

## **CABINET – 16 OCTOBER 2018**

### **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A UNITARY STRUCTURE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN LEICESTERSHIRE**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To respond to the Cabinet resolution of 6 July 2018 to enable the Cabinet to consider outline proposals for the development of a unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire and, in light of that consideration, stakeholder engagement. The report also provides an update on the development of a Strategic Alliance for the East Midlands.

#### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that:
  - (a) the outline proposals for the development of a unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire and subsequent stakeholder engagement be considered;
  - (b) the proposed terms of reference for the working party established by the County Council on 26 September be considered;
  - (c) the present position in respect of a Strategic Alliance for the East Midlands be noted.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

3. To enable consideration to be given to the next steps in the development of a unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire.

#### **Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

4. Subject to agreement by the Cabinet, this report will be considered by the Scrutiny Commission and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during November, as follows:-

Children and Families - Monday 5 November  
 Adults and Communities - Tuesday 6 November  
 Health – Wednesday 7 November  
 Environment and Transport - Thursday 8 November  
 Scrutiny Commission - Wednesday 14 November

5. The Cabinet has left open the opportunity to consider comments of the Scrutiny bodies, stakeholders and the working party (referred to in paragraphs 130 to 133) at its meeting on 23 November 2018.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

6. The Cabinet at its meeting on 6 July requested officers to undertake work on the development of a unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire and to prepare outline proposals. The Cabinet also authorised the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources to work with regional counterparts to develop a Strategic Alliance for the East Midlands.
7. At its meeting on 26 September the County Council set up a politically balanced working party on a unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire.

### **Resource Implications**

8. Work on the development of a unitary structure for local government has been undertaken within existing resources. The financial implications of unitary local government in Leicestershire are set out in the report.

### **Legal Implications**

9. The outline proposals and recommendations under consideration are 'Executive Functions' and are therefore a matter for the Cabinet. However, given the significance of the decision it is planned that the matter should be referred to the full Council for consideration and debate. The Leader has given a separate commitment to consideration by the full Council.
10. The Director of Law and Governance has been consulted on the content of this report. The legislative position in respect of unitary reorganisation is set out later in the report.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

11. As this is a matter which will affect all areas of the county, a copy of this report is being circulated to all members of the County Council.

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## **PART B**

### **Background**

#### **Recent history of Local Government Structures in the UK and Leicestershire**

12. The reorganisation of 1974 following the Local Government Act 1972 established a two-tier structure of counties and districts throughout England. Successive reorganisations have increasingly dismantled that structure, through the introduction of unitary authorities, starting in 1986. Of the current membership of the County Councils' Network, 25% are unitary councils.
13. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have unitary structures of local government.
14. In 1997, Leicester City and Rutland became unitary authorities, while the rest of Leicestershire retained the two-tier county and district councils. There were other reorganisations elsewhere in 1997 and 1998.
15. Following the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, there was a further round of local government reorganisation. It included the creation of county unitary authorities in Northumberland, Durham, Cornwall, Wiltshire and Shropshire. The counties of Cheshire and Bedfordshire were also reorganised using a two-unitary model, acknowledging that parts of both counties, namely Luton, Warrington and Halton, had previously become unitary authorities in 1997. The first elections for those new unitary authorities took place in 2008 or 2009.
16. Currently, unitary reorganisation is most advanced in Dorset and Northamptonshire. A reorganisation has been approved in Dorset for two unitary councils, one rural and one urban/suburban to reflect the nature of the area, one building on an existing unitary. It is widely known that the splitting of two-tier Northamptonshire into two unitaries is not a model for any other reorganisation since a single unitary would have been perceived as replacing a failed council with another on the same footprint.

#### **Combined Authority Proposal**

17. In May 2015 a decision was taken to pursue a Combined Authority proposal for Leicester and Leicestershire, bringing the eight councils in the county area together with Leicester City Council under a new governance arrangement in order to deliver a range of strategic services focused on economic growth and transport planning across the area.
18. The Combined Authority proposal for Leicester and Leicestershire, supported by the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and the three Universities, was submitted to Government in December 2015. However due to changes in Government and the prioritisation of combined authority proposals which included having an elected mayor, the Leicester/Leicestershire Combined Authority proposal was not progressed by Government.

## **Financial Situation**

19. In the circumstances set out below the Cabinet is considering the use of powers available to the County Council to establish a unitary structure of local government.
20. The principal driver for change through a unitary structure is the financial situation facing the County Council and the impact on front-line services.
21. The nation's public finances have been in a perilous state since the financial crisis a decade ago. The crisis instigated the deepest recession in the UK since the Second World War. The effects of the recession are still being experienced today.
22. The tax increases and spending cuts that followed the crisis have reduced the public sector's budget deficit to a relatively low level. However, slow economic growth over the previous eight years has left public debt at double its pre-crisis level, relative to the size of the economy. The expenditure on public debt is equivalent to it being the fourth largest government "department" after social security, health and education. This level of debt is problematic even though Government borrowing costs are at historically low levels. It is a structural problem that needs fixing before borrowing costs inevitably increase.
23. To quote the Institute of Fiscal Studies: "With public debt twice its pre-crisis level, economic growth remaining sluggish and the population ageing rapidly there will be no shortage of tough decisions over the coming decade."
24. These tough decisions come in three forms:
  - Boosting economic growth;
  - Tax increases;
  - Cost control.
25. Faster economic growth would be the preferred option for the Government, but achieving this has proven elusive. Most medium term economic forecasts suggest modest growth, below historic averages, should be expected, which pushes the emphasis onto the other two options.
26. There has been some softening of public attitudes towards tax increases and this may afford the Government some respite. However, as the funding would be used to deal with existing and predicted demand and not service improvement, public acceptance is limited. National political uncertainty around Brexit may further constrain the Government's choices.
27. This leaves the Government's most likely option to be further cost control. The acceptance that welfare and NHS expenditure are very difficult to control leaves all other Government Departments apprehensive in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2019 (CSR19). Education, Defence and Police are all putting forward compelling arguments for additional funding. The NHS is likely to join this chorus to push their annual increase towards the historic average of 4% above inflation, compared to the current (unfunded) commitment of 3.4%.

28. Recognition of local government financial problems are mixed at best. The interdependency between the NHS and Adult Social Care means that it cannot be ignored, although at the time of writing no long term solution has been proposed by Government. The larger problems of Children's Social Care and Special Education Needs do not appear to be grasped outside of the local government sector.
29. Local government has not traditionally fared well in spending prioritisation decisions against departments such as Health, Education, and Defence. The working assumption, for financial planning, is that this situation will continue.
30. CSR19, which will have to reflect the Prime Minister's statement at the Conservative Party Conference 'that the end of austerity is in sight', should go some way to validating this assumption, although the time period of funding projections may be too short to give any lasting certainty. The County Council therefore has to keep financial sustainability in its own hands through:
  - Local tax generation;
  - Management of service growth;
  - Development of savings and investment initiatives.
 It is also reasonable in the circumstances to propose wider transformation and reform.
31. The local government press and more recently the national media report stories of councils who have not planned ahead with the consequence of greater levels of service cuts than otherwise would have been required.
32. Northamptonshire County Council is at the forefront of struggling councils. Poor leadership and financial management undoubtedly accelerated its decline, but the underlying issues of funding cuts coupled with rising demand for services and National Living Wage driven cost pressures are the same for all councils with social care responsibilities. This leads to the view that Northamptonshire County Council's experience is an insight into the future.
33. The National Audit Office's financial sustainability report echoes this sentiment. The report identifies a 49.1% real terms reduction in Government funding for local authorities between 2010/11 and 2017/18 (equating to a 28.6% real terms reduction in 'spending power', i.e. what the Government defines as the main sources of Government funding plus Council Tax) and warns that one in 10 English Councils (15 in total) with social care responsibilities will not be able to balance their budgets within three years. The BBC recently attempted to identify the councils most at risk, publishing a list of 11 authorities. The list included eight County Councils, all of whom are better funded by the Government than Leicestershire County Council. These eight account for nearly one third of the total number of County Councils in England, demonstrating the disproportionate financial strain being placed on authorities such as Leicestershire.
34. Although deprivation is at a low level in Leicestershire, compared to the rest of England, it is not the least deprived county area. There are seven other county areas with lower deprivation, but a higher level of funding. The most extreme example is Surrey that has lower deprivation, but benefits from £150 per resident

of additional funding. If Leicestershire was funded by the Government at the same level as Surrey it would be £100m better off each year. Surrey is one of the councils identified as being in financial difficulty. It is facing a funding gap rising to £94m in 2020/21.

