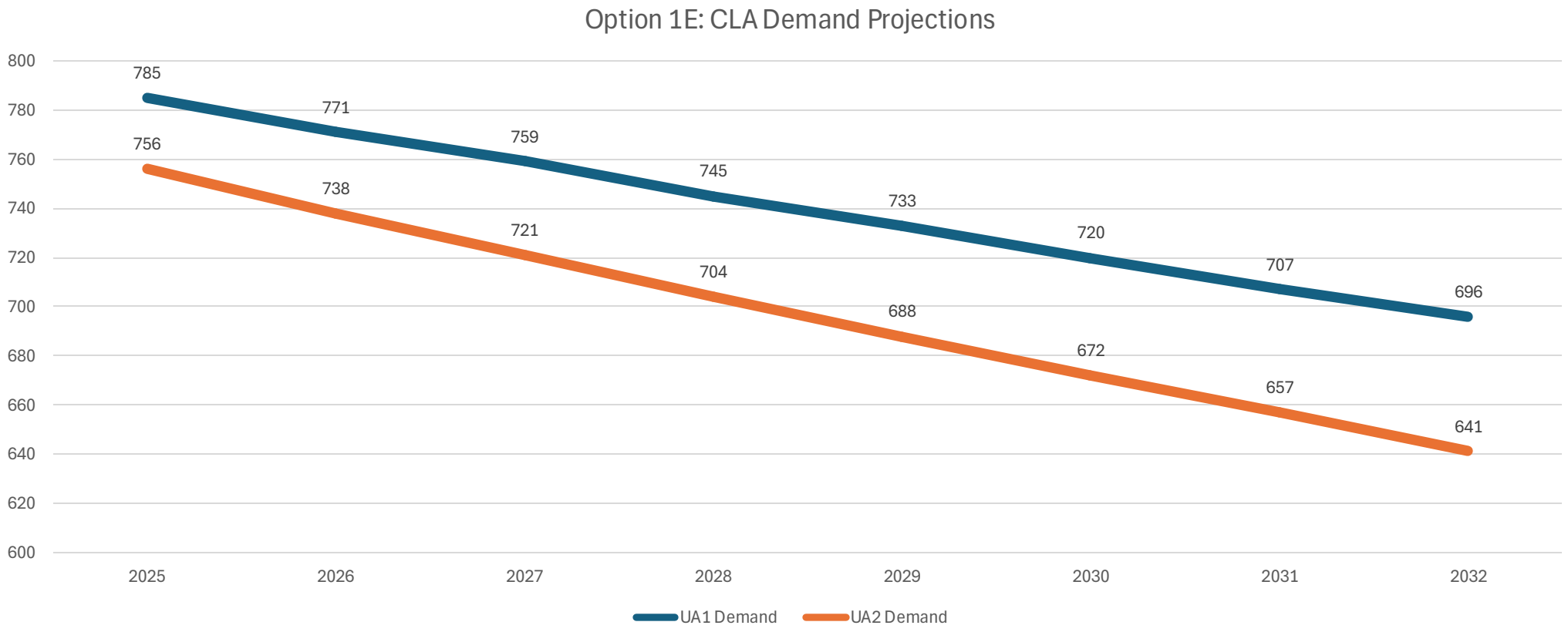
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5.3 Children's Social Care- Financial Modelling

CLA Demand – Option 1E

Option 1E Two Unitarities Broken down:

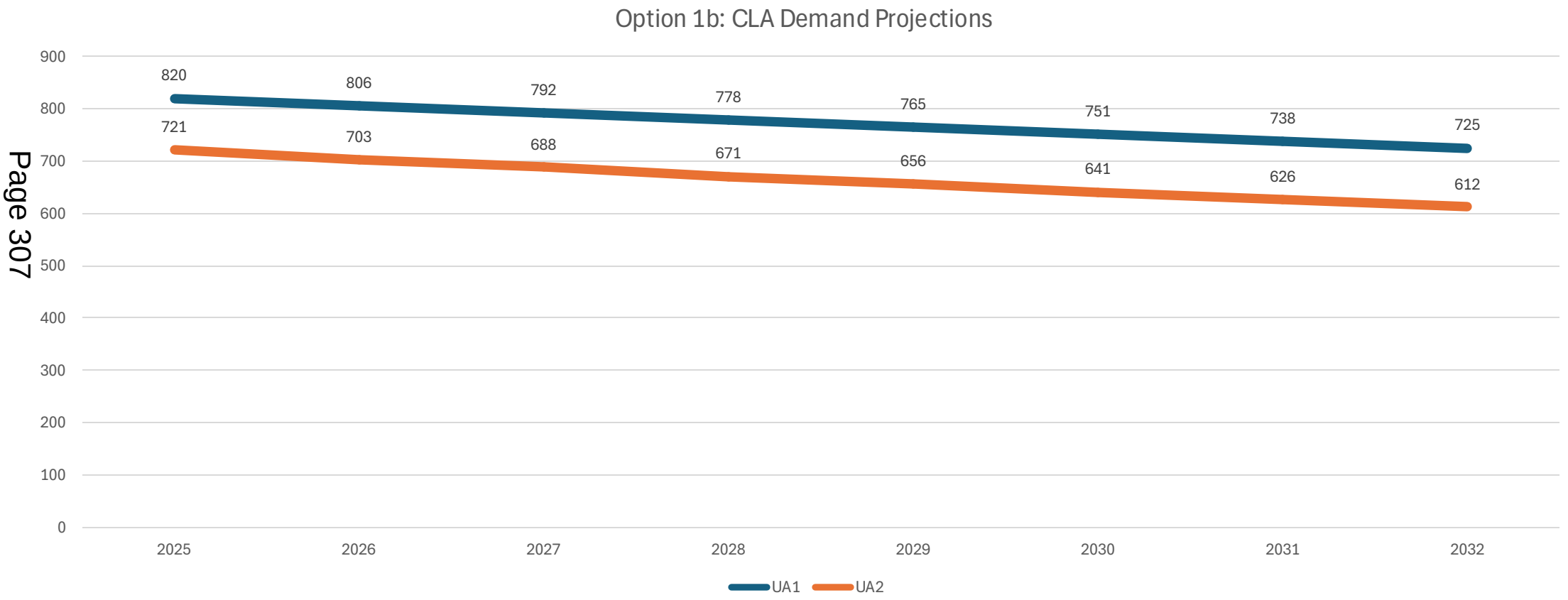
- UA1: Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe
- UA2: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood



CLA Demand – Option 1b

Option 1B Two Unitarities Broken down:

- UA1: Broxtowe, Gedling and Nottingham City
- UA2: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe



Children Looked After Costs for LGR

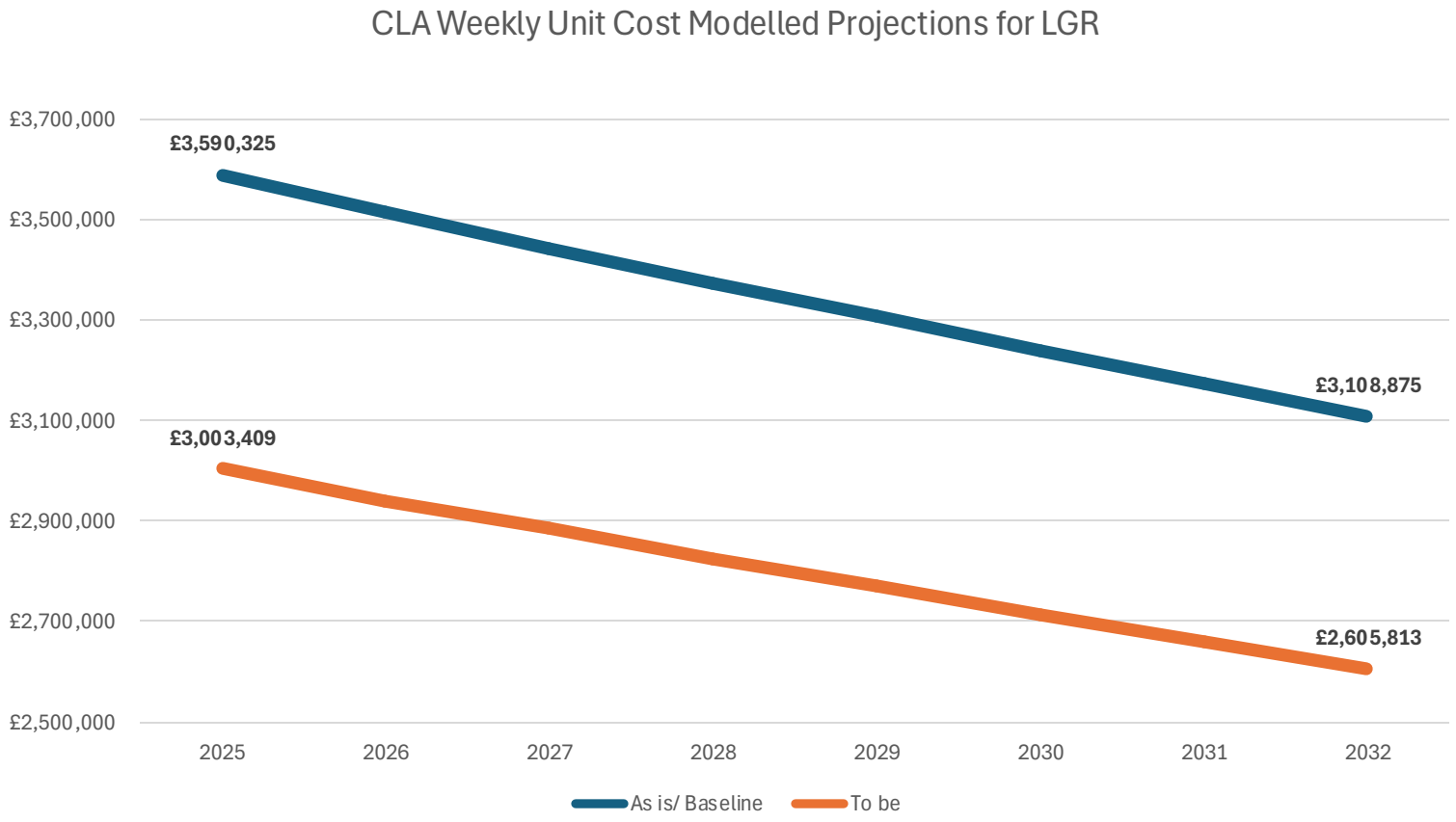
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Methodology for option 1E:
Projected growth in demand was calculated by first working out the annual percentage change in the numbers of CLA for each year from 2021 to 2025 and then taking the average of these annual changes.

For the 'Baseline/As is', each annual projection is multiplied by the LAC S251/Outturn Weekly Cost. The combined totals form the 'As Is' projection.

For the 'To Be', the Nottinghamshire districts and Nottingham City are modelled using the LAC S251/Outturn Weekly Cost by population size for areas with 500-750k cost per person. 'OOC' and blanks are distributed evenly across districts for modelling purposes and uses Nottinghamshire's average % change.

Unit Costs taken from published from LAIT – CLA S251/ Outturn Weekly Cost
Calc: (x/y)/365 * 7 where:
x = Total funding on Childre Looked After recorded on outturn
y = Total number of Children Looked After as at 31 March
No inflation applied to S251 outturn weekly unit costs.



	LAC S251/Outturn Weekly Cost
Nottingham City	£2,125
Nottinghamshire County Council	£2,475
500-750k	£1,949

Children Looked After Costs for LGR

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1. Projected Cost Reduction

- **Baseline / As is**:
  Costs fall from **£3.59M (2025)** to **£3.11M (2032)** — a **13% reduction** over the period in line with a trend in reduction of demand.
- **To be** (LGR scenario):
  Costs reduce more sharply from **£3M (2025)** to **£2.61M (2032).** A **13% greater reduction** than the baseline.

This implies that under LGR, efficiencies or economies of scale could produce **additional WEEKLY savings of approximately £0.5M** by 2032 compared to the status quo.

2. Unit Cost Comparison

The **'To Be'** scenario assumes redistribution and rationalisation of services to move toward the lower unit cost (£1,949). This reflects **efficiency gains through standardisation, pooled commissioning, and reduced variation in placement cost**.

Area	LAC S251/Outturn Weekly Cost
Nottingham City	£2,125
Nottinghamshire County	£2,475
500–750k population band (model average)	£1,949

Analysis

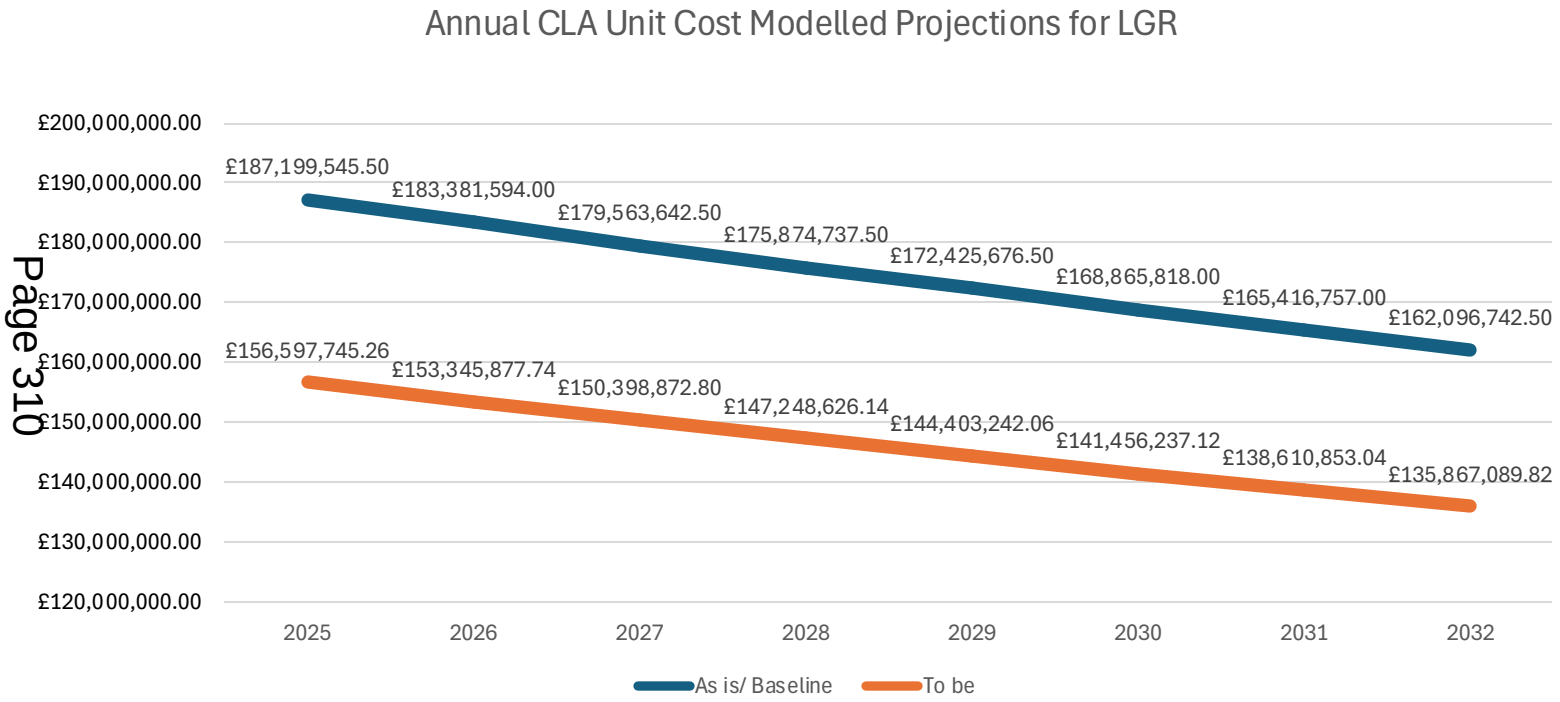
- The **LGR model predicts reduced CLA unit costs** through integrated commissioning and management across Nottinghamshire and City boundaries.
- The **decline in costs** likely reflects:
  - Improved placement sufficiency and reduced reliance on high-cost independent provision.
  - Shared commissioning frameworks and economies of scale.
  - Possible prevention and early intervention benefits from unified practice.

However, note that **no inflation adjustment** means real-term savings will be less once cost growth in placements is factored in, but trajectory remains as inflation would also be applied to the "as is" forecast.

Considerations / Risks

- **Demand growth** assumptions are based on past averages (2021–2025). If CLA numbers rise faster than expected, savings could be overstated.
- **Implementation risk**: achieving integration and consistency in cost management across authorities takes time.
- **Inflation and provider costs** are excluded; future unit costs could rise significantly post-2025.

Annual Children Looked After Costs for LGR

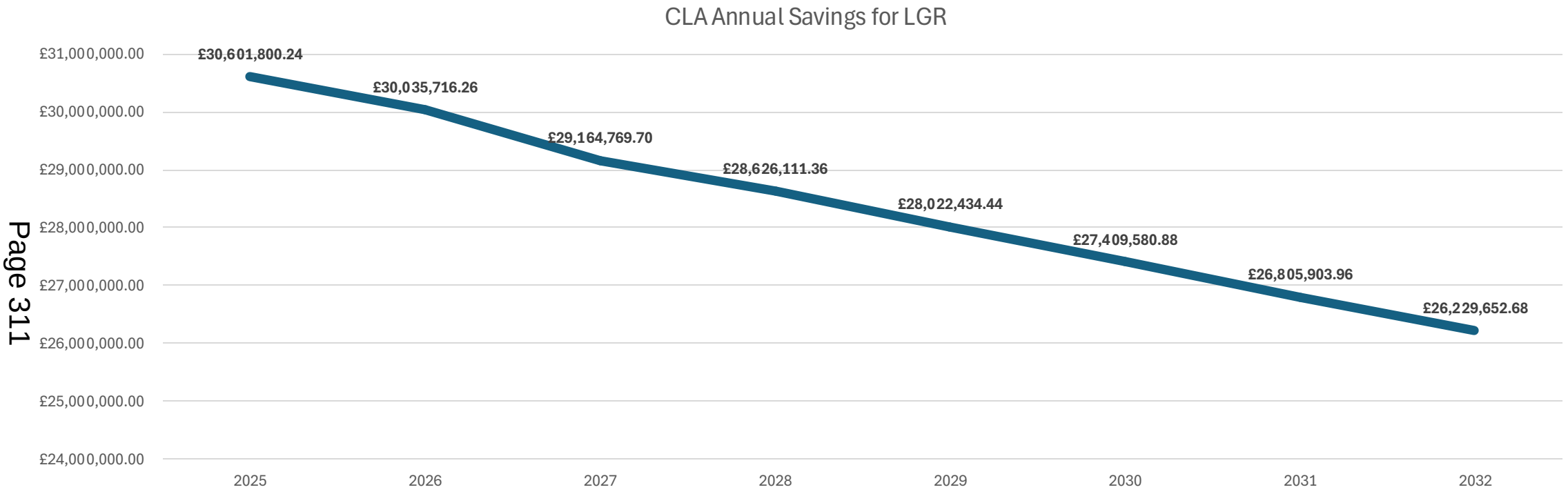


	LAC S251/Outturn Weekly Cost
Nottingham City	£2,125
Nottinghamshire County Council	£2,475
500-750k	£1,949

The LGR modelling for Children Looked After services indicates that the benefits of LGR identified within this report could reduce total annual costs by approximately **£26 - £28m per annum** compared with maintaining the current structure.

These savings are driven by harmonised commissioning, economies of scale, and lower unit placement costs. Over the period 2025–2032, cumulative efficiencies could exceed **£200 million**, offering scope for reinvestment in prevention and family support.

CLA Annual Savings for LGR



Methodology for Option 1E Annual Savings:
Weekly unit costs difference of 'As is' vs 'To be' *52.14

Reduction in savings due to projected reduction of demand

Comparison Analysis

Option 1B	UA1 Demand	UA2 Demand	Gap (UA1 – UA2)
2025	820	721	**99**
2028	778	671	**107**
2032	725	612	**113**

Option 1E	UA1 Demand	UA2 Demand	Gap (UA1 – UA2)
2025	785	756	**29**
2028	745	704	**41**
2032	696	641	**55**

Option 1E presents a **better balance of need and capacity**, allowing both unitaries to:

- Manage resources and placements more evenly.
- Share risk and commissioning capacity.
- Achieve **fairer and more sustainable cost trajectories**.

Analysis for costs:

- **Option 1E**'s balanced demand means **more stable per-unit costs** and avoids one authority being forced into **higher-cost external placements** due to pressure.
- **Option 1B**'s uneven split would likely inflate costs in UA1 through:
  - Increased reliance on high-cost independent residential placements.
  - Workforce strain and placement scarcity.
  - Reduced capacity for early intervention due to budget concentration.

Estimated Financial Effect:

Using the previous slides' average LAC weekly costs:

- Even a **5–10% imbalance** in demand can translate into **Millions per year** in additional costs for the higher-demand authority.
- Option 1E could therefore deliver **lower combined system costs** and **more predictable annual spending**, supporting the broader LGR efficiency case.

6) Conclusion and Risk Matrix

Conclusion

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Option 1E delivers the most balanced, resilient and future-proof configuration for LGR. It equalises demand and capacity across both unitaries in Children's and Adults' services, avoiding the structural asymmetries that drive cost and risk in other splits.

In Children's Social Care, 1E better aligns CLA demand with local placement capacity and market sufficiency, supporting continuity of care and reducing reliance on out-of-area commissioning, while enabling system savings of tens of millions per annum through harmonised commissioning and economies of scale. It also creates a fairer distribution of deprivation and need, ensuring neither unitary is over-weighted with complex demand, which underpins equitable service delivery and financial stability.

In Adult Social Care, 1E pairs areas of higher demand with areas of provider strength and workforce supply, supporting sustainable commissioning alongside stronger integration with the NHS/ICB footprint and place-based prevention, Home-First and reablement models. Beyond the headline balance, 1E provides the most sustainable foundation for market management (including CQC-rated capacity to support weaker localities), reduces system risk on the LGR risk matrix, and is underpinned by a "safe and legal" Target Operating Model that protects statutory duties from Day 1.

Taken together, Option 1E offers a coherent platform to improve outcomes and contain costs, balancing population need, strengthening market sufficiency, sharing risk, and enabling integrated, prevention-led services, thereby maximising the benefits of reform for residents and public finances alike.

Risk Matrix

Overall Risk Profile: Balanced and manageable under Option 1E. “As-Is” scenario would push NT1, NT2, NT5, NT8 into red-critical territory by 2027 due to structural inefficiency and unbalanced demand.

Risk ID	Risk Description	Category	Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Overall Rating	Potential Consequences	Mitigation Actions (Option 1E Focus)
NT1	Escalation of **SEND DSG deficit** beyond £120 m by 2027 if fragmented commissioning continues.	Financial / Education	High (5)	High (4)	20	Unsustainable deficit; DfE intervention risk; reduced flexibility for Children’s and ASC budgets.	Establish single SEND inclusion strategy under Option 1E; joint sufficiency planning; DfE Safety Valve-style agreement; early years investment.
NT2	**Adult Social Care cost growth** exceeds MTFP assumptions due to demographic pressures and inflation.	ASC Sustainability	High (4)	High (4)	16	ASC demand increases expenditure reducing prevention investment; loss of financial resilience.	Expand reablement and “Home First” model; shared market oversight across two UAs; digital triage and demand forecasting.
NT3	**Over-reliance on agency workforce** in Children’s and Adults frontline teams.	Workforce	Medium (3)	High (4)	12	High costs, service instability, variable quality of practice.	Regional recruitment pipeline, shared training academy, retention premiums, career pathways under joint LGR framework.
NT4	**Fragmentation of health and care integration** with ICB during reorganisation.	Partnership & Integration	Medium (3)	High (4)	12	Disrupted joint commissioning; poorer system outcomes; reputational risk.	Align LGR boundaries with ICB geography; shared governance MoU; joint transformation teams through transition.
NT5	**High-cost placements** (residential & nursing) continue to rise above benchmark rates.	ASC Market / Children’s Market	High (4)	Medium (3)	12	Budget overspends; market fragility; out-of-area placements.	Block contracts and provider alliances; local fostering and extra-care investment; shared market shaping under Option 1E.

Risk Matrix

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Risk ID	Risk Description	Category	Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Overall Rating	Potential Consequences	Mitigation Actions (Option 1E Focus)
NT6	**Political and public resistance** to reform (e.g., identity concerns in rural districts).	Governance & Engagement	Medium (3)	Medium (3)	9	Slower implementation; reputational risk; weakened public trust.	Local boards and community assemblies; strong communications strategy; visible benefits to frontline services.
NT7	**Digital and innovation lag** delays efficiency benefits.	Transformation	Medium (3)	Medium (3)	9	Slower realisation of savings; missed productivity gains.	Invest in AI-enabled triage, resident accounts, predictive analytics, and digital workforce tools.
NT8	**Inequalities in outcomes** (urban deprivation vs rural access) persist.	Equity & Outcomes	Medium (3)	High (4)	12	Entrenched disparities; Ofsted/CQC risks; poorer life outcomes.	Equity framework under Option 1E; targeted investment in urban and rural pressures; performance dashboard tracking outcomes.
NT9	**Transition disruption** delays benefit delivery and savings realisation.	Finance / Delivery	Medium (3)	Medium (3)	9	Benefits slip beyond MTFP period; DLUHC concerns.	Phased implementation plan; external programme assurance; benefits tracker and governance board.
NT10	**Failure to achieve market balance** post-LGR leads to provider collapse in one UA.	Market Sustainability	Medium (3)	High (4)	12	Service gaps, cost escalation, public concern.	Shared provider risk register; joint contingency fund; regional provider forum to share capacity.

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Appendix A: Option 1E

Target Operating Model (TOM) and Implementation Plan for Adult Social Care, Children's Services and SEND

October 2025

Contents

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1. Overview
2. Target Operating Model (TOM)
    a) Adults Social Care
    b) Children's Services
    c) Localities, Neighbourhoods and Communities
    d) Regional Working
3. Implementation Plan

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1. Overview

Overview: Purpose and Implementation Phases

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Purpose

This Target Operating Model (TOM) sets out how Nottinghamshire CC and Nottingham City can safely and legally transition Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and SEND functions into two new balanced unitaries under Option 1E:

- Unitary 1 (South): Broxtowe, Nottingham City, Rushcliffe
- Unitary 2 (North): Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood

It demonstrates continuity of statutory services, financial sustainability, and strengthened local accountability for DLUHC, DfE, and DHSC.

Why Change?

- ASC: Cost escalation above MTFP assumptions; fragmented commissioning; variable provider quality; fragile markets and workforce gaps.
- Children's: High and uneven CLA costs (City > County), rising placement inflation, inconsistent early help and sufficiency planning.
- SEND: Combined DSG deficit trajectory exceeding £100 m by 2027; duplication and inconsistent governance.
- Demographics: North–south variation in deprivation, ageing population, and demand patterns.

TOM

- Balanced scale delivery: Two unitaries 600–650 k population, aligned with NHS/ICB footprint.
- Safe & legal: Continuity of statutory functions (Care Act, Children Act, SEND).
- Closer to communities: Family Hubs, prevention and neighbourhood models replacing county-wide systems.
- Financial sustainability: Recalibrate ASC costs to benchmark (£44k WAA, £31k OA) and share risk.
- Prevention-first: Embed Home First and early help.
- Workforce: Shared academy, recruitment pipelines, and reduced agency dependence.
- Digital-first: Resident care accounts, predictive analytics, AI-enabled triage.
- Integration: Joint commissioning and shared Section 75 arrangements with NHS/ICB.

Mobilisation, Transition and Optimisation and Transformation Phases

Foundations (2025/26) – essentials, officers, vision, governance, mapping and engagement.

→

Design (2026) – frameworks, constitution, transition plan, alignment, co-design and comms.

→

Mobilisation (Shadow Year, 2026/27) – workforce, training, systems, leadership, teams, contracts and pilots.

→

Go Live (April 2028) – pathways, locality model, safeguarding, placements, services and continuity.

→

Optimisation & Transformation (Post-2028)- QA, resilience, review, refinement, market development, targeted prevention and early help.

Day 1 Priority: To Be Safe and Legal

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In practice, when councils negotiate a devolution deal or a structural change order (e.g. moving to unitary status, or transferring functions to a Combined Authority), the "safe and legal" test is the gateway: government won't sign off unless it's clear that Adult and Children's statutory services remain legally compliant, safe for service users, and financially sustainable during and after the transition.

What "safe and legal" means in this context:

Statutory Compliance (legal test)

- The new arrangements must comply fully with all relevant legislation (e.g. Children Act 1989, Care Act 2014, Children and Families Act 2014, Education Acts, Health and Social Care Act 2012).
- Duties to safeguard and promote welfare of children, and to meet eligible needs of adults, must remain clear and enforceable.
- The "single accountable body" principle applies: there must be a clear legal entity responsible for delivering each statutory function (no gaps or duplication).

Safety of Service Delivery (safe test)

- Services must continue without interruption through the transition (no gaps in provision for vulnerable children/adults).
- Safeguarding arrangements must remain robust:
  - Local Safeguarding Partnerships (for children) and Safeguarding Adults Boards must still function effectively.
  - Clear escalation and accountability for risk and protection.
- Workforce, data, and systems must remain aligned so statutory timescales and thresholds are met (e.g. assessments, reviews, casework).
- The DfE and DHSC require formal assurance before approving restructuring/devolution orders.

Governance and Accountability

- Local authorities must be able to show that political and professional leadership is clear — e.g. a Director of Children's Services (DCS) and a Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) are still appointed and legally responsible (as required in statutory guidance Children Act 2004, s18 and Local Authority Social Services Act 1970).
- Decision-making and financial accountability must not be blurred when services are split or shared.

Financial Sustainability

- Budgets for Adult and Children's Social Care must be ring-fenced or transparently allocated so that statutory duties can be met.
- Risk-sharing mechanisms must be in place if pooled or delegated budgets are used (e.g. in Combined Authority or joint commissioning models).

Inspection and Regulation

- Ofsted and the CQC expect councils to demonstrate "safe and legal" operation when disaggregating / reaggregating services.
- The DfE and DHSC require formal assurance before approving restructuring / devolution orders.

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2a. Adult Social Care TOM

Target Operating Model (TOM) – 1e Adults Social Care

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Focus Area	Nottinghamshire & Nottingham City "As Is"	Option 1E Future Model
Financial Trajectory	WAA + OA cost growth projected > £300 m by 2032 without LGR and adoption of a new target operating model.	Balanced costs £70 m (WAA) + £98 m (OA) by 2032 through demand reduction & shared commissioning.
Market Management	Fragmented provider markets; cost volatility; urban inflation.	Regional provider framework, block contracts, sufficiency planning, shared QA.
Workforce	High agency reliance; competition between City & County.	Shared recruitment/retention pipeline, aligned pay & practice standards.
Integration	Misaligned ICB boundaries; duplication.	Full alignment with NHS Notts ICB; locality hubs co-located with PCNs.
Digital Innovation	Limited automation; separate systems.	Single platform for assessment, review, BI & analytics across both UAs.
Carers & Prevention	Uneven access to respite/support.	Carer networks in every locality; expanded reablement & Home First model.

Core Features of the ASC Operating Model

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Neighbourhood / Integrated Teams

Aligned to PCN/ICS footprints, co-locating social workers, OTs, NHS staff, and voluntary sector partners. Designed around the strengths and needs of each local population.

Multi-Disciplinary Triage

At the front door, ensuring people are directed to universal or short-term solutions before long-term care is considered.

Home First

Embedded as the default pathway, supported by expanded reablement services, assistive technology, and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) now devolved to the new unitary.

Strategic Commissioning & Market Management

At a unitary or locality scale, with outcome-based contracts, micro-care ecosystems, strong joint commissioning with NHS/public health and local resilient markets.

Digital-First Solutions

Including resident care accounts, online self-assessment, AI-enabled triage, and assistive technologies to support independence.

Workforce Transformation

Embedding strength-based practice, standardising ways of working, building local recruitment pipelines, and improving retention.

Prevention

Working with partners, VCS, and community assets to deliver targeted prevention and early intervention tailored to neighbourhood needs.

Carer Support & Co-Production

Structured engagement with unpaid carers and service users, with expanded access to respite, training, and peer networks.

Key Features of the ASC Model

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1

Community & Partnership Working

Strengthens the ability to build place-based partnerships:

- Natural alignment with ICB footprints and NHS neighbourhood models.
- Expanded collaboration with housing, welfare, and voluntary sectors to deliver holistic support.
- Each unitary will organise ASC delivery around recognised localities (PCNs or community clusters), ensuring services are relatable and accessible.
- Smaller footprint strengthens democratic accountability, enabling elected members to engage directly with communities.
- Brings decision / strategy making closer to communities.

2

Workforce Transformation

The ASC workforce is central to sustainability. Provides the platform to:

- Develop localised recruitment and training pipelines linked to further education and local employers.
- Embed strength-based practice consistently across both authorities.
- Improve productivity through digital tools (AI-assisted note-taking, automated workflows, decision support).
- Build a workforce that reflects local communities, improving trust and cultural competence.

3

Strategic Commissioning & Market Management

Allows two authorities to build upon strengths where they exist, whilst retaining local responsiveness.
Opportunities include:

- Embedding prevention and enabling outcomes in contracts.
- Prioritising local and VCSE providers to strengthen community resilience.
- Developing micro-commissioning approaches to grow hyper-local and personalised services, particularly in rural areas or where capacity gaps exist.
- Joint commissioning with NHS to reduce duplication and support shared outcomes.

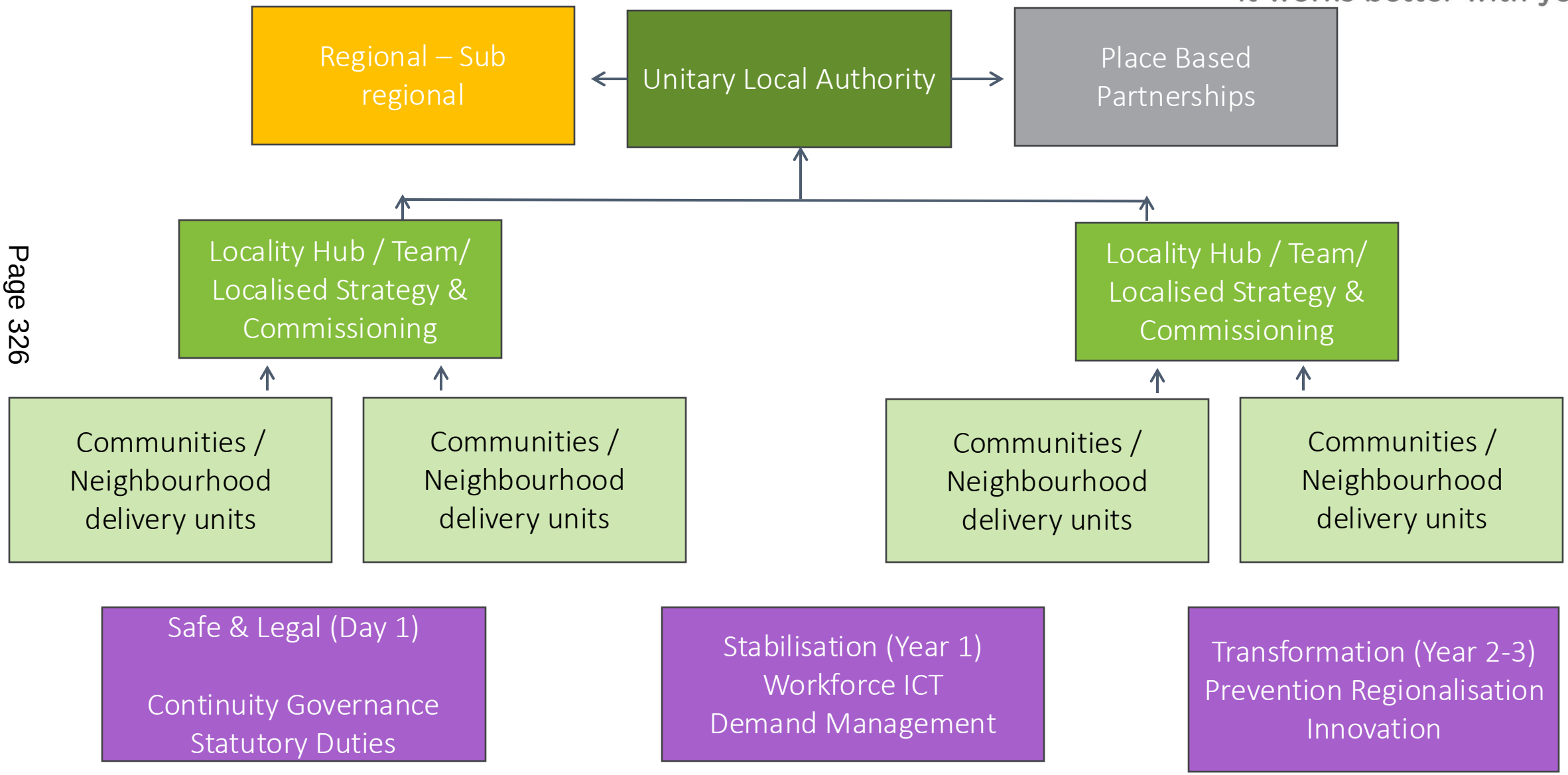
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Digital Innovation

Unitaries will implement a service innovation agenda including:

- Resident care accounts (“one stop” portals).
- Online assessment and review tools.
- Assistive technology and predictive analytics for early intervention.
- AI-driven triage and chatbots at the front door.
- Automated workflows to improve workforce efficiency.

ASC Governance Example



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2b. Children's Services TOM

TOM – 1E Children's Services & SEND

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Focus Area	Current Issues (As Is)	Option 1E Solutions
CLA Demand	High concentration in City; County rising.	Balanced distribution (UA1 696 vs UA2 641 by 2032); integrated early help & Family Hubs.
Placement Costs	External residential reliance (£2k +/wk).	Shared commissioning; regional block contracts; invest in local fostering.
Workforce	Agency dependency; uneven practice.	Single practice model; shared workforce academy; reduced churn.
Safeguarding	Multiple MASH / front doors.	Locality-based MACPTs within two integrated structures.
SEND & Education	Fragmented governance; high tribunal rate (> 5%).	Unified inclusion strategy; pooled DSG risk; shared QA; faster EHCP timeliness.

Issue	As Is	Option 1E Response
DSG deficit	£100m + by 2027.	Joint inclusion board; Safety Valve-style recovery plan; new local sufficiency.
Sufficiency	High reliance on INMSS/out-of-county.	Capital programme for specialist places; local SEND trust model.
Inclusion	Inconsistent practice between City & County.	Graduated approach; joint training and moderation.
Parental Trust	Weakened; high appeals.	Rebuild via Local Offer redesign, co-production forums, transparency.

Core Features of the Operating Model

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Family Hubs and Early Intervention

Creation of Family Help hubs across localities, offering early support to families before escalation; kinship-first approach to reduce children entering care.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding

Local MACPTs ensuring swift, joined-up responses to safeguarding risks, aligned to statutory thresholds.

Placements & Permanence

Kinship, fostering and adoption prioritised; expand in-house fostering; joint regional commissioning of high-cost residential placements; stability and permanence planning from the outset.

Education & Inclusion

Strong partnership with schools and health; embed inclusion in mainstream schools; align Family Hubs and SEND support to improve outcomes locally.

Digital-First & Data-Driven

Including AI-enabled solutions for information, advice and certain assessment points e.g. SEND; and assistive technologies to support independence.

Workforce & Practice Development

Single practice model across localities (e.g. strengths-based, trauma-informed); improve recruitment/retention of social workers and foster carers; shared training and standards.

Prevention & Community Partnerships

Place-based working with VCS, schools, housing, and health partners; locally commissioned early help and edge-of-care services; focus on reducing demand for statutory intervention.

Children, Families & Carer Voice

Structured co-production with children, young people and families; clear Local Offer; transparent communication to rebuild trust, especially with SEND parents.

Children's Services Process and Pathways

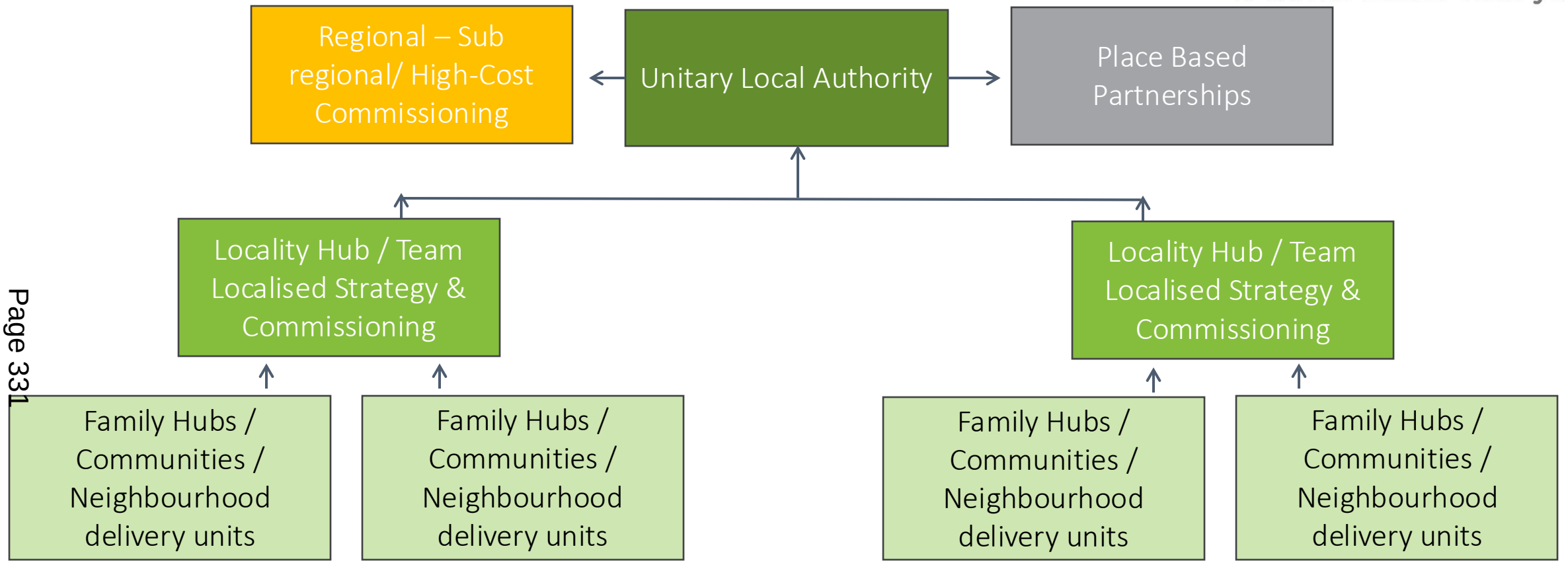
Here's how core processes could flow under the reforms:

Universal / Early Help → Social Care → Oversight

Front Door / Access / Referral	Family Help Delivery	Child Protection / Safeguarding Pathway	Care / Placements / Permanence	Governance, Oversight & Assurance
Referral comes in (could be from family, school, health, police, etc). The intake / front door in localities screens and triages: • If the issue is lower risk / early, route to universal / community supports or services. • If requires more support but not safeguarding, referred into Family Help. • If concerns about significant harm, escalated to MACPT.	• A Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) is assigned. Could be a social worker or experienced family support worker (depending on complexity). • The team around the family is formed (could include family support worker, health, mental health, school, etc). • Family group decision making options offered. • Plan developed, including support, milestones, sustainability. • Regular review; decision points whether escalated to CP or maintained in FH.	• MACPT takes lead when there is likely / actual significant harm (or after section 47 investigations) • LCPP assumes legal responsibility for ensuring high-quality decisions; chairs conferences; is supported by multi-agency team. • Coordination with FHLP if case was already in FH, ensuring continuity / interface (e.g. previous practitioner remains in team around child) to preserve relationship with family where possible. • Monitoring, legal thresholds, review of CP plans, transitions to care when required.	Where children need to be placed: first with kinship / family network where safe. Foster care, adoption, children's homes used as needed. • Ensure local capacity; if not, regional/shared commissioning. • Stability of placements; frequent review; planning for permanence early. • For care leavers: transition planning, supported housing, skills, education/ employment.	• Performance metrics aligned to the National Framework outcomes. • Regular reporting (locality & LA) on case types, timescales, outcomes, placement stability, cost. • QA / audit of practice; feedback loops from children/families. • Multi-agency governance boards for MACPTs; operational oversight; alignment with ICS / ICB and education/housing partners. • Inspection readiness (Ofsted etc) built in.

Children's Services Governance Example

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Safe & Legal (Day 1)

Continuity Governance
Statutory Duties

Stabilisation (Year 1)
Workforce ICT
Demand Management

Transformation (Year 2-3)
Prevention Regionalisation
Innovation

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2c. Localities, Neighbourhoods and Communities

Definitions

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Key Difference

- Localities = system integration, statutory assurance, larger commissioning, safeguarding infrastructure.
- Communities/Neighbourhoods = day-to-day prevention, personalised delivery, direct relationship with families/residents.

Locality Level (approx. 200–250k population) x3 per UA

- **Scale**: Matches NHS "place" footprint (4–8 Primary Care Networks).
- **Function**:
  - Owns the *front door* (Children's MASH / Family Help hubs, Adults' triage and reablement).
  - Runs local commissioning for *lower-value, high-volume* services.
  - Co-located, multi-agency teams (social care, health, schools, police, housing, VCSE).
- **Purpose**:
  - Large enough to sustain statutory functions (child protection, safeguarding, reablement).
  - Ensures consistent thresholds, practice model, and performance monitoring across services.
  - Provides leadership and governance (e.g. Locality Boards, Children's Trust arrangements).
- **Analogy**: The "engine room" for integrated delivery.

Community / Neighbourhood Level (approx. 30–50k population)

- **Scale**: Mirrors a Primary Care Network footprint, secondary school catchment, or natural town community.
- **Function**:
  - Delivery of *prevention, early help, carers' support*.
  - Strong VCSE role, housing links, Disabled Facilities Grants.
  - Micro-commissioning for hyper-local personalised services (esp. rural areas).
- **Purpose**:
  - Brings services as close to residents as possible.
  - Builds trusted relationships with families, carers, and communities.
  - Reduces escalation into statutory services by responding earlier.
- **Analogy**: The "front line" where families and residents experience services in their community.

Base for Locality Working

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"Do locally what benefits from place-knowledge and relationships; do centre/regional what needs scale, resilience or scarce skills."

This aligns to reform directions on Family Help, kinship emphasis, MACPTs (children), workforce, and community-first prevention (adults).

For a 600k unitary with three localities of 200–250k, each locality hub is a co-located, multi-agency unit that:

- ✓ Owns front-door + Family Help + CIN (children) and front-door + reablement + short-term care (adults),
- ✓ Convenes schools, PCNs/ICB community teams, police, housing & VCSE,
- ✓ Runs local commissioning (lower-value, high-volume), while the centre/regional level holds specialist/high-cost markets.

Good Practice: *North Yorkshire Locality Boards* (0–25): five boards co-governing inclusion & outcomes; formalised membership/decision-making; published impact examples. Great governance pattern for your hubs.

Home - Locality Boards

Core building blocks at locality level
Unified front door with rapid triage to Family Help (children) and to reablement / community independence (adults).
Family Hubs network (0–19/25 SEND), integrated with schools and early help partners.
MACPT capacity available to the locality with clear hand-offs from Family Help.
Reablement & intermediate care team (OT, physio, SW, support workers) linked to same-day equipment/adaptations and care tech.
Local commissioning cell for home care, supported living, short breaks, parenting, inclusion support, etc., with routes to centre/regional frameworks for high-cost/low-volume needs.
Data & insight mini-cell in each hub to run caseload dashboards, demand forecasts, and spot "hot streets."
Practice development & supervision (restorative/strengths-based) embedded in hub routines.

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2d. Regional Working

Regional Models – Core Building Blocks

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Core Building Blocks		
Regional Commissioning Hub	Hosted by one unitary. Category management, procurement, analytics, brokerage for specialist/complex demand; leads joint tenders and frameworks.	
Market Stewardship & Intervention	Sufficiency plans, market shaping, price/quality oversight, escalation with regulators; aligns to DfE's market interventions work and new advisory structures (MIAG).	Children's social care market interventions advisory group - GOV.UK
Sufficiency Programmes (Children)	Regional pipeline of in-house homes, IFA/fostering campaigns, and secure/step-down capacity; proto-RCC functions where established. (Live examples: **West Midlands**, **White Rose/Yorkshire & Humber**, **North East ADCS** regional sufficiency collaboration, and **Pan-London** programmes.)	COV - West Midlands Children's Regional Residential Care Framework (2025) - Find a Tender
Complex Adults Commissioning	Regional lots for complex LD/ASD, MH rehab/forensic step-down, EBD/PD specialist supported living, and pan-area care-home frameworks (e.g., **Pan-London nursing homes AQP**).	Pan-London Nursing Homes AQP - Contract introduction for providers - Care England
Workforce & Practice Academy	Shared training/OD (e.g., delegated healthcare tasks into care roles per ADASS guidance), supervision standards, agency reduction initiatives.	
Data, Digital & Brokerage	Regional data room; dashboards for price/volume/quality; shared brokerage for hard-to-place cases; aligns to Ofsted ILACS/SEND and CQC assurance regimes.	
NHS/ICS Integration	Interfaces with provider collaboratives and specialised commissioning delegation to ICBs (useful for secure estate/complex health pathways).	NHS England » Specialised commissioning 2024/25 – next steps with delegation to integrated care boards

Regional Working – Children's Services & Adult Social Care

Children's Services

Categories: Residential & secure, complex solo/2:1, step-down therapeutic, independent fostering frameworks, specialist education packages linked to care, regional sufficiency capital pipeline.

- Demand & sufficiency: rolling 3-yr forecast; capacity pipeline with DfE capital routes; market heat-maps.
- Commissioning & procurement: regional frameworks, dynamic purchasing for edge cases, common Ts&Cs, shared QA; "price corridor" and escalation.
- Brokerage: single regional team for hard-to-place; localities retain mainstream fostering/kinship; time-bound brokerage SLAs.
- Market oversight: contract performance, unannounced checks with LA QA leads; dovetail with DfE Market Interventions Advisory Group signals.
- Workforce: regional recruitment campaigns (foster carers, residential staff), practice standards, and shared training.

Adult Social Care

Complex LD/ASD with PBS, forensic/MH rehab step-down, specialist dementia/nursing blocks, NHS-adjacent discharge capacity, workforce academies, and pan-area AQP frameworks. (E.g., Pan-London nursing homes AQP; NW ADASS market-shaping networks.) How it runs:

- Pooled category strategies: joint fee setting, shared risk/void cover for step-down beds, Better Care Fund linkage as policy evolves.
  - New reforms and independent commission to transform social care - GOV.UK
- Delegated healthcare tasks: joint protocols, training and indemnity (ADASS guidance), opening headroom in home support/reablement models.
  - Adult social care and delegated healthcare activities - ADASS
- Regional QA & market resilience: early-warning on provider failure, improvement support, and cross-border contingency placements.
- NHS interface: MAP with ICBs and specialised commissioning for secure/complex cohorts and discharge pathways.

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3. Implementation Plan

Assurance to MHCLG, DfE, and DHSC

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Key Enablers	Risks	Governance & Oversight
Governance: Separate DCS/DASS for each new Unitary Authority; pooled financial risk-share for ASC and SEND; joint Section 151 oversight and "safe and legal" assurance through transition.	**SEND DSG deficit:** Combined Nottinghamshire + City DSG deficit forecast to exceed £110 m by 2027. Risk of DfE intervention if recovery plan not credible.	**Programme Board:** Shadow Authority Chairs plus DCS/DASS from both UAs overseeing readiness, finance, and assurance.
Workforce: Shared recruitment pipeline and academy; consistent pay and practice standards; regional staff-pooling to reduce agency reliance.	**ASC costs:** Cost growth and inflation risk (£44k WAA / £31k OA benchmarks). Demand increases from ageing population may exceed prevention capacity.	**Locality Boards:** Co-chaired with NHS, schools, and VCSE partners to drive integration and community accountability.
ICT / Digital: Dual-running Nottinghamshire and City systems until stable; shared case-management and analytics platform; resident care accounts and predictive modelling.	**ICT migration:** Transition cost and risk of data-migration failure; potential disruption to statutory reporting.	**Regional Hub:** Joint commissioning for high-cost placements, workforce academy, data & brokerage shared across both UAs.
Commissioning: Shared frameworks for high-cost placements (children & adults); block contracts to stabilise markets; joint market-shaping and sufficiency planning.	**Market fragility:** Provider closures or price escalation during transition; inconsistent QA ratings.	**Commissioning Board:** Oversees sufficiency, block contracts, and quality assurance under joint Section 75 with ICB.
Partnerships: Co-location with NHS ICB, PCNs, schools, and voluntary sector; shared place-based integration model.	**Integration risk:** Misalignment of priorities between new UAs and NHS ICB could delay benefits realisation.	**Integration Board:** Joint ICB / LA governance for health and care interface; aligns Section 75 and place partnerships.
Inspection Readiness: Single improvement plan per UA; joint "dry-runs" for Ofsted (ILACS, SEND) and CQC (ASC).	**Inspection pressure:** Early Ofsted/CQC visits expected within 12–18 months of vesting; possible inconsistency between UAs.	**Inspection Readiness Group:** Tracks Ofsted ILACS, Area SEND and CQC progress; reports to Programme Board quarterly.

This TOM and Implementation Plan provide:

- **Continuity of care**: Statutory assurance that vulnerable people remain protected across Nottinghamshire Option 1e.
- **Financial case**: Clear trajectory to recalibrate ASC costs and contain SEND deficits.
- **Localism benefits**: Smaller, more responsive unitaries aligned with NHS/ICS footprints and local communities.
- **Inspection readiness**: Consistent focus on improvement, parental trust, and CQC/Ofsted compliance.

Project Plan Overview

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Phase	Level of Delivery	Key Actions	Source/Requirement
Phase 1 Foundations (2025/26)	Regional / ICS footprint	Identify "Day 1 Essentials" (continuity of care, safeguarding, ICT dual running)	DfE regional sufficiency programme
	Local Authority (statutory corporate role)	Appoint statutory officers (DCS/DASS) Establish integrated programme and single business case (governance, budget, scope, benefits)	DfE/DHSC requirement
	Locality (200-250k population hubs based on demographics)	Agree vision, principles and outcomes of locality working Agree scope for regional commissioning hub	Best practice
	Community / Neighbourhood (30-50k PCNs, schools, VCSE)	Map current demand, budgets and workforce capacity (by ward where relevant) Initial engagement with schools, GPs, providers, VCSE, ICS and partners	LGA guidance
Phase 2 Design (2026)	Regional / ICS footprint	Design shared frameworks for residential & SEND placements	DfE/DHSC policy
	Local Authority (statutory corporate role)	Draft constitution & scheme of delegation Build draft transition plan with risk and benefit analysis, including shared/transactional services Align with MTFP, SEND and social care reforms	LGR statutory process
	Locality (200-250k population hubs based on demographics)	Co-design operating model for family hubs & reablement	Family Help reforms
	Community / Neighbourhood (30-50k PCNs, schools, VCSE)	Pilot micro-commissioning with VCSE Communication plan – staff, members, families, partners	Good practice

Project Plan Overview

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Phase	Level of Delivery	Key Actions	Source/Requirement
Phase 3 Mobilisation (2026/27)	Regional / ICS footprint	Mobilise regional workforce academy	ADASS workforce guidance
	Local Authority (statutory corporate role)	TUPE workforce transfers; workforce training, induction and cultural alignment Implement system and data transition (case management, BI, reporting); data migration testing Secure leadership and retain critical expertise to vesting day	TUPE Regs / GDPR
	Locality (200-250k population hubs)	Establish locality teams/structures and co-located MDTs (ASC front door, Family Help) Novate/renegotiate contracts "Day 1 Readiness Review" – dry run of key processes	Working Together 2023
	Community / Neighbourhood (30-50k PCNs, schools, VCSE)	Launch early help & reablement pilots	Best practice
Phase 4 Go Live (April 2028)	Regional / ICS footprint	Broker high-cost placements; regional market oversight	DfE MIAG / CQC assurance
	Local Authority (statutory corporate role)	Submit statutory returns; monitor safeguarding continuity	Legal duty
	Locality (200-250k population hubs)	Operate new front door pathways (FH + ASC triage) Launch locality operating model Implement contingency measures for risks identified earlier	Care Act / Children Act
	Community / Neighbourhood (30-50k PCNs, schools, VCSE)	Ensure community-level services accessible (family hubs, carers) Maintain provider and community reassurance through ongoing comms	SEND reforms
Phase 5 Optimisation & Transformation (Post-2028)	Regional / ICS footprint	Sustain regional QA and market resilience programmes Plan financial resilience and interim shared service hosting	DfE/DHSC policy
	Local Authority (statutory corporate role)	Review outcomes and financial performance vs benchmark; adjust MTFP	CIPFA duty
	Locality (200-250k population hubs)	Refine commissioning, sufficiency planning and service pathways based on learning Consolidate contracts and embed VFM approach Embed prevention and early help as a core operating principle	Best practice
	Community / Neighbourhood (30-50k PCNs, schools, VCSE)	Continuous improvement of early help, kinship, carer offers and wider partnerships (ICS, QA, market resilience programmes)	Ofsted inspection

Gantt Chart Overview

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Full implementation plan Gantt chart available in Appendix

Phases	Key Actions	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029-30
Phase 1: Foundations	Set up Day 1 essentials (care continuity, safeguarding, ICT), appoint statutory officers, and agree vision, outcomes, and governance.					
	Map demand, budgets, and workforce; define commissioning scope; and engage with schools, GPs, providers, and partners.					
Phase 2: Design	Develop shared frameworks, draft constitution, and transition plan with risk/benefit analysis.					
	Align with reforms and MTFP, co-design family hubs/reablement, pilot micro-commissioning, and plan communications.					
Phase 3: Mobilisation	Launch workforce academy, TUPE transfers, training, and cultural alignment; test data migration and system transitions.					
	Secure leadership, set up locality teams and MDTs, manage contracts, conduct readiness reviews, and pilot early help/reablement.					
Phase 4: Go Live	Operate new pathways (FH + ASC triage), launch locality model, and oversee high-cost placements with market oversight.				April 2028	
	Submit statutory returns, ensure safeguarding, maintain accessible services, and apply contingency measures.				April 2028	
Phase 5: Optimisation & Transform	Sustain QA and market resilience, review outcomes vs benchmarks, and refine commissioning and financial planning.					
	Market development, embed prevention/early help, maximise partnerships, drive continuous improvement and improve outcomes.					

NORTH - SOUTH

APPENDIX 3

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LGR OPTIONS APPRAISAL OF EDUCATION SERVICES – PEOPLETOO

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Nottinghamshire – Developing the Case for Education

September 2025

Introduction

- The report explores the impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Nottinghamshire on education outcomes, comparing two options:
- Option 1b – North: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Rushcliffe; South: Nottingham City, Broxtowe, Gedling.
- Option 1e – North: Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood; South: Nottingham City, Broxtowe, Rushcliffe.
- The analysis looks at school quality, attainment, pupil outcomes, and institutional profiles.

All data used in this report is publicly available. Please note this report does not include data of children educated at home.

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Overview

Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council
Education Overview

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According to the most recent release of DfE information on schools (2024), across Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council there are:

- 350 primary schools, with a total student body of 100,452 pupils.
  - At the most recent Ofsted inspections 4% of primaries were found to be Outstanding, 65% Good, 3% required improvement to be good, and none were rated as Inadequate.
  - *Note: 28% of primaries as of September 2025 had their most recent inspection after the September 2024 removal of one-word summaries or are yet to have their first inspection, either following their establishment or re-registration to Ofsted with new governance structures.*
- 96 open secondary schools, with a total student body of 78,589 pupils.
  - At their most recent Ofsted inspection 70% of secondary schools were found to be either Outstanding (9%) or Good (61%), 7% required improvement to be good.
  - *The remaining 22% have their most recent inspection without a one-word inspection outcome or are yet to be inspected.*
- 56 six form or colleges, with a student population of 21,626.

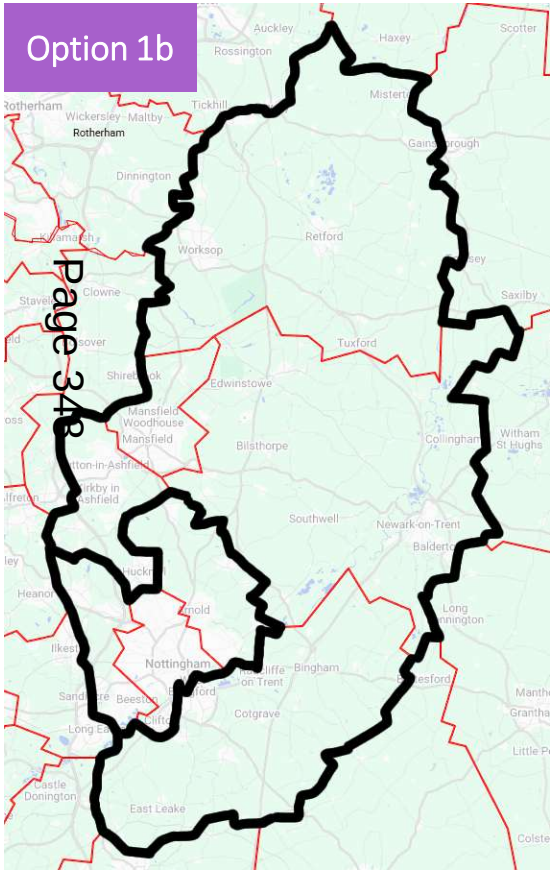


Map of the District Councils within Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council Source: Nottinghamshire.gov.uk

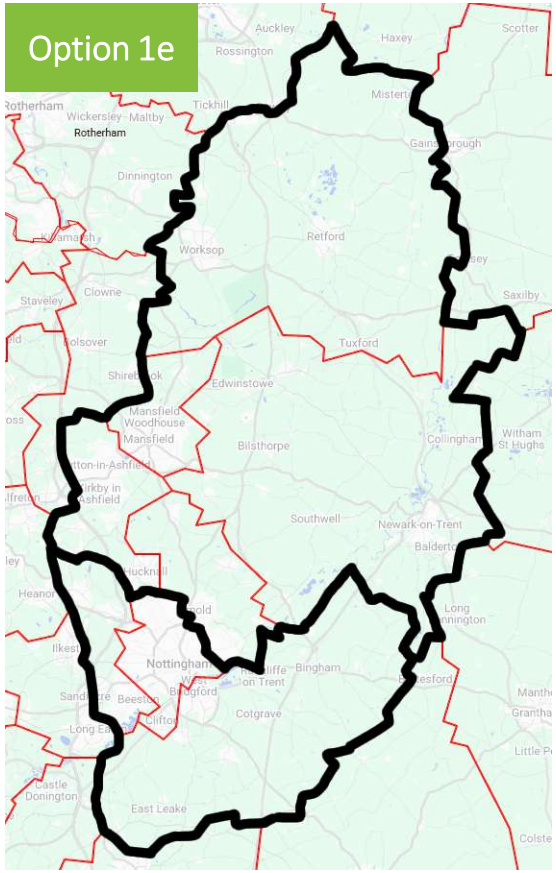
Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council
Local Government Reorganisation Overview

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Option 1b



Option 1e



Option 1B	Overall Population	School Age Population
Northern UA	622,269	88,409 (52.8%)
Southern UA	565,821	79,071 (47.2%)

Option 1b

- A Northern Unitary Authority made up of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, and Rushcliffe.
- A Southern unitary authority containing: Nottingham City Council, Broxtowe, and Gedling

Option 1E	Overall Population	School Age Population
Northern UA	615,712	86,474 (51.6%)
Southern UA	572,378	81,006 (48.8%)

Option 1e

- A Northern Unitary Authority made up of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, and Newark & Sherwood,
- A Southern Unitary Authority containing: Nottingham City Council, Broxtowe, and Rushcliffe

Overview: The Case for Option 1e

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- Option 1b clusters the strongest (Rushcliffe) and weakest (Ashfield, Mansfield) districts together in the North, creating a polarised profile: excellence alongside entrenched underperformance. The South is steadier.
- Option 1e distributes strengths more evenly: Gedling balances Ashfield/Mansfield in the North geographically (ie. shares borders) and in terms of education outcomes, while Rushcliffe strengthens the South alongside Nottingham City and Broxtowe. This reduces extremes, spreads disadvantage more evenly and creates clearer improvement pathways.

1. Numbers – balance of children

- Option 1b: North = 88,409 pupils vs South = 79,071 - gap of 9,338 **(11% imbalance).**
- Option 1e: North = 86,474 vs South = 81,006 - gap of 5,468 **(6% imbalance)**.

Option 1e balances the system more fairly — South gains 5,500 pupils compared with 1b.

2. Disadvantage (indicator based on eligible for Free School Meals in the last 6 years FSM6) – fairer spread

- Option 1b primaries: South 33.2% FSM, North 24.9%. – difference 8.3%
- Option 1e primaries: South 30.6%, North 26.9% - difference 3.7%
- Option 1b secondaries: South 39.3%, North 30.7% - difference 8.6%
- Option 1e secondaries: South 37.2%, North 32.5% - difference 4.7%.

Option 1e spreads disadvantage more evenly — both sides carry similar challenges instead of the South carrying much more.

3. Inspection profiles

- Both options show high proportions of Good/Outstanding primaries (78–84%).
- Secondary challenges sit more in the South under both models.

Option 1e sharpens the focus: North needs support for primaries, South for secondaries.

4. Inequality and equity

- Option 1b creates sharper divides: Rushcliffe excelling vs Mansfield struggling, with little middle ground.
- Option 1e blends strengths and weaknesses: Gedling offsets Ashfield/Mansfield in the North, Rushcliffe offsets City in the South.

This makes the split for outcomes of pupils fairer overall — each side carries both assets and challenges.

The Case for Option 1e

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5. Persistent absence – closer alignment under 1e	6. Future focus
• Primary: ○ 1b - North 14.6%, South 16.4%. ○ 1e - North 15.6%, South 15.1%. Secondary: ○ 1b - North 28.2% (1,950 pupils), South 28.4% (1,620 pupils). ○ 1e - North 29.0% (1,860 pupils), South 27.6% (1,720 pupils). **Option 1e brings the regions closer together — near-identical absence rates, rather than the South consistently higher under 1b.**	Option 1e creates a story of equity and shared responsibility. Instead of one UA carrying most of the disadvantage and the other holding most of the excellence, both North and South under 1e are mixed, balanced, and improvement-ready.

Overview

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Dimension	Option 1b	Option 1e
Pupil balance	🟡 North-heavy (53/47 split, **gap = 9,300 pupils)**	🟢 More balanced (52/48 split, **gap = 5,500 pupils)**
Disadvantage spread	🟡 Unequal – South carries more FSM6	🟢 Balanced – disadvantage shared more evenly
Inspection (primaries)	🟢 Balance of stronger schools in the North and South (68% Good / Outstanding vs 71% South)	🟡 South stronger (75% Good / Outstanding vs 66% North) but concentrates Requires Improvement (RI) primaries in North
Inspection (secondaries)	🔴 South weaker (67% Good / Outstanding vs 75% North)	🔴 Same – South weaker (67% Good / Outstanding vs 75%)
Balance of strengths/risks	🟡 More polarised – Rushcliffe + Mansfield/Ashfield together	🟢 Balanced – Gedling offsets Mansfield/Ashfield; Rushcliffe anchors South
Resilience/future focus	🟡 North and South not as balanced and strategies to address challenges more divided between two distinct areas.	🟢 Shared anchors, clearer improvement focus

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School Analysis by District

Overview by District

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Nottinghamshire's education landscape shows a clear **north-south divide**:

- **South (Rushcliffe, Gedling, Broxtowe):** high attainment but larger disadvantage gaps.
- **North & City (Mansfield, Ashfield, Nottingham):** entrenched underperformance, high SEND/disadvantage.
- Solutions must balance raising standards in the weakest areas while closing gaps in the strongest.

Key Messages

- Lowest performers: Ashfield, Mansfield, Nottingham City — high disadvantage, SEND, weak attainment.
- Strongest performers: Rushcliffe (highest attainment, but biggest disadvantage gap), Gedling (strong primaries, weaker secondaries), Broxtowe (solid secondaries).
- Mid-tier: Newark & Sherwood, Bassetlaw — good inspection outcomes but outcomes suppressed by SEN/disadvantage.
- Balance under Option 1e:
  - North gains Gedling's strength at primary, but also clusters Ashfield/Mansfield underperformance.
  - South benefits from Rushcliffe excellence but must manage Nottingham City's challenge.

Systemic Risks (Option 1e)

North UA (Ashfield, Mansfield, Gedling, Bassetlaw, Newark & Sherwood):

- Cluster of weak districts (Ashfield + Mansfield) risks overwhelming North's averages.
- Gedling offsets this at primary, but secondary weaknesses remain.

South UA (Rushcliffe, Nottingham City, Broxtowe):

- South becomes more polarised — Rushcliffe very strong, City very weak.
- Risk of widening internal inequality unless resources are shifted.

Key Risk Themes

- Concentration risk: Option 1e clusters multiple underperforming districts (Ashfield + Mansfield) in the North.
- Equity risk: Rushcliffe's success hides deep disadvantage gaps.
- Persistence risk: Without targeted policy/funding, entrenched underperformance (Mansfield, City) will not shift.

Overview by District

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District	Option 1B	Option 1E	Strengths / Risks	District Overview	Inspection Judgement Overview
Ashfield	Northern UA	Northern UA	High disadvantage & SEND, weakest attainment (Primary & Secondary).	Primary: High numbers of disadvantaged pupils (560). Attendance fairly strong (94.1%) but outcomes lower than average: only 56.7% meet expected standard in RWM. Disadvantaged attainment gap –21.3%. Secondary: Attainment 8 score lowest (32.3) with weak Progress 8 (–0.44 English, –0.24 Maths). Only 43% achieve standard passes in English & Maths (well below county averages). Risk: Concentrated deprivation and underperformance across phases.	**Primary:** 60% Good/Outstanding, 6% RI and a recently Inadequate school. **Secondary:** Only 55% Good/Outstanding, 9% RI and another recently Inadequate. **Analysis:** Confirms high risk. Larger proportion of secondary schools are RI, explaining persistently weak attainment despite fair attendance.
Bassetlaw	Northern UA	Northern UA	Moderate performance, high SEN, below average outcomes.	Primary: Relatively balanced profile. SEN/EHCP numbers are high (232 pupils with EHCP/SEN). Attainment at expected standard is 54.7% (below average). Secondary: Attainment 8 score 40.3, Progress 8 close to 0 (–0.1). 52% achieve standard GCSE passes. Stronger than Ashfield/Mansfield but weaker than South districts.	**Primary:** 73% Good/Outstanding and 2% RI. **Secondary:** 88% Good/Outstanding. **Analysis:** Schools judged highly, but pupil outcomes below average. Likely driven by SEN and deprivation mix, rather than school quality.
Mansfield	Northern UA	Northern UA	Persistently weakest attainment, high SEND & disadvantaged.	Primary: High proportion of SEN (241) and disadvantaged pupils (459). Attainment lowest (54% meeting expected) with weak progress for disadvantaged pupils. Secondary: Attainment 8 second lowest (30.1), Progress 8 among the weakest (–0.83 English, –0.53 Maths). Only 38.7% achieve standard passes – the lowest in the county. Risk: Mansfield is a persistent underperformer across all phases, reflecting deprivation and SEND prevalence.	**Primary:** 72% Good/Outstanding, but 3% RI. **Secondary:** 73% Good/Outstanding, with 9% RI. **Analysis:** Weak attainment aligns with inspection profile —secondaries judged below Good, especially in disadvantaged communities.
Newark & Sherwood	Northern UA	Northern UA	Steady mid-tier performance, disadvantaged pupils weaker.	Primary: Mid-range profile; 57.6% meet expected standards. Secondary: Attainment 8 (38.3) below average, Progress 8 close to 0. GCSE pass rate 52.5%, disadvantaged pupils at 37.3%. Risk: Steady but slightly below average; disadvantaged pupils particularly weak.	**Primary:** 67% Good/Outstanding and 5% RI. **Secondary:** 90% Good/Outstanding. **Analysis:** Strong inspection profile for secondary, weaker profile in primary. Lower attainment reflects contextual disadvantage (disadvantaged gap –25%). Schools perform well given intake, but outcomes show structural inequalities.

Note: Schools with N/A inspection outcomes have had their most recent inspection after the removal of single word judgements or there has been no inspection undertaken for the school yet.