35. Despite being poorly funded Leicestershire County Council is faring better than most, due to a proactive approach to planning and savings delivery. The approach taken locally is set out in the following paragraphs.

### Funding

36. In Leicestershire County Council, being realistic about what resources Government is willing and able to assign to local government has ensured that the reductions received were not unexpected. A key component of the County Council's strategy has been to campaign for a funding settlement that is representative of the needs of the county area.
37. The fair funding campaign has been very successful in gaining national recognition that the current system for funding local government is broken. However, the need to continue the repair of the nation's finances will mean sustained additional funding for the local government sector is very unlikely. The implementation of fair funding will require the reallocation of resources away from highly funded areas. The consequence of this and the proposed phased implementation indicate that the financial benefit is likely to be relatively disappointing. Hence the potential financial benefits of the campaign have not been included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

### Service Demand

38. The County Council has accepted that whilst all services can be made more efficient and effective it is not always possible to put a cap on cost increases.
39. Care for elderly adults is the largest expenditure area in the County Council's budget. Demographic projections predict continued growth in this area compounded by the fact that the average length of time for which people require care is increasing.
40. Children's Social Care, although a smaller portion of the budget than Adult Social Care, is the main driver of financial growth. The looked after children population in Leicestershire is growing at a rate of 8% per annum. The supply of interventions cannot keep pace with demand, driving up costs further.
41. Provision of Special Education Needs has experienced cost growth for some time. However, to date this has been contained within the Dedicated School Grant. Recent Government changes in the rules around funding and continued increase in the number of pupils requiring support have restricted the County Council's ability to manage this budget. This is further compounded by the impact of the national funding formula on schools. Schools are required to make savings to maintain their current level of provision. This will make it harder to engage schools

in identifying solutions and it is not unreasonable to expect them to look for ways to mitigate savings by seeking to charge costs to other organisations.

42. The current four year MTFS includes £90 million for cost and demand increases. It is reasonable to expect that a similar level of increase will be required in the future. Taking a realistic estimate of unavoidable demand allows the necessary Council Tax increases and savings plans to be put in place. It also allows demand management activity to be performed rather than having to deal reactively with overspends through emergency cuts.

### Savings

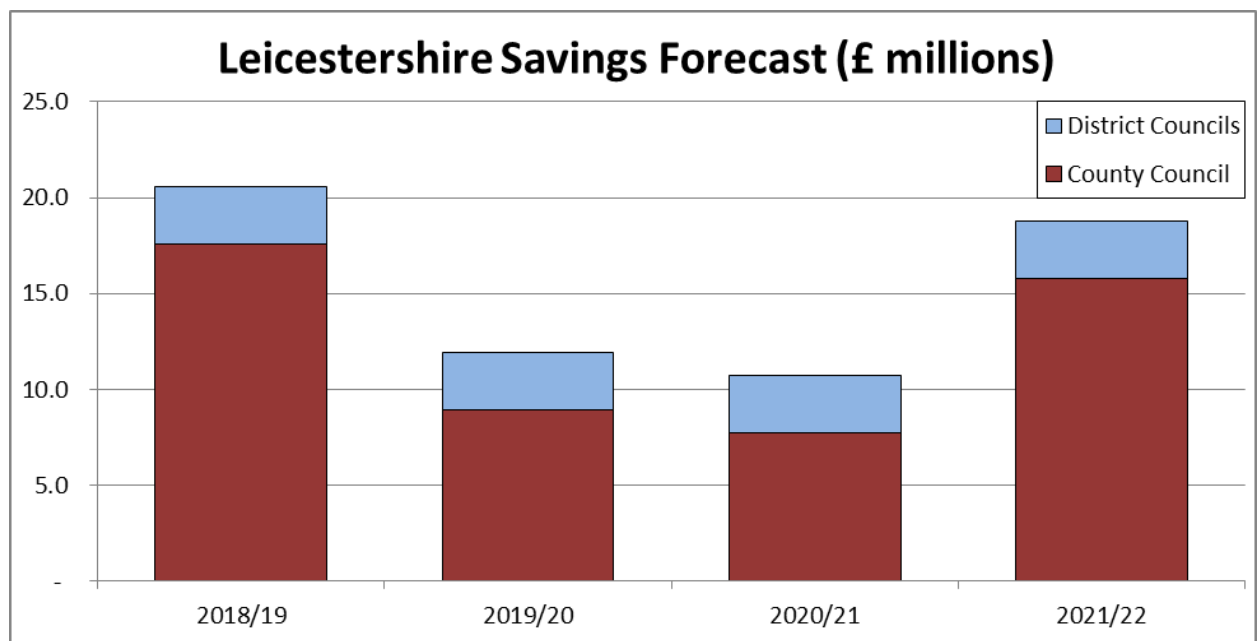
43. Since the start of austerity the County Council has recognised the need to invest in change and make early decisions in difficult areas. This has allowed the emphasis to be kept on efficiency savings, which form 70% of the current savings plans. The technical delivery of further efficiency projects is getting more risky requiring either significant financial investment, for example the asset investment fund, implementation of new solutions, e.g. technology, or more transformational change to front-line services.
44. By the end of this financial year the County Council will have delivered £200m of savings since the start of austerity in 2010. The majority of these savings have been used to fund the rising cost of social care services.
45. Despite these significant savings, which have not been achieved easily, the latest financial forecasts predict that a balanced budget will only be achieved for the next two years. Beyond this point significant new savings will have to be identified and maximum Council Tax increases implemented. This is clearly a worrying scenario requiring serious attention.
46. Low funding for Leicestershire is a significant problem making further savings difficult and more likely to result in cuts or additional charges rather than efficiencies. In short the County Council's financial position is not sustainable. If the financial pressures continue then the visible detrimental impact upon residents and partners will inevitably increase through service reduction or cost increases.
47. Even if Government stopped the anticipated future funding reductions, the known service demand and inflationary pressures will create a cost pressure of £20 million p.a. ongoing. If housing growth continues in the county and Government allows 1.99% annual council tax increases (without a referendum), only half of this cost pressure will be funded, leaving a £10million annual savings requirement. Saving at this level is not sustainable on a long term basis and continued increases in Council Tax for a reduction in services would not be acceptable to the public.

### Countywide Finances

48. Financial pressures have not been spread evenly across the different tiers of local government organisations. District councils do not have responsibility for social care services and Government incentives for new homes and business rate

growth have disproportionately benefited many districts. The result is that the savings requirement has not been on the same scale or had the same impact as for county councils. The Government has already signalled its intention to reform the New Homes Bonus (currently £18.2m p.a. for Leicestershire), with some reductions already implemented. In addition the retained business rate growth (currently £15m p.a.) is expected to be removed from annual budgets as part of the national funding reforms in 2020/21. The combination of these two funding reforms and the several high profile examples of struggling councils with social care responsibility are likely to increase the financial pressure on district councils.

49. Using published financial plans and an assumption that cost and funding pressures continue at a similar rate to the current planning period, an estimate has been made of the savings challenge to the middle of the next decade. This fits with the Government's current aspiration for delivering a balanced budget.



50. Savings in the chart from 2018/19 to 2021/22 are taken from the latest published budgets of the councils in Leicestershire. The district council savings have been averaged, due to different planning periods and use of reserves that distorts the timing of savings. It should be noted that individual councils have taken different approaches to the potential changes in future funding.
51. The estimate is for £62 million of savings to be required in Leicestershire (both County Council and District Councils). This estimate already assumes that £57 million is raised through Council Tax increases, which continue at the maximum level permitted by Government. Only two thirds of the estimated savings across the County Council and District Councils have formed plans over this period.

### Future Uncertainty

52. Current forecasts assume that economic growth continues. However there has been a recession in every decade since the 1950s. As the last was in 2009 it would not be surprising for a recession to hit before austerity ends.



53. Taking a more pessimistic view of the economy increases the savings requirement significantly, as medium term plans assume a significant level of income growth related to new housing and business rates. In the event of a recession housing and business growth are likely to stall.
54. There continues to be uncertainty over what agreement will be reached for Britain's exit of the European Union. Regardless of the eventual deal reached most commentators believe that there will be an impact on the country's economic activity and the way domestic organisations need to operate. Local government is not insulated from these changes. Service departments are dependent upon a fully functioning labour market; the local economy is dependent upon business investment and consumer confidence; Government funding is dependent upon the state of the nation's finances.
55. Adoption of a unitary structure could be seen as a positive step to financial sustainability, as uncertainties could be dealt with more effectively. There is thought to be strength in the argument that aside from the financial benefits of re-organisation, unitary organisations are more responsive to significant changes (fewer organisations), make better decisions (preventative services aligned to the services they support) and are able to deploy more resources rather than hold contingencies (County Council reserve level is 38% versus 97% for the District Councils).