Overview by District

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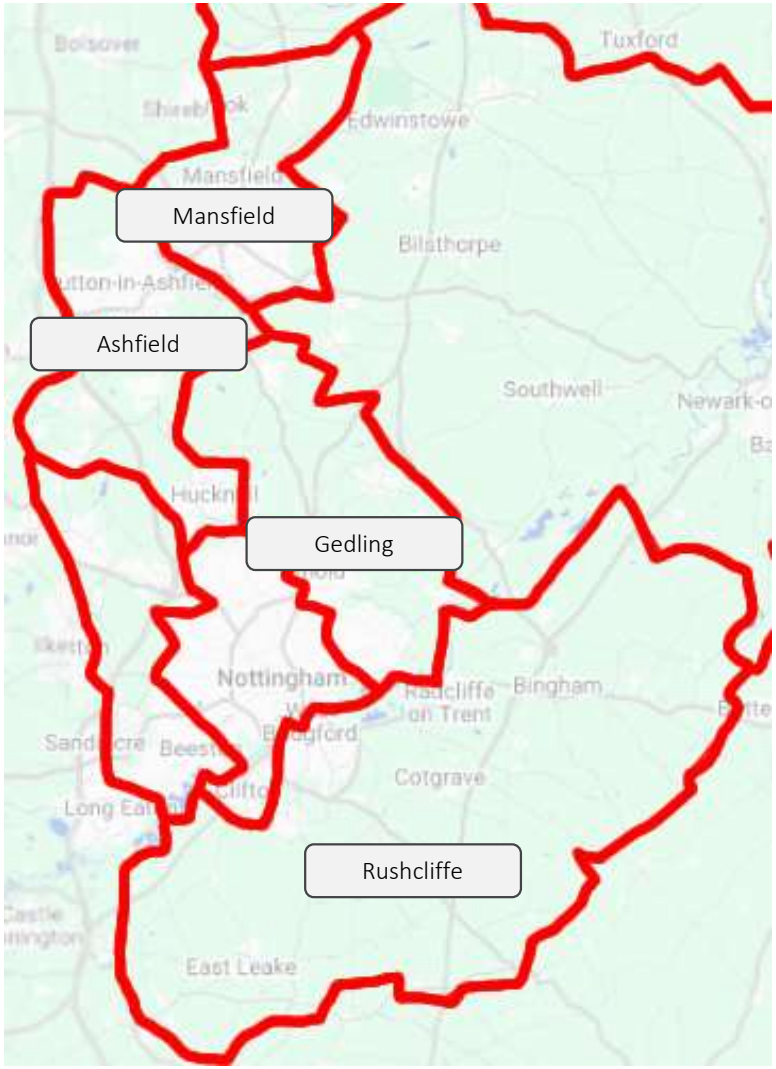
District	Option 1B	Option 1E	Strengths / Risks	District Overview	Inspection Judgement Overview
Rushcliffe	Northern UA	Southern UA	Highest attainment, Outstanding schools, but wide disadvantage gap.	Primary: High attainment – 69% at expected standards, the highest. Disadvantaged attainment gap widest (–28.3%). Secondary: Attainment 8 highest (54.9), strong Progress 8 (positive across subjects), 81% achieve standard GCSE passes. Strength: Strongest district academically. Risk: Large attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils.	**Primary:** 67% Good/Outstanding. **Secondary:** 75% Good/Outstanding. **Analysis:** Strong across the board. Strong attainment matches inspection judgements. Main risk is wide disadvantage gap (–28%). Second largest proportion of primary schools recently inspected dampening inspection outcomes.
Nottingham City	Southern UA	Southern UA	High deprivation, EAL, weak attainment & progress (especially Secondary).	Primary: Very large numbers of disadvantaged (1,683) and EAL pupils (1,359). Attendance weaker (93.4%). Attainment at expected standard 57.3% – below national. Secondary: Attainment 8 37.9, Progress 8 strongly negative (–0.55 English, –0.37 Maths). Only 48.3% achieve standard GCSE passes. Risk: High deprivation, SEND, and EAL drive persistent underperformance.	**Primary:** 80% Good/Outstanding and 2% RI. **Secondary:** 58% Good/Outstanding, 13% RI. **Analysis:** Primaries strong. Secondary attainment lags despite inspections — high deprivation, SEND, and EAL remain key challenges.
Broxtowe	Southern UA	Southern UA	Strong secondary attainment, moderate primary results.	Primary: Solid profile, 61.8% meeting expected standard. Disadvantaged attainment gap moderate (–21.2%). Secondary: Attainment 8 48.2, Progress 8 slightly negative (–0.22). GCSE pass rate 68%, better than most northern districts. Strength: Secure performance at secondary, mid-tier at primary.	**Primary:** 70% Good/Outstanding. **Secondary:** 89% Good/Outstanding, 11% RI. **Analysis:** Secure profile, no Inadequate schools. A small RI proportion explains moderate secondary performance, but overall provision is strong.
Gedling	Southern UA	Northern UA	Good attainment overall, but some secondary underperformance risks with previously RI schools.	Primary: Stronger results – 62.3% meet expected standards. Lower SEN/Disadvantaged numbers than Mansfield/Ashfield. Secondary: Attainment 8 47.9, strong Progress 8 (positive in English/Maths), 68% achieve standard passes. Strength: High performance relative to similar demographics.	**Primary:** 54% Good/Outstanding and 3% RI. 44% N/A. **Secondary:** 75% Good/Outstanding. **Analysis:** Stronger secondary profile, with weaker appearing primary schools as 44% had been recently inspected or re-registered with Ofsted within the last 12 months due possibly due to previous RI outcomes. Outcomes are mixed — while some pupils achieve highly, the inspection profile highlights inconsistency in secondary quality.

Note: Schools with N/A inspection outcomes have had their most recent inspection after the removal of single word judgements or there has been no inspection undertaken for the school yet.

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Travel Time and Social Mobility

Improvement Areas and Travel times



District	Ashfield		Mansfield	
	Distance (miles)	Duration (mins)	Distance (miles)	Duration (mins)
Gedling	11	23	16	28
Rushcliffe	21	34	26	41

- To evaluate the difference in the proximity the average mileage and journey was taken between a random sample of 3 secondary schools from each of Ashfield and Mansfield (see table below for list of schools included in the sample). Journey times and mileages were taken from Google Maps between the two school addresses on a Monday morning at 8:00 using the lower bound of average journey times, to lessen impact of rush hour traffic.
- The table above demonstrates that schools in Gedling are closer to both Mansfield and Ashfield, both in terms of average journey distances (10 miles shorter) and average journey times (over 10 minutes shorter), than schools in Rushcliffe.
- That schools are closer in Gedling to the two areas where school outcomes are struggling suggests greater geographic potential for working collaboratively with Gedling, in comparison to Rushcliffe which is comparatively remote to Ashfield and Mansfield.

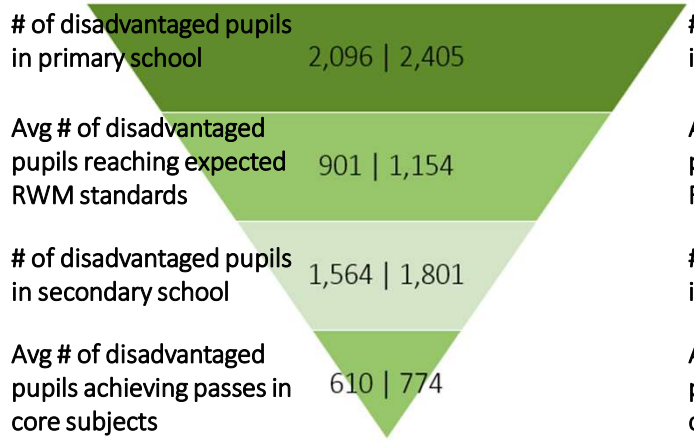
Ashfield	Mansfield
Bracken Hill School	Dawn House School
Ashfield Comprehensive School	Samworth Church Academy
The Holgate Academy	Meden School

Social Mobility Across Nottinghamshire

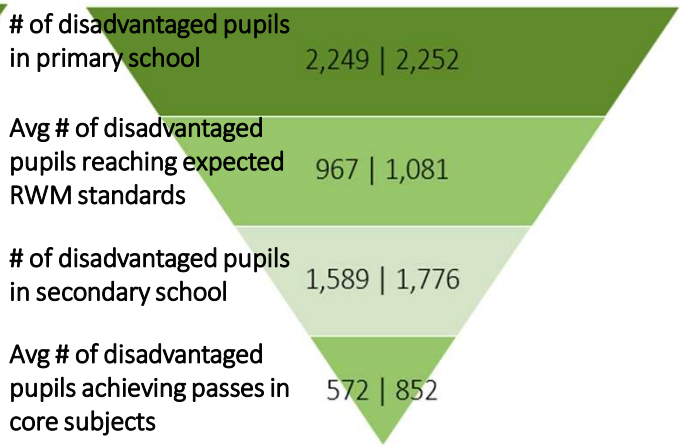
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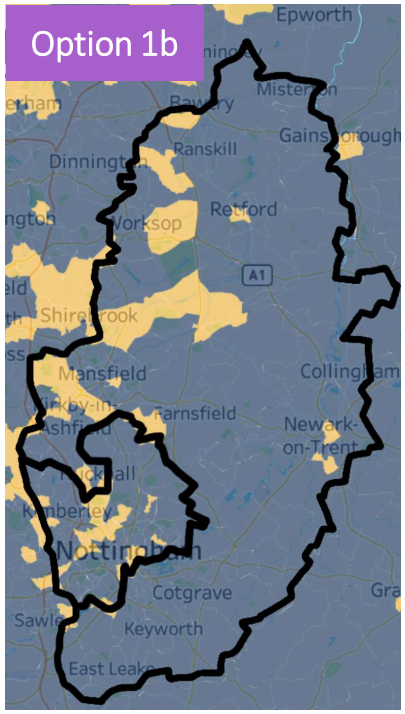
- Giving an accurate review of social mobility in Nottinghamshire broken down by Options 1B and 1E is challenging as NEET data by districts is not available online. However, Uni Connect data is published in map form, which allows for an overlay of the option maps to determine areas where support with higher education (HE) access may be needed. Uni Connect is a government-funded programme across England aimed at improving HE access and social mobility, helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds progress to HE, apprenticeships, or other post-16 opportunities.
- The funnels below show the progression of disadvantaged pupils in Nottinghamshire based on Options 1B and 1E, split by North and South unitary authorities for both. Option 1E shows a better distribution of disadvantaged pupils in primary schools reaching expected reading, writing and maths standards, while there is a strong number of secondary school pupils achieving 9-4 passes in core subjects in the South unitary authority. Under Option 1E, there is also a wider distribution of Uni Connect programmes available to pupils in Rushcliffe.

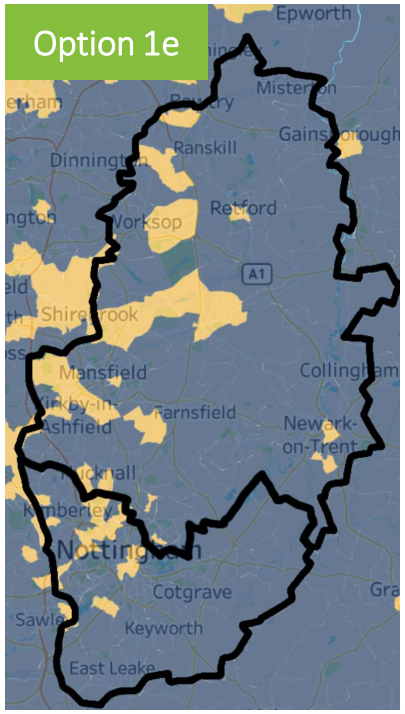
Option 1B
North UA | South UA



Option 1E
North UA | South UA





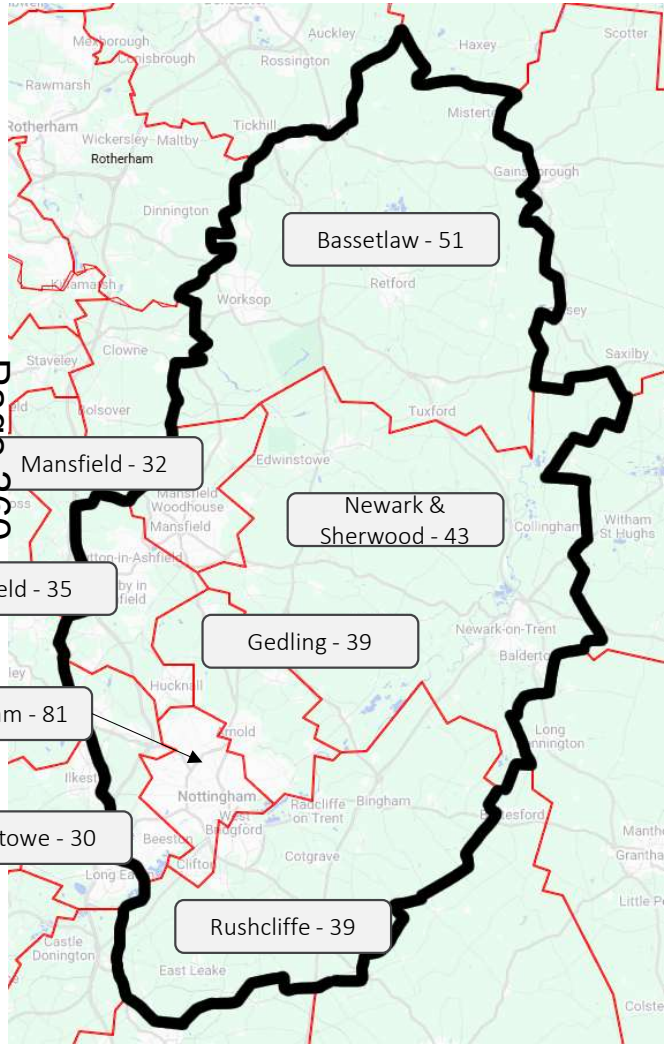


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School Provision Maps

Map of Primary Schools



Districts	School Numbers	Pupil Number
Bassetlaw	51	1,382
Mansfield	32	1,344
Newark & Sherwood	43	1,381
Ashfield	35	1,547
Gedling	39	1,408
Nottingham	81	3,922
Broxtowe	30	1,377
Rushcliffe	39	1,513
Total	350	13,874

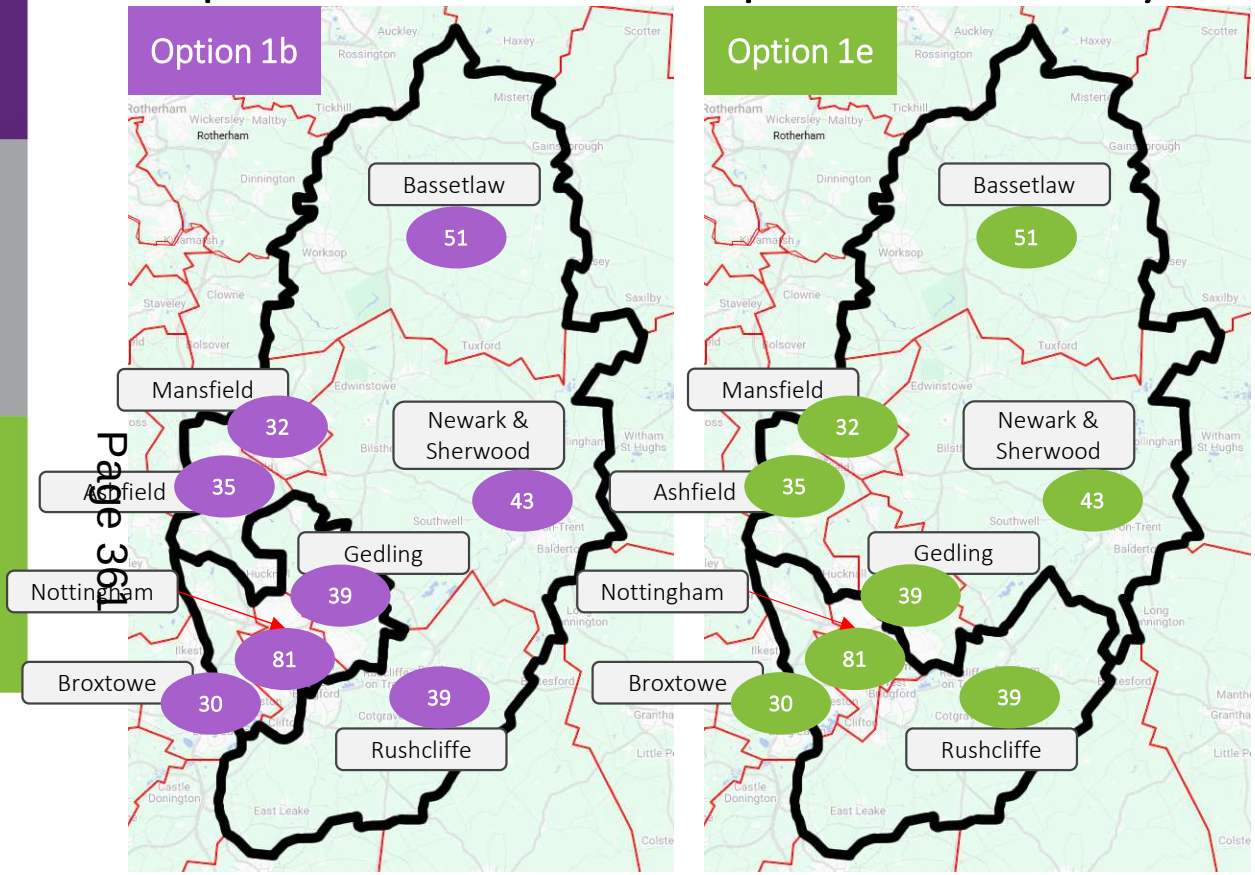
Option 1B	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Distribution of Pupils
Northern UA	200 (57.1%)	7,167	51.7%
Southern UA	150 (42.9%)	6,707	48.3%

Option 1E	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Distribution of Pupils
Northern UA	200 (57.1%)	7,062	50.9%
Southern UA	150 (42.9%)	6,812	49.1%

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The slide clearly outlines school and pupil distribution in Nottinghamshire. Nottingham City dominates in both schools and pupils. Between the two split options, Option 1E achieves a more balanced distribution of pupils, whereas Option 1B leans toward the north.

Option 1B and 1E Comparison: Primary Schools



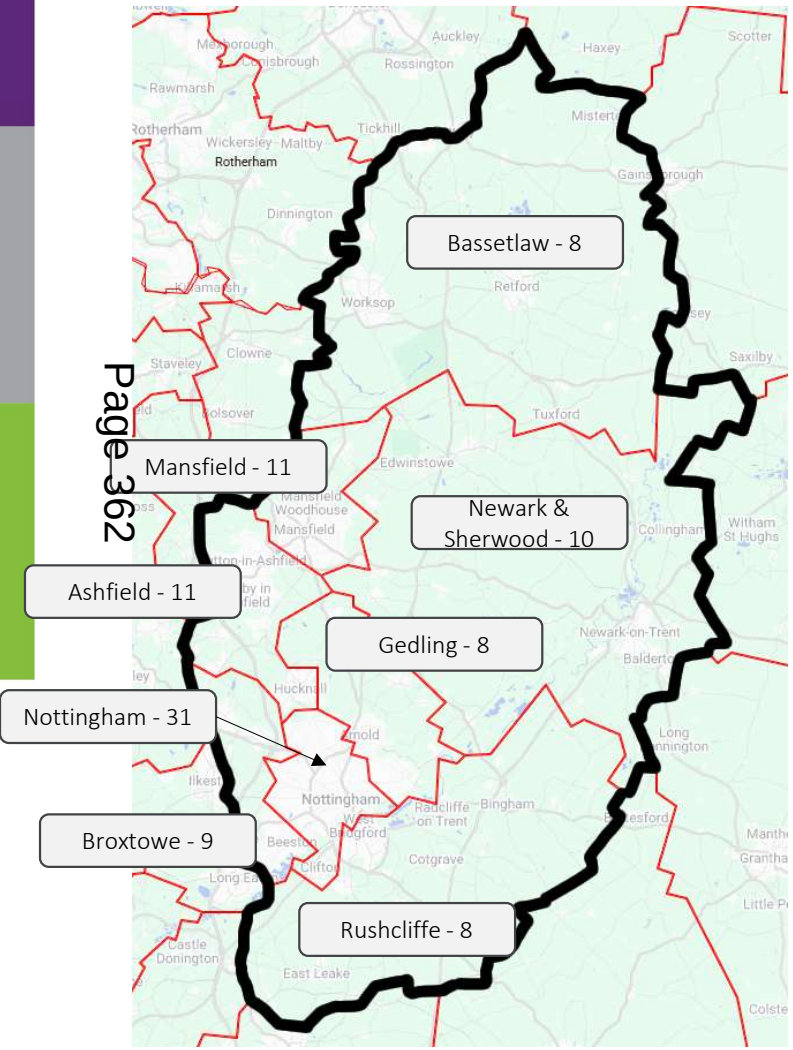
- Equity of split: Both options achieve fairness, but Option 1E is slightly more equitable in pupil distribution.
- Strategic considerations: Numerical balance is not the sole factor – outcomes for disadvantaged pupils will depend on school performance, resource allocation, and local deprivation levels.
- Decision framing: The choice between 1B and 1E is less about school/pupil numbers and more about long-term educational outcomes and social equity.

In terms of pupil distribution, both options would provide an even split in pupil numbers with the Northern unitary in 1B constituting 51.7% of pupils and the Southern unitary constituting 48.3%. This is similarly aligned in option 1E with 50.9% of pupils in the Northern unitary and 49.1% of pupils in the South. This even split in schools and pupil numbers places more importance on school performance and the support available to disadvantaged pupils.

Option 1B	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Distribution of Pupils
Northern UA	200 (57.1%)	7,167	51.7%
Southern UA	150 (42.9%)	6,707	48.3%

Option 1E	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Distribution of Pupils
Northern UA	200 (57.1%)	7,062	50.9%
Southern UA	150 (42.9%)	6,812	49.1%

Map of Secondary Schools



Districts	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Mainstream School	Special School
Bassetlaw	8	9,115	7	1
Mansfield	11	8,181	7	4
Newark & Sherwood	10	6,505	6	4
Ashfield	11	8,977	7	4
Gedling	8	6,266	6	2
Nottingham	31	22,846	25	6
Broxtowe	9	6,661	6	3
Rushcliffe	8	10,038	7	1
Total	96	78,589	71	25

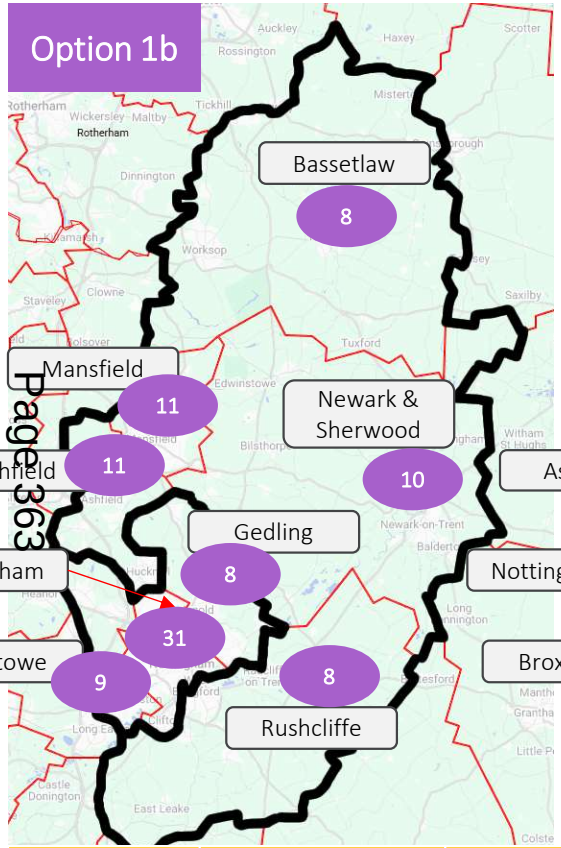
Option 1B	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Distribution of Pupils
Northern UA	48 (50%)	42,816 (54.5%)	54.5%
Southern UA	48 (50%)	35,773 (45.5%)	45.5%

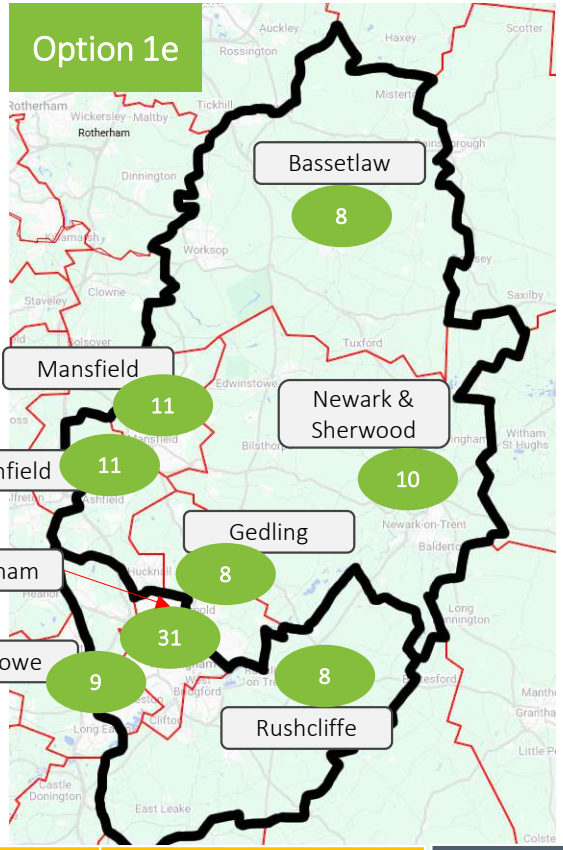
Option 1E	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Distribution of Pupils
Northern UA	48	39,044 (49.7%)	49.7%
Southern UA	48	39,545 (50.3%)	50.3%

**Eligible pupil numbers are all age*

Option 1B and 1E Comparison: Secondary Schools

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According to both Options 1B and 1E, there would be an even divide in the number of primary schools available in the Northern and Southern unitaries at 48 schools respectively. Not only is this due to a matched number of schools in Gedling and Rushcliffe, but there is a strong spread of schools across both the Northern and Southern districts of Nottinghamshire.

In terms of pupil distribution, both options would provide an even split in pupil numbers with the Northern unitary in 1B constituting 54.5% of pupils and the Southern unitary constituting 45.5%. This is similarly aligned in option 1E with 49.7% of pupils in the Northern unitary and 50.3% of pupils in the South. This even split in schools and pupil numbers places more importance on school performance and the support available to disadvantaged or more deprived pupils.

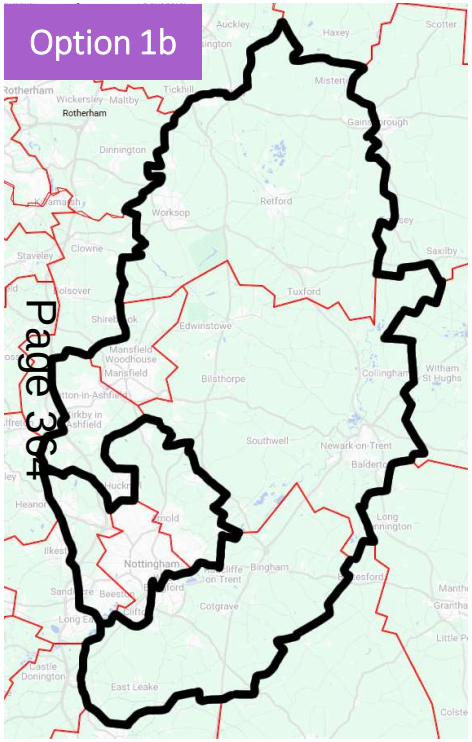
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Map of Academies Across Nottinghamshire

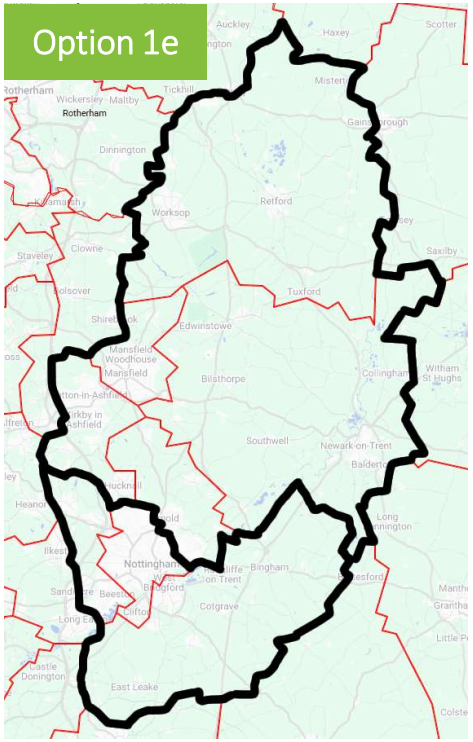
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Option 1b



Districts	Academy Numbers	Phase
Bassetlaw	4	Secondary (11-18)
Mansfield	4	Secondary (11-18) with 1 including Secondary and Sixth Form
Newark & Sherwood	4	Secondary (11-18)
Ashfield	4	Secondary (11-18) with 1 including Secondary and Sixth Form
Gedling	3	Secondary (11-18)
Nottingham	2	Secondary (11-18)
Broxtowe	4	Secondary (11-18) with 1 Primary
Rushcliffe	3	Secondary (11-18)
Total	28	

Option 1e



The table above outlines how many academies can be found in each district, with phase information available. There is only one primary school academy which is in Broxtowe, and two academies combining secondary and sixth form in Mansfield and Ashfield. Gedling and Rushcliffe have the same number of academies covering the same phase type (secondary). However, if further support was needed in Mansfield or Ashfield for pupils attending academies, those in Gedling would be more accessible to young people geographically in the Option 1E model.

Map of Academies Across Nottinghamshire

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- Nottinghamshire academies show a two-tier system: most MATs (Multi-Academy Trusts) are consistently Good/Outstanding, while a small number (notably Greenwood Academies Trust schools and Samworth Church Academy) are persistently underperforming.
- These underperformers are clustered in Mansfield, Nottingham City, and Gedling/Ashfield – areas of higher deprivation.
- Stronger MATs (Spencer, Outwood, EMET) could anchor improvement if systematically linked to weaker schools.

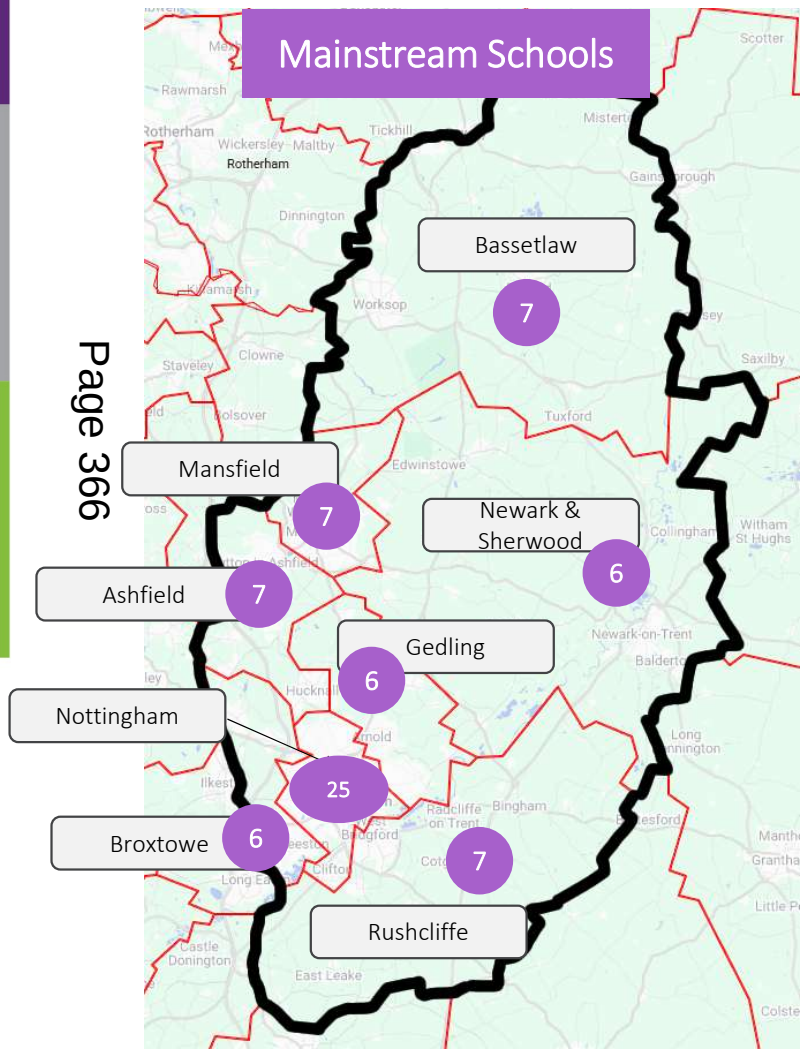
Key Risks & Weaknesses

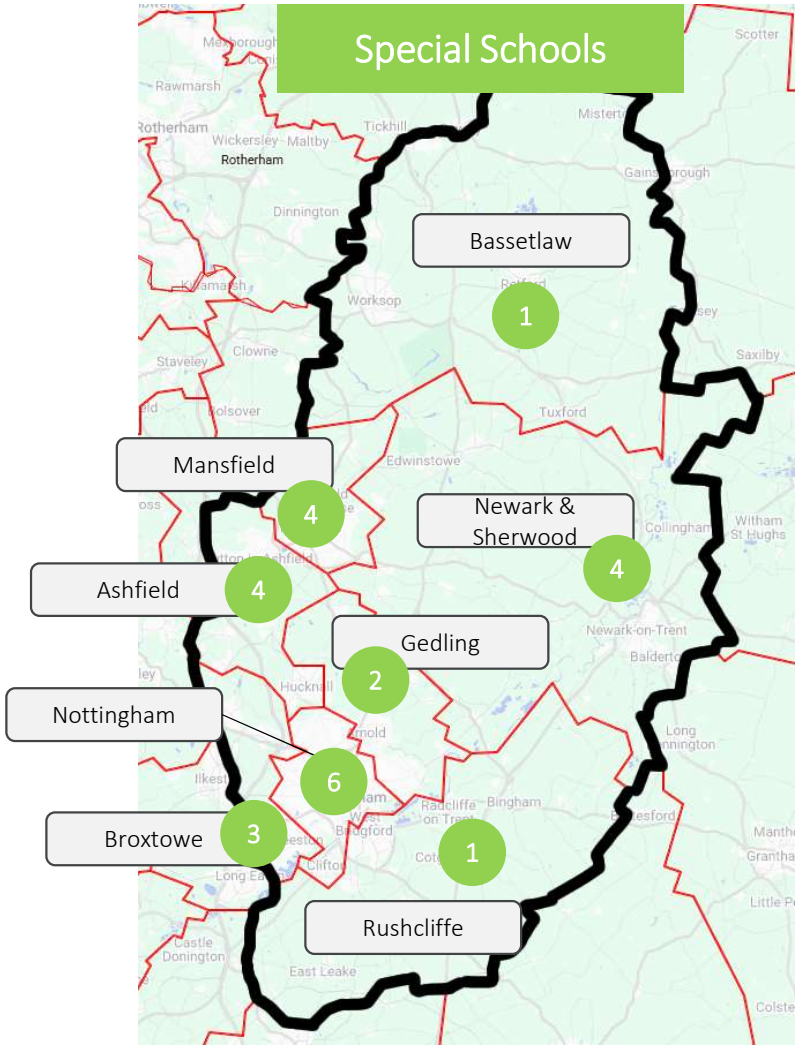
- Concentration of RI schools: Greenwood Academies Trust (Nottingham Academy & The Brunts Academy) and Samworth Church Academy are all Requires Improvement.
- These schools are mostly in Mansfield and Nottingham City, which already face higher deprivation and SEND pressures.
- This aligns with Ofsted's broader concerns about inequalities across Nottinghamshire – weaker performance is clustered in already disadvantaged areas.

Strengths

- High-performing MATs like Spencer Academies Trust and Outwood Grange provide a strong foundation across the county.
- Many recent inspections (2023–25) confirm "Good" outcomes, showing improvement trajectories.
- Several Outstanding schools (Rushcliffe Spencer, West Bridgford, Chetwynd Spencer) provide local centres of excellence.

Map of Mainstream & Special Schools



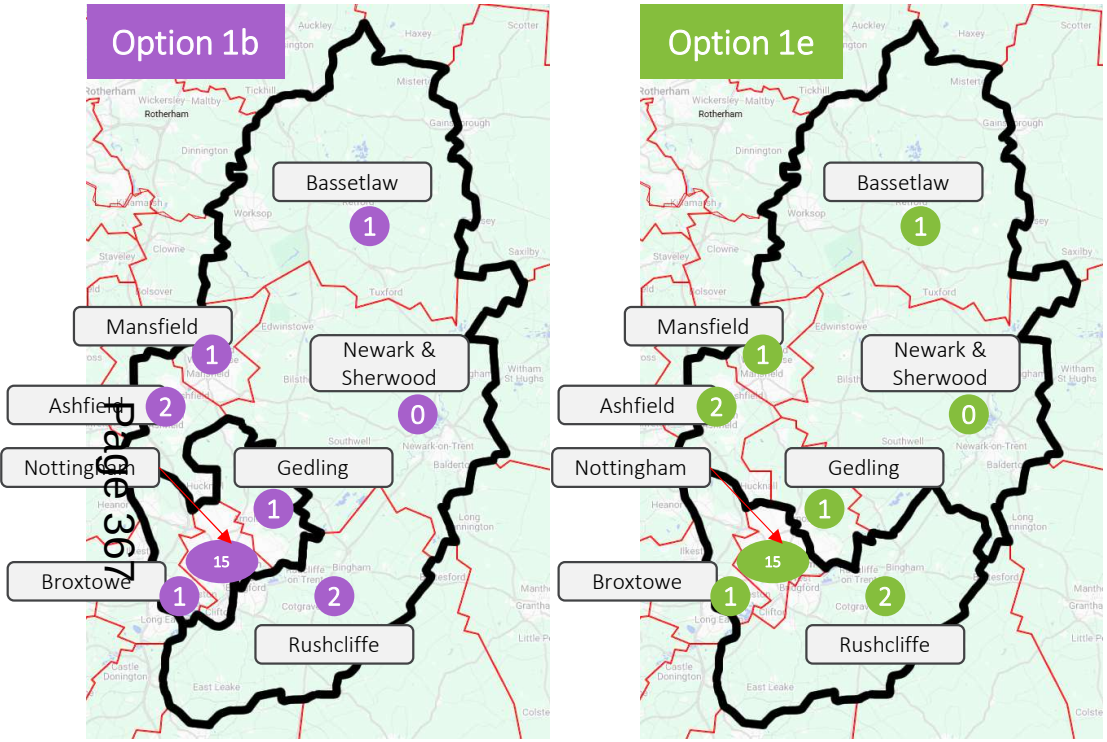


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- There 71 mainstream schools across Nottinghamshire, with the largest cluster of 25 schools in Nottingham. Under Option 1B, the North UA would have 34 mainstream schools and the South UA would have 37. Under Option 1E, the North UA would have 33 mainstream schools and the South UA would have 38.
- Nottinghamshire has a total of 25 special schools, with the most amount of schools in a district being in Nottingham with 6 schools. In Option 1B, the North UA would have 14 special schools and the South UA would have 11. In Option 1E, the North UA would have 15 special schools and the South UA would have 10.

Map of Alternative Provision (AP) Across Nottinghamshire

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Districts	AP Providers	Notes
Bassetlaw	1	Across Bassetlaw and areas of Mansfield
Mansfield	1	
Newark & Sherwood	0	Unable to find information online
Ashfield	2	
Gedling	1	
Nottingham	15	1 provider across Nottingham City & County (outreach)
Broxtowe	1	
Rushcliffe	2	
Address not specified	13	Listed on the AP Nottingham page
Other	4	National provider or online resource
Total	40	

- Nottingham has 15 AP providers, the vast majority of the county's provision.
- Other districts: 0–2 each, with Newark & Sherwood having none.
- Many AP providers are clustered in Nottingham City, with outreach across the county.

Analysis for Options 1B vs. 1E:

- In both options, Nottingham anchors the Southern UA's AP landscape.
- This reinforces dependency of surrounding districts on Nottingham provision, especially for excluded pupils, those with SEMH needs, or those awaiting SEND placements.
- The SEND inspection report noted concerns about variable quality and sufficiency of AP in Nottinghamshire. Option 1E's geography (linking Nottingham with Rushcliffe and Broxtowe) arguably provides a tighter geographic spread of AP to meet needs, compared with 1B, where Gedling is included but Rushcliffe's strong AP presence is separated into the North.

Analysis Mainstream, Special Schools and Alternative Provision

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Factor	Option 1B	Option 1E
Geographic/AP provision	Nottingham + Broxtowe + Gedling gives some spread, but Gedling does not have as strong AP presence as Rushcliffe. AP is mostly concentrated in Nottingham under both, but under Option 1B, Southern UA will include Gedling rather than Rushcliffe, potentially leaving gaps in proximity of AP providers for certain areas.	Better geographic spread: Nottingham + Rushcliffe + Broxtowe offers more consistent coverage of AP and special school reach. Rushcliffe has existing AP providers, which helps reduce travel or service bottlenecks.
Balance of population / service demand	Southern UA under 1B has a higher school-age population share (47.2%) vs Northern UA but less balanced than in 1E. May put more demand strain on Southern UA services, especially SEND services centralised in or around Nottingham.	More balanced school-age split (48.8% in South), which may help distribute pressure more evenly, easing demand for Nottingham's SEND services.
SEND service capacity & partnerships	Given the report's findings, Southern UA in 1B may have to extend or improve capacity in GP, therapy, health inputs, short breaks etc., and possibly more forward planning in commissioning. The presence of Gedling (which has fewer AP providers relative to Rushcliffe) might make coordination or reach more difficult.	Likely better able to share commissioning, reach, and support due to inclusion of Rushcliffe. Could improve access and reduce inequities in support (if done properly).
Risk factors	Risk of overloading Nottingham resources (short breaks, mental health / therapy, assessment delays) unless investments scale up. More transportation / access difficulties for families in Gedling or other areas far from Nottingham. Communication gaps as noted in report (local offer etc.) may hit more districts.	Risk still present, but somewhat mitigated. The geographic clustering under 1E may allow better service scaling, more outreach potential (Rushcliffe possibly acting as a semi-hub), which could reduce travel burdens and waiting times.

Analysis Mainstream, Special Schools and Alternative Provision

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Option 1E becomes even more strongly preferred. It better aligns with the need to address service access, spread of AP, and helps balance the load on Nottingham's SEND services (by improving geographic distribution of providers, potentially enabling better outreach and shared responsibilities).

But crucially, whichever option is chosen (1B or 1E), structural change alone will not be sufficient. Nottingham's SEND report shows that there are systemic issues: poor communication, delays, lack of clarity, health input and capacity issues, etc. Implementation under either option must plan to specifically tackle those vulnerabilities.

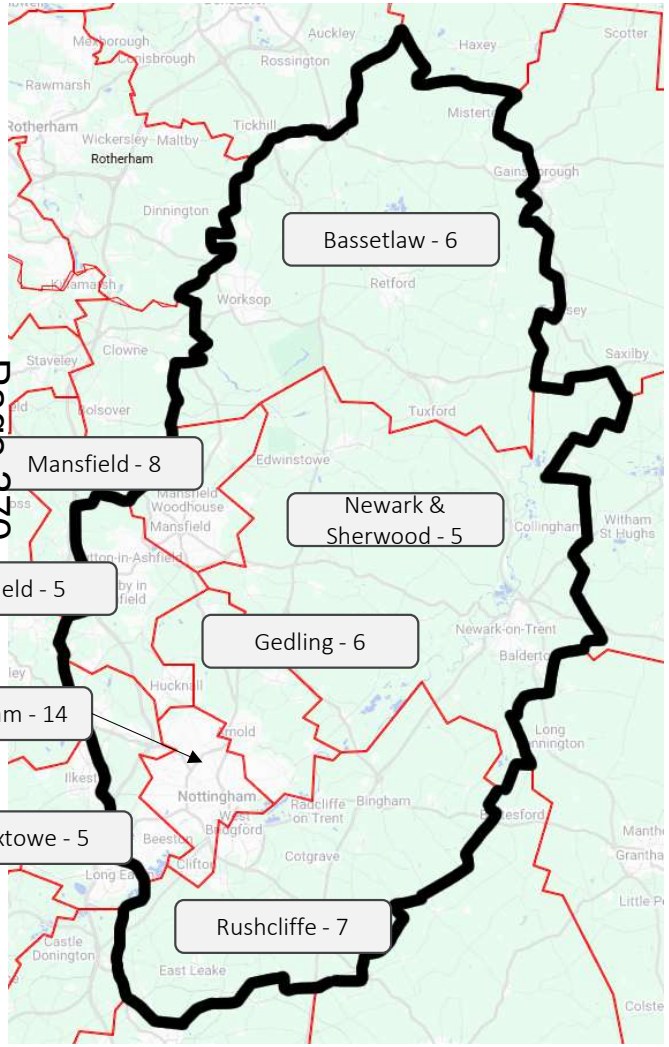
In particular, Southern UA under both options (which includes Nottingham) must ensure:

- Enhanced commissioning capacity for SEND & AP, with joint oversight health/education/social care.
- Improved outreach / AP provider availability especially in districts that are not centrally Nottingham (Rushcliffe or Gedling) to reduce transport or access barriers.
- Greater clarity and accessibility of information for parents (local offer, how the system works, EHC plans) especially for families with language barriers or limited digital access.
- Strengthening of short-break / respite provision, ensuring diversity of need and accessibility.

Option 1E appears to offer a slightly stronger balance in terms of:

- School-age population split (closer to 50/50).
- Alternative provision geography (Rushcliffe + Nottingham working together).
- However, both options risk overburdening Nottingham unless additional resources and reforms (e.g., improved AP quality, SEND sufficiency planning) are prioritised.
- The SEND inspection findings reinforce that numbers alone don't solve challenges — the reorganisation must directly address performance, inclusion, and support for disadvantaged learners in Nottingham.

Map of Sixth Form Education



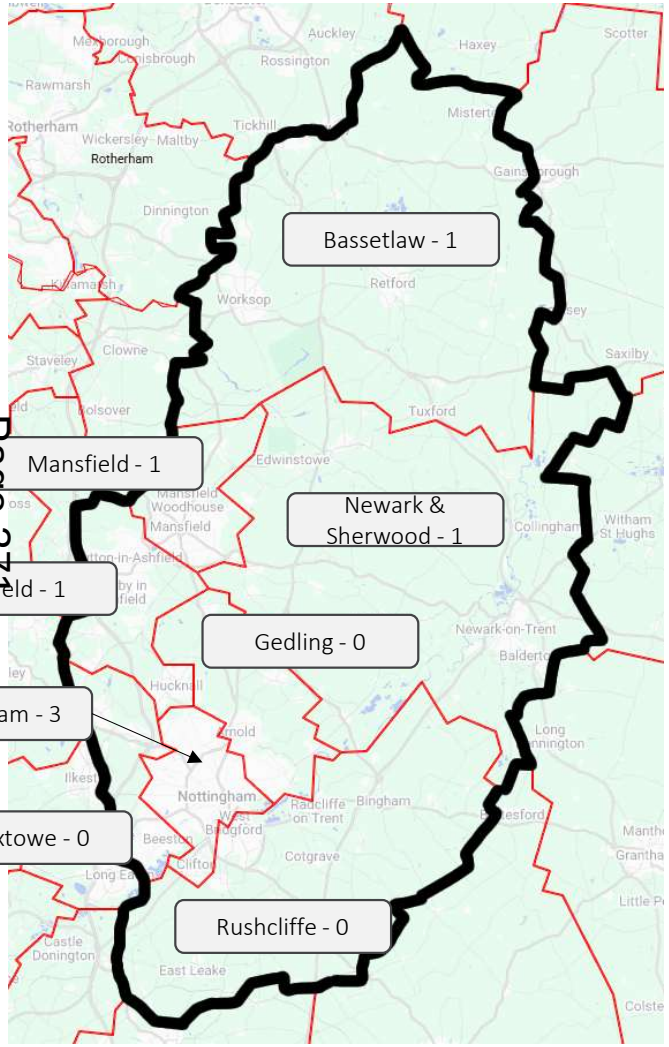
Districts	School Numbers	Pupil Number
Bassetlaw	6	1,020
Mansfield	8	4,187
Newark & Sherwood	5	816
Ashfield	5	1,003
Gedling	6	849
Nottingham	14	11,090
Broxtowe	5	727
Rushcliffe	7	1,934
Total	58	21,626

Option 1B	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Distribution of Pupils
Northern UA	31 (55%)	8,960	41%
Southern UA	25 (45%)	12,666	59%

Option 1E	School Numbers	Pupil Number	Distribution of Pupils
Northern UA	30 (54%)	7,875	36%
Southern UA	26 (46%)	13,751	64%

**Eligible pupil numbers are 16-18*

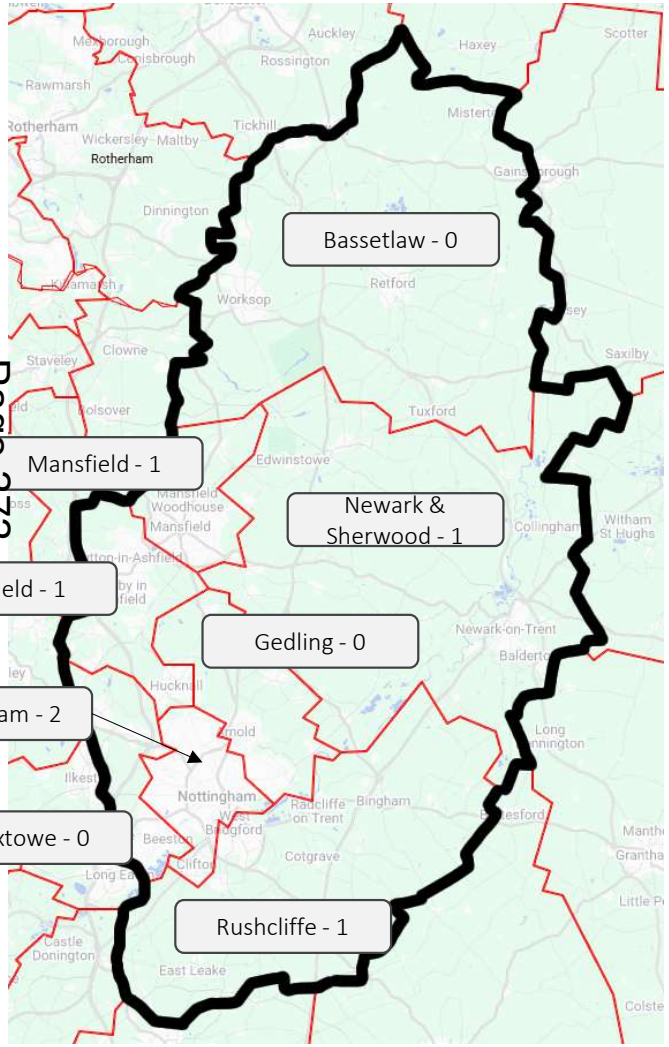
Map of Further Education Colleges Across Nottinghamshire



Districts	College Numbers	Name of College & Student Numbers
Bassetlaw	1	RNN Group: North Notts College in Worksop (~9,300)
Mansfield & Ashfield	1	Vision West Nottinghamshire College (~9,600)
Newark & Sherwood	1	Lincoln College Group: Newark College (~11,000)
Gedling	0	-
Nottingham	3	Nottingham College (~30,000) Confetti Institute of Creative Technologies (~2,500) Bilborough Sixth Form College (~1,600)*
Broxtowe	0	-
Rushcliffe	0	-
Total	6	~64,000 students in colleges
Option 1B & 1E	**# of Colleges**	**Student Number**
Northern UA	3	29,000 students
Southern UA	3	34,100 students

- *Bilborough is both a sixth-form college and an FE (further education) provider.
- There is a good distribution of colleges across Nottinghamshire, with college campuses in each district in the North and large colleges in Nottingham to support student intake from Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Gedling. Students in Gedling also have a strong number of choices and distribution throughout the districts allows students to be supported in all areas of Nottinghamshire. Bilborough in Nottingham also supports sixth form provision in the South, as Broxtowe and Rushcliffe had 5 and 7 sixth form locations respectively, in comparison to Nottingham's 14 locations.

Map of Universities Across Nottinghamshire



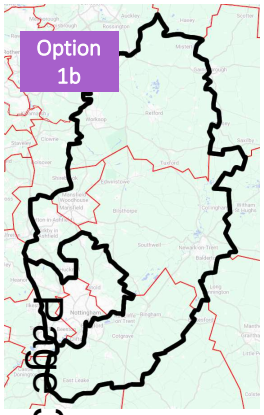
Districts	University Numbers	Name of University & Student Numbers
Bassetlaw	0	-
Mansfield & Ashfield	1	NTU Mansfield (~664)
Newark & Sherwood	1	NTU Brackenhurst Campus (~1,700)
Gedling	0	-
Nottingham	2	University of Nottingham (~52,000) Nottingham Trent University (~37,500)
Broxtowe	0	-
Rushcliffe	1	UoN Sutton Bonington Campus (~2,500)
Total	5*	~94,364 students in universities
Option 1B & 1E	**# of Universities**	**Student Number**
Northern UA	2	2,364 students
Southern UA	3	92,000 students

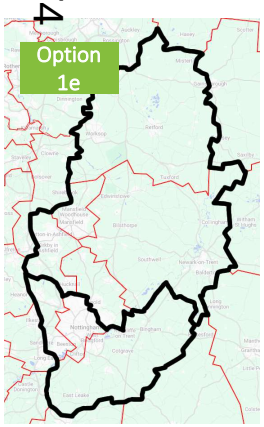
- *It should be noted that there are 2 main universities in Nottinghamshire (University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University). These have campuses across Nottingham and the districts which have been counted only in the districts to show the availability of local higher education offer.
- In this instance, Gedling does not impact the difference between options as there are no campuses in the district. However, the spread of campuses is strong throughout Nottinghamshire, with only students in Bassetlaw having to travel further to reach a specific campus.

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Inspection Judgements

Ofsted Inspection Judgements





Ofsted Ratings by District – Primary Schools	Option 1b		Option 1e	
	Northern Unitary	Southern Unitary	Northern Unitary	Southern Unitary
Number of Primary schools found to be Good/Outstanding	136	107	131	112
Proportion of Primary schools found to be Good/Outstanding	68%	71%	66%	75%
Number of Primary schools found to Require Improvement to be Good	6	3	7	2
Proportion of Primary schools that Require Improvement to be Good	3%	2%	4%	1%
Number/Proportion of Primary schools found to be Inadequate	-	-	-	-
Number of Primary schools with no inspection outcome record	58	40	62	36
Proportion of Secondary schools with no inspection outcome record	29%	27%	31%	24%

Ofsted Ratings by District – Secondary Schools	Option 1b		Option 1e	
	Northern Unitary	Southern Unitary	Northern Unitary	Southern Unitary
Number of Secondary schools found to be Good/Outstanding	36	32	36	32
Proportion of Secondary schools found to be Good/Outstanding	75%	67%	75%	67%
Number of Secondary schools that Require Improvement to be Good	2	5	2	5
Proportion of Secondary schools that Require Improvement to be Good	4%	10%	4%	10%
Number/Proportion of Secondary schools found to be Inadequate	-	-	-	-
Number of Secondary schools with no inspection outcome record	10	11	10	11
Proportion of Secondary schools with no inspection outcome record	21%	23%	21%	23%

Note: Schools where there is 'no record' have their most recent inspection after the removal of single word judgements or there has been no inspection undertaken for the school yet.

Note: Schools regarded as N/A are a result of a new inspection with no single word judgement being the most recent inspection or there being no inspection undertaken for the school yet.

Ofsted Inspection Judgements

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Ofsted Ratings by District – Primary Schools	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Mansfield	Newark & Sherwood	Gedling	Rushcliffe	Nottingham	Broxtowe
Number of Primary schools – Good/Outstanding	21	37	23	29	21	26	65	21
Proportion of Primary schools – Good/Outstanding	60%	73%	72%	67%	54%	67%	80%	70%
Number of Primary schools – Require Improvement to be Good	2	1	1	2	1	-	2	-
Proportion of Primary schools – Require Improvement to be Good	6%	2%	3%	5%	3%	-	2%	-
Number of Primary schools – Inadequate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of Primary schools – Inadequate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of Primary schools - N/A	12	13	8	12	17	13	14	9
Proportion of Primary schools – N/A	34%	25%	25%	28%	44%	33%	17%	30%

Ofsted Ratings by District – Secondary Schools	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Mansfield	Newark & Sherwood	Gedling	Rushcliffe	Nottingham	Broxtowe
Number of Secondary schools – Good/Outstanding	6	7	8	9	6	6	18	8
Proportion of Secondary schools – Good/Outstanding	55%	88%	73%	90%	75%	75%	58%	89%
Number of Secondary schools – Require Improvement to be Good	1	-	1	-	-	-	4	1
Proportion of Secondary schools – Require Improvement to be Good	9%	-	9%	-	-	-	13%	11%
Number of Secondary schools – Inadequate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proportion of Secondary schools – Inadequate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of Secondary schools – N/A	4	1	2	1	2	2	9	-
Proportion of Secondary schools – N/A	36%	13%	18%	10%	25%	25%	29%	-

Ofsted Inspection Judgements

Option 1b: A steady balance — both North and South primaries perform well, but neither has a decisive advantage. The North looks slightly stronger overall. Secondary weaknesses sit more in the South.
Option 1e: Creates a clearer split — the South is stronger in primaries, the North carries more primaries needing improvement. Secondary outcomes are unchanged, with the South still lagging. This gives a sharper improvement focus: invest in the North's primaries and the South's secondaries.

Primary Schools

- Both options show very high proportions of Good/Outstanding primaries (66–75%), with no Inadequate schools recorded.

Option 1b:

- North: 136 primaries rated Good/Outstanding (68%).
- South: 107 primaries rated Good/Outstanding (71%).
- North slightly stronger in absolute numbers as 11% greater student population than South, but both regions perform similarly.

Option 1e:

- North: 131 primaries Good/Outstanding (66%).
- South: 112 primaries Good/Outstanding (75%).
- This configuration shifts more quality into the Southern UA, giving it the higher proportion of strong primaries, and a closer number of good primaries, reflective of a smaller (6%) difference of pupil numbers

Analysis: Under Option 1e, the South gains a stronger primary profile, while the North has more schools requiring improvement (7 vs 6 under 1b).

Secondary Schools

- Secondaries show a more uneven profile than primaries. Performance is good overall, but the distribution matters.

Option 1b:

- North: 36 secondaries Good/Outstanding (75%).
- South: 32 secondaries Good/Outstanding (67%).
- Slightly stronger North; South carries more schools requiring improvement. 11% greater pupil population in North than the South.

Option 1e:

- North: 36 secondaries Good/Outstanding (75%).
- South: 32 secondaries Good/Outstanding (67%).
- The proportions remain the same — the balance doesn't shift between options. Though, a 6% greater pupil population in the North under 1e.

Analysis: Whichever option is chosen, secondary challenges are concentrated in the South, with only two-thirds of schools rated Good/Outstanding compared to three-quarters in the North.

Ofsted Inspection Judgements: Risks and Opportunities

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Risks to Option 1e

- **Concentration of weaker primaries in the North**:
  Under Option 1e, 7 primary schools in the North require improvement, compared with just 2 in the South. This clusters school improvement needs in one UA.
- **Secondary challenges remain in the South**:
  Only 67% of Southern secondary schools are Good/Outstanding, compared with 75% in the North. This is unchanged from Option 1b and means the South continues to face persistent secondary underperformance.
- **Pressure on Northern UA leadership capacity**:
  The Northern UA would face a larger share of primary schools requiring improvement (7 vs 6 under 1b), creating resourcing pressures unless additional support is provided.
- **Risk of widening the North–South gap**:
  Without targeted intervention, the North could fall further behind at primary, while the South continues to struggle at secondary — reinforcing inequalities across phases.

Potential Solutions to Support Option 1e

To mitigate these risks and turn Option 1e into a sustainable model, targeted strategies should be built into the reorganisation plan:

Targeted School Improvement Partnerships

- Link strong Southern primaries (75% Good/Outstanding) with weaker Northern primaries (66%).
- Share best practice through peer mentoring, leadership secondments, and federation models.

Dedicated Improvement Fund

- Ringfence funding for Northern primaries requiring improvement and Southern secondaries underperforming.
- Align with DfE's "Education Investment Areas" model to attract additional resources and high-quality teachers.

Strengthened MAT Oversight

- Encourage underperforming Northern primaries and Southern secondaries to join or strengthen ties with high-performing MATs.
- Ensure consistent accountability and shared improvement standards across both UAs.

Phase-Focused Intervention

- North: Prioritise primaries needing improvement (7 schools).
- South: Focus on 5 secondaries where schools are RI.

Integrated SEND & AP Support

- Provide additional SEND and Alternative Provision support to schools at risk of underperformance.
- Prevent exclusion spikes and address attendance/behaviour challenges that often cluster in struggling schools.

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Village of 100 – Comparative Analyses

What is the Village of 100?

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If Nottinghamshire were a village of 100 children, the way we draw boundaries in local government would shape their education and their futures. The difference between **Option 1b** and **Option 1e** is not just numbers on a page — it changes how fair, balanced and sustainable this village feels for its children.

Option 1b (North with Rushcliffe, South with Gedling)

In the North (53 children):

Most attend good or outstanding schools, but the experience is uneven. Rushcliffe children thrive, leaving school with nearly 8 GCSEs each. Yet just down the road in Mansfield and Ashfield, many leave with little more than 5 GCSEs. Fewer than half of disadvantaged children keep up through secondary. The North is a place of contrasts: some children with high attainment results, and some who fall behind.

In the South (47 children):

Most also attend good schools. Gedling pulls results up, with disadvantaged children here achieving as well as any in the county. Outcomes are steadier, but overall levels are not as strong as Rushcliffe. Disadvantage is less of a barrier, but the South lacks the same high-end performance.

The story of 1b: The North is more divided between areas of affluence and deprivation. The South is more balanced, but weaker overall. Inequality is stark, and the village feels pulled apart.

Option 1e (North with Gedling, South with Rushcliffe)

In the North (52 children):

Gedling sits alongside Mansfield and Ashfield, helping to lift the average. Pupils achieve around 6.5 GCSEs each — better balanced than in 1b. Gedling's disadvantaged children do particularly well, achieving 7 GCSEs on average, far outstripping their peers in Mansfield and Ashfield. The North becomes a more even community: challenges remain, but they are offset by strengths.

In the South (48 children):

Here Rushcliffe anchors excellence, with children averaging 8 GCSEs. Nottingham City brings challenges, but resources are greater and the mix ensures the South is strong without being unbalanced. Outcomes are high, though tackling disadvantage remains the key priority.

The story of 1e: Both North and South are balanced. Strengths and weaknesses are shared. Children's chances depend less on where they live and more on how the whole village supports them.

*According to Option 1B, if Nottinghamshire was a Village of 100 children and young people...

Northern UA

Primary School

- **8 children** would be primary school pupils
- **4 pupils** would be girls
- **4 pupils** would be boys
- **1 pupil** would require SEN support
- **0.2 pupils** would have an EHCP
- **3 pupils** would be disadvantaged
- **6 pupils** would be non-disadvantaged
- **1 pupil** with EAL
- **94 pupils** would be present at school
- **6 pupils** would be absent from school
- **15 pupils** would have persistent absences
- **14 pupils** would be eligible for FSMs
- **25% of pupils** on average eligible for FSMs in past 6 years
- **43 disadvantaged pupils** would reach expected RWM standards
- **24% RWM difference** between disadvantaged and other pupils

Secondary School

- **8 children** would be secondary school pupils
- **4 pupils** would be girls
- **4 pupils** would be boys
- **1 pupil** would require SEN support
- **0.09 pupils** would have an EHCP and SEN support
- **2 pupils** would be disadvantaged
- **5 pupils** would be non-disadvantaged
- **1 pupil** with EAL
- **90 pupils** would be present at school
- **10 pupils** would be absent from school
- **28 pupils** would have persistent absences
- **11 pupils** would be eligible for FSMs
- **31% of pupils** on average eligible for FSMs in past 6 years
- **-0.67 average P8** for disadvantaged pupils
- **0.037 average P8** for non-disadvantaged pupils

Southern UA

Primary School

- **8 children** would be primary school pupils
- **4 pupils** would be girls
- **4 pupils** would be boys
- **1 pupil** would require SEN support
- **0.2 pupils** would have an EHCP
- **3 pupils** would be disadvantaged
- **6 pupils** would be non-disadvantaged
- **2 pupils** with EAL
- **94 pupils** would be present at school
- **6 pupils** would be absent from school
- **16 pupils** would have persistent absences
- **19 pupils** would be eligible for FSMs
- **33% of pupils** on average eligible for FSMs in past 6 years
- **49 disadvantaged pupils** would reach expected RWM standards
- **18% RWM difference** between disadvantaged and other pupils

Secondary School

- **7 children** would be secondary school pupils
- **4 pupils** would be girls
- **4 pupils** would be boys
- **1 pupil** would require SEN support
- **0.09 pupils** would have an EHCP and SEN support
- **2 pupils** would be disadvantaged
- **5 pupils** would be non-disadvantaged
- **2 pupils** with EAL
- **90 pupils** would be present at school
- **10 pupils** would be absent from school
- **28 pupils** would have persistent absences
- **14 pupils** would be eligible for FSMs
- **39% of pupils** on average eligible for FSMs in past 6 years
- **-0.70 average P8** for disadvantaged pupils
- **0.036 average P8** for non-disadvantaged pupils

*Figures have been calculated based on the projected 5-16 age population for Option IB across the Northern UA (88,409) and the Southern UA (79,071).

*According to Option 1E, if Nottinghamshire was a Village of 100 children and young people...

Northern UA

Primary School

- **8 children** would be primary school pupils
- **4 pupils** would be girls
- **4 pupils** would be boys
- **1 pupil** would require SEN support
- **0.2 pupils** would have an EHCP
- **3 pupils** would be disadvantaged
- **6 pupils** would be non-disadvantaged
- **1 pupil** with EAL
- **94 pupils** would be present at school
- **6 pupils** would be absent from school
- **16 pupils** would have persistent absences
- **15 pupils** would be eligible for FSMs
- **27% of pupils** on average eligible for FSMs in past 6 years
- **44 disadvantaged pupils** would reach expected RWM standards
- **23% RWM difference** between disadvantaged and other pupils

Secondary School

- **7 children** would be secondary school pupils
- **4 pupils** would be girls
- **4 pupils** would be boys
- **1 pupil** would require SEN support
- **0.09 pupils** would have an EHCP and SEN support
- **2 pupils** would be disadvantaged
- **5 pupils** would be non-disadvantaged
- **1 pupil** with EAL
- **90 pupils** would be present at school
- **10 pupils** would be absent from school
- **29 pupils** would have persistent absences
- **12 pupils** would be eligible for FSMs
- **33% of pupils** on average eligible for FSMs in past 6 years
- **-0.75 average P8** for disadvantaged pupils
- **-0.011 average P8** for non-disadvantaged pupils

Southern UA

Primary School

- **8 children** would be primary school pupils
- **4 pupils** would be girls
- **4 pupils** would be boys
- **1 pupil** would require SEN support
- **0.2 pupils** would have an EHCP
- **3 pupils** would be disadvantaged
- **6 pupils** would be non-disadvantaged
- **2 pupils** with EAL
- **94 pupils** would be present at school
- **6 pupils** would be absent from school
- **15 pupils** would have persistent absences
- **18 pupils** would be eligible for FSMs
- **31% of pupils** on average eligible for FSMs in past 6 years
- **48 disadvantaged pupils** would reach expected RWM standards
- **19% RWM difference** between disadvantaged and other pupils

Secondary School

- **8 children** would be secondary school pupils
- **4 pupils** would be girls
- **4 pupils** would be boys
- **1 pupil** would require SEN support
- **0.09 pupils** would have an EHCP and SEN support
- **2 pupils** would be disadvantaged
- **5 pupils** would be non-disadvantaged
- **2 pupils** with EAL
- **90 pupils** would be present at school
- **10 pupils** would be absent from school
- **28 pupils** would have persistent absences
- **13 pupils** would be eligible for FSMs
- **37% of pupils** on average eligible for FSMs in past 6 years
- **-0.61 average P8** for disadvantaged pupils
- **0.083 average P8** for non-disadvantaged pupils

*Figures have been calculated based on the projected 5-16 age population for Option IE across the Northern UA (86,474) and the Southern UA (81,006).

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Conclusion

Conclusion

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- The analysis of educational performance across Nottinghamshire highlights both clear strengths and significant challenges. The county benefits from high-performing areas such as Rushcliffe and Gedling, where outcomes are consistently above average and disadvantaged pupils make meaningful progress. At the same time, areas such as Mansfield and Ashfield continue to experience the lowest attainment and progress scores, with entrenched inequalities that demand focused intervention.
- Option 1b works better if the priority is to spread weaker schools more evenly — under this model, the North has both excellence (Rushcliffe) and failure (Mansfield, Ashfield), while the South looks steadier, though weaker overall.
- Option 1e works better if the priority is to create resilience and fairness. It reduces the pupil number imbalance, balances disadvantage, and ensures each new UA has both strong and weak areas — encouraging shared responsibility and capacity for improvement.
- The Village of 100 analysis reinforces this: under 1b, one village is polarised while the other is middling. Under 1e, both villages are mixed, balanced, and improvement-ready.

Recommendation: Option 1e provides the fairest, most sustainable model. It avoids polarisation, balances disadvantage, and creates a clearer improvement focus (North primaries, South secondaries).

Risk Assessment

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Risk	Applies More To	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Concentration of underperforming primaries (9 RI in North under 1e)	Option 1e	High	High	Targeted improvement fund; school-to-school support; MAT intervention
South secondary underperformance (only 67% G/O)	Both 1b & 1e	High	High	Phase-focused intervention; targeted leadership support; academy sponsor partnerships
Polarisation – extremes of excellence and failure	Option 1b	High	High	Balance by redistributing support staff and resources across both UAs
Equity gap for disadvantaged pupils (wider in Rushcliffe)	Both, but sharper in 1b	Medium	High	Strengthened pupil premium strategy; cross-UA equity monitoring
Leadership/ capacity strain in Northern UA (esp. under 1e)	Option 1e	Medium	Medium	Build in dedicated capacity funding and joint improvement boards
Persistent underperformance in Mansfield & City	Both	High	High	Long-term DfE-backed improvement programme

NORTH - SOUTH

APPENDIX 4

THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ENGAGEMENT REPORT – PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES

The future of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Engagement report

September 2025

LGR | Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

public perspectives

Research, consultation and evaluation for the public and charitable sectors.

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The future of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Engagement report

Executive Summary

Introduction and background

1. Nottinghamshire is a two-tier area served by seven district and borough councils and a county council. The city of Nottingham is contained within the boundary of Nottinghamshire, with all council services in the area provided by Nottingham City Council, which is a unitary council. In total, nine different councils provide services across the county.
2. In February 2025, as part of the Government's local government reorganisation plans, it contacted local councils in areas such as Nottinghamshire to work together to draw up initial proposals to reduce the number of councils by replacing two-tier councils with larger unitary councils.
3. Following considering key criteria and a range of potential options, Nottinghamshire's councils submitted an interim proposal to Government in March 2025. They propose to create two new unitary councils that would be responsible for all council services in their areas and replace the existing nine councils.
4. An important part of the local government reorganisation process is engaging with residents and stakeholders. This report relates to an engagement exercise about the councils' proposals to replace the nine existing councils with new unitary councils, including different options for the configuration of the future councils. The councils have been supported to conduct the engagement process by independent organisation, Public Perspectives.
5. The results of the engagement exercise will be used to inform the development of the councils' final proposals for the future of local councils in Nottinghamshire, alongside a range of evidence. This must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025, and feedback on how any proposal will be taken forward for Nottingham is expected in 2026, and then subject to statutory consultation by Government.

Approach to the engagement

6. The engagement exercise was conducted over a six-week period ending on Sunday 14 September 2025.
7. The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity, including a dedicated website (lgrnotts.org), as well as outreach events and engagement with stakeholders.
8. The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats on request, such as paper copies, alongside e-mail, phone, BSL and translation support. The questionnaire is available at appendix 1.
9. Relatedly, four focus groups were conducted involving 34 local residents reflecting the diversity of Nottinghamshire and organised by urban and rural areas. These focus groups allowed the emerging findings from the engagement process to be unpacked and views about the proposals to be discussed in-depth, both adding further insight as well as

validating the findings from the engagement survey. The focus group discussion guide is available at appendix 2.

10. In total, the engagement questionnaire received 11,483 responses.

Key findings and points for consideration

Local area

11. **Sense of place and identity is layered** with respondents **anchoring their description to Nottingham City** (e.g. near Nottingham or north of Nottingham), **followed by Nottinghamshire (the county)**, and then **refined by naming specific towns** or local villages (especially for those areas further away from Nottingham City such as Mansfield, Newark and Worksop), or well-known areas/landmarks or **cultural references such as Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood.** There are also **occasional regional references** such as 'the middle of England' or the 'East Midlands'.

12. In more **rural areas**, respondents often emphasised the rurality e.g. 'a small village', 'the countryside'. In more **urban areas** they tended to reference 'the city' or the nearest town. Whilst there is a **tendency to look inwards within the county and towards Nottingham City** (especially for those areas bordering the city), some respondents in **areas that border other counties and major urban areas or landmarks will also make reference to these.** There are also tendencies to draw clear **distinctions between urban and rural areas and those that live in or near the city and those in other areas of Nottingham, while local authority names are not often used as reference points or forms of identity.**

13. Most respondents are **proud of their local area**, with respondents that live in the Rushcliffe, Gedling and Broxtowe council areas having higher levels of pride about their local area than other locations. There is a **distinction between being proud of their local areas, and satisfaction and advocacy of their local council**, regardless as to whether they hold positive perceptions or not of their council.

Effectiveness of the current council structure and services

14. **Over half of respondents said the current structure and approach to service delivery in councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is effective.** Respondents in Rushcliffe, Gedling and Broxtowe council areas have the highest ratings of effectiveness, while respondents in Nottingham City have the lowest.

15. Those rating the system **effective** tend to highlight **service reliability, local knowledge and responsiveness, local representation, and a sense that the current system is fit for purpose.** Those who said **neither effective or ineffective** often expressed **mixed experiences.** Those rating the system **ineffective** often emphasised issues related to a two-tier system such as **confusion, duplication, inefficiency, lack of joined-up/partnership working, political distrust, and inequity and inconsistency in services between different local councils**, with some advocating for change and unitary authorities.

Local Government Reorganisation in England

16. Respondents identified several **potential benefits** of the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils, with **efficiency and cost savings being the most common,** particularly through reduced duplication and streamlined services by forming unitary councils. Other perceived advantages included greater geographic and administrative coherence, a simpler and clearer council structure, improved coordination and joined-up working, enhanced service quality and outcomes, and fairer, more consistent access to services. However, around **one in five respondents were sceptical**, seeing no real benefits or expressing doubt about whether the potential benefits could be realised in practice, with slightly higher levels of scepticism in Rushcliffe and Broxtowe council areas.
17. The main **concerns** about the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils **centred on fears of urban–rural imbalance**, particularly that Nottingham City could dominate and rural areas would lose voice, priority, and tailored services. **Financial risks** were also a major worry, with doubts about high reorganisation costs, savings not being realised, or neighbouring areas having to cover Nottingham City's perceived financial struggles.
18. **Other key concerns included loss of local representation, accountability, and knowledge**, potential decline in service quality and disruption during transition, and **doubts about efficiency, with larger councils seen as possibly more bureaucratic.** Smaller proportions mentioned risks of job losses and staff disruption, politicisation and distrust of motives, and argued for reform within the current system or no change at all. Around 5% of respondents expressed no concerns. Concerns were broadly consistent across areas, but stronger in Rushcliffe and Broxtowe council areas, particularly regarding urban–rural imbalance and financial risks.
19. In addition, a few participants in the focus groups **questioned how the proposals align with wider reforms**, noting that the mix of regional devolution, other public bodies/offices, and new governance structures risks creating confusion rather than simplification. They felt the approach adds layers while removing others, leading to disruption, costs, and a system that remains just as complex.