#### Action open to the County Council

56. Adoption of sound financial management has kept Leicestershire County Council out of the first wave of crisis councils. This has not been without significant impact on the residents of Leicestershire both in the level of council tax and reduction of services.
57. As mentioned earlier (paragraph 30) in the financial circumstances identified it is reasonable for the County Council to consider transformation and reform which go beyond actions in its own hands. This has been recognised in MTFS reports to Council budget meetings. It is a fact that Leicestershire has an expensive structure of local government.
58. At least three of the County Councils identified by the BBC have started to work toward a core offer that focuses on statutory requirements and protection of vulnerable children and adults. The cuts tend to focus on the universal services that the majority of the population value. Examples of services commonly cut include:
  - Bus subsidies, highways maintenance, road gritting and road safety
  - Prevention services that promote wellbeing
  - Libraries and heritage
  - Trading Standards service
  - Early Help and Prevention Services, in particular Children's Centres
59. Whilst some of the service reductions made in Leicestershire have been in these areas they are not as severe as they would have been had decisions been

delayed. Time is important. The experience of Northamptonshire is that delaying simply increases the level of cuts required. By way of example the County Council has £270m of debt, and is looking for ways to reduce; other councils have higher debt burdens that are likely to increase, for example Northamptonshire County Council (£789m) and Surrey County Council (£759m.)

60. District councils have avoided the worst effects of austerity due to their different funding mix and nature of services delivered. As mentioned earlier in the report (paragraph 48) the funding pressures on district councils look set to increase and some demand pressures, such as homelessness, are also increasing. Should the financial pressure increase service provision in key services such as Leisure Centres, Waste Collection and Parks would inevitably come under review.
61. Reforming local government in Leicestershire would make cuts to county and district services in Leicestershire less likely.
62. In addressing this scale of financial challenge it is a sound principle that demand-led services create a constant requirement for efficiency improvements to keep council tax at an acceptable level, but at the same time wider reform should focus on protecting and investing in front line services, provided now by both the County Council and the district councils.

### **Joining Up Services**

63. A second driver for change through a unitary structure is to join up front-line services.
64. Criticism of moving to a unitary structure from a two tier structure is often based on a claim that 'services would no longer be delivered at the local level.' In any structure services are delivered locally, whether personal social care or waste collection. The structure in which they are delivered can help or hinder their effectiveness.
65. It is believed that there is a good case to be made that a unitary structure provides an opportunity to redesign service delivery in a way which would be better for residents, local businesses and partner organisations, as well as bringing benefits in financial savings. Service redesign could be informed by the following principles:-
  - Fit for the future, with the agility to adapt to the changing landscape of local government;
  - Focus on outcomes, supported by a robust evidence base;
  - Continued value for money, maximising the use of the Leicestershire pound;
  - Simplified service provision;
  - Strengthened relationships with strategic partners and businesses, leading to more effective multi-agency decision making and delivery of services.
66. Similarly, there is a good case to be made that fragmentation in service delivery and responsibility inevitably can lead to frustration and confusion for members of the public and that a unitary structure can correct that.

67. Last year the County Council recorded more than 130,000 web visits where someone was confused between the county and district council services. Similarly, 11,000 out of 200,000 calls to the Customer Service Centre at the County Council were redirected to district councils. This is inefficient in terms of time and money and also slows down the response to the public. A unitary structure would address public enquiries more effectively and make transactions quicker and clearer.

#### Partnership working

68. The creation of a unitary structure for Leicestershire would also improve the effectiveness of partnership working across local government, health, business, the voluntary and community sector and other local partners.
69. Leicestershire forms part of a wider geographic footprint for key partners: Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) for NHS and emergency services except the regional ambulance service; Leicester and Leicestershire for the Local Enterprise Partnership. This can be clumsy and fragmented. It can be difficult for partners to engage in a co-ordinated way with local government services. There are examples of an individual council delaying or frustrating a policy initiative, causing reputational damage to local government.

#### Services in a Unitary Structure

70. Appendices A - I to this report have been prepared by Chief Officers to show the potential benefits of a unitary structure. The appendices also reflect best practice examples drawn from County Unitary Councils with a particular focus on service delivery models in Cornwall, Wiltshire and Durham.

#### Model Unitary Structure

71. A suggested model unitary structure has been developed for the purposes of this report and subsequent stakeholder engagement. Feedback from this engagement, including from the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny bodies, can be used to develop the model further. For the purposes of exemplification it has been based on a single unitary council but this should not be seen as indicative of anything other than a position from which discussion can be initiated. The County Council recognises that a decision to propose restructuring in Leicestershire assumes an invitation from the Secretary of State, and the form which any proposal took would be subject to public consultation and further development.
72. The model recognises best practice, it utilises research material and seeks to address the following:-
- The risk that a removal of a tier of governance could result in a loss of local involvement and identity;

- The need to ensure that local accountability is a key building block of the new council;
- The perception that the establishment of a unitary structure would create what is sometimes called a 'democratic deficit';
- The EY Report (2016), referred to later, finding that the transition from two tier to single tier worked best where the ambition of increasing community participation was explicit from the outset;
- National evidence which shows that community engagement develops social networks which can lead to improved health outcomes.

73. The model unitary structure will need to demonstrate the strongest strategic and local leadership. To deliver this, the proposed model adopts the following approaches:-

- (i) To employ the 'Cabinet and Strong Leader' model of governance.
- (ii) To ensure that all councillors act as community leaders and bring that experience to strategic decision making for the benefit of the county.
- (iii) To have a clear and simple structure for local partners to engage with.

74. Where a councillor serves on both county and district councils, conflicts of interest can arise in decision making. This model allows a better balance between local and strategic issues in the decision making process and the removal of conflict between tiers.

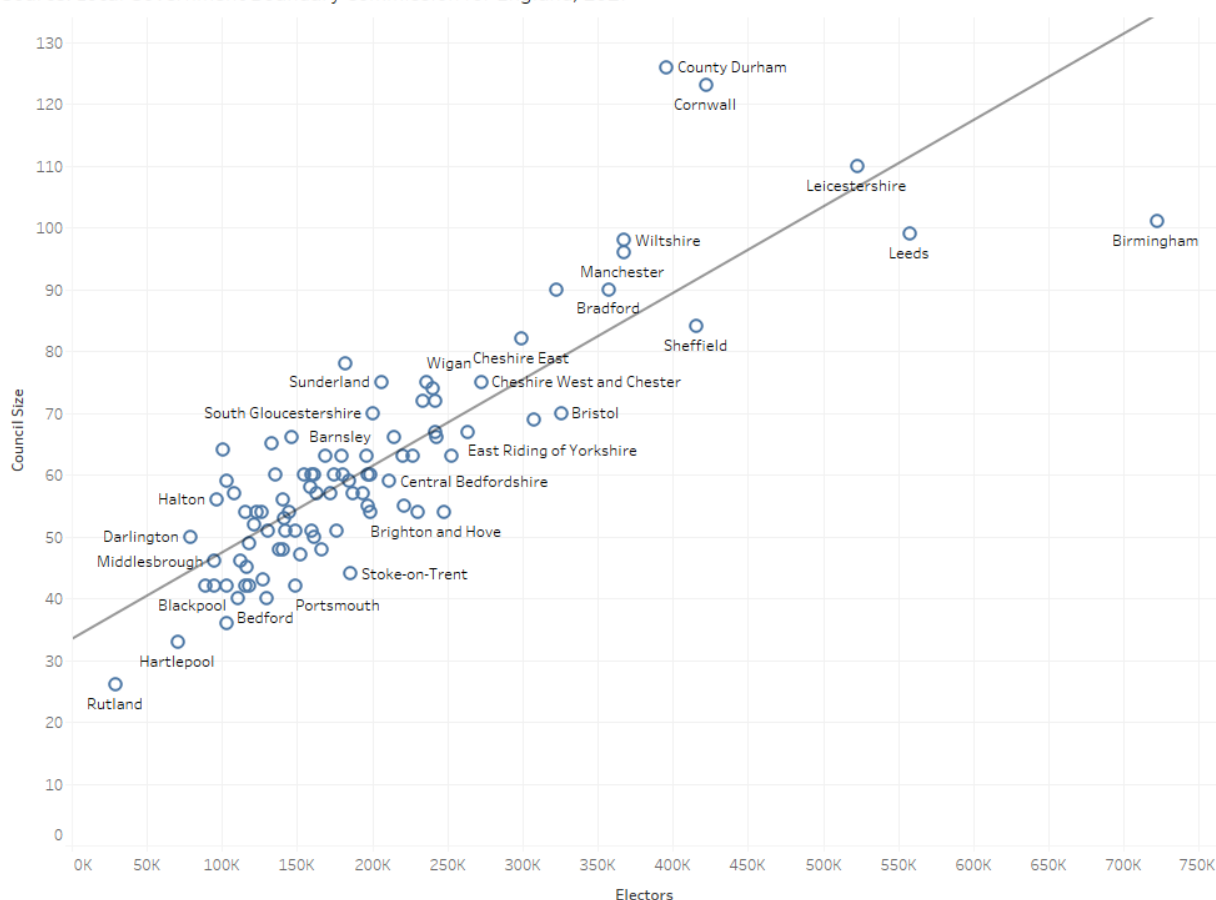
75. The removal of a tier of governance for Leicestershire would lead to a reduction in the number of councillors. Such a reduction gives rise to criticism of a 'democratic deficit' in a unitary structure compared to a two tier structure. Whilst the role of the councillor is not wholly related to the responsibilities of the councillor's particular local authority, it is noted that in two-tier areas, the numbers of district councillors will significantly outnumber the county councillors. In the case of Leicestershire, the County Council (55 members) is responsible for 81% of local government expenditure and the district councils collectively (254 members) are responsible for 19% of that expenditure. At this stage and subject to the views of the Boundary Commission at a later stage, it is suggested that a single unitary council for Leicestershire would have 110 councillors; twice the size of the existing County Council but reducing the overall number of councillors (across the current county and district councils) by 199.