Future councils

20. Respondents said that any new council should **focus on delivering good quality core and universal services/issues** such as roads and pavements, crime and anti-social behaviour, clean streets, and travel and transport, alongside **value for money and meeting local needs.**
21. Relatedly, respondents highlighted the **importance of involving residents in decision-making and local area/neighbourhood working** to ensure that future councils understand and are responsive to the needs of different communities and areas, including urban and rural (this was considered important in general and especially important in the context of larger unitary councils). Consequently, they want to see mechanisms in place to ensure this continues and thrives in future arrangements. This can include local area forums, research and consultation to identify local issues and priorities, engaging with local councillors, and working closely with town and parish councils as well as local community and voluntary groups. They also wanted engagement and consultation to be genuine and meaningful, leading to positive change.
22. Throughout the engagement results, there are differences in experience, perceptions and opinion by different demographic groups. The reasons for this are not unpicked in this report, although it highlights the **importance of understanding local issues and**

priorities and tailoring services and support to different communities (both equality groups, different localities and urban-rural communities) as part of any future arrangements.

Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

23. **Over half disagree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils from the existing nine to two new larger unitary councils**, with a relationship between perceived effectiveness of the current system and levels of agreement i.e. in other words, those that consider the current system ineffective are more likely to state there is a case for change. Respondents in Nottingham City are more likely to agree with the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two than respondents in other areas. In contrast, respondents in Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Gedling council areas are less likely to agree.
24. Those that **agreed tended to state that the proposals would reduce duplication, generate efficiencies and consequently lead to cost-savings**, while a smaller number also said that it would lead to a **simplification of the system and therefore improved accessibility.** This said, support was often conditional upon potential benefits being realised, including savings being re-invested into better services or lower council tax.
25. Those that disagreed are **concerned about fairness and equitability, especially in relation to an urban-rural imbalance.** Similarly, they are concerned about a **loss of local representation, knowledge and accountability**, and associated issues around **access to services and responsiveness to local issues.** Some respondents **oppose local government reorganisation in general**, with concerns that implementation will be disruptive, and **improvements and savings will not be achieved in practice.** There is also some **distrust about the motives** behind the proposals and **concern that neighbouring areas will inherit perceived financial and service delivery issues experienced by Nottingham City.** This said, it is **worth noting that the concerns were mainly about larger councils not necessarily moving to a unitary model.**

The Options

Option 1b

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Gedling (known as Option 1b). This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Rushcliffe. The second covering Gedling, Broxtowe, and Nottingham City.

26. Around half of respondents **expressed concerns about Option 1b, particularly that the proposed boundaries are illogical or unfair**, with some urban areas excluded (such as neighbouring urban areas with close links to the city, such as West Brigford) and rural areas included that lack alignment with Nottingham City (such as in some parts of Broxtowe Borough Council area). Many were also concerned about **perceived Nottingham City Council's financial and management issues**, fearing neighbouring areas could be drawn into these perceived problems, face higher council tax, or experience declining services, as well as **rural voices lost within a council dominated by Nottingham City** - concerns especially strong in Broxtowe and Gedling council areas.
27. Nonetheless, around one in ten respondents supported the option, but largely on the condition that it delivers genuine efficiencies, cost savings, and service improvements. This said, **some participants that live in Gedling Borough Council area were more agnostic**

about the option, given their proximity and relationship to Nottingham City. Participants living in other parts of Nottinghamshire had less to say about this option (or all the options) because they would not be in a council with Nottingham City. However, there were some concerns about **being in a large council covering such a large and diverse area.**

Option 1e

This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Gedling. The second covering Broxtowe, Nottingham City, and Rushcliffe.

28. **Option 1e received more support than 1b, with around a third of respondents viewing it positively or as the better of the two, particularly for its clearer North–South split and perceived geographic logic.** Nottingham City and Gedling respondents were more supportive than other respondents, though concerns remained about boundary choices, especially the inclusion of rural areas with little connection to the city (such as in the south of Rushcliffe Borough Council area) and exclusion of closer areas that were seen as more integrated with Nottingham City, such as some parts of Gedling Borough Council and Ashfield District Council.
29. **Consistent worries included perceptions about Nottingham City's financial challenges and the risk of neighbouring areas 'bailing it out', as well as rural–urban imbalance and loss of local voice**, particularly in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe council areas. Around one-in-ten opposed the option outright, questioning the evidence base and feasibility of benefits. Some respondents also suggested alternative models, such as a single county-wide council, a smaller city-focused unitary alongside a wider county council, or a three-council structure dividing north, south, and city areas.

Other considerations

30. Respondents often said they wanted **more information** to better understand the reasons for the proposals, the evidence base, and the potential benefits and challenges, highlighting the continued importance of effective communications.
31. They also want any **changes to be conducted seamlessly and with as little disruption as possible**, so that services and outcomes are not undermined and any potential benefits realised.

The future of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Engagement report

Main report

Section 1: Introduction

Introduction and background

1.1. Nottinghamshire is a two-tier area served by seven district and borough councils and a county council. The city of Nottingham is contained within the boundary of Nottinghamshire, with all council services in the area provided by Nottingham City Council, which is a unitary council. In total, nine different councils provide services across the county.

1.2. In February 2025, as part of the Government's local government reorganisation plans, it contacted local councils in areas such as Nottinghamshire to work together to draw up initial proposals to reduce the number of councils by replacing two-tier councils with larger unitary councils.

1.3. Following considering key criteria and a range of potential options, Nottinghamshire's councils submitted an interim proposal to Government in March 2025. They propose to create two new unitary councils that would be responsible for all council services in their areas and replace the existing nine councils.

1.4. An important part of the local government reorganisation process is engaging with residents and stakeholders. This report relates to an engagement exercise about the councils' proposals to replace the nine existing councils with new unitary councils, including different options for the configuration of the future councils. The councils have been supported to conduct the engagement process by independent organisation, Public Perspectives.

1.5. The results of the engagement exercise will be used to inform the development of the councils' final proposals for the future of local councils in Nottinghamshire, alongside a range of evidence. This must be submitted to Government by 28 November 2025, and feedback on how any proposal will be taken forward for Nottingham is expected in 2026, and then subject to statutory consultation by Government.

Approach to the engagement

1.6. The engagement exercise was conducted over a six-week period ending on Sunday 14 September 2025.

1.7. The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity, including a dedicated website (lgrnotts.org), and partner toolkits.

1.8. The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats on request, such as paper copies, alongside e-mail, phone, BSL and translation support. The questionnaire is available at appendix 1.

1.9. Local councils also supported some community outreach and engagement events, promoting the engagement exercise with residents and stakeholders, including businesses.

1.10. In addition, local councils drew-up a list of key stakeholders who were directly contacted and invited to participate in the engagement exercise. This included town and parish councils, VCSE organisations and local businesses, as well as strategic and pan-Nottinghamshire organisations.

1.11. Relatedly, four focus groups were conducted involving 34 local residents reflecting the diversity of Nottinghamshire and organised by urban and rural areas. These focus groups allowed the emerging findings from the engagement process to be unpacked and views about the proposals to be discussed in-depth, both adding further insight as well as validating the findings from the engagement survey. The focus group discussion guide is available at appendix 2.

1.12. In total, the engagement questionnaire received 11,483 responses.

1.13. The following table summarises the background of respondents:

Figure 1.1: Background of respondent*

A resident living in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire	96%
Someone who works in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire	26%
A voluntary or community organisation	1%
A Town or Parish Council	1%
A District / Borough / City / County Council employee	7%
Another public sector organisation	0%
A local councillor	1%
A business owner or business leader operating in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire	2%
Other	1%

*Respondents could select more than one answer, hence why responses add up to over 100%.

1.14. The following table shows the local council area in which respondents live and compares this to the population sizes in each local council area. As is the nature with self-selecting/open-access questionnaires, the responses are not proportional to the population sizes in each of the local council areas.[1] Consequently, the results are analysed (and in some cases presented) both as they are and also re-weighted to be in-line with the population sizes in each local council area.

Figure 1.2: Location of respondents

Location	Respondents	Population*
Ashfield District Council area	5%	11%
Bassetlaw District Council area	9%	10.3%
Broxtowe Borough Council area	22%	9.7%
Gedling Borough Council area	16%	10.2%
Mansfield District Council area	4%	9.6%
Newark and Sherwood District Council area	7%	10.7%
Nottingham City Council area	10%	28.2%
Rushcliffe Borough Council area	26%	10.4%
Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	2%	N/A

*Based on Census 2021.

[1] The level of response is influenced, in part, by the degree to which the proposals and options may affect a local council area.

1.15. There is a spread of responses across different demographic groups, albeit a skew towards older and more affluent groups, which is common in self-selecting/open-access questionnaires such as this.

Figure 1.3: Demographic profile of respondents (only asked to those that live in Nottinghamshire)

Sex	
Female	49%
Male	45%
Another term	0%
Prefer not to say	5%
Age	
Under 18	0%
18-24	1%
25-34	7%
35-44	13%
45-54	18%
55-64	23%
65 and over	31%
Prefer not to say	7%
Disability	
Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a lot	6%
Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a little	10%
Yes, but they don't reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities at all	10%
No	64%
Prefer not to say	10%
Ethnicity	
White British-Irish	82%
Non-White British-Irish	7%
Prefer not to say	11%
Housing situation	
Owner-occupier	80%
Privately renting	5%
Renting from the council or housing association	4%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	9%

Reporting

1.16. The rest of this report presents the key findings from the engagement questionnaire and focus groups. The results have been analysed against all demographic and key variables/questions to identify any important differences in opinion between different groups. In particular, the focus is on geography i.e. the local council area respondents live in.

1.17. In addition, the open-ended comments received in the questionnaire have been reviewed and key themes presented in the report.

1.18. The focus group insights are integrated alongside the engagement questionnaire findings, including exemplifying quotes.

1.19. The report is organised in-keeping with the structure of the engagement questionnaire and focus groups, as follows:

- Section 2: Your local area
- Section 3: The current way councils are organised in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- Section 4: Local Government Reorganisation in England
- Section 5: Future councils
- Section 6: Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Section 2: Your local area

Introduction

2.1. This section presents findings about respondents' views on their local area, including movement across the county, sense of place and council services/priorities.

Where is your main place of work or study? by Which council area do you live in?

Respondents tend to work or study in areas closest to where they live, while notable proportions that live outside Nottingham work or study in the city, especially those council areas that border it

2.2. Respondents tend to work or study in the same council areas they live in, especially those that live in Nottingham City (69%), Bassetlaw (68%) and Newark and Sherwood (61%) council areas.

2.3. Notable proportions that live outside Nottingham work or study in the city, especially those council areas that border it (Gedling – 33%, Broxtowe – 29%, Rushcliffe – 24% and Ashfield - 23%).

2.4. In addition, there are also notable proportions that work or study across the county. Similarly, there are notable proportions that work or study outside of the county, especially those council areas that neighbour other counties or urban areas (Bassetlaw – 17%, Broxtowe – 17% and Rushcliffe – 15%).

Figure 2.1: Movement across Nottinghamshire

	Council area live in							
Main place of work or study	**Ashfield**	**Bassetlaw**	**Broxtowe**	**Gedling**	**Mansfield**	**Newark and Sherwood**	**Notting-ham**	**Rushcliffe**
Ashfield District Council area	**47%**	1%	2%	3%	9%	2%	1%	0%
Bassetlaw District Council area	1%	**68%**	0%	1%	3%	4%	0%	0%
Broxtowe Borough Council area	3%	0%	**43%**	3%	1%	1%	4%	2%
Gedling Borough Council area	3%	1%	2%	**40%**	4%	3%	3%	2%
Mansfield District Council area	9%	3%	1%	2%	**52%**	5%	1%	1%
Newark and Sherwood District Council area	2%	4%	0%	3%	6%	**61%**	1%	2%
Nottingham City Council area	**23%**	**2%**	**29%**	**33%**	**4%**	**8%**	**69%**	**24%**
Rushcliffe Borough Council area	2%	0%	3%	5%	2%	2%	7%	**48%**
Across all of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	12%	8%	10%	13%	17%	10%	9%	11%
Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	9%	17%	17%	7%	10%	8%	10%	15%

Number of respondents: 7,658 (excludes respondents that do not study or work currently – 33%).

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

(Non-weighted results i.e. the results have not been changed to reflect the actual population sizes of a local council area. This is the case for all graphs and tables in this report. The weighted results, where presented, are referenced in separate paragraphs and clearly indicated).

How do you describe where you're from when talking to someone who doesn't live nearby? Which names or places do you mention?

Residents tend to anchor their description to Nottingham City and/or Nottinghamshire, with further mention of nearby towns or villages as well as well-known landmarks or cultural references

2.5. Respondents were asked how they describe where they are from when talking to someone who does not live nearby (only asked to respondents that live in Nottinghamshire – 10,945 responses). In summary, across Nottinghamshire **sense of place and identity is layered** with respondents **anchoring their description to Nottingham City** (e.g. near Nottingham or north of Nottingham), **followed by Nottinghamshire (the county)**, and then **refined by naming specific towns** or local villages (especially for those areas further away from Nottingham City such as Mansfield, Newark and Worksop), or well-known areas/landmarks or **cultural references such as Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood.**

2.6. There are also **occasional regional references** such as 'the middle of England' or the 'East Midlands'. In more **rural areas**, respondents often emphasis the rurality e.g. 'a small village', 'the countryside'. In more **urban areas** they will tend reference 'the city' or the nearest town. Whilst there is a **tendency to look inwards within the county and towards Nottingham City** (especially for those areas bordering the city), some respondents in **areas that border other counties and major urban areas or landmarks will also make reference to these.**

2.7. The following summarises the responses by each council area:

Ashfield District Council area

- Anchor to Nottingham plus local towns: Sutton-in-Ashfield, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Hucknall, and also nearby Mansfield.
- Some wider mention of being part of Nottinghamshire County.
- Strong references to Robin Hood/Sherwood Forest connections.
- Directional framing ("north of Nottingham").

Bassetlaw District Council area

- Reference to key towns such as in or near Worksop or Retford.
- Occasional reference to being part of Nottinghamshire, alongside references to nearby Sheffield and Doncaster (due to proximity to South Yorkshire) (and more likely to reference these areas and look northwards than southwards to Nottingham City).
- Also mentions of Sherwood Forest as a notable local landmark.
- Some occasional mention of 'Bassetlaw' highlighting a sense of identity linked to the local council area.
- Also mentions of rurality and specific villages.

Broxtowe Borough Council area

- Nottingham City is commonly mentioned as an anchor reference point, for example ‘near Nottingham’.
- This is accompanied by local identifiers of nearby towns such as Beeston, Eastwood, Kimberley, Stapleford, as well as rural areas, suburban areas and villages such as Bramcote, Chilwell and Nuthall.
- There is also occasional reference to IKEA as a landmark.

Gedling Borough Council area

- A common anchor point is reference to Nottingham, for example ‘just north of Nottingham’, ‘just outside Nottingham’ or ‘near Nottingham’.
- Local towns and areas are also commonly reference in conjunction with reference to the city, such as Arnold, Carlton and Mapperley.

Mansfield District Council area

- Strong and primary emphasis on Mansfield as the main identifier, given its eponymous nature, history/heritage, and dominance of, and largest town within, the district.
- Some lesser references to Warsop as a smaller town in the district or Woodhouse.
- Frequent associated references to nearby Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood heritage.
- Nottingham City is also occasionally mentioned, but often in a secondary manner. For example, ‘I live in Mansfield, a few miles north of Nottingham’.

Newark and Sherwood District Council area

- Newark-on-Trent is often referenced as an anchor point given its relative size, the main town in the area and where the council offices are located.
- Southwell (and sometimes the racecourse) and Ollerton are also mentioned. Depending on location, Mansfield is also sometimes mentioned as too Nottingham City itself, often as secondary markers. There is also occasional secondary mention of ‘near Lincoln’, depending on proximity.
- Landmark and cultural references are commonly made to Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood.

Nottingham City Council area

- The core reference is unsurprisingly Nottingham itself, with follow-up reference to specific locations within the city.
- There is sometimes secondary mention of wider landmarks, regional and cultural references such as Nottinghamshire, East Midlands or Robin Hood.

Rushcliffe Borough Council area

- Nottingham City is a common anchor reference, often framed as relative to 'the south of Nottingham'.
- There is often follow-up reference to specific towns and areas as a key local identifier, especially West Bridgford as the largest town in the area.
- Other notable areas mentioned include Bingham, Cotgrave, Radcliffe-on-Trent and Ruddington.
- There are also sometimes references to 'Rushcliffe' or near the 'River Trent'.
- Further south in the district into more rural areas such as Keyworth and East Leake there is less reference to Nottingham City and more reference to the wider county and/or rurality, as well as some reference to large nearby towns outside of the county, such as Loughborough.

Focus group insight:

The focus groups validate the points raised through the engagement survey about layered identity and sense of place, with **clear distinctions between urban and rural areas and those that live in or near the city and those in other areas of Nottingham:**

"I say I'm from Nottingham first, which most people have heard about and reflects how I feel about myself. If I need to clarify even further I might say Nottinghamshire, East Midlands or just the middle of England." *Urban participant*

"I say that I live near Nottingham. I'm on the outskirts and I don't really feel like I live in the city itself, but it's a good reference point and at the end of the day I spend quite a bit of time in Nottingham and I'm happy to be associated with it." *Urban participant*

"Not everyone has heard of Newark-on-Trent, so I might say that and follow it up by saying Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood, most people have heard of those." *Urban participant*

"I live in a small village in a rural area. I'm guess I'm not a million miles away from the city, but I definitely don't feel like I come from Nottingham or an urban area. But I do feel like I'm from Nottinghamshire and that's normally what I tell people." *Rural participant*

Focus group participants tended to say that they **do not specifically identify with their local authority in itself or would not typically use it as a reference point:**

"I live near Mansfield and that's how I'd introduce myself, but I wouldn't go as far as to say I live in Mansfield District." *Urban participant*

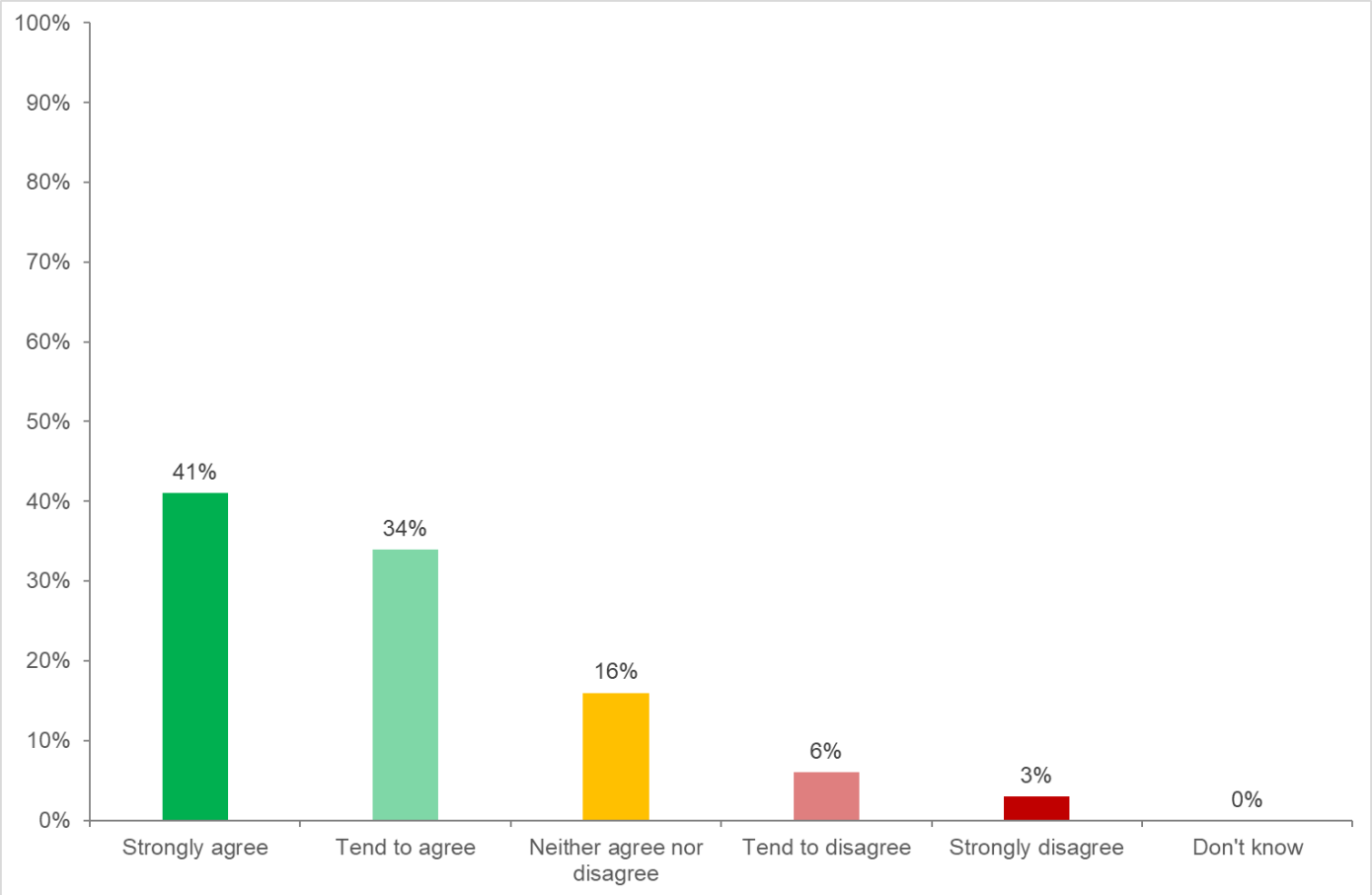
"I pay my council tax to Rushcliffe Borough Council. I'm pretty happy with them. But I don't say to people I'm from Rushcliffe or that I live in Rushcliffe Borough Council area. I only reference them if I'm talking about council stuff, like services, council tax or voting." *Rural participant*

To what extent do you agree or disagree that you are proud to live in your local area?

Three-quarters of respondents said they are proud to live in their local area with notable variation by council area

2.8. 75% of respondents are proud to live in their local area including 41% that strongly agree. Only 9% disagree.

Figure 2.2: Proud to live in local area



Number of respondents: 11,206 (only asked to respondents that live in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire).

Focus group insight:

The focus group participants highlighted a **distinction between being proud of their local areas and satisfaction and advocacy of their local council**, regardless as to whether they hold positive perceptions or not of their council:

"I like my local area, I like living here, but that's got nothing to do with whether I think my council are doing a good job or not. There's been lots of reported issues about the City Council and there's been issues that we've experienced, but I still enjoy living in the city and I'm proud to say I'm from Nottingham." *Urban participant*

"I think my council does a good job, in general. But when I think about my local area I don't really think about the council. They can affect my enjoyment of living here because if it's well looked after it improves my quality of life. But the reason I like living here is because of lots of other things specific to the area such as the location, ruralness and being close to lots of different places and attractions." *Rural participant*

2.9. Respondents that live in Rushcliffe (91% proud), Gedling (79% proud) and Broxtowe (78% proud) council areas have higher levels of pride about their local area than other locations, especially Mansfield council area (43% proud).

Figure 2.3: Proud to live in local area by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
Strongly agree	21%	26%	41%	40%	17%	32%	25%	63%
Tend to agree	33%	32%	37%	39%	26%	38%	35%	28%
Neither agree nor disagree	24%	24%	16%	17%	30%	20%	20%	7%
Tend to disagree	14%	10%	4%	3%	18%	7%	11%	1%
Strongly disagree	8%	8%	1%	1%	9%	3%	9%	0%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

2.10. Consequently, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottinghamshire there is a change in the levels of pride in a downwards direction (as the locations with higher levels of pride have responded in greater numbers relative to their population size). The re-weighted data has 65% of respondents agreeing that they are proud and 15% disagreeing:

- Strongly agree: 31%
- Tend to agree: 34%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 20%
- Tend to disagree: 9%
- Strongly disagree: 6%
- Don’t know: 0%

2.11. Respondents with lower levels of pride are:

- Aged 18-25: 58% proud compared with 75% of older respondents.
- People living with a disability: 70% proud compared with 78% of other respondents.
- Private and social renters: 65% proud compared with 77% of owner-occupiers.

Thinking generally, what would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live? And what are your priorities for improvement in the local area?

Core and universal services/issues such as roads and pavements, crime and anti-social behaviour, clean streets, and travel and transport are key priorities

2.12. 71% of respondents said that maintaining roads and pavements are the priority for improvement (and also second top cited as making somewhere a good place to live – cited by 83%).

2.13. 64% of respondents said crime and anti-social behaviour are priorities for improvement (third top cited as making somewhere a good place to live – cited by 81%).

2.14. 57% of respondents said clean streets are a priority, which is top cited as making somewhere a good place to live by 85% of respondents.

2.15. 53% noted public transport, roads and parking as priorities for improvement (also fourth cited as making somewhere a good place to live – cited by 80% of respondents).

2.16. Other core and universal services/issues such as refuse collection and recycling (cited by 40% as a priority for improvement), parks, sports and leisure facilities (42%) and health services (46%) also standout.

Figure 2.4: Important aspects in making somewhere a good place to live and priorities for improvement

	Making somewhere a good place to live (11,173)	Priority for improvement (11,123)
Keeping the streets and public areas clean and tidy	85%	57%
Maintaining roads and pavements	83%	71%
Tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing crime	81%	64%
Public transport, roads and parking	80%	53%
Refuse collection and recycling	77%	40%
Parks, sports and leisure facilities	77%	42%
Health services such as mental health services and promoting healthy lifestyles	68%	46%
Schools and places of learning	67%	32%
Decent and affordable homes	64%	35%
Support and services for older people and vulnerable groups	62%	37%
Activities and facilities for children and young people	61%	30%
Regeneration of town centres / high streets, including shops and markets	59%	41%
Jobs and supporting people into work	58%	32%
Community events and activities and supporting local community groups	58%	25%
Arts and cultural services such as theatres and museums	44%	16%
Supporting residents to reduce their impact on the environment	37%	20%

Numbers in brackets are the number of respondents to each question (only asked to respondents that live in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire). Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

2.17. In the ‘other’ responses, approximately 2-3% mentioned the importance of ‘sense of community’, while a similar proportion said a priority is increasing ‘community voice’ to influence decision-making and an associated improvement in governance of local councils and areas.

2.18. Whilst there are variations by council area (and also other demographics), these are not notable and the order of importance/priority is similar. Consequently, for succinctness, these are not presented in this report (although they are available in a separate document).

Focus group insight:

The focus groups reiterated the importance of **good quality core services and value for money**, and that these should be the priorities for any future council:

> “It isn’t rocket science. Councils spend lots of money on lots of things that often don’t matter to local people. All I really want my council to do is get the basics right – keep the streets clean, pick up my bins and don’t leave a mess when you do it, get rid of potholes and keep me and my family safe. Anything else on top of this is a bonus, but I’d rather pay a lower council tax than see money wasted on vanity projects.” *Urban participant*

Section 3: The current way councils are organised in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Introduction

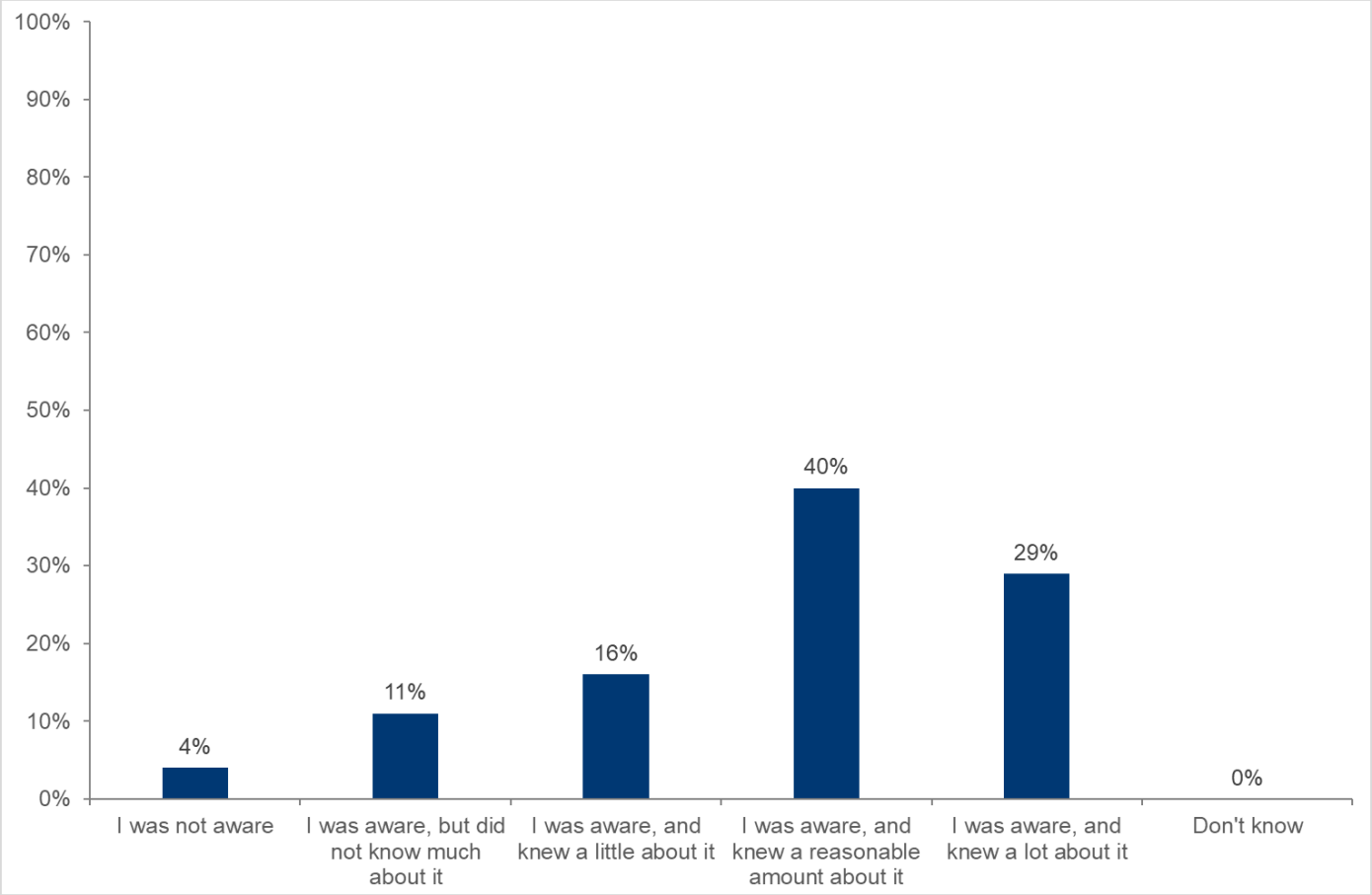
3.1. This section presents findings about the current ways councils are organised in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including awareness and knowledge, and perceptions of effectiveness.

Before today, how aware were you of the current structure of councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and the services each council provides?

Most respondents were aware of the current structure of councils and the different services delivered, and had varying levels of knowledge

3.2. 96% of respondents were aware of the current structure of councils, including 29% that knew a lot about it, 40% a reasonable amount, 16% a little and 11% not much about it. 4% were not aware of the current structure of councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire before responding to the engagement survey.

Figure 3.1: Awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils



Number of respondents: 11,424.

Focus group insight:

Participants in the focus groups had **varying levels of awareness and knowledge** of the current structure of councils in their area, including the two-tier system. In several cases this was **limited to an awareness that their council tax is shared between two councils** (in the case of non-Nottingham City residents), while others said their **use of services had made them aware, albeit also often confusing:**

"I know that my council tax goes to both my District Council and the County Council. I think I know why and what each does, but don't test me. It can be a little confusing." *Rural participant*

"I've had to deal with both councils during my time for different services, including the county council for social services. I'd say I'm now quite knowledgeable about it, but that's been hard won through bitter experience of having to navigate around the system." *Rural participant*

"I know that Nottingham City delivers all services in the area, but what relationship does it have with the county and the neighbouring district and borough councils? It's always felt a bit odd. It's like the City is an island in amongst all these other councils. It doesn't feel that joined-up when you think about it." *Urban participant*

3.3. Respondents in Gedling (98% aware including 75% with at least reasonable knowledge), Rushcliffe (also 98% aware including 74% with at least reasonable knowledge) and Ashfield (96% aware including 72% with at least reasonable knowledge) are most awareness and knowledgeable. Respondents in Bassetlaw are least aware and knowledgeable (92% aware including 56% with at least reasonable knowledge).

Figure 3.2: Awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
I was not aware	4%	8%	5%	2%	6%	7%	5%	2%
I was aware, but did not know much about it	9%	17%	12%	7%	11%	11%	12%	9%
I was aware, and knew a little about it	14%	17%	19%	15%	15%	13%	16%	15%
I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it	37%	34%	41%	43%	31%	36%	37%	43%
I was aware, and knew a lot about it	35%	22%	23%	32%	36%	33%	30%	31%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

3.4. There are some minor changes when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire:

- Not aware: 5%
- Not know much: 11%
- Know a little: 16%
- Know a reasonable amount: 38%
- Know a lot: 30%
- Don’t know: 0%

3.5. Respondents with lower levels of awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils and the different services delivered are:

- Women: 25% know a lot compared with 33% of men.
- Aged under 35: 62% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 69% of older respondents.
- Non-White British-Irish: 57% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 69% of other respondents.
- Private renters and social renters: 61% of private renters and 51% of social renters know at least a reasonable amount compared with 70% of owner-occupiers.

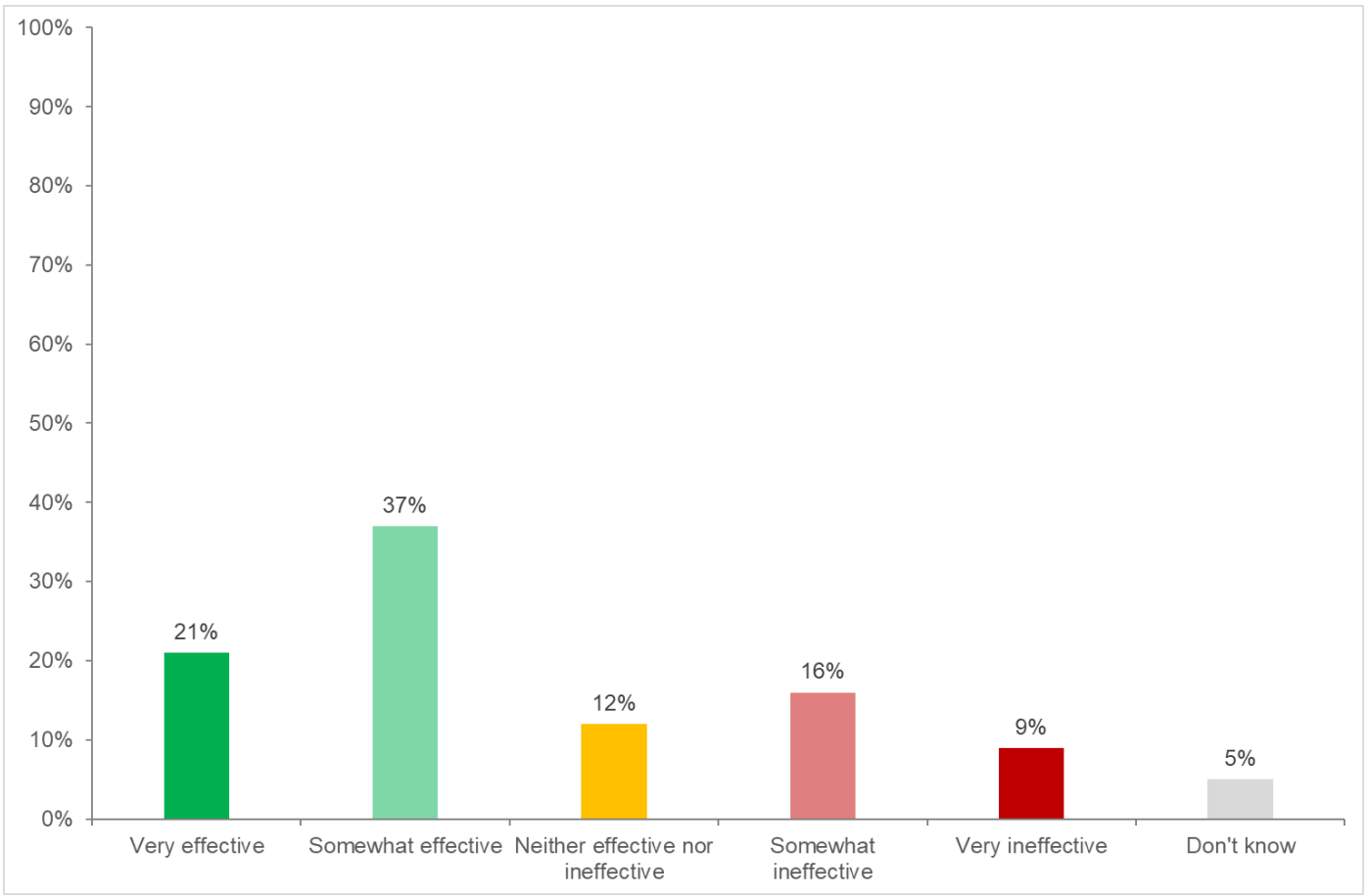
How effective is the current structure of councils and the approach to service delivery in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire?