76. Analysis has been undertaken to compare council size and number of electors for single tier local authorities, and a 'line of best fit' developed. That analysis suggests that a council size of 110 would be in line with the council size of other unitary authorities comparable in size. This is illustrated in the chart below.

### Electorate vs. Council Size (Single Tier Local Authorities exc. London Boroughs)

Source: Local Government Boundary Commission for England, 2017

Authority Name  
All



77. The Boundary Commission also considers factors such as governance, scrutiny and the role of the councillor when undertaking a review.
78. To strengthen local leadership, recognising that there will be a reduction in the number of local elected representatives, it is proposed that the unitary councillor would be supported to undertake an enhanced role in supporting the council's strategic direction and a higher profile community leadership role, which would include the following:-
  - To act as 'steward of the place', i.e. a more identifiable local leadership role, working across the locality in partnership with others;
  - To be proactive in supporting, encouraging and enabling community capacity building;
  - To build and maintain relationships with local partners and facilitate their involvement in the community;
  - To oversee the use of an individual budget for community capacity building/to support local projects.
79. It is also proposed that local leadership would be strengthened through the development of Local Area Committees. The building blocks used to define Area Committees would be electoral divisions, local delivery arrangements such as the health and social care Integrated Locality Teams and parliamentary constituencies. They would also need to have roughly similar sized populations.

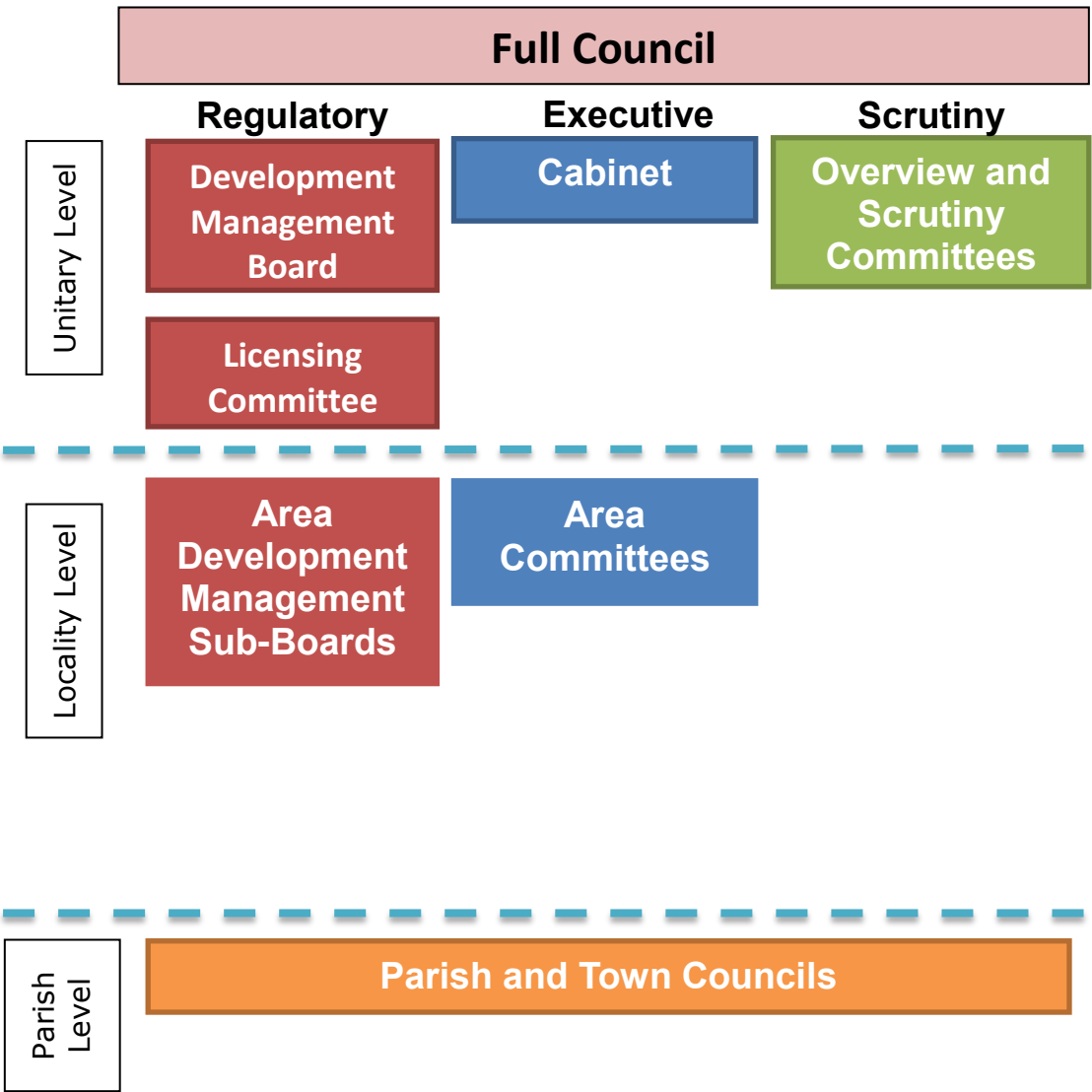
In addition it is crucial that the areas should reflect natural communities in terms of the economic and local interests and identities.

80. A suggested role for the Area Committees could be:-
  - (i) To provide a locality focus to strategic decision making and be able to influence strategic outcomes such as a county-wide Local Plan by acting as a key consultee;
  - (ii) To set local priorities over and above the core service offer which will be consistent across the county;
  - (iii) To produce an '*Area Priority Plan*' reflecting the local priorities and to allocate a devolved revenue budget to support delivery of local priorities;
  - (iv) To agree some Traffic Regulation Orders and be responsible for some delegated funding for local highways measures;
  - (v) To engage local residents, organisations and stakeholders in the best way it sees fit.
81. Through funding a local priority set out in the Area Priority Plan, an Area Committee could also commission an additional service for its locality. This might include areas such as:-
  - Public realm (publicly accessible free and open spaces);
  - Supporting the local economy;
  - Capacity building;
  - Community services (including leisure, culture and art);
  - Promoting community cohesion and wellbeing;
  - Supporting the local voluntary and community sector;
  - Community transport;
  - Community safety measures.
82. It is important that the Area Committees would be able to take decisions which have been delegated to them, so they would be formally constituted committees of the Unitary Council, although there is no requirement for them to be politically balanced. Each Area Committee could co-opt additional members as it saw fit, such as Town and Parish Council representatives or business, voluntary sector and statutory partners.
83. In addition to the Area Committees, it is proposed to establish separate Area Development Management Sub Boards, spanning the footprint of two or more Area Committees, which would be responsible for the local determination of planning applications when the Officer Scheme of Delegation does not apply. The membership of these Sub Boards does not need to reflect political balance, provided that their remit is limited to local matters.
84. Based on analysis of the current level of business undertaken by District Planning Committees, four Area Development Management Sub Boards would determine approximately nine planning applications per month, whereas five Area Development Management Sub Boards would determine approximately seven planning applications per month.
85. The proposed governance model for Planning is set out in the table below. It is acknowledged that there would need to be a regional or sub-regional level to take

into account the relationships with neighbouring councils, particularly Leicester City Council, in terms of economic growth and development.

Level	Governance Proposal	Remit
Unitary Level	<b>Cabinet/ Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan Making:-               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single Local Plan (strategic and non-strategic policies, minerals and waste, mineral safeguarding, infrastructure plan)</li> <li>Neighbourhood Plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>Local Transport Plan</li> <li>Supplementary Planning Documents (housing, energy, historic environment, biodiversity, design, green space, landscape)</li> <li>Community Infrastructure Levy (or S106 policy)</li> <li>Other Policy Documents (e.g. Conservation Area Appraisals, Development briefs)</li> </ul>
	<b>Strategic Development Management Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response to the impact of major developments outside Leicestershire on county residents</li> <li>Determination of Planning Applications for:-               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic and/or Large scale major developments (including Minerals and Waste)</li> <li>Developments that are a significant departure from policy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Officers</b> (delegated decision making powers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and other applications (e.g. Listed Building Consent, Tree Preservation Orders, Rights of Way, Advertisement Control etc.) and discharge conditions unless the local member makes a sound request that it be considered by the Development Management Sub-Board</li> <li>Enforcement Matters</li> <li>Appeals</li> </ul>
Local Level	<b>5 Area Development Management Sub-Boards</b> (average 7 applications per month)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Applications referred by local members</li> <li>Designation and amendment of conservation areas</li> <li>Public Rights of Way</li> <li>Tree Preservation Orders</li> </ul>
Parish Level	<b>Town and Parish Councils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for competent councils (within the meaning of the Localism Act 2011) to determine minor applications</li> <li>Ability to prepare Neighbourhood Plans</li> <li>Consultee on planning applications</li> </ul>

86. The diagram below illustrates the proposed unitary structure:-



## Possible responsibilities

- Strategic, area wide decision making including social care, education, strategic planning, environment and transport, regulatory services, housing, leisure and recreation, public health, strategic management of revenue and benefits;
  - National, regional and strategic partner engagement.
- 
- To provide a locality focus to strategic decision making and be able to influence strategic outcomes;
  - To set local priorities over and above the core county-wide service offer;
  - To produce an 'Area Priority Plan' reflecting the local priorities and to allocate a devolved revenue budget to support delivery. Local Priorities listed in 'Parish Level' below as areas for possible devolvement to Parish/Town councils;
  - To agree some Traffic Regulation Orders and be responsible for some delegated funding for local highways measures;
  - To engage local residents, organisations and stakeholders.
- 
- Where requested, build capacity to take on an enhanced community and service delivery role, to possibly include:-  
  
Public Realm (e.g. grass cutting), Promoting community cohesion, wellbeing, Local Economy support, Supporting the local VCS, Capacity building, Community Transport Community Services (Leisure, Culture, Arts), Community Safety.



### Town and Parish Councils

87. Consideration can be given to the creation of new Town Councils to cover currently 'unparished' areas.
88. Local leadership can be strengthened through giving town and parish councils an enhanced role where this is requested. Key to this would be to ensure where powers and responsibilities are devolved that funding is provided. It is likely that a number of existing Parish Councils, as well as any that are newly established, would request support to build their capacity to take on an enhanced role, to include:-
- (i) Engaging with the community to identify and address local issues and aspirations;
  - (ii) Encouraging social action and developing community managed services;
  - (iii) Enhancing their role in service delivery and devolution, including via asset transfers.
89. Following the County Council's Annual Parish Council Liaison Event in July 2018 it was mutually agreed to hold a focus group of parish and town councils. This was held on the 20 September and those present provided the following view on the principles of a unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire and the role local councils could play:
- (i) General support, particularly from larger councils, for a unitary structure and strengthening the role of local councils;
  - (ii) Appreciation for early engagement and a commitment for ongoing discussions.

### Literature Review

90. The national financial position has, in recent years, led to the production of reports from a number of consultancies and local government commentators about the benefits of moving to a unitary structure. A summary of what appear to be the most relevant reports, including the report commissioned from Ernst and Young by the County Council in 2014, is set out below.

#### Ernst & Young (EY) Report February 2014: Strategic Financial Case for a Unitary Council for Leicestershire

91. The key findings in this report were as follows:-
- A single unitary council could save up to £30m per annum and would generate a Net Present Value saving of nearly £90m over five years. The cost of implementing the required changes was estimated at £12.8m with a forecast payback period of just over one year.
  - A dual unitary council structure would deliver savings but £12m per annum less (39%) compared to a single unitary council.

- Harmonising council tax charges at the lower level would represent greater value to the Leicestershire council tax payer. EY estimated this would cost £7.7m per year.
- A stronger locality focus could be achieved through:-
  - (i) The elimination of municipal boundaries and organisational silos;
  - (ii) The simplification of the delivery landscape; and
  - (iii) Creation of greater local democratic accountability.
- A unitary council would have greater strategic impact through the reduction in the number of individual organisations that need to be involved in discussions, planning and delivery. It would also provide the opportunity to create:-
  - (i) A single planning authority;
  - (ii) A single integrated housing strategy; and
  - (iii) Strategic planning for the area as a whole.

92. The EY analysis also identified a number of potential liabilities and risks which would need to be evaluated in more detail if the case for a unitary council were progressed to a further stage including: employee pay harmonisation; service level standardisation; and designing an effective democratic structure.

93. It should be noted that, in response to criticisms of this report made by the Liberal Democrat Group at the time, there were four points of clarification or correction made, viz:

- Names of Councils, page 5 – the titles of Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton and Oadby and Wigston were incorrectly shown as district and not borough councils.
- Service expenditure, page 5 – as indicated, the figures were extracted from Government data and were correct.
- Population figures, page 5 – EY used mid-year population estimates from 2008. Later figures could have been used.
- Elected Members, page 25 – the total should have been 309, not 316. Incorrect numbers were shown for Blaby, Charnwood and Melton.

94. The above did not impact on the key findings set out in paragraph 91.

95. In developing the case for a unitary structure of local government in Leicestershire, officers have reviewed and updated the methodology used by EY. The areas that savings can be derived from are similar in the majority of subsequent financial studies and still entirely relevant. However, the opportunity has been taken to update savings calculations by using the latest published information and to broaden the sources of information, where possible, to reduce the likelihood of a

material error. This is a process that will continue, as new information becomes available.

InLoGov Report 2015: Building Better Collaboration - Improving Collaborative Behaviours in Local Government

96. This report commissioned by the District Councils' Network was supportive of retaining the status quo. It focused on the role of district councils and suggested that "the energy invested in debates about structure would be better focused on improving services and outcomes through collaborative behaviours. Indeed, perhaps the longevity of the present municipal arrangements bears a certain amount of testimony to their relative success. Whilst the arguments about confusion for citizens and inefficiency remain; a system that allocates local services and a local voice to districts and more strategic and cost-sensitive services to counties has stood the test of time".
97. However, the report recognised shortcomings in the current system and recommended greater collaboration between districts as a way of delivering better local services, savings and efficiencies. It found that, because of their size and the nature of their services, districts were well placed to lead collaborative projects. It also suggested that behaviour, culture and trust are far more important to collaboration than the structures through which people work.
98. The report did not make reference to either the estimated or actual level of savings which could be achieved through greater collaboration between district councils. It also focussed essentially on district councils rather than the two-tier structure per se.

EY Report September 2016: Independent Analysis of Governance Scenarios and Public Service Reform in County Areas (National Report)

99. This report examined six scenarios using national data across the then remaining 27 two-tier counties in England. The table below shows the indicative level of savings for the average county. The results gave a national picture and it was noted that further detailed analysis would be required to ascertain precise savings in each area. Nevertheless the proposed savings for the average council were broadly in line with other studies.

Scenario	Payback Period	Annual saving post implementation
Single Unitary	Two years two months	£23m - £29m
Two Unitaries	Three years two months	£13m - £19m
Three Unitaries	Seven years	£4m - £10m
Shared support services	Four years eleven months	£2m - £8m
Merged Districts	Three years eight months	£6m – £10m
Three Unitaries and a Combined Authority	Seven years plus	£3m - £10m

100. Figures are based on an average county size i.e. population of 800,000 and spend of £930m. For comparison, Leicestershire's population is 690,212 with a spend of £791m.
101. The report also highlighted the savings achieved by the unitary councils created in 2008/9 reorganisations, compared to their projected savings. This is illustrated in the table below. In most cases, savings exceeded the target set, based on whether the council took opportunities to redesign structures and services and deliver transformation or whether they simply re-organised and 'scaled up' current ways of working.