Over half of respondents said the current structure and approach to service delivery in councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is effective with some variations by area

3.6. 58% of respondents said the current structure and approach to service delivery is at least somewhat effective, including 21% that said it is very effective. A quarter said it is at least somewhat ineffective, including 9% that said it is very ineffective.

3.7. Respondents that knew at least a reasonable amount about the current structure and approach to service delivery (63%) are more likely to say that the current system is effective compared to respondents with less awareness or knowledge (48%).

Figure 3.3: Effectiveness of the current structure and approach to service delivery



Number of respondents: 11,413.

3.8. Respondents in Rushcliffe (72% effective), Gedling (65% effective) and Broxtowe (63% effective) council areas have the highest ratings of effectiveness, while respondents in Nottingham City have the lowest (26% effective).

Figure 3.4: Effectiveness of the current structure and approach to service delivery by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
Very effective	14%	11%	24%	22%	10%	15%	5%	31%
Somewhat effective	40%	32%	39%	43%	34%	38%	21%	41%
Neither effective nor ineffective	14%	16%	13%	12%	17%	15%	15%	9%
Somewhat ineffective	16%	21%	12%	14%	20%	20%	33%	11%
Very ineffective	11%	14%	5%	7%	15%	8%	22%	5%
Don't know	4%	6%	6%	3%	5%	5%	5%	4%

3.9. Consequently, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottinghamshire there is a change in the results with levels of effectiveness decreasing (as the locations with higher ratings of effectiveness have responded in greater numbers relative to their population size). The re-weighted data is more polarised with 47% of respondents rating the current system as effective and 34% ineffective:

- Very effective: 14%
- Somewhat effective: 33%
- Neither effective nor ineffective: 14%
- Somewhat ineffective: 21%
- Very ineffective: 13%
- Don’t know: 5%

3.10. Respondents that rated lower the effectiveness of the current system are:

- Aged under 25: 46% rate the current system as effective compared with 58% of older respondents.
- Private and social renters: 49% rate the current system as effective compared with 59% of owner-occupiers.

3.11. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the reasons behind their perceptions about effectiveness with 59% of respondents providing further explanation. In summary, those rating the system **effective** tend to highlight **service reliability, local knowledge and responsiveness, local representation, and a sense that the current system is fit for purpose.** Those who said **neither effective or ineffective** often expressed **mixed experiences, or uncertainty/lack of clarity.** Those rating the system **ineffective** emphasised **confusion, duplication, inefficiency, lack of joined-up/partnership working, political distrust, and inequity and inconsistency in services between different local councils**, with some advocating for change and unitary authorities.

3.12. The following provides more detail on the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for rating the current system as effective:

- **Satisfaction with services** (cited by approximately 15% of respondents): Service provision is generally considered effective and satisfactory including key services such as bin collections, highways maintenance, and schools working well.
- **Local knowledge and responsiveness** (cited by approximately 10%)**:** Smaller/more localised councils such as District/Borough councils allow services to be tailored to local need and priorities, and be more aware of, and responsive to, issues as they emerge at the neighbourhood level.
- **Representation** (cited by approximately 5%)**:** Councils are closer to their communities and there is greater local accountability and political representation, reflecting local needs/priorities.
- **Familiarity, stability and continuity** (cited by approximately 2-3%): The current approach works sufficiently well and does not need to change, just potentially improved in-situ.

Reasons for rating the current system as neither effective nor ineffective:

- **Mixed experiences and views** (cited by approximately 5% of respondents): Some services/aspects work well and others could be improved. This includes an appreciation that there is scope for change and improvement, allied with concerns that change could be disruptive or not lead to positive benefits in practice.
- **Lack of knowledge, information or understanding of the current structure or approach to services** (cited by approximately 2-3%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding effectiveness.

Reasons for rating the current system as ineffective:

- **Service delivery issues** (cited by approximately 10% of respondents): Mixed experiences of service delivery and quality, with scope for improvement.
- **Duplication and inefficiency** (cited by approximately 5%): The two-tier structure is inefficient with resource duplication between councils, unnecessary tiers of management and staffing resulting in wasted resources, added bureaucracy and negative consequences for service delivery/quality as well as cost-effectiveness.
- **Confusion** (cited by approximately 5%): The two-tier structure makes the system difficult to navigate, as well as creating a lack of accountability between councils.
- **Joined-up/partnership working** (cited by approximately 5%): The current two-tier system makes coordination challenging between councils and partners across the different tiers of local government, with scope to improve partnership working.

- **Political concerns** (cited by approximately 2-3%): Undercurrent of distrust of politics and politicians, surfacing mainly around planning decisions, fairness of service allocation, and perceptions of political agendas overriding residents' needs.
- **Inequity and lack of consistency** (cited by approximately 2-3%): Experiences of inconsistent services depending on location and challenges accessing services in neighbouring areas, as well as some concerns around a bias to service provision in urban areas compared to more rural areas.

Focus group insight:

Focus group participants shared similar views about the effectiveness of the current system to those expressed by respondents in the engagement survey, **driven by their personal experience of the councils and their services.** These views tended to be **dominated by perceived concerns about Nottingham City council's finances and services** and their impact on neighbouring areas. There was also reference to **inconsistent services, parochialism and calls for more joined-up and partnership working:**

> "It is confusing about who you should speak with about any given issue, the district council, the city council or the county council or all of them. I've learnt to know who does what and navigate the system, but I think there's scope for change." *Rural participant*

> "When you think about Nottingham City Council you can't say that the current approach works. There's been mismanagement, its financially bankrupt and my fear is that there will be a ripple effect on its neighbouring areas, especially if there is local government reorganisation. It's not a good advert for a unitary council or forming a new council with Nottingham City council at its head." *Urban participant*

> "I generally feel like my council does a reasonable job, but I've seen it professionally where I've been able to get services for one client from their council, but not for someone else who lives in a neighbouring council. It's a bit like a postcode lottery, so I'd like to see more consistency in service provision and it to be easier to access those services so that you don't have to speak to lots of different people." *Urban participant*

> "The day-to-day is fine, but I do question some of the decisions that are made. On one level it is nice to have a local council that feels close to the community, but some of the decisions feel a bit parochial, and possibly even overly self-interested, especially around planning decisions or pet projects of councillors. It feels a bit inward looking and I'd like to see the council be more innovative and outward facing, working closely with other councils and partners." *Rural participant*

One point focus group participants tended to share is that they felt it **important that their council is coherent geographically and focussed on their local community:**

> "One thing I like about the current system is that it feels like your council is working for you, is focussed on your area and your issues. Mansfield council is a good example, it is a fairly small council and is focussed on those that live in Mansfield and the surrounding areas." *Urban participant*

Section 4: Local Government Reorganisation in England

Introduction

4.1. This section presents findings about the Government's plans for reorganisation of local government across the country, including awareness and knowledge, and perceptions about these plans.

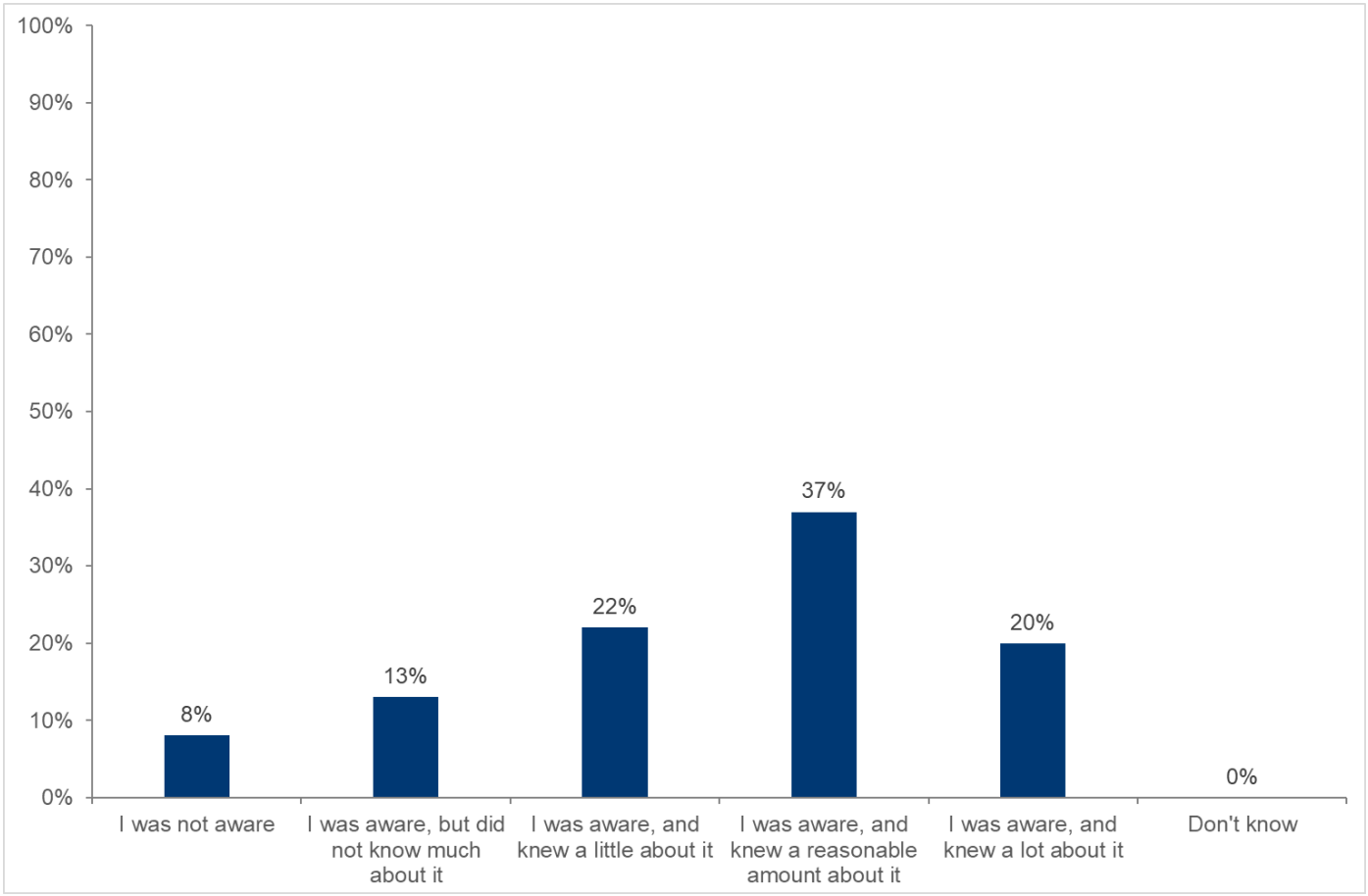
Before today, how aware were you about the Government's plans to reorganise local councils across England?

Most respondents are aware of the reorganisation of councils across England, including over half that have at least reasonable knowledge about it

4.2. 92% of respondents are aware of the reorganisation of councils across England, including 20% that knew a lot about it, 37% a reasonable amount, 22% a little and 13% not much about it. 8% were not aware at all before responding to the engagement survey.

4.3. There is a close relationship between awareness and knowledge of the current structure of councils and that of the reorganisation of councils across England. For example, 50% that were not aware of the current structure of councils are also not aware of the reorganisation of councils. Similarly, 54% that were aware and know a lot about the current structure of local councils are also equally aware and knowledgeable about the reorganisation of councils across England.

Figure 4.1: Awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England



Number of respondents: 11,429.

Focus group insight:

The focus group participants had **mixed levels of awareness and knowledge about local government reorganisation in England**, with most awareness and knowledge generated through this engagement process and associated communications. Awareness and knowledge tended to be **greatest amongst participants in areas that are perhaps most affected by the proposals.** Prior awareness was also linked with the wider devolution agenda, including the formation of the East Midlands Combined County Authority:

"I wasn't aware about any of this until you invited me to attend the focus group." *Urban participant*

"I had some awareness, but only really vaguely. I'd seen something on social media about it." *Urban participant*

"I'd heard of devolution and all that previously, but only really found out about local government reorganisation when I heard more about it from my council. Once I heard that we may be joining Nottingham I spent some time getting familiar with the issues as they directly affect me and my family." *Rural participant*

"There was that consultation around the East Midlands regional authority a few years ago, so I was aware of what's going on in general, but I can't say I knew much about these specific plans until just recently." *Rural participant*

4.4. Respondents in Rushcliffe (96% aware including 64% with at least reasonable knowledge) and Gedling (96% aware including 62% with at least reasonable knowledge) are most aware and knowledgeable. Respondents in Bassetlaw are least aware and knowledgeable (78% aware including 37% with at least reasonable knowledge).

Figure 4.2: Awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
I was not aware	8%	22%	8%	4%	14%	9%	9%	4%
I was aware, but did not know much about it	15%	19%	15%	12%	13%	16%	14%	10%
I was aware, and knew a little about it	19%	21%	24%	22%	22%	21%	22%	22%
I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it	37%	25%	36%	40%	28%	34%	37%	42%
I was aware, and knew a lot about it	20%	12%	17%	22%	22%	21%	18%	22%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

4.5. There are some minor changes when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire:

- Not aware: 9%
- Not know much: 14%
- Know a little: 22%
- Know a reasonable amount: 35%
- Know a lot: 19%
- Don’t know: 0%

4.6. Respondents with lower levels of awareness and knowledge of local government reorganisation across England are:

- Women: 51% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 62% of men.
- Aged under 25: 79% are aware compared with 92% of older respondents.
- Non-White British-Irish: 49% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 56% of other respondents.
- People living with a disability that affects their day-to-day activities a lot or a little: 49% know at least a reasonable amount compared with 57% of other respondents.
- Private renters and social renters: 49% of private renters and 39% of social renters know at least a reasonable amount compared with 57% of owner-occupiers.

What do you think are the main potential benefits, if any, of the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils?

Potential benefits include efficiency and cost savings, geographic coherence, a simpler and clearer system and more joined-up working

4.7. Reduced duplication, efficiency and cost savings are the dominant perceived benefits, while scepticism/no benefits form the second largest cluster. Other themes like geographical coherence, simplification, joined-up working, improved services and fairness also stand-out, albeit in lesser numbers:

- **Efficiency and cost savings** (cited by approximately 35% of respondents): Respondents frequently highlighted the potential for reducing duplication, achieving greater efficiencies and consequently saving money by moving to larger unitary councils (although some also questioned whether these savings would be reinvested into local areas, public services or reduced council tax).
- **Geographic / administrative coherence** (cited by approximately 15%): Some respondents noted the opportunity to bring areas under a clearer, more consistent administrative structure, which reflects the way people live and move across the county, by bringing council areas together into larger bodies.
- **Simplification / clarity of councils and access to services** (cited by approximately 10%): These respondents consider benefits in having a single unitary council to contact, resulting in improved access to services, ease of navigation around the council system, and consequently also clearer accountability.
- **Better coordination, joined-up services and partnership working** (cited by approximately 10%): Some see value in larger councils promoting better coordination of services and joined-up decision making and working in areas managed by a single council. Relatedly, some also consider this could lead to better partnership working between the larger unitary councils and other public bodies.
- **Improved services and outcomes** (cited by approximately 5%): A smaller, albeit notable, proportion of respondents felt these changes would lead to improved service quality and delivery, and better social outcomes because of the above noted potential for efficiencies and joined-up decision-making and services, and partnership working, as well as scope for further investment in local areas and services due to cost savings.
- **Fairness and equitability** (cited by approximately 2-3%): A smaller group of respondents suggested that the proposals could lead to a fairer and more equitable system as a single, larger unitary council could result in more consistency around access to, and quality of, services and support. Relatedly, some also said it could result in a more considered and cohesive approach to tackling inequalities across a larger area.

4.8. However, approximately 20% of respondents were **sceptical about the proposals** for local government reorganisation stating they could see **no real benefits, expressing doubt or outright opposition.**

4.9. The findings are broadly **consistent across different areas and demographics**, albeit with slightly greater scepticism amongst respondents in Rushcliffe and Broxtowe council areas.

What concerns, if any, do you have about the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils?

Respondents are concerned about urban-rural imbalance and the financial risks of local government reorganisation, as well as loss of local representation, accountability and knowledge

4.10. Urban–rural imbalance was the biggest single concern amongst respondents with costs/financial risks and loss of representation also consistently high mentions. These issues feed into concerns about service disruption and decline:

- **Geographic / urban–rural imbalance** (cited by approximately 35% of respondents): Strong concerns about Nottingham City in particular as the major urban centre in the county dominating rural locations in neighbouring council areas. This includes a concern that larger councils will not be able to tailor services to suit rural areas and that rural areas will receive inconsistent service provision or be deprioritised (loss of rural voice) compared to urban areas, as well as suffer from some of the challenges in urban areas and councils currently serving those areas. This view is heightened in areas surrounding Nottingham City, especially Broxtowe and Rushcliffe. Relatedly, some respondents suggested that Nottingham City could be a separate council in its own right to avoid some of these concerns and provide services specific to an urban area.
- **Financial risks** (cited by approximately 25%): Worries that reorganisation would be expensive and potentially not achieve the projected savings in the longer-term. Similarly, there are concerns that reorganisation could be used to bail out councils that are perceived to be struggling financially, especially Nottingham City, which in turn could lead to increased council tax and/or worse services in neighbouring areas.
- **Concerns over efficiency and complexity** (cited by approximately 10%): Related, there is scepticism that larger councils will be more efficient, simpler to navigate and improve access to services but rather in practice would add complexity and bureaucracy (and costs due to inefficiencies and waste).
- **Loss of local representation, accountability and knowledge** (cited by approximately 20%): Merging councils could increase the distance between decision-makers and communities, diluting residents' voices and reducing accountability and local connections. This could result in less responsive and tailored services to meet local needs and priorities, as well as a system and services that will be harder to navigate and access.
- **Service quality decline** (cited by approximately 15%): Linked to the above points, specific concerns that bigger councils would stretch services, reduce responsiveness, and worsen frontline delivery. Similarly, some respondents are concerned about the complexity of merging councils, which could lead to confusion and disruption, affecting service quality in the short-term.
- **Job losses / staffing concerns** (cited by approximately 5%): Relatedly, some respondents noted risks of redundancies, loss of experienced staff, and disruption to council workforces, in turn affecting services. This concern was shared between both residents and staff currently working in local councils with the latter explicitly concerned about their own jobs.

- **Politicisation** (cited by approximately 5%): A few respondents questioned whether these proposals are about political parties using reorganisation to consolidate power, or about democracy being weakened.
- **Preference for reform within existing structure** (cited by approximately 2-3%): As a result of the above concerns, some respondents said existing councils should be improved rather than replaced.
- **No need for change** (cited by approximately 2-3%): The system is not broken, so there is not a need to fix it, especially with risk that any changes could lead to less effective councils and services.

4.11. Approximately 5% of respondents said they did **not have any concerns about local government reorganisation and/or saw the risks as minimal.**

4.12. The findings are broadly **consistent across different areas and demographics**, albeit with greater concern amongst respondents in Rushcliffe and Broxtowe council areas especially related to Nottingham City and concerns around urban-rural imbalance and financial risks/costs.

Focus group insight:

Participants in the focus groups echoed the potential benefits and concerns around local government reorganisation, albeit with a **skew towards concerns over benefits.** Most participants could **appreciate the potential efficiencies and cost-savings, although they questioned whether in practice these would be achieved and moreover where they would be invested.** They also could see that there may be opportunities for more joined-up decision-making, working and services, although they also felt these could be **achieved within the current structure:**

> "It's all well and good saying there will be these savings and I can see on paper how they may think that's the case, but I'm not entirely convinced. I'd like to see the evidence and calculations because in my experience these things are a lot harder to achieve in practice." *Rural participant*

> "Cost-savings are fine, but how will they benefit me? Will I get a lower council tax? Will they be re-invested in services? Or will they just be a way of balancing the books and in effect we're just bailing out the government or failing councils?" *Rural participant*

> "I can see that there's room for improvement in the way things are currently. Services could be improved, there could be opportunities to work more strategically and regionally. I guess what I don't fully get is why this can't happen as things are now. Why do we have to rip up everything and start again. It's costly and time consuming to do that and it's not guaranteed to get results. It does feel a bit like a cost-cutting exercise dressed up." *Urban participant*

The two biggest concerns cited by focus group participants (mainly from rural areas) were around the **urban-rural imbalance and associated dominance of Nottingham City, and the loss of local representation and knowledge:**

> "The benefit of the current system is that you've got a council focussed on the needs of Nottingham City and another focussed on an area with a completely different set of issues and characteristics, a much more rural area. So you'd be losing that focus by creating larger councils and you risk creating councils that end up having different divisions in them, one to deal with rural issues and one to deal with urban issues because some of the challenges and priorities in these areas will be vastly different, so in the end you're not making any savings. Or what's more likely is that everything will be configured to suit the city because it will dominate any future larger council. It just feels like my voice and that of my community would be lost within the thousands more voices of those that live in the city." *Rural participant*

A few participants also questioned how **local government reorganisation fits with regional devolution and other public bodies and reforms:**

> "The whole agenda and governance in local government feels a bit muddled to me. They created the East Midlands regional council, which I felt like was adding an extra tier and now they're saying they want to reduce the tiers. Then you've also got things like the Police and Crime Commissioner who is meant to reflect local issues. You've got all these layers already, so they take some away and then add some more in, and in the end it's no more or less complex, confusing or cost-effective, and in the process you've incurred costs, time and disruption. It just feels messy and like an exercise in job creation and constant unnecessary change." *Urban participant*

Section 5: Future councils

Introduction

5.1. This section presents findings about the design of the potential future councils, including the most important principles and features of a new council and the best ways for the new councils to involve people in local decisions.

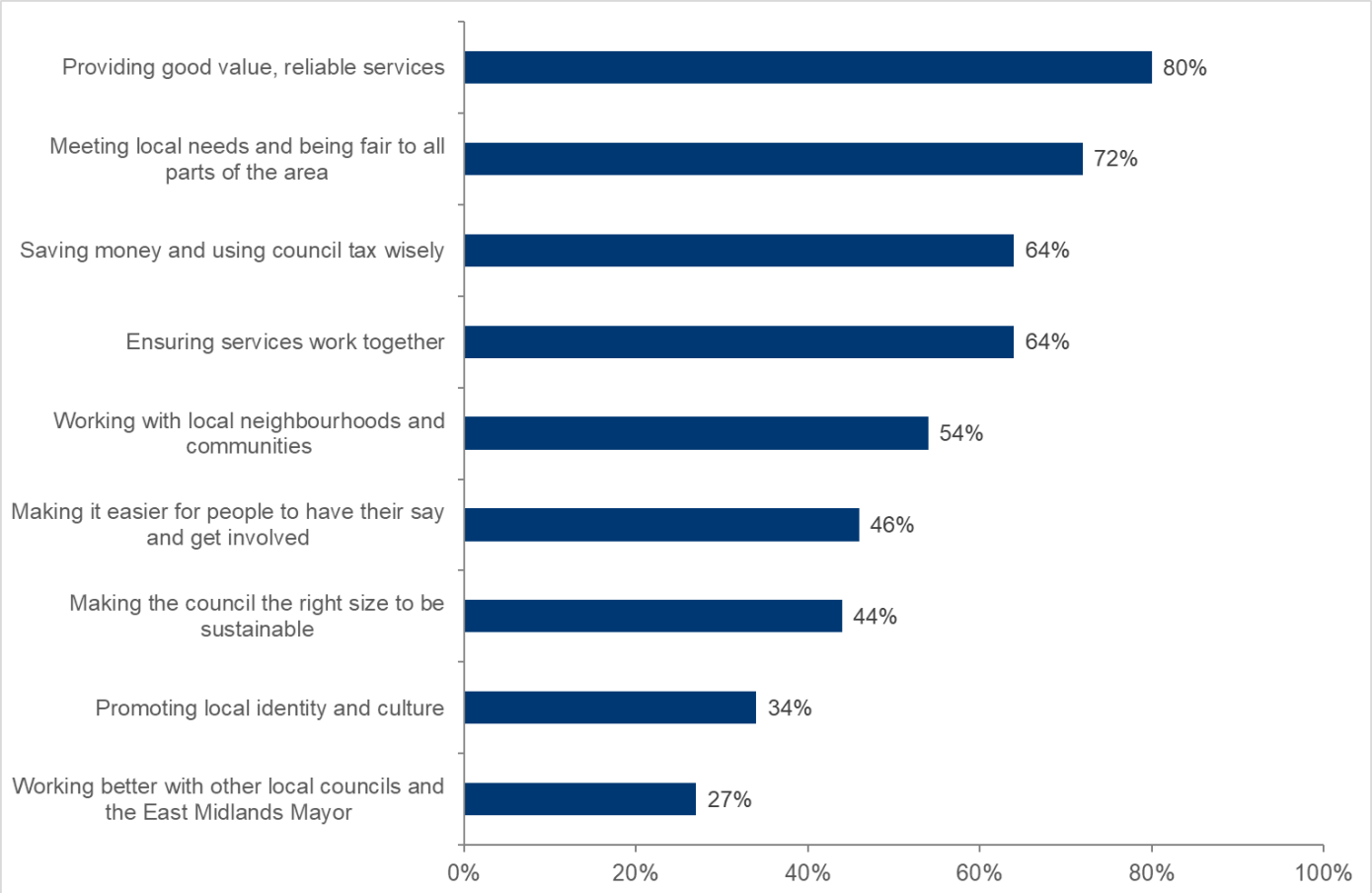
What should be most important when designing a new council?

Quality services, value for money and meeting local needs are the priorities for a future council

5.2. 80% of respondents cited providing good value, reliable services, following by 72% noting meeting local needs and being fair to all parts of the area.

5.3. 64% said saving money and using council tax wisely and the same proportion mentioned ensuring services work together, while 54% said working with local neighbourhoods and communities.

Figure 5.1: Most important for a new council



Number of respondents: 11,335.

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

5.4. In the 'other' responses, approximately 5% of respondents said that new councils should engage effectively and meaningfully with local residents, respond to local concerns and issues and consequently provide representation and accountability.

5.5. Whilst there are variations by council area (and also other demographics), these are not notable and the order is similar. Consequently, for succinctness, these are not presented in this report (although they are available in a separate document).

Focus group insight:

Discussions in the focus groups reflected the results in the engagement survey with an emphasis on **effective delivery of core services, value for money, competent management and meeting the needs of local residents**, including those in rural and urban areas**:**

"Keep it simple really – good quality services, keep council tax low and manage the council and it services effectively." *Urban participant*

"The role of local councils, local government is to reflect the priorities of local people and meet their needs. Local councillors have an important role in this, as too does effective engagement with local people, communities and neighbourhoods. So any future council needs to preserve this approach, which I think is more difficult to do in a larger council." *Urban participant*

"I'm worried a larger council will be more detached from local people and local areas. How will they make sure that they understand and respond to the specific local concerns, especially of rural areas compared to somewhere like the city? That's something they really need to bottom-out in a new council." *Rural participant*

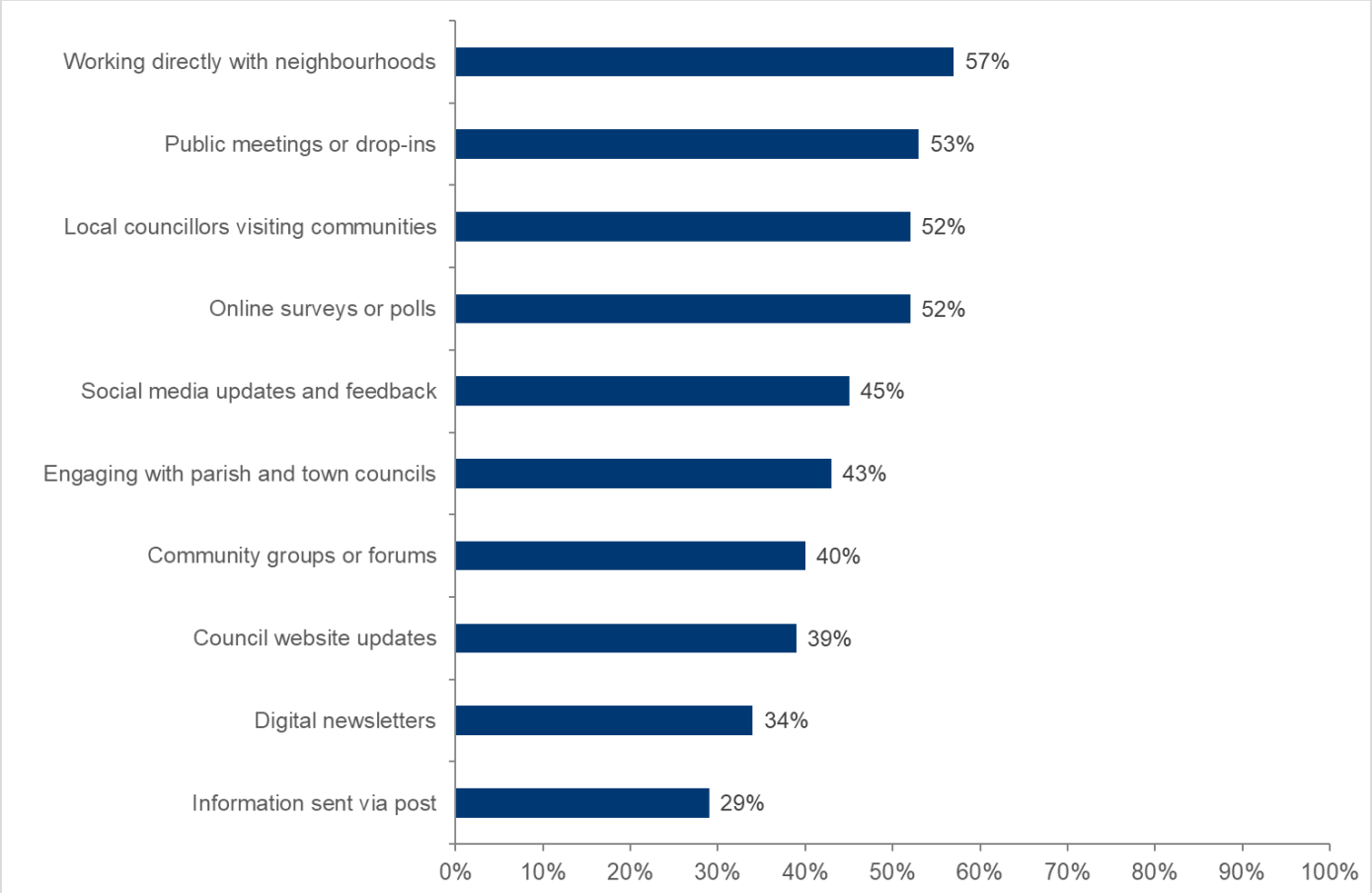
What are the best ways for the new councils to involve people in local decisions?

Neighbourhood working, direct resident engagement, and local councillors along with parish and town councils and community groups are the best way to involve people in local decisions

5.6. 57% of respondents said working directly with neighbourhoods, while several respondents mentioned engaging with local residents through public meetings (53%), online surveys (52%) and social media (45%).

5.7. 52% mentioned local councillors visiting communities, 43% said engaging with parish and town councils, and 40% mentioned community groups or forums.

Figure 5.2: Best ways to involve people in local decisions



Number of respondents: 11,262.

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

5.8. In the 'other' responses, approximately 2-3% of respondents highlighted the importance of engaging with local residents prior to decisions being made and avoiding decisions being 'imposed' on residents. Relatedly, some of these respondents raised concerns that their voices are not heard and will not make a difference. Similarly, some said they are concerned that new and larger councils will lead to less representation and undermine resident voices and democracy as there will be a greater distance between local people and issues, and their decision-makers.

5.9. Whilst there are variations by council area (and also other demographics), these are not notable and the order is similar. Consequently, for succinctness, these are not presented in this report (although they are available in a separate document).

Focus group insight:

Focus group participants said it is **important that local people are involved in decision-making**, both in principle and especially given the potential changes with concerns that larger councils may be more detached from local people and diverse local areas. They felt that **local councillors, parish councils, community groups and working closely in local neighbourhoods/communities** would be most important. They also wanted **engagement and consultation to be genuine and meaningful:**

"It's really important anyway, in principle, to involve local people, but even more so if these changes go ahead. I've engaged with my local councillor on a few things, so I'd be worried that the changes will take that away. Local councillors, if you get a good one, can be really important. And what is happening with the parish councils? They play an important role on the ground in rural areas like mine." *Rural participant*

"I don't think it really matters how big the council is, they're already quite big now covering lots of people and areas. It's more about how well they know their communities and how well they respond to those issues. You want to see them getting involved at the grassroots level, out and about in their neighbourhoods and communities and delivering services at that more local level to meet specific needs. Council staff and councillors have a role in this, but so too do local community groups and charities because they know their areas and often work at a more individual or local level." *Urban participant*

"You can run as many surveys and focus groups as you want, but it's not worth much if it doesn't change things. I'm worried that this process is a done deal, that these changes we're discussing will happen regardless of what we say. So my main point is that any involvement of local people needs to be done earnestly and with integrity." *Urban participant*

Section 6: Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Introduction

6.1. This section presents the proposals for reorganisation of local government across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two councils and different options for the proposed new councils.

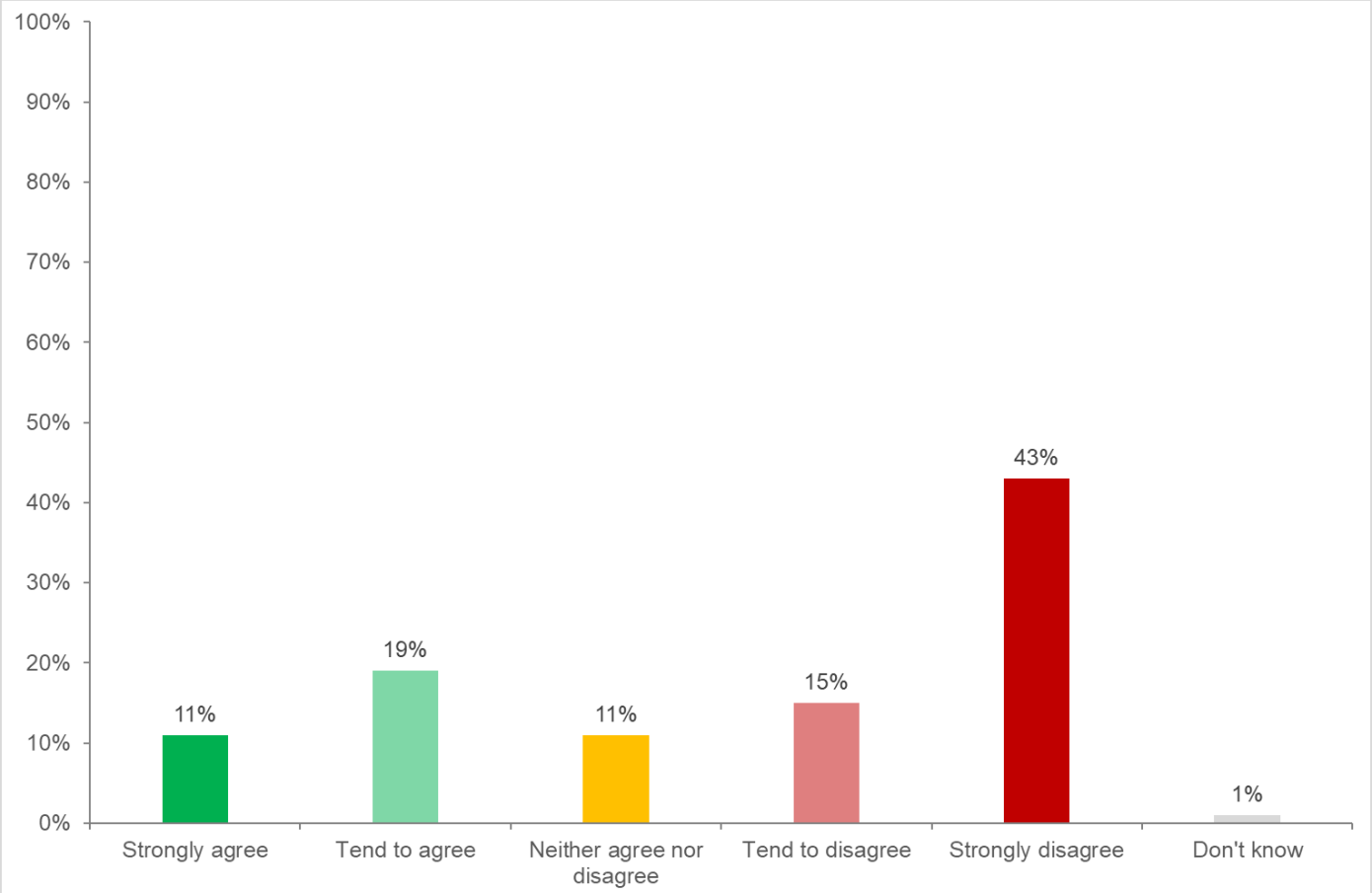
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two councils to run local government across the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area?

Over half disagree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils, with a relationship between perceived effectiveness of the current system and levels of agreement, as well as variations by area

6.2. 30% of respondents agree with the proposal, including 11% that strongly agree. In contrast, 58% of respondents disagree with the proposal, including 43% that strongly disagree.

6.3. There is a relationship between perceptions of the effectiveness of the current system and levels of agreement with the proposal. For example, 16% of those that said the current structure of local councils is effective agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councils compared with 60% of those that said the current system is ineffective. i.e. in other words, those that consider the current system ineffective are more likely to state there is a case for change.