Unitary	Projected Saving	Estimated savings achieved
Cornwall	£17m per year	£25m per year
Wiltshire	£18m per year	£25m per year
Northumberland	£17m per year	£28m per year
Durham	£22m per year	£22m in year one
Shropshire	£20m per year	£20m per year

102. In terms of public sector reform, the report found a correlation between the scenario that delivers the highest level of savings and that which relates best to key areas of public service reform. Areas such as social care and health integration, economic growth, transport, crime and financial viability and sustainability benefit from maximising economies of scale, clear governance, enhanced coterminous boundaries with partner agencies and high change capacity.
103. The report also noted that all the larger county unitary authorities established in 2009 have implemented models which enhance community governance and address the risks highlighted in the report.

ResPublica Report (November 2017): Devo 2.0: The Case for Counties (National Report)

104. The report found that due to funding pressures and increased demands on key services, maintaining the status quo of local government structures in two-tier areas such as Leicestershire is not an option. County unitaries would provide a recognised and identifiable unit of administration that corresponds to the appropriate scale of operation required for strategic decision making and development.
105. The District Councils' Network responded to this report by arguing that local government reorganisation should focus on the needs of local people and place at a local geography residents can recognise and relate to, where incentives to grow can be seen to work and where councils are small enough to solve problems one family at a time. The question of what constitutes a 'local geography' was left open.

## **Legislative Position and Government Criteria for Reorganisation to a Unitary Structure**

106. Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 sets out a procedure for local government structural and boundary changes in England. This provides for the Secretary of State to invite any 'principal authority' (defined as a County or District Council) to make one of the following proposals:-

- **Type A:** a proposal for a single tier of local government for a county area based on existing county boundaries.
- **Type B:** a proposal for a single tier of local government for an area which is currently a district or two or more districts based on existing district boundaries.
- **Type C:** a proposal for a combination of a whole county or one or more districts in that county with an adjoining county or counties or district(s).
- **A combined proposal:** a combined proposal is a proposal consisting of (1) one or more Type B proposals and one or more Type C proposals; or (2) two or more Type B proposals or (3) two or more Type C proposals.

107. The invitation from the Secretary of State may either specify the type of proposal invited or allow the Authority to choose the type of proposal it submits. In responding to an invitation, the Authority is required to have regard to any guidance from the Secretary of State on what a proposal should seek to achieve and matters to be taken into account in formulating a proposal. Guidance issued in 2006 ('Invitations to Councils in England') sets out the approach and criteria with which proposals were required to conform as follows:

- "i) the change to the future unitary local government structures must be:*
- *affordable, i.e. that the change itself both represents value for money and can be met from councils' existing resource envelope; and*
  - *supported by a broad cross section of partners and stakeholders; and*
- ii) those future unitary local government structures must:*
- *provide strong, effective and accountable strategic leadership;*
  - *deliver genuine opportunities for neighbourhood flexibility and empowerment; and*
  - *deliver value for money and equity on public services".*

108. Following the Caller report on Northamptonshire County Council in February 2018, the Secretary of State (in his invitation letter for revised structural proposals to the Northamptonshire principal authorities) provided guidance as follows:

*"A proposal should seek to achieve for the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government, that is the establishment of unitary authorities:*

- a. which are likely to improve local government and service delivery across the area of the proposal, giving greater value for money, generating*

*savings, providing stronger strategic and local leadership, and which are more sustainable structures;*

- b. which command a good deal of local support as assessed in the round overall across the whole area of the proposal; and*
- c. where the area of each unitary authority is a credible geography consisting of one or more existing local government areas and having a substantial population that at a minimum is substantially in excess of 300,000”.*

109. On receipt of a proposal in response to an invitation, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) may request advice from the Local Government Boundary Commission on any matter relating to the proposal.

110. The Secretary of State may:-

- a. Make an order implementing the proposal with or without modification;
- b. Implement an alternative proposal submitted by the Local Government Boundary Commission with or without modification; or
- c. Decide to take no action.

111. Before making any order, the Secretary of State is required to consult every Authority affected by the proposal (except the authority or authorities which made the proposal) and such other persons as he considers appropriate.

### **Options and Appraisal**

112. The Cabinet decision of 6 July requested outline proposals for a unitary structure. The following initial appraisal looks at two options: a single unitary council and two unitary councils. The MHCLG population criterion alone rules out a three way split and also challenges a two way split.

113. At this outline proposal stage, the approach adopted in the options appraisal is to consider financial and non-financial aspects. It draws on learning from other Councils (single and dual Unitary Councils within a county).

114. The Cabinet decision of 6 July did not request an analysis of the status quo. The current thinking is that retention of a two-tier structure in any form, however, could not be expected to meet fully the requirements of the drivers for change identified elsewhere in this report.

### **Financial Assessment**

115. The following table summarises the financial implications of the two options set out above. More detailed financial information, including a breakdown of where the net annual savings come from, is included in paragraphs 118 – 122.

Option		Net annual Saving	4 year MTFS saving	Cost of implementation
1	Single unitary Council for Leicestershire	£30m	£100m	£19m
2	Two unitary Councils for Leicestershire	£18m	£60m	£18m

116. Savings for both options are derived in a similar way and are set out in the table below. The key differences reducing the financial benefits of the two unitary option are:

- a. County wide services need splitting to create two new services. This results in additional senior and middle management.
- b. More organisations exist, which will require a greater total level of back office and infrastructure support. These costs tend to be fixed in nature.
- c. The two unitary councils are smaller organisations than the existing County Council, resulting in a loss of purchasing power.
- d. Salaries to attract the right people will not be materially lower in the smaller organisations. For some posts, where there is already a shortage of good candidates, salaries are likely to be the same.

Category	Savings Rationale
Members Allowances	Fewer organisations will mean that the number of elected members can be reduced, although those that remain will have greater responsibility.
Elections	Elections for district and county members are held in different years. Having one set of elections for fewer members will cost less. The operations to maintain the register of electors can also be combined.
Senior Management	A management structure is required to manage each organisation and the services within it. Having fewer organisations and joining up similar services will mean that management savings can be realised.
Back office	Joining up and running services in a similar way will simplify the back office support requirements greatly. Combined with the benefit of only having one set of back office services rather than one in each organisation will allow support to converge on common systems, infrastructure, policy and process. Benefit is enhanced by fewer staff in totality reducing the office space requirements.
Service management and administration	Joining up and running services in a similar way will allow management and administration roles to be combined and the best practice from the current disparate services to be selected for the whole county. Further benefit will be secured from improved procurement and contract management.

117. The implementation costs for both options are derived in a similar way and are set out in the table below. The single unitary option benefits from there being no requirement to disaggregate services and the dual unitary option is cheaper in some areas due to the lower level of change and related savings.

Category	Rational
Staff redundancy cost	A significant proportion of the unitary financial benefits comes from reducing the number of staff employed, particularly at a senior level. Staff have a legal and contractual right to compensation for loss of their job.
Cost of integrating and decommissioning IT systems	Investment will be needed to integrate and replace the core service systems, including the merging of necessary historic service information.
Transformation team	An integration team will be required to perform the detailed service design work for the new organisation/s, implement the changes and ensure service continuity.
Support functions (Finance, HR, Legal, etc.)	The integration team will need access to significant levels of specialist advice and support.
Communications	Residents and partners will need to understand any changes to their access of services.
Merging of Operations	It is likely that there will be instances of contracts being terminated early to avoid duplication of running costs. Organisations differences will also need to be removed so that a unitary council operates as one organisation, for example harmonisation of employment terms and conditions.

118. The latest estimate of cost and benefits is set out in the table below. The majority of savings could be made without any impact upon the services delivered to residents. The savings that do impact front line services are limited to administration, management and procurement activity that should not be detrimental to the actual service and in some cases beneficial. Even for services where a successful local partnership is operating improvements are expected to be delivered, for example:

- a. Co-ordination of seven different organisations in a partnership requires significant management and administration effort. In a single organisation governance arrangements can be much less bureaucratic with fewer meetings and less co-ordination required.
- b. Disagreements between organisations do not arise.
- c. Formal agreements such as legal contracts and for information sharing do not need to be put in place.
- d. Quicker decision making is possible with just one governing organisation and a more straightforward relationship for partners.



<b>Annual Savings</b>	<b>Single Unitary £ million</b>	<b>Two unitary £ million</b>	<b>Difference £ million</b>	
Members Allowances	0.5	0.3	0.2	40%
Elections	0.9	0.9	0.0	0%
Senior Management	5.6	3.5	2.1	38%
Back office	17.4	10.5	6.9	40%
Service management and administration	8.5	5.3	3.2	38%
Contingency	(2.9)	(2.9)	-	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>41%</b>
Implementation cost	(19.0)	(17.5)	1.5	7%

119. The expected payback period for the single unitary would be within two years of the organisation being created. Senior management and democracy savings would be delivered from day one, benefiting from advanced design work. A significant proportion of back-office costs would also be delivered early although not all due to the requirement to close the old organisations and the phased expiry of contracts. Similarly the service management and administration savings would be phased, reflecting the likelihood of longer term contracts and the focus on back-office savings.
120. The implementation of a dual unitary structure is only cheaper due to the lower level of redundancies. The payback would take longer due to the proportionately higher implementation costs and the complexity of dividing up services such as social care.
121. A contingency has been included against the savings to reflect the early development stage of these proposals. As more information becomes available it may be possible to increase the savings delivery.
122. The financial estimates will be updated as new information becomes available. Before any business case were submitted to Government it is expected that independent verification of the modelling would be undertaken.

### **Beneficiaries of savings**

123. Austerity will dictate that the majority of savings will go towards ensuring the on-going sustainability of services. This would allow existing services to be protected from cuts that would otherwise be inevitable. Ultimately which services are protected will be a matter for the unitary council, but this would be informed by public consultation.
124. Adoption of a unitary council would mean that some of the direct financial benefit was naturally shared with residents through harmonisation of Council Tax. Residents in a unitary council's geography would all pay the same level of tax, which is usually set at the level of the lowest district council charge. For the single unitary council up to £8 million of the savings would be used for reduced Council Tax bills, although the final number would depend upon the impact upon town and

parish councils and actual level of charges. The reduction in Council Tax bills for a two unitary model is potentially less, as the lowest charging district council would be different in each unitary area unless a conscious choice was made to reduce bills in an identical way.

125. The future financial situation is very uncertain, but the proposed scale and speed of savings delivery should create the ability for some investment in services. Devolved revenue budgets to support delivery of local priorities have been mentioned earlier in the report. Capital investment, for example for leisure facilities or improvements to roads, is another option that can be used to improve local services in a targeted way. There should also be sufficient resources to invest and improve some countywide services. Gaining the views of Leicestershire residents would be vital in targeting investment at the right areas.

### **Non-financial assessment**

126. The options been evaluated against the MHCLG non-financial criteria together with similar studies that have been undertaken elsewhere within the country. In summary:
127. **Option One:** A single unitary council for Leicestershire. A single unitary model would reduce the number of elected members, but would strengthen their role as explained in paragraphs 71 – 86. It would create the opportunity to reduce the number of senior and middle managers and more importantly to integrate the delivery of local government services in Leicestershire. Combined, these would be likely to improve outcomes for citizens and business and to reduce the cost of the Council being in business, giving rise to the possibility of Council Tax being reduced, key services better protected against further funding pressures and certain services being enhanced.
128. **Option Two:** Two unitary councils for Leicestershire: A two unitary model for Leicestershire would be likely to bring many of the benefits to citizens and businesses described in Option 1 (a single unitary council for Leicestershire) and would see relatively more elected members. It would, however, mean that there would be duplication in democracy and organisational structure: two senior leadership teams, two Council Cabinets, two ways of delivering services in different parts of the County. It would also mean that creating a single transport and housing plan for the County and working with strategic partners would be more difficult. Whilst a two council model could base its design on collaboration and shared services between the councils, it is an accepted position in national studies that the savings are reduced by as much as approximately 40% compared to developing a single Council.
129. The criterion relating to a 'good deal of local support' cannot be tested without stakeholder engagement and subsequent public consultation.

## Appraisal

Government Criteria	Option 1: Single Unitary Council	Option 2: Two Unitary Councils
<b>Credible geography</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Leicestershire' is a well-established and recognised name.</li> <li>• Leicestershire is the outer circle of a functional economic area, Leicester and Leicestershire, recognised by Government. The interdependencies of city and county are a key part of that functional coherence in terms of the economy, employment and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any division of Leicestershire, say north/south or east/west would have to demonstrate how this was not an arbitrary division. The only comparable division has been the two County CCGs (West; East and Rutland) but they are now moving into a single arrangement covering either all of Leicestershire (and Rutland) or LLR (City, County and Rutland).</li> <li>• In other counties the only instance of a two-way split was Cheshire, now East and West.</li> </ul>
<b>Population substantially in excess of 300,000</b>	Leicestershire's population is 690,212 (mid-2017 population estimate).	A population substantially in excess of 300,000 is unlikely to be a population just below or just above a 5% excess. To exemplify, a north/south split would be 331,369 and 358,843.
<b>Improves service delivery, including innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of services, genuinely joined up in planning and delivery.</li> <li>• Confusion over responsibilities eliminated for public and organisations.</li> <li>• Reinvestment in front-line services.</li> <li>• Innovation opportunities, e.g. greater digitalisation, property rationalisation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits would be similar to a single unitary but on a smaller scale.</li> <li>• The disadvantages of the disaggregation of social care services, now on a county footprint, would have to be taken into account, including the impact on partners and safeguarding boards and related arrangements.</li> </ul>
<b>Greater value for money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council tax and business rates income maximised on front-line services, not expensive management tiers and corporate costs.</li> <li>• 'Overhead costs', i.e. support services reduced to 6% in line with the County Council costs. Districts' average cost is 15%.</li> </ul>	The duplication of departments, management teams/structures and service providers for two councils would reduce the value for money to the taxpayer.

<b>Government Criteria</b>	<b>Option 1: Single Unitary Council</b>	<b>Option 2: Two Unitary Councils</b>
<b>Yield significant cost savings</b>	Predicted savings are £30m per year.	Predicted savings are £17.6m per year.
<b>Provide stronger strategic and local leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic leadership provided by a single, elected voice able to speak for Leicestershire on all local government and public sector and other matters affecting the county.</li> <li>• Local leadership strengthened through Area Committees with delegated decision making and devolved funding.</li> <li>• Opportunity for town councils: large settlements and market towns currently without a town council include Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic leadership would be less effective with no single voice for Leicestershire.</li> <li>• Engagement with regional agreements, neighbouring councils and partnership working could be problematic in the event of disagreement.</li> <li>• Local leadership would in part be dependent on the credibility of the locality and if this option offered the opportunity for new town councils.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivering a more sustainable structure in respect of finance, partnership and beyond.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing reinvestment in front-line services through significant annual savings and economies of scale.</li> <li>• Creates optimum integration of health and social care with CCGs moving from the present three to one for LLR or two (one county, one city).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ongoing benefits in terms of savings, reinvestment in services and consolidation of services would not be as great compared to a single unitary.</li> <li>• The need to create two social care authorities to replace one would be unhelpful and unwelcome in operational and planning terms to NHS partners locally, regionally and nationally.</li> </ul>

**Working Party**

130. At its meeting on 26 September the County Council resolved:

- a) That this Council:
  - i) notes that plans for a unitary structure of government in principle for Leicestershire were drawn up after a positive endorsement by the Conservative Group at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and were communicated promptly and appropriately to stakeholders in the usual way;
  - ii) has started a much needed and long overdue debate on the future provision of local government services in the county, which leaders of the seven district councils have recognised is in need of reform;
  - iii) recognises that continuing austerity and cost pressures for services are placing councils of all types in an impossible financial position, requiring Councils such as Leicestershire to consider a unitary structure;
  - iv) recognises that plans for an East Midlands Strategic Alliance to counterbalance the West Midlands Combined Authority require further work and agreement amongst regional leaders and stakeholders before a business case is submitted to the Secretary of State;
  - v) notes that the information to be provided in the Cabinet report will allow Members to undertake detailed scrutiny of the level of savings including savings that have been achieved by other Councils who have already undertaken local government reorganisation;
  - vi) recognises that Leicestershire County Council must be allowed to pursue its right to self-determination of policy via the democratic process and that this Council respects the rights of other local authorities to do the same.
- b) That this Council notes:-
  - i) That in line with the decision of the Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018 proposals for a new unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire will be published in a report to the Cabinet on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October;
  - ii) That the proposals will provide a basis and framework for Scrutiny Bodies, members and stakeholders to consider and make representations on the future shape of local government in Leicestershire;
- c) That recognising the need for member involvement, a cross party group be established to consider the proposals and advise the Cabinet on the next steps including a timescale for consultation;

- d) That the Chief Executive be asked to include proposed terms of reference for the cross party working group in the report to the Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.

131. In respect of parts c) and d) of the resolution, the following terms of reference for the working group/party are proposed for consideration:

- (i) To consider and receive feedback on the proposals put forward by the Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> October and in the light of this and any work and analysis may undertake to advise the Cabinet on the next steps.
- (ii) In undertaking this role, to recognise the separate and distinct role of the Scrutiny Commission and its Committees to examine the Cabinet's proposals. The Working Party will consider the views and comments made by the Scrutiny Commission and its Committees.
- (iii) To consider also the views and representations made by stakeholders.
- (iv) If it wishes, to consider any alternative proposals put forward by a District Council(s).
- (v) To be able to commission work on issues that it considers may assist it in discharging its prime role of advising the Cabinet on the way forward.