Figure 6.1: Level of agreement with proposal to replace nine existing councils with two across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire



Number of respondents: 11,427.

6.4. Respondents in Nottingham City are more likely to agree with the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two (63% agree) than respondents in other areas. In contrast, respondents in Broxtowe (20% agree), Rushcliffe (22% agree) and Gedling (27% agree) council areas are less likely to agree.

Figure 6.2: Level of agreement with proposal to replace nine existing councils with two across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire by council area

	Ashfield	Bassetlaw	Broxtowe	Gedling	Mansfield	Newark and Sherwood	Notting-ham	Rushcliffe
Strongly agree	11%	10%	7%	9%	14%	12%	31%	8%
Tend to agree	21%	21%	13%	18%	23%	24%	32%	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%	18%	8%	11%	16%	17%	15%	7%
Tend to disagree	14%	21%	13%	15%	15%	17%	8%	15%
Strongly disagree	36%	28%	58%	46%	31%	28%	11%	55%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%

6.5. Consequently, when the data is re-weighted by council area to be proportionate to population sizes across Nottinghamshire there is a change in the results with levels of agreement increasing (as the locations with lower levels of agreement have responded in greater numbers relative to their population size). The re-weighted data is more polarised with 39% of respondents agreeing compared with 46% that disagree:

- Strongly agree: 16%
- Tend to agree: 23%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 14%
- Tend to disagree: 14%
- Strongly disagree: 32%
- Don't know: 2%

6.6. Respondents that are less likely to agree with the proposal to replace nine existing councils with two are:

- Women: 26% agree compared with 35% of women.
- Aged under 35: 37% agree compared with 30% of older respondents.
- People living with a disability that affects their lives a lot: 25% compared with 32% other respondents.

6.7. Respondents were asked to explain their answers to help understand the levels of agreement for the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with 70% of respondents providing further explanation. Many of these comments reflect the benefits and concerns raised earlier about local government reorganisation in England in general. In summary, those that **agreed tended to state that the proposals would reduce duplication, generate efficiencies and consequently lead to cost-savings**, while a smaller number also said that it would lead to a **simplification of the system and therefore improved accessibility.**

6.8. Those that disagreed are **concerned about fairness and equitability, especially in relation to an urban-rural imbalance.** Similarly, they are concerned about a **loss of local representation, knowledge and accountability**, and associated issues around **access to services and responsiveness to local issues.** Some respondents **oppose local government reorganisation in general and in principle**, with concerns that implementation will be disruptive, and **improvements and savings will not be achieved in practice.** There is also some **distrust about the motives** behind the proposals and at a local level **concern that neighbouring areas will inherit the issues experienced by Nottingham City.**

6.9. The following provides more detail on the reasons alongside volume of opinion:

Reasons for agreement:

- **Efficiencies, streamlining and cost-savings** (cited by approximately 15% of respondents): Fewer councils would reduce duplication and bureaucracy with less waste and administrative layers resulting in cost-savings and potentially improved services.
- **Simplification of system and services** (cited by approximately 5%): Related to the above, a single layer/simplified structure and larger/fewer councils could be easier for residents to navigate and access services, as well as partners to engage with (resulting in more joined-up/partnership working, including between the two new councils).

Reasons for neutrality:

- **Balanced views** (cited by approximately 5% of respondents): Whilst there is an appreciation that changes may have a positive impact, there is also scepticism that these will be realised in practice. Similarly, some respondents said that the current system works satisfactorily and that change is not essential, even if it leads to improvements.
- **Lack of knowledge, information or understanding of the proposals or certainty about the outcomes** (cited by approximately 5%): This meant that respondents could not form a firm or clear opinion regarding agreement with the proposals or were uncertain in practice what the changes would entail and the potential benefits, as well as whether any benefits would be achieved in practice.

Reasons for disagreement:

- **Rural inequality and urban-rural divide** (cited by approximately 25% of respondents): Concern that larger councils will not be able to tailor services to suit rural areas and that rural and smaller areas will lose their voice and receive inconsistent or unfair service provision, resource allocation or be deprioritised compared to urban areas, as well as suffer from some of the challenges in urban areas and councils currently serving those areas. This view is heightened in areas surrounding Nottingham City where a relatively large urban area will be at the centre of the new council, and where some respondents in these areas do not want to take on the problems and challenges experienced by Nottingham City. Relatedly, some respondents suggested that Nottingham City could be a separate council in its own right to avoid some of these concerns and provide services specific to an urban area.
- **Loss of local representation, knowledge and accountability** (cited by approximately 20%): Concern that two councils would be more detached from local communities and not responsive to local issues, needs and priorities. This includes less access to councillors and decision-makers, loss of local identity and diminishing the ability of smaller communities to influence decision, with the concern heightened in more rural areas located away from urban centres.
- **Impact on services and outcomes** (cited by approximately 10%): Related to the above there is a concern that larger, potentially more centralised, councils will become more complex and difficult to navigate, as well as less in touch with local issues and priorities. Consequently, this will undermine access to service, negatively impact on quality and responsiveness of services and lead to reduced social outcomes, especially in rural areas away from the urban centres that may dominate the proposed new larger councils.
- **Concerns about implementation** (cited by approximately 5%): Scepticism that proposed benefits may not be realised and concern that disruption and confusion in making changes may outweigh benefits, at least in the short-term. This includes not realising the potential financial benefits and making it harder to navigate councils and access services.

- **Opposed to local government reorganisation in principle and specifically a two-council model (cited by approximately 5%):** Related to many of the above points, some respondents said they do not agree with local government reorganisation in principle. They either said that changes are not needed as the system is not broken, that improvements should be made to the existing councils in situ or that alternative approaches should be considered such as a whole county model and/or a Nottingham City specific model.
- **Distrust about motives** (cited by approximately 2-3%): A smaller proportion of respondents raised concerns that the proposals are about politicians and political parties seeking to strengthen their positions and power, and/or that it is about neighbouring councils and residents bailing out Nottingham City council for its perceived financial and delivery challenges.

Focus group insight:

Participants in the focus groups shared **similar viewpoints to those in the engagement survey and expressed earlier about Government's local government reorganisation across England.** The main points made were that a **two-council solution and associated larger councils would distance decision-makers from local issues and their communities**, including urban and rural areas, which in turn would lead to less responsive services. Consequently, they tended to feel that any potential efficiency, cost-saving and service improvement benefits would be undermined. This said, it is **worth noting that the concerns were mainly about larger councils not necessarily moving to a unitary model:**

> "Big isn't necessarily better. I think it's difficult enough already for councils to engage with their residents and really know the issues in each area, each neighbourhood. This is only going to be more difficult now if they're larger and more distanced from the people they're meant to serve, especially if they have lots of areas within their council that are different, from large cities to small towns and villages." *Rural participant*

> "I don't necessarily disagree with the idea of moving to a unitary model. The two-tier system is confusing, complex and bureaucratic. But I think two large councils may not be the answer, especially with one of them having Nottingham City at its heart. Big can sometimes mean that things are more cumbersome and more complex, which means it may make things worse. Have they considered any other solutions, like 3 or 4 councils? Or a city council on its own, with then a larger county one around it. That way at least you avoid the city being mixed in with villages and rural areas." *Urban participant*

The core options

Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about this option (Option 1b)?

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Gedling (known as Option 1b). This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Rushcliffe. The second covering Gedling, Broxtowe, and Nottingham City.

There is concern that the proposed boundaries, especially around Nottingham City, are illogical or unfair, excluding some relevant areas close to the city while including outlining rural areas that do not have much in common with Nottingham City

6.10. Approximately half of respondents raised **concerns about the way the boundaries are drawn and the associated geography in the proposed new councils.** There is strong concern that the proposed boundaries are illogical or unfair with many respondents highlighting the exclusion of some neighbouring areas such as West Bridgford in Rushcliffe Borough Council and some areas close to the city in Ashfield District Council, which are seen as integral to Nottingham's urban area. At the same time, the **council covering Nottingham City is considered two large in scope, bringing in areas that do not align in terms of identity, characteristics, and access to services with the City**, while under-representing the city compared to its surrounding districts.

6.11. Relatedly, approximately 20% of respondents are critical of Nottingham City Council, which they perceive to be struggling financially. Consequently, they are **worried that neighbouring areas will be pulled into the city's problems and essentially 'bailing it out'.** In turn, they are concerned that they will have worse services and higher council tax. Respondents in Broxtowe and also some in Gedling particularly expressed these views. In contrast, some respondents that live in Nottingham were concerned that they may be forced to subsidise more rural areas.

6.12. Similarly, approximately 10% of respondents raised **concerns that rural areas in neighbouring councils will lose their voice within a council dominated by Nottingham City** (this is a particular concern of respondents living in Broxtowe). They said this could lead to less suitable services and/or loss of resources and services in rural areas, the new council not meeting the needs and priorities of rural areas, and rural areas subsidising the city.

6.13. Approximately 10% of respondents **explicitly supported the option, albeit conditionally.** This was often tied to an acceptance that local government has funding issues and that compromises are necessary if savings are to be made. That said, these respondents tended to say that they only support this option if in practice is leads to efficiencies and cost-reductions, as well as improved services and outcomes.

Focus group insight:

Focus group participants tended to have **negative views about Option 1b**, reflecting those in the engagement survey. Firstly, they were **concerned about Nottingham City dominating the new council** and the neighbouring areas being used to resolve its perceived financial issues, while receiving services that do not suit their local areas. The second reason related to the **exclusion of certain areas that neighbour the city**, such as West Brigford (and also Hucknall in Ashfield District Council area).

> "I'm against it. I feel like residents living in Broxtowe are going to have to pay for all the financial mismanagement of Nottingham City Council and subsidise the city and take on its problems. I don't see any benefits to anyone outside the city. Broxtowe is a very different area to the city, with different identity, heritage, character and issues. Are we now going to be treated the same way as those that live in Nottingham and receive the same types of services?" *Rural participant*

> "How did they draw up these boundaries. Why do they have Broxtowe and not say West Bridgford which is in Rushcliffe. There are definitely some places that are more like suburbs of Nottingham that you could argue for inclusion, but not some of the more rural areas in Broxtowe. Some of them are just a few miles away, but they feel a world away from the city." *Urban participant*

This said, some participants that **live in Gedling Borough Council area were more agnostic about the option, given their proximity and relationship to Nottingham:**

> "I'm fairly relaxed about it to be honest. I do feel like I live in a suburb of Nottingham – that's where I tell people I'm from. I work in Nottingham and we socialise and recreate in Nottingham. I appreciate some of the concerns around finances and management, but changes can be made to improve that. If this is all going ahead, then I can see the benefits of being part of a larger city council than with say the rest of Nottinghamshire that I have a bit less to do with." *Urban participant*

Participants living in other parts of Nottinghamshire had less to say about this option (or all the options) because they would not be in a council with Nottingham City. However, there were **concerns about being in a large council covering such a large area:**

> "On one level it doesn't really affect me that much, I'd be more worried if I was in one of the areas proposed for inclusion with Nottingham City. But on another level, this option geographically just doesn't sit well with me. The county-wide council is just so large. I live at the top of it and I'm wondering what I've got in common with areas and communities right at the bottom of it in Rushcliffe. It just feels like there should be three or four councils, not just two – it all fills a bit simplistic, which makes you worry about the thinking and evidence behind it all." *Rural participant*

Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about this option (Option 1e)?

This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Gedling. The second covering Broxtowe, Nottingham City, and Rushcliffe.

Whilst there is more positivity towards this option, notable concerns remain including around the proposed boundaries and inclusion or exclusion of certain areas

6.14. There is **more positivity/support towards this option compared to 1b** with approximately a third of respondents supporting it or at least state that it is the best of two options. This in part is because some respondents say it **makes more sense geographically and/or is a cleaner North-South split** with a better division of populations and resources. Nottingham City respondents are most supportive, although question marks remain about the boundaries not being wholly logical and linked to the urban-suburban connections between the city and areas in its immediate vicinity and the way local residents live and connect with the city. Respondents living in Gedling are also more supportive about option 1e compared to 1b, although some that live closer to the city felt that it is more appropriate that they are part of a city/south council rather than one orientated towards the north.

6.15. This said, many respondents re-assert concerns about the option **joining outlying rural and other areas to the city that have little to no relationship with it, while excluding other areas** that are much closer geographically and more connected to the city (cited by approximately 25% of respondents). These concerns were particularly made by respondents living in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Council areas.

6.16. Similarly, **concerns about bailing out Nottingham City Council** and inheriting its issues (cited by approximately 20% of respondents) and **rural-urban differences and associated concerns** (cited by approximately 20%) in relation to the city continued to be noted with this option, especially amongst respondents living in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Council areas that are worried about being ‘over-shadowed’ or their voice lost with local identity, decision-making and priorities absorbed into the urban and city areas. Some respondents from Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Council areas said that if such an option were to go ahead those councils should take over the running of the new council.

6.17. Approximately 10% of respondents **outright oppose the option**, often citing issues raised earlier about local government reorganisation in general. Some of these respondents also **request more information and question the evidence base**, including around identifying the options and the practical reality of the potential benefits and savings.

6.18. Across both options, some respondents **suggested alternatives** including a one county option, a two-council option involving the city and immediate surrounding areas (but not to the current extent of proposed options) and then a wider county council, or a three-council solution – one in the north, one in the south and then one based around the city and its immediate vicinity.

Focus group insight:

Much of the discussion in the focus groups about Option 1e **reiterated points made about Option 1b, and the results of the engagement survey.** Participants said that whilst they felt **Option 1e was more logical, they also questioned the exclusion of some neighbouring areas to the north of the city and the inclusion of areas at the bottom** of Rushcliffe Borough Council in the option involving the city.

"On the face of it this seems like a more logical and fair option, a more natural split between the north and the south of the county." *Urban participant*

"This options resolves some of the issues we discussed about the other option like including West Bridgford, but you've now got an option that excludes some areas in Gedling Borough that are on the doorstep of Nottingham and instead includes some areas that are miles away from the city in really rural areas. I don't see how this can work as a coherent council." *Urban participant*

"I live right at the bottom of Rushcliffe Borough in a small village. It's as rural as you can get. I try to avoid going into Nottingham and if I do, it's only to the outskirts. I have very little to do with it. So it feels strange that I'd then be in a council with Nottingham at its centre. I can't see how that would benefit me or my area in any way." *Rural participant*

Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about the development of this option (Nottingham City specific option)?

Nottingham City Council boundary review option that could include parts of Rushcliffe, Broxtowe, and Gedling as one of the unitary councils. The second council would cover the rest of Nottinghamshire – **only asked to respondents that live or work in Nottingham City.**

This is considered a sensible and logical solution by *Nottingham City respondents*, although concerns remain around fairness, urban-rural imbalance and that this may not resolve perceived deep-seated financial and service issues, while in practice it may be difficult to identify appropriate boundaries

6.19. This approach was often described as the **"most sensible and logical" solution** (cited by approximately half of respondents to this question) by Nottingham City respondents. Respondents that supported it said it is fairer with suburban residents who use city services paying city council tax and having voting rights, essentially creating a **better alignment between service use, taxation, and representation.** Some respondents also perceived it as potentially a **less disruptive and preferable alternative to wider structural reorganisation.** There was also support for the **concept of a city-specific solution and relatedly a strong city at the heart of the county.**

6.20. However, **concerns remain about fairness of boundaries and urban-rural divides**, potentially dragging rural areas into an urban focussed council and an urban area having to deliver and potentially subsidise services to a rural area (cited by approximately 20%). There is also **scepticism as to whether a larger council with new boundaries will solve financial pressures and service delivery issues** with some believing these are deep-seated and underlying in nature (cited by approximately 15%).

6.21. There are also **concerns and debate about the drawing up of new boundaries** – their appropriateness and the areas that would be included/excluded, which is not considered clear-cut or straight-forward (cited by approximately 10%). Relatedly, some respondents said that there is a **risk of disruption or disputes over boundaries, with concern that some of this could be politically motivated** (cited by approximately 5%).

6.22. Some respondents said that a boundary review, whilst potentially sensible, could be **more challenging to deliver as it involved breaking-up existing local councils**, which could undermine some of the potential cost-savings and service improvements (cited by approximately 5%). Similarly, a few respondents said that **existing council boundaries reflected local community connections, heritage and identity and breaking-up these council areas could be divisive**, especially if the boundaries are not identified appropriately (cited by approximately 5%). This was **especially cited in the case of West Bridgford, which is considered linked to the city but also an integral part of the Rushcliffe Borough Council area** and therefore risked undermining ties between the town and neighbouring villages and leaving the rest of the council area 'adrift' (cited by approximately 15%).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Engagement survey

Note: This is an export from an online version of the survey.

Give your views on the future of Local Government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Introduction

The way local councils in England are organised is being fundamentally changed for the first time in 50 years.

All nine local councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are working together to gather views on how local government should work in the future. This includes the city, county, and all district and borough councils. The survey is open to everyone who lives, works, or has an interest in the area. Your feedback will help shape proposals that reflect the needs and priorities of local communities.

The changes being considered are significant. If approved, all nine existing councils would be abolished and replaced with two new, larger councils. These new councils would each be responsible for delivering all local services in their area, bringing everything from housing and social care to waste collection and road maintenance under one organisation.

This would be a major shift from the current system, where responsibilities are split between different councils. The aim is to make services more joined-up, easier to access, and more responsive to local needs. It could also reduce duplication and overheads, helping to save money and make local government more efficient.

The feedback from this survey will help shape the final proposals, which must be submitted to Government by November 2025. The Government will then decide how and when the new arrangements will be introduced.

This questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. **Please complete it by Sunday 14 September 2025.**

The survey is being conducted with support from Public Perspectives, an independent organisation that works with local councils and communities.

Your personal details are managed securely and within data protection laws. Your responses are anonymous and confidential. This means that we will not report your answers alongside your personal details in such a way that you can be identified. Each of the partner council privacy notices will apply and anonymised data will be shared between councils. Please visit the following to read Public Perspectives' privacy notice:

www.publicperspectives.co.uk/data-security-and-privacy/

Information in a different format:
If you need help or support to respond to this questionnaire, or would like it in an alternative format (large print, British Sign Language etc.) or language, please contact Public Perspectives via e-mail on: Nottinghamshire@publicperspectives.co.uk or Freephone: 0800 533 5386 (please leave a message and we will call you back).

Please read the background information before responding: Read background information

Click 'Next' below to begin responding to the questionnaire.

Living, working and studying in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Q1a.Are you responding as . . .?

Please select all relevant answers. These questions help us understand who is responding to the survey.

- ❑ A resident living in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Someone who works in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire
- ❑ A voluntary or community organisation
- ❑ A Town or Parish Council
- ❑ A District / Borough / City / County Council employee
- ❑ Another public sector organisation
- ❑ A local councillor
- ❑ A business owner or business leader operating in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Other

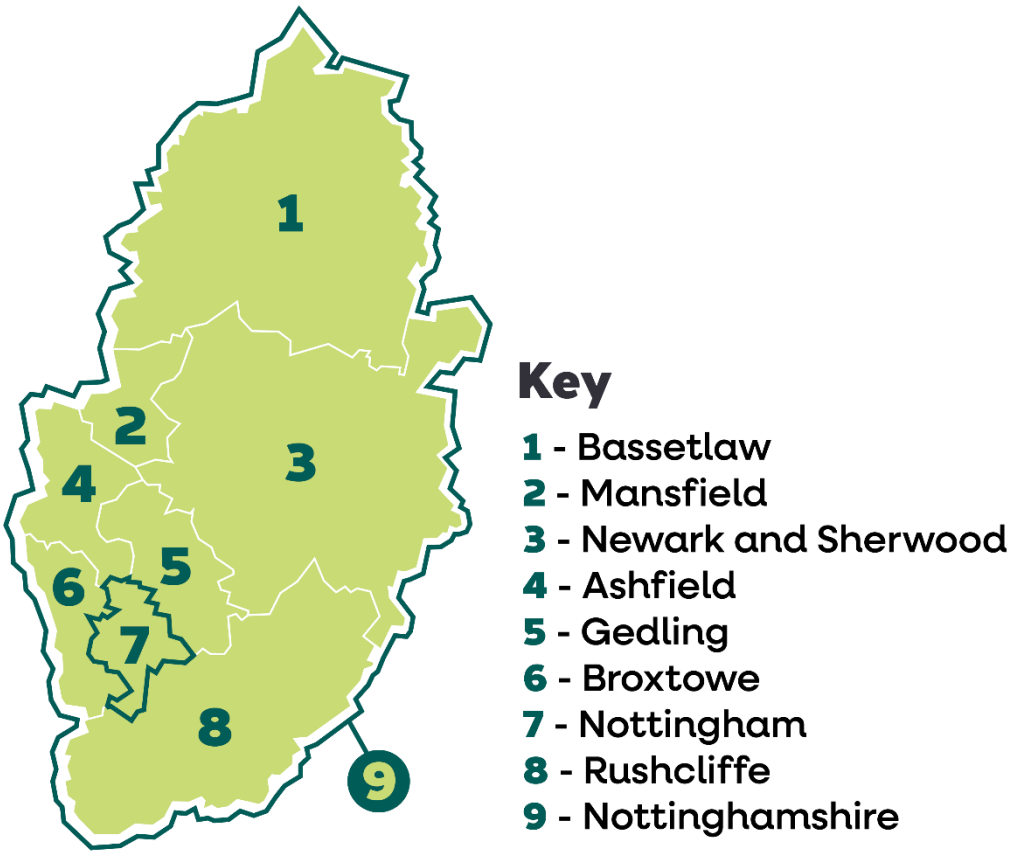
If 'Other', please state:

_____

Please state the name of the organisation or business you represent:

_____

To help you answer the following questions, this map shows the boundaries of the local councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire:



Q1b. Which council area does your organisation mainly operate in?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Ashfield District Council area
- ❑Bassetlaw District Council area
- ❑Broxtowe Borough Council area
- ❑Gedling Borough Council area
- ❑Mansfield District Council area
- ❑Newark and Sherwood District Council area
- ❑Nottingham City Council area
- ❑Nottinghamshire County Council area
- ❑Rushcliffe Borough Council area
- ❑Across all of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑Don't know

Q2a. Which council area do you live in?

If you are uncertain which council covers your area, visit the following website and enter your postcode: **www.gov.uk/find-local-council**

Please select one answer only.

- ❑ Ashfield District Council area
- ❑ Bassetlaw District Council area
- ❑ Broxtowe Borough Council area
- ❑ Gedling Borough Council area
- ❑ Mansfield District Council area
- ❑ Newark and Sherwood District Council area
- ❑ Nottingham City Council area
- ❑ Rushcliffe Borough Council area
- ❑ Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Don't know

Q2b. What is your postcode? (This is asked so we can analyse the results by different areas. We will not be able to identify you personally)

_____

Q3. Where is your main place of work or study?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑ Ashfield District Council area
- ❑ Bassetlaw District Council area
- ❑ Broxtowe Borough Council area
- ❑ Gedling Borough Council area
- ❑ Mansfield District Council area
- ❑ Newark and Sherwood District Council area
- ❑ Nottingham City Council area
- ❑ Nottinghamshire County Council area
- ❑ Rushcliffe Borough Council area
- ❑ Across all of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- ❑ Don't know
- ❑ Not applicable - not currently in work / education

If 'Outside of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire', where is your main place of work or study?

_____

Your local area

Q3a. How do you describe where you're from when talking to someone who doesn't live nearby? Which names or places do you mention?

Please list below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q3b. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you are proud to live in your local area?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑Strongly agree
- ❑Tend to agree
- ❑Neither agree nor disagree
- ❑Tend to disagree
- ❑Strongly disagree
- ❑Don't know

Q3c. Thinking generally, what would you say are most important in making somewhere a good place to live?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Arts and cultural services such as theatres and museums
- ❑Activities and facilities for children and young people
- ❑Community events and activities and supporting local community groups
- ❑Decent and affordable homes
- ❑Health services such as mental health services and promoting healthy lifestyles
- ❑Jobs and supporting people into work
- ❑Keeping the streets and public areas clean and tidy
- ❑Maintaining roads and pavements
- ❑Parks, sports and leisure facilities
- ❑Public transport, roads and parking
- ❑Refuse collection and recycling
- ❑Regeneration of town centres / high streets, including shops and markets
- ❑Schools and places of learning
- ❑Support and services for older people and vulnerable groups
- ❑Supporting residents to reduce their impact on the environment
- ❑Tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing crime
- ❑Other
- ❑Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

_____

Q3d. And what are your priorities for improvement in the local area?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑ Arts and cultural services such as theatres and museums
- ❑ Activities and facilities for children and young people
- ❑ Community events and activities and supporting local community groups
- ❑ Decent and affordable homes
- ❑ Health services such as mental health services and promoting healthy lifestyles
- ❑ Jobs and supporting people into work
- ❑ Keeping the streets and public areas clean and tidy
- ❑ Maintaining roads and pavements
- ❑ Parks, sports and leisure facilities
- ❑ Public transport, roads and parking
- ❑ Refuse collection and recycling
- ❑ Regeneration of town centres / high streets, including shops and markets
- ❑ Schools and places of learning
- ❑ Support and services for older people and vulnerable groups
- ❑ Supporting residents to reduce their impact on the environment
- ❑ Tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing crime
- ❑ Nothing
- ❑ Other
- ❑ Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

_____

The current way councils are organised in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Currently, council services in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are delivered differently, depending on where you live.

In Nottinghamshire, local services are currently delivered under what is known as a ‘two-tier’ council structure. For example, your local borough or district council will collect your waste, but the county council will dispose of it. You will also be represented by two sets of councillors, borough or district councillors and county councillors.

Nottinghamshire County Council oversees county-wide services such as social care, education, and road maintenance. While several district and borough councils are responsible for services, including waste collection, housing and leisure centres.

Nottingham City Council operates as a ‘unitary authority’, meaning it provides all council services within the city of Nottingham.

In total, nine different councils provide services across the county (not including town and parish councils and these councils are not included in the reorganisation).

Q4. Before today, how aware were you of the current structure of councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and the services each council provides?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑ I was not aware
- ❑ I was aware, but did not know much about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a little about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a lot about it
- ❑ Don't know

Q5. How effective is the current structure of councils and the approach to service delivery in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑ Very effective
- ❑ Somewhat effective
- ❑ Neither effective nor ineffective
- ❑ Somewhat ineffective
- ❑ Very ineffective
- ❑ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Local Government Reorganisation

For the first time in 50 years the way local councils are set up in parts of England is being reviewed and modernised. In areas like Nottinghamshire, where there are currently two layers of local government (such as county and district councils), the Government is encouraging a move to a simpler system.

This change, called Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), would replace the current two-tier structure with a single council, known as a unitary authority. Instead of having separate councils responsible for different services, one council would take care of everything from roads and rubbish collection to housing and social care.

The goal is to bring services that are currently split across different councils into one place, with the aim of making them easier to access and more joined-up for residents. It also means fewer councils overall, which could lead to savings by cutting duplication and reducing overheads.

Local councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have been asked to work together on proposals for how this new system could work best in their area. These proposals, which will include evidence and public feedback, need to be submitted by November 2025. The Government will then decide on the final arrangements.

Q6. Before today, how aware were you about the Government's plans to reorganise local councils across England?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑ I was not aware
- ❑ I was aware, but did not know much about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a little about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a reasonable amount about it
- ❑ I was aware, and knew a lot about it
- ❑ Don't know

Q7. What do you think are the main potential benefits, if any, of the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils?

Please make comments below:

Q8. What concerns, if any, do you have about the Government's proposed reorganisation of local councils?

Please make comments below:

Future councils

Q9. What should be most important when designing a new council?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Ensuring services work together
- ❑Making the council the right size to be sustainable
- ❑Providing good value, reliable services
- ❑Saving money and using council tax wisely
- ❑Working better with other local councils and the East Midlands Mayor
- ❑Making it easier for people to have their say and get involved
- ❑Working with local neighbourhoods and communities
- ❑Meeting local needs and being fair to all parts of the area
- ❑Promoting local identity and culture
- ❑Other
- ❑Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

Q10. What are the best ways for the new councils to involve people in local decisions?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Working directly with neighbourhoods
- ❑Public meetings or drop-ins
- ❑Online surveys or polls
- ❑Local councillors visiting communities
- ❑Community groups or forums
- ❑Social media updates and feedback
- ❑Council website updates
- ❑Digital newsletters
- ❑Information sent via post
- ❑Engaging with parish and town councils
- ❑Other
- ❑Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

All councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have been working together on a proposal to restructure how local government services are delivered in the area. An initial proposal was submitted to the Government in March 2025.

Since then, further work has been carried out to explore options in greater detail and gather supporting evidence. In line with government guidance to use existing district areas as the basis for reorganisation, two core options are being proposed. No final decision has been made by all councils on a single option, and some councils could still explore additional proposals alongside the two core options currently being proposed.

Under these proposals, the nine existing councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire would be replaced by two new unitary councils. Each new council would be responsible for delivering all local government services in its area.

You can see a map showing the geography of the two proposals later in this questionnaire.

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two councils to run local government across the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area?

Please select one answer only.

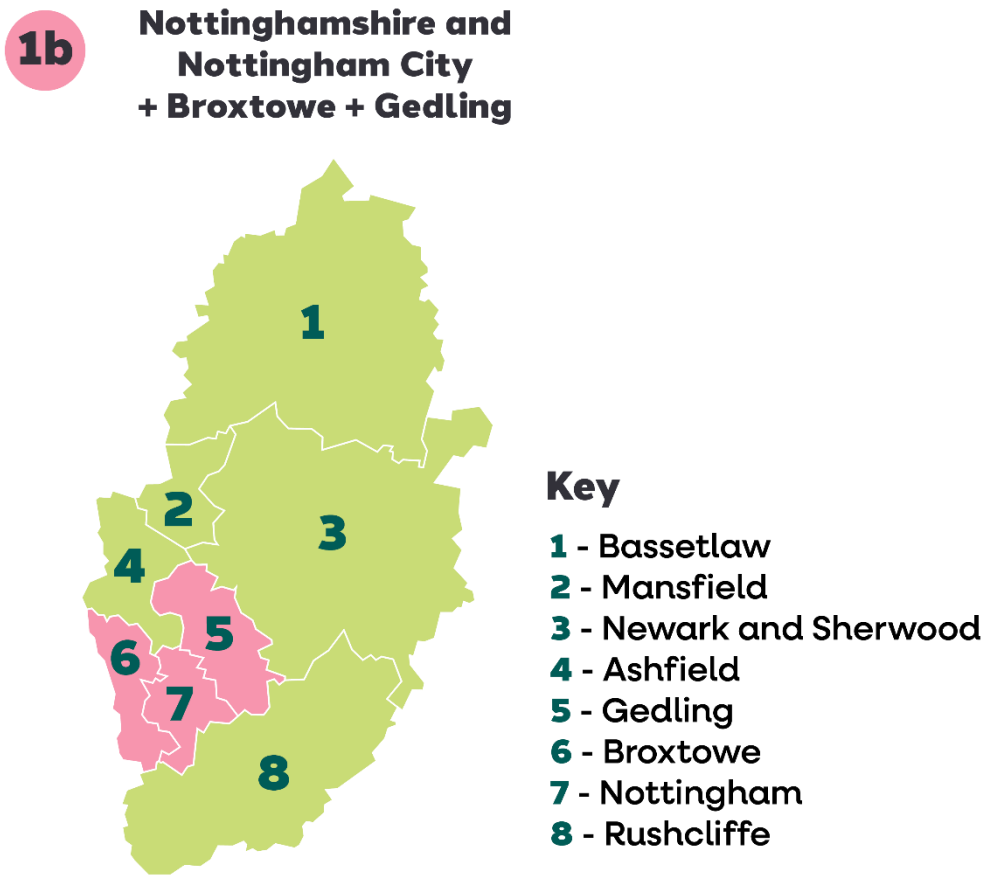
- ❑ Strongly agree
- ❑ Tend to agree
- ❑ Neither agree nor disagree
- ❑ Tend to disagree
- ❑ Strongly disagree
- ❑ Don't know

Why have you answered in this way?

The core options

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Gedling (known as Option 1b)

This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Rushcliffe. The second covering Gedling, Broxtowe, and Nottingham City.

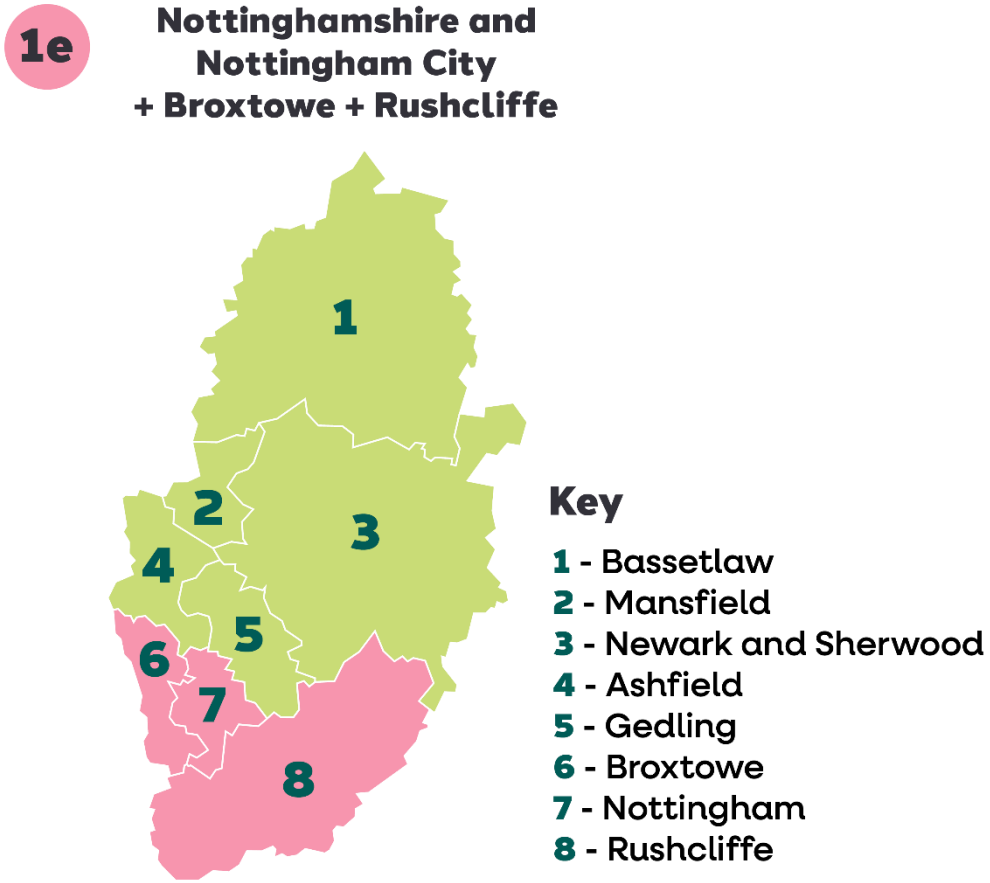


Q12. Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about this option?

Please make comments below:

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City + Broxtowe + Rushcliffe (known as Option 1e)

This option is two new unitary councils, one covering Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Gedling. The second covering Broxtowe, Nottingham City, and Rushcliffe.



Q13. Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about this option?

Please make comments below:

Nottingham City Council boundary review option

This option is being presented to anyone living or working in the Nottingham City Council area.

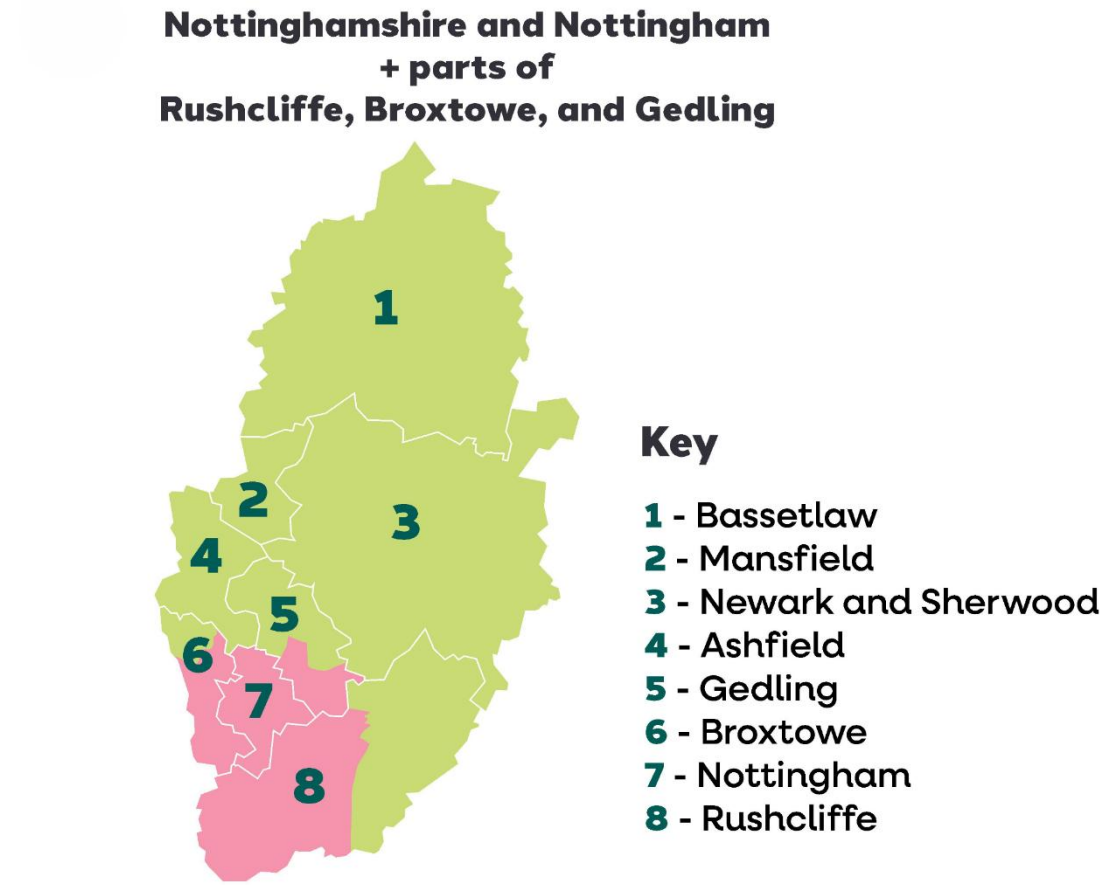
The Government has suggested that there may be an opportunity for a boundary review, where strong justification exists. A boundary review looks at the current local council boundaries, the communities within them and the services they access to see if they work well or whether new boundaries may work better. A boundary review could allow councils to look at options outside of their existing boundaries.

Nottingham City Council is currently exploring a boundary review option that may include parts of Rushcliffe, Broxtowe, and Gedling as one of the unitary councils. The second council would cover the rest of Nottinghamshire.

The rationale is that while the official population of Nottingham is 328,000, the built-up area of the city is much greater, and there are people who live in the suburbs, work in the city, and use Nottingham City services, but who can't vote in city elections and don't contribute to city council tax because of the current council boundaries.

A map is included below to indicate what this could look like, however Nottingham City Council would like to understand people's views in order to develop the option further.

Example of city's boundary review option



Q13a. Do you have any comments, concerns or suggestions about the development of this option?

Please make comments below:

Other comments

Q14. Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestions about the proposals for the reorganisation of local government across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire?

Please make comments below:

Q15. How did you hear about this survey?

Please select all relevant answers.

- ❑Council website
- ❑Council e-mail or newsletter
- ❑Other council communication or event
- ❑Council social media
- ❑Other social media
- ❑Via a local councillor
- ❑Via a local organisation
- ❑Poster or flyer
- ❑Direct e-mail or letter
- ❑An advert in a local newspaper
- ❑A relative or a friend
- ❑Other
- ❑Don't know

If 'Other', please state:

About you

We would like to ask you some questions about yourself and your household. This will help councils understand the opinions and impact of the proposals on different groups of people that live or work in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Please be assured that your answers are confidential and will be treated anonymously. This means that we will not report your answers alongside your personal details in such a way that you can be identified. All your answers and personal information will be managed securely and in accordance with data protection laws.

This information is **optional**. If you do not wish to complete this section, you can skip these questions and then submit your responses.

Q16. Are you . . .?

Please select one answer only.
- ❑Female
- ❑Male
- ❑Another term
- ❑Prefer not to say

Q17. What is your age group?

Please select one answer only.
- ❑Under 18
- ❑18-24
- ❑25-34
- ❑35-44
- ❑45-54
- ❑55-64
- ❑65 and over
- ❑Prefer not to say

Q18. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

Please select one answer only.
- ❑Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a lot
- ❑Yes, which reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities a little
- ❑Yes, but they don't reduce my ability to carry out my day-to-day activities at all
- ❑No
- ❑Prefer not to say

Q19. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group or background?

Please select one answer only.
- ❑White British or Irish
- ❑Central or Eastern European
- ❑Other White background
- ❑Asian or Asian British
- ❑Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- ❑Mixed background
- ❑Other ethnic group
- ❑Prefer not to say

Q20. Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

Please select one answer only.

- ❑Owner-occupier
- ❑Privately renting
- ❑Renting from the council or housing association
- ❑Other
- ❑Prefer not to say

Next steps

You're nearly finished – thank you for taking part so far.

Before you submit your response, please take a moment to read the information below about what happens next.

Following the close of the survey on Sunday 14 September 2025, we will be collating and analysing all of the responses received from across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to understand the views of everyone who has taken part.

The views of people shared in this survey will feed into the development of final proposals, which must be submitted to government by 28 November 2025. Your local council will keep you updated as things progress.

Click 'Submit' below to send us your responses.

Once submitted, you will be redirected to the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Government Reorganisation website.

Appendix 2: Stakeholder in-depth interview discussion guide

Key aims and approach

Four on-line focus groups are being conducted with residents to provide further insight, complementing the findings from the questionnaire. The aims of these are:

- Opportunity for an informed and in-depth discussion with residents about living in the county and future local government proposals. These discussions will explicitly explore:
    - Sense of place and identity
    - Understanding of local government reorganisation and high-level perceptions about change, including potential benefits, concerns and mitigations
    - Future local council priorities and design
    - Views on changing from nine councils to two, including opportunities, concerns and mitigations
    - Views on each of the specific core options, including opportunities, concerns and mitigations

In essence, the focus groups will explore in-depth the ground covered in the questionnaire, and consequently the discussion guide is built around this.

9 participants will be recruited for each group (with 6-8 participating in practice per group because there will always be one to two drop-outs, despite best efforts to maximise participation – 6 or 7 participants tends to be the optimum number for an on-line discussion allowing sufficient opportunity for each participant to share their views).

As discussed, two groups will be with residents living in urban areas and two living in rural areas (these will be both self-defined and also validated against their postcode). This approach both allows us to explore the differences and similarities in perception between residents living in these different types of locations as well as reach a broad diversity of residents across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Each group will include a mix of key demographics such as location, sex, age and ethnicity so that the groups broadly reflect the profile of residents living in urban and rural areas.

The groups will take place on-line, via Zoom, on Thursday 4th September and Monday 8th September (these are provisional dates currently, and all groups will be completed by the close of the engagement exercise):

- 5.50pm to 7.30pm
- 7.50pm to 9.30pm

Participants will be offered a £50 thank you gift (incentive) for taking part and to maximise participation.

In advance of the discussions, the link to the engagement website will be shared and participants will be asked to review, although we will not rely on this and will be feeding participants with information throughout the discussions.

Discussion Guide

Please note: This is a discussion guide and will be used flexibly depending on the flow of discussion. This means that not every question will necessarily be asked in the way or order outlined below. However, we will make sure that all the key issues are explored fully.

On log-in:

- Participants will be held in a virtual waiting room and invited into the main forum at the start of the discussion.
- On joining the main room, participants will be asked to check that their audio and visual works and name labels changed to first names only (for ease and anonymity).

Introduction (c2-3 mins)

Key points to note:

- Background – why we're here and some of the things we plan to discuss [i.e. living in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and proposed changes to local councils in the area].
- Introduce facilitator.
- Introduce observers (if present).
- Ask to record the interview.
- Stress anonymity and confidentiality.
- Set ground rules – no right or wrong answers, honest and open, range of views encouraged.
- Respect different opinions.
- Encourage disagreement, agreement and debate – do it politely.
- One voice at a time.
- Allow others the space and time to share their views.
- Introduce key features of Zoom such as chat function and emoticons, and encourage use.
- Stress important that patient and flexible given challenges of technology and conducting on-line discussions.
- Stress that important people participate and input as much as they might in a face-to-face group – we can be relaxed and informal, but we want to make sure we cover the ground and use the time as effectively as possible.
- What happens to the information? [i.e. feed into decision-making process, along with a range of other information and evidence].
- Any questions?

Key lines of questioning

Warm-up, context and headline perceptions (c10 mins)

- Just so we can get to know each other a little bit, can I ask each of you to say briefly:
  - Your name?
  - Roughly, where you live?
  - What do you think about the area you live in? Why – what's good and what could be improved?

Your local area – sense of place and local identity (c15 mins)

- How do you describe where you're from when talking to someone who doesn't live nearby? Which names or places do you mention? Why do you use those names or places?

  Prompt/probe:
  - Do you see yourself as living in an urban, suburban, semi-rural or rural area – why?
  - Do you consider yourself as living in Nottinghamshire? Why?
  - What do you consider you nearest town? Why?
  - What is your association or link with Nottingham? Why?
  - Do you feel like you are part of your local authority area? Why?

Local government reorganisation (c20 mins)

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about the way councils are currently organised as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about the current structure of councils and the approach to service delivery in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire? Why?

  Prompt/probe:
  - Before today, how aware were you of the current structure?
  - What's good about it/what works well? Why?
  - What's not good about it/could be improved? Why?
  - How well do the current arrangements suit an area such as yours (i.e. urban/rural)? Why?

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about local government reorganisation as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about the Government's plans to reorganise local councils across England? Why?

  Prompt/probe:
  - Before today, how aware were you of these plans?
  - What do you think are the potential benefits of this, if any? Why?
  - What concerns, if any, do you have about the plans to reorganise local councils? Why?

Future local council design and priorities (c20 mins)

- What should be most important when designing a new council (e.g. what should be the key principles that it adopts or it is built around or tries to achieve)? Why?

  Prompt/probe:

  - Ensuring services work together
  - Making the council the right size to be sustainable
  - Providing good value, reliable services
  - Saving money and using council tax wisely
  - Working better with other local councils and the East Midlands Mayor
  - Making it easier for people to have their say and get involved
  - Working with local neighbourhoods and communities
  - Meeting local needs and being fair to all parts of the area
  - Promoting local identity and culture
  - Other

- What are the best ways for the new councils to involve people in local decisions? Why?
- How well is this done now? Why?
- And does this matter to you? Why?

  Prompt/probe:

  - Working directly with neighbourhoods
  - Public meetings or drop-ins
  - Online surveys or polls
  - Local councillors visiting communities
  - Community groups or forums
  - Social media updates and feedback
  - Council website updates
  - Digital newsletters
  - Information sent via post
  - Engaging with parish and town councils
  - Other

- What do you think should be the priorities for any new council to improve your local area? Why?

  Prompt/probe:

  - What's important to you? Why?
  - What's currently working well, and that you would like to continue working well? Why?
  - What's not working well and is important to change/improve? Why?

Local Government Reorganisation across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including core options (c20-25 mins)

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about the proposal to move from 9 to 2 councils as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about the proposal to replace the nine existing councils with two councils to run local government across the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire area?

  Prompt/probe:
  - What do you think are the potential benefits of this, if any? Why?
  - What concerns, if any, do you have about this proposal? Why?
  - How may it impact you and your family? Why?
  - How may it impact your area? Why?
  - Is there anything you would like considered to help promote any potential benefits and/or mitigate/reduce any potential negative impacts?

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about the core option 1b as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about this option? Why?

  Prompt/probe:
  - What do you think are the potential benefits of this, if any? Why?
  - What concerns, if any, do you have about this option? Why?
  - How may it impact you and your family? Why?
  - How may it impact your area? Why?
  - Is there anything you would like considered to help promote any potential benefits and/or mitigate/reduce any potential negative impacts?

[Note: Facilitator to share screen and read out information about the core option 1e as per the questionnaire]

- What do you think about this option? Why?

  Prompt/probe:
  - What do you think are the potential benefits of this, if any? Why?
  - What concerns, if any, do you have about this option? Why?
  - How may it impact you and your family? Why?
  - How may it impact your area? Why?
  - Is there anything you would like considered to help promote any potential benefits and/or mitigate/reduce any potential negative impacts?

Summing up (c5 mins)

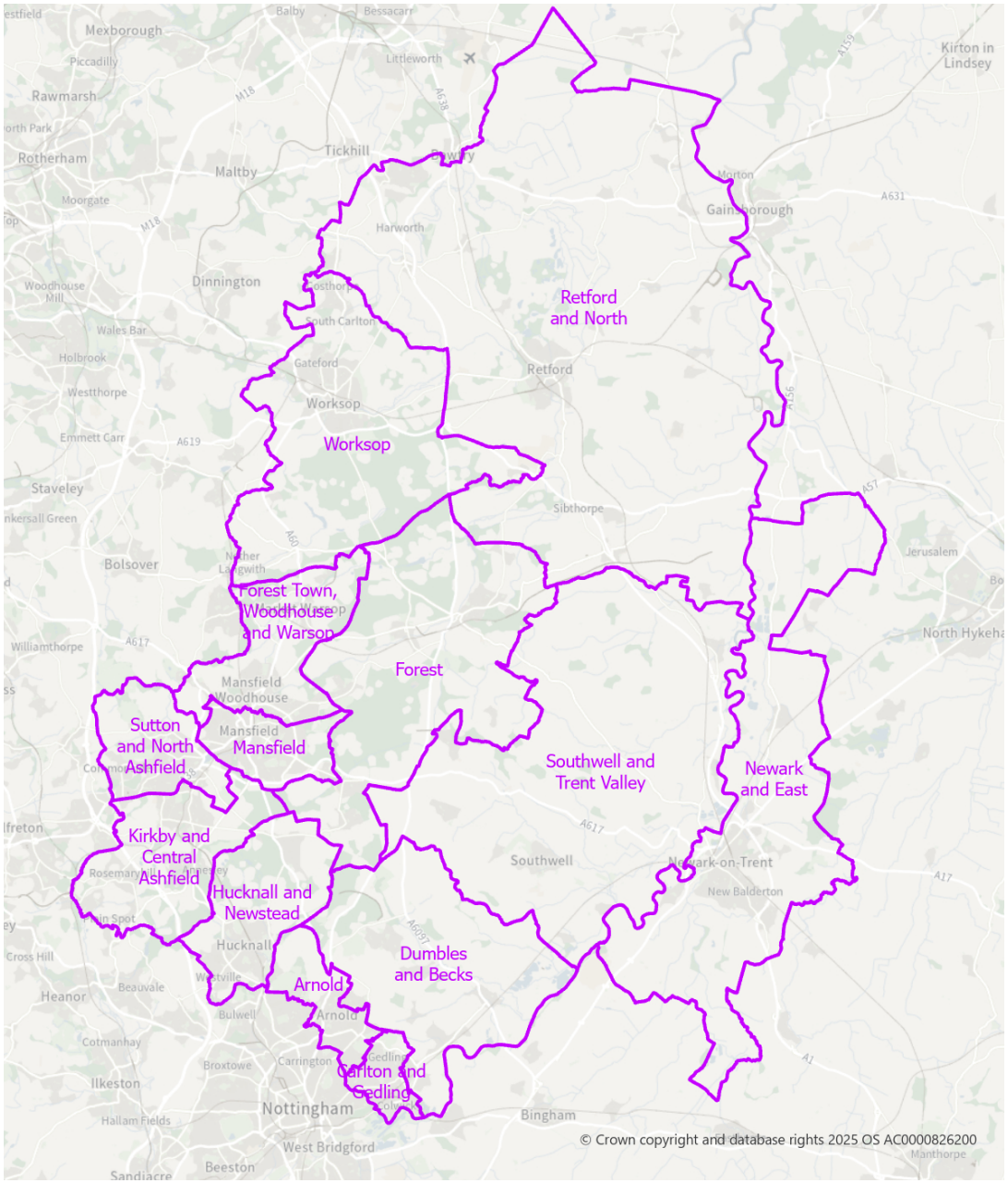
- Overall, what do you think about the proposals and options?
- Are there any alternatives you would like considered?
- Is there anything else you would like to say this subject?
- Facilitator to sum up the key messages identified from the discussion to sense check that understood correctly.

- Facilitator to outline next steps – what will happen to the information.
- Sign-post to on-line consultation, if not already participated.
- Any final points or questions?
- Outline how thank you gifts will be provided.
- Thank and close.

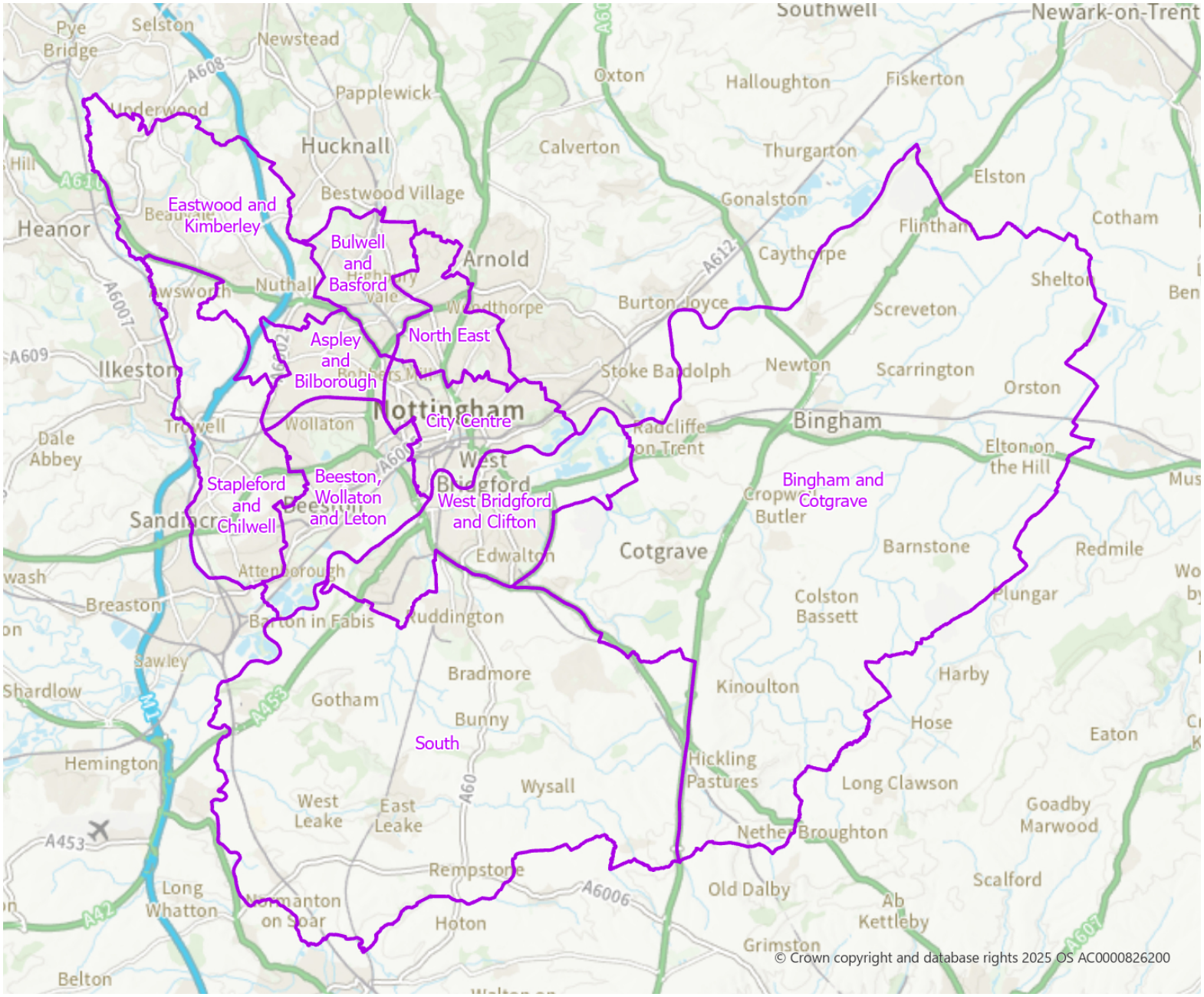
NORTH - SOUTH

APPENDIX 5

MAP OF ILLUSTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF AREA COMMITTEES



Sherwood Forest (North Nottinghamshire)



Nottingham and South Nottinghamshire (South Nottinghamshire)

NORTH - SOUTH

APPENDIX 6

DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF WARDING AND AREA COMMITTEE PROPOSALS

Sherwood Forest (North Nottinghamshire) Warding and Area Committee proposals

Ward No	Wards	Electorate size	Councillors	Average Number of Electors per Councillor	Area Committee	Current District
1	Abbey Hill and Harlow Wood	4,316	1	4,316	SF7	ADC
2	Annesley and Kingsway	4,255	1	4,255	SF7	ADC
3	Ashfields and Leamington	5,041	1	5,041	SF12	ADC
4	Balderton North & Coddington	5,277	1	5,277	SF9	NSDC
5	Balderton South	4,403	1	4,403	SF9	NSDC
6	Bancroft & Central	4,729	1	4,729	SF8	MDC
7	Beacon and Castle	9,664	2	4,832	SF9	NSDC
8	Berry Hill & Lindhurst	3,719	1	3,719	SF4	MDC
9	Bestwood St Albans	4,230	1	4,230	SF1	GBC
10	Blyth and Harworth	10,908	2	5,454	SF10	BDC
11	Brick Kiln & Grangefarm	4,451	1	4,451	SF8	MDC
12	Bridge	4,899	1	4,899	SF9	NSDC
13	Calverton	6,381	2	3,191	SF3	GBC
14	Carlton Hill	6,407	1	6,407	SF2	GBC
15	Carlton Ward	4,858	1	4,858	SF2	BDC
16	Carlton, Colwick and Netherfield	10,558	2	5,279	SF2	GBC
17	Carr Bank & Eakring	4,699	1	4,699	SF8	MDC
18	Carsic and Central Sutton	5,607	1	5,607	SF12	ADC
19	Cavendish and Phoenix	8,436	2	4,218	SF2	GBC
20	Collingham	4,902	1	4,902	SF9	NSDC
21	Coppice and Dumbles	7,152	1	7,152	SF3	GBC
22	Daybrook and Ernehale	9,116	2	4,558	SF1	GBC
23	Dover Beck and Lowdham	4,802	1	4,802	SF3	NSDC
24	Edwinstowe & Clipstone	9,451	2	4,726	SF4	NSDC

25	Farndon & Fernwood and Devon	13,229	3	4,410	SF9	NSDC
26	Farnsfield and Bilsthorpe	5,693	1	5,693	SF11	NSDC
27	Gedling	5,324	1	5,324	SF2	GBC
28	Greenwood, Kirkby Cross and Larwood	4,689	1	4,689	SF7	ADC
29	Holly Forest Town & Newlands Forest Town	4,640	1	4,640	SF5	MDC
30	Hornby & Manor	4,692	1	4,692	SF5	MDC
31	Hucknall Central and South	9,572	2	4,786	SF6	ADC
32	Hucknall North	8,382	2	4,191	SF6	ADC
33	Hucknall West	9,525	2	4,763	SF6	ADC
34	Huthwaite and St Marys	9,267	2	4,634	SF12	ADC
35	Jacksdale and Underwood	5,128	1	5,128	SF7	ADC
36	Kings Walk & Oakham	4,774	1	4,774	SF8	MDC
37	Kingsway Forest Town & Maun Valley Forest Town	5,256	1	5,256	SF5	MDC
38	Kirkby Woodhouse and Portland	4,641	1	4,641	SF5	ADC
39	Ling Forest & Oak tree	4,107	1	4,107	SF8	MDC
40	Market Warsop & Meden	4,805	1	4,805	SF5	MDC
41	Mill Lane & Yeoman Hill	4,463	1	4,463	SF5	MDC
42	Misterton	10,909	2	5,455	SF10	BDC
43	Netherfield & Warsop Carrs	4,640	1	4,640	SF5	MDC
44	New Cross and Sutton Junction	5,150	1	5,150	SF12	ADC
45	Newstead Abbey	7,095	2	3,548	SF6	GBC
46	Ollerton and Boughton	9,861	2	4,931	SF4	NSDC
47	Park Hall & Vale	4,859	1	4,859	SF5	MDC
48	Penniment & Wainwright	4,245	1	4,245	SF8	MDC
49	Plains	6,754	1	6,754	SF1	GBC
50	Pleasley & Sherwood	4,033	1	4,033	SF5	MDC
51	Porchester and Woodthorpe	10,997	2	5,499	SF1	GBC

52	Racecourse & Rock Hill	5,148	1	5,148	SF8	MDC
53	Rainworth North & Rufford	5,176	1	5,176	SF4	NSDC
54	Rainworth South & Blidworth	4,669	1	4,669	SF4	NSDC
55	Redhill	4,961	1	4,961	SF1	GBC
56	Retford East	9,510	2	4,755	SF10	BDC
57	Retford West	9,932	2	4,966	SF10	BDC
58	Rufford & West Bank	4,747	1	4,747	SF8	MDC
59	Selston	4,883	1	4,883	SF7	ADC
60	Skegby	5,167	1	5,167	SF12	ADC
61	Southwell & Thompsons	4,702	1	4,702	SF4	MDC
62	Southwell and Trent	9,564	2	4,782	SF11	NSDC
63	Stanton Hill, Teversal and The Dales	5,094	1	5,094	SF12	ADC
64	Summit	4,053	1	4,053	SF7	ADC
65	Sutton-on-Trent and Muskham	5,012	1	5,012	SF11	NSDC
66	Trent Valley	5,231	1	5,231	SF3	GBC
67	Tuxford	9,259	2	4,630	SF10	BDC
68	Worksop East	4,809	1	4,809	SF13	BDC
69	Worksop North East	4,951	1	4,951	SF13	BDC
70	Worksop North West and Worksop North	14,560	3	4,853	SF13	BDC
71	Worksop South, Worksop South East and Welbeck	12,654	3	4,218	SF13	BDC
		459,073	**96**	**4782**		

Ref	Area Committee	Electorate size	Members
SF1	Arnold	36,058	7
SF2	Carlton & Gedling	30,725	6
SF3	Dumbles & Becks	23,566	5
SF4	Forest	37,578	8
SF5	Forest Town, Woodhouse & Warsop	37,388	8
SF6	Hucknall & Newstead	34,574	8
SF7	Kirkby & Central Ashfield	31,965	7
SF8	Mansfield	36,900	8
SF9	Newark & East	42,374	9
SF10	Retford & North	50,518	10
SF11	Southwell & Trent Valley	20,269	4
SF12	Sutton & North Ashfield	35,326	7
SF13	Worksop	41,832	9
	Total	**459,073**	**96**

Nottingham and South Nottinghamshire (South Nottinghamshire) Warding and Area Committee Proposals

Ward No	Wards	Electorate size	Councillors	Average Number of Electors per Councillor	Area Committee	Current District
1	Abbey and Trent Bridge	8,600	2	4,300	SN10	RBC
2	Aspley	12,149	3	4,050	SN1	NCC
3	Attenborough & Beeston Rylands	9,858	2	4,929	SN2	BBC
4	Awsworth, Bramcote, Cossall & Trowell	9,938	2	4,969	SN9	BBC
5	Basford	11,625	2	5,813	SN4	NCC
6	Beeston	12,756	3	4,252	SN2	BBC
7	Berridge	11,315	2	5,658	SN7	NCC
8	Bestwood	12,346	3	4,115	SN7	NCC
9	Bilborough	12,672	3	4,224	SN1	NCC
10	Bingham North	4,504	1	4,504	SN3	RBC
11	Bingham South	4,485	1	4,485	SN3	RBC
12	Brinsley & Greasley	7,667	2	3,834	SN6	BBC
13	Bulwell	11,615	2	5,808	SN4	NCC
14	Bulwell Forest	10,305	2	5,153	SN4	NCC
15	Bunny and Keyworth & Wolds	9,501	2	4,751	SN8	RBC
16	Castle	6,177	2	3,089	SN5	NCC
17	Clifton East	12,575	3	4,192	SN10	NCC
18	Clifton West	7,465	2	3,733	SN10	NCC
19	Compton Acres and Lutterell	7,149	2	3,575	SN10	RBC
20	Cotgrave and Tollerton	7,843	2	3,922	SN3	RBC
21	Cranmer and East Bridgford	4,930	1	4,930	SN3	RBC

22	Cropwell and Neville & Langar	4,729	1	4,729	SN3	RBC
23	Dales	12,082	3	4,027	SN5	NCC
24	Eastwood	9,436	2	4,718	SN6	BBC
25	Edwalton	4,602	1	4,602	SN10	RBC
26	Gamston	4,575	1	4,575	SN10	RBC
27	Gotham and Soar Valley	3,844	1	3,844	SN8	RBC
28	Hyson Green & Arboretum	10,634	2	5,317	SN5	NCC
29	Kimberley	12,958	3	4,319	SN6	BBC
30	Lady Bay	4,911	1	4,911	SN10	RBC
31	Leake	7,210	2	3,605	SN8	RBC
32	Leen Valley	7,046	2	3,523	SN1	NCC
33	Lenton & Wollaton East	8,481	2	4,241	SN2	NCC
34	Mapperly	11,680	2	5,840	SN7	NCC
35	Meadows	7,652	2	3,826	SN5	NCC
36	Musters	4,224	1	4,224	SN10	RBC
37	Newton and Radcliffe-on-Trent	8,125	2	4,063	SN3	RBC
38	Radford	5,676	1	5,676	SN5	NCC
39	Ruddington	6,737	2	3,369	SN8	RBC
40	Sherwood	11,375	2	5,688	SN7	NCC
41	St Anns	11,352	3	3,784	SN5	NCC
42	Stapleford	11,633	3	3,878	SN9	BBC
43	Toton & Chilwell	12,053	3	4,018	SN9	BBC
44	Wollaton West	11,389	2	5,695	SN2	NCC
		387,879	**88**			

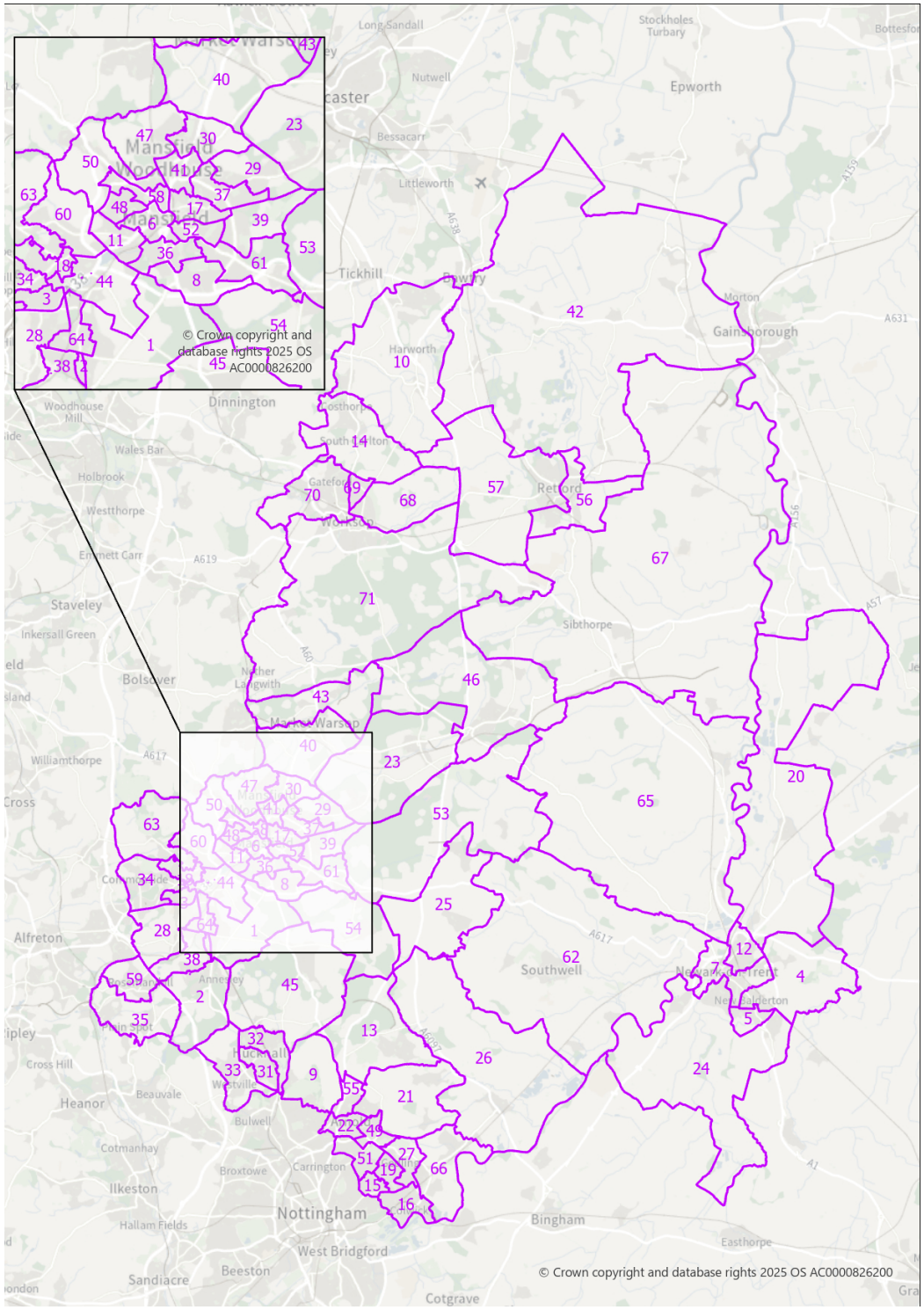
Ref	Area Committee	Electorate size	Members
SN1	Aspley & Bilborough	31,867	8
SN2	Beeston Wollaton & Lenton	42,484	9
SN3	Bingham & Cotgrave	34,616	8
SN4	Bulwell & Basford	33,545	6
SN5	City Centre	53,573	13
SN6	Eastwood & Kimberley	30,061	7
SN7	North East	46,716	9
SN8	South	27,292	7
SN9	Stapleford & Chilwell	33,624	8
SN10	West Bridgford & Clifton	54,101	13
	Total	**387,879**	**88**

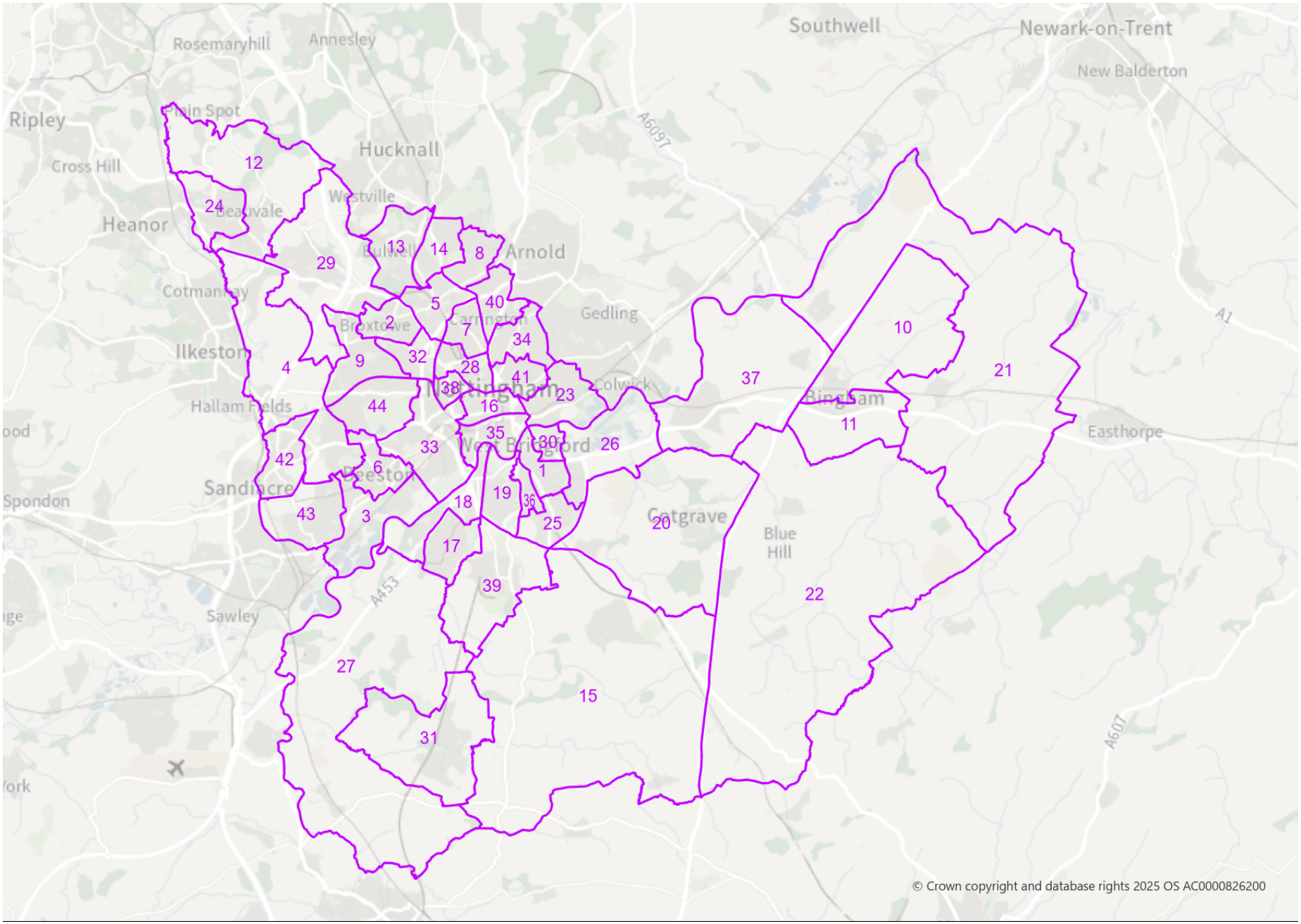
NORTH - SOUTH

APPENDIX 7

MAP OF ILLUSTRATIVE WARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Sherwood Forest (North Nottinghamshire)





Nottingham and South Nottinghamshire (South Nottinghamshire)



MANSFIELD MARKET PLACE, MANSFIELD

Bassetlaw DISTRICT COUNCIL — North Nottinghamshire —

Gedling Borough Council

Mansfield District Council

NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

A brighter future for driving growth and improving lives.
Rooted in community. Connected by place.

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