132. Whilst the meetings of the Working Group will be in private to allow it to explore issues and options in detail, the reports it produces will be in the public domain.

133. As the Leader referred to at the County Council meeting on 26 September, the working party will have a politically balanced membership of ten:

Conservative	7
Liberal Democrat	2
Labour	1

This enables representation to include members with an electoral division in each district area.

### **Strategic Alliance**

134. There is little to report since the meeting of the Cabinet on 6 July, but to recap:

- The East Midlands is disadvantaged in terms of the ability to influence Government and attract investment or devolution opportunities compared to the West Midlands. There is an elected mayor and a combined authority for the West Midlands. Their most recent devolution deal (2017) includes £6m for a housing delivery taskforce, £5m for a construction skills training scheme and £250m to be spent on local intra-city transport priorities. The first devolution deal (2015) included over £1bn investment to boost the West Midlands economy.

- Effective leadership of the combined authority lies with the elected mayor and the leaders of the 7 constituent authorities, all unitary. There is also a category of 'non-constituent authorities' which includes other councils and LEPs.
- The East Midlands has delivered the highest GVA relative to public investment in transport of any UK nation or region since 2010. Yet, with a population of over 4.5m is the biggest industrial area not to have a devolution deal.
- The table below extracted from the most recent HM Treasury report gives examples of how the East Midlands is losing out to the West Midlands:

	Economic Affairs			Of which: Transport		
	2011-12 outturn	2015-16 outturn	% increase	2011-12 outturn	2015-16 outturn	% increase
South East	416	591	42.1	213	365	71.4
West Midlands	430	505	17.4	206	342	66.0
London	869	1,196	37.6	649	973	49.9
England	534	664	24.3	298	444	49.0
South West	443	508	14.7	188	277	47.3
Yorks & Humber	510	615	20.6	259	380	46.7
North West	496	603	21.6	275	401	45.8
UK	596	703	18.0	319	441	38.2
North East	527	558	5.9	223	299	34.1
East	543	610	12.3	286	365	27.6
East Midlands	465	475	2.2	209	260	24.4

Infrastructure Projects	£ per head (15/16)
London	1,079
North West	702
England	582
Yorks & Humber	489
South East	488
East	468
West Midlands	445
South West	428
North East	418
East Midlands	352

Railway Expenditure	£ per head (15/16)
London	746
England	251
North West	203
East	191
South East	180
Yorks & Humber	180
West Midlands	143
North East	110
South West	94
East Midlands	91

Source: HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2017.

- The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, who is the Midlands Engine Champion, has asked the East Midlands County Leaders for a business case for a strategic alliance by the end of 2018. Derbyshire County Council has been leading on this work. Leicestershire County Council has set out its position that currently more work is required in regard to clarity of purpose, governance and 'asks' of Government, to be undertaken in conjunction with the three city councils.

135. At the time of writing it is not possible to expand on the announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Conservative Party Conference to establish a development corporation for the area around Toton, linked to the planned HS2 hub.

### **Conclusion**

136. The Cabinet resolution of 6 July requested officers to undertake work on the development of a unitary structure and to prepare outline proposals. Taking account of the Government's criteria for new unitary councils, two options have been identified.

137. The financial and non-financial initial appraisal points to a single countywide unitary structure for Leicestershire as the best fit against the Government's criteria and therefore the best model for meeting present and future challenges.

138. The key benefit of a single unitary structure for Leicestershire would be to maximise financial savings to protect and invest in front-line services currently provided by both the County Council and the District Councils. Other benefits drawn from the initial appraisal include:-

- a. A single point of accountability and responsibility for the quality and consistent delivery of all council services, led by a single executive function and a single managerial function;
- b. A single platform on which to build more effective partnerships with business and other public sector bodies, notably the NHS;
- c. A single geography for economic growth, with one council accountable for spatial planning, asset management, housing, infrastructure and transport.
- d. A enhancement of existing county-wide social care, public health and safeguarding services by integrating responsibilities for housing, benefits and leisure and amenity services.

139. The initial key challenge to a single unitary structure for Leicestershire would be to provide assurance that residents and local communities feel connected to the work of the new Council and are able to shape their communities, based on local need.



140. A two unitary council structure would not maximise financial savings. The initial appraisal also shows that benefits overall would be less than in a single unitary council and that in particular:-

- a. The establishment of two unitary councils would require the disaggregation of existing county-wide services such as Children's and Adults Social Care, creating additional management and service delivery cost and potential inconsistency in service;
- b. More widely, the opportunities afforded by a single unitary structure cannot be present.

141. This model would be challenged in relation to any natural geography, how it would work with partners, with the functional economic area of Leicester and Leicestershire, and how it would relate to local communities.

### **Equalities and Human Rights Implications**

142. Due to the complexity and scope of the proposal and possible wide scale impact of the changes proposed the Council will adopt a strategic approach to conducting EHRIAs.

143. EHRIAs will be carried out during all programme phases and stages to create a new unitary structure. Through such an approach the council will meet the Public Sector Equality Duty by delivering the following objectives:

- Identifying and seeking to mitigate the potential equality and human rights impacts of the proposal on those with protected characteristics.
- Identifying and seeking to maximise the equality and human rights opportunities of the proposal for those with protected characteristics.
- Ensuring that a unitary structure for Leicestershire will positively contribute to the elimination of discrimination and the advancement of equality for all.
- Adopting a "Vision Statement" for Equality and Diversity for the unitary structure for Leicestershire that demonstrates positively and proactively promotes the elimination of discrimination and advancement of equality for all.

### **Background Papers**

144. Report to the Cabinet on 6 July 2018 - East Midlands Strategic Alliance and Unitary Government in Leicestershire – Timetable for Consideration  
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/b12920/Urgent%20Item%20-%20Strategic%20Alliance%20and%20Single%20Council%20-%20Timetable%20Friday%2006-Jul-2018%2014.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=9>

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**SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE****CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES****Introduction**

1. Consideration of a possible unitary structure for Leicestershire presents an opportunity to consider whether to redesign how services are delivered by local government, and if so what form the redesigned structure should take. The focus is on how better outcomes can be delivered for residents, local business and partner organisations, and how local government can best work with those organisations recognising the challenging times ahead as a result of public sector finance restraints. This appendix, and other appendices prepared in part to facilitate discussion at scrutiny bodies, set out the opportunities that a unitary structure could afford to each service, as well as some examples of best practice from the county unitary councils established in 2009.
2. This appendix should be read alongside the appraisal of options in the Cabinet report. In the 'Opportunities' section and case studies which follow, some of the changes highlighted offer the greatest benefits in a single unitary structure.

**Background**

3. The two tiers of local government in Leicestershire have different responsibilities; the County Council is responsible for the delivery of Children's Services and in particular this is underpinned by statutory guidance that sets out the responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services. This guidance covers the legislative basis for the two appointments, roles and responsibilities of the post holders, and how this relates to Government expectations about local authorities' role in education and children and young people's services.
4. The County Council is responsible for delivering services to looked after children, children in need of protection and in need of support, early help services, education quality and sufficiency, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and safeguarding children. The department also leads on safer communities across the County.
5. District Councils are responsible for housing services and in some districts they choose to deliver non-statutory services directly to children and their families. The districts are responsible for community safety in their locality, including the servicing of the Community Safety Partnerships. Some district councils also work closely with schools in their locality offering a range of support on issues such as community safety and anti-social behaviour.

**Opportunities for the Service presented by a Unitary Structure****Education**

6. Leicestershire County Council Children and Families Department has a number of statutory responsibilities relating to education, primarily around

maintained schools. The Department is responsible for ensuring sufficient school places are available for children across Leicestershire and for promoting high standards in education.

7. Whilst a unitary council could lead to minimal change in the delivery of functions that are currently managed centrally (admissions, education improvement, education sufficiency) it could provide opportunities for the better alignment of planning matters relating to school capital. The Department currently deals with 7 different planning authorities to secure Section 106 funding for new school builds. A unitary council could reduce this to a single planning authority and allow a cross Leicestershire approach to school planning. A unitary authority could also streamline and simplify support provided to schools (over and above curriculum support) currently offered through District Councils around crime, anti-social behaviour, economic and skills development.

### **Early Help and Social Care**

8. Leicestershire County Council provides children social care and early help services through a centrally managed locality delivered model. Whilst some District Councils provide children's early help services, there is no statutory requirement to do so.
9. Children and Family Services Team are based in localities in order to work closely with partners and communities; however practices and protocols are managed centrally in order to ensure consistency of delivery and quality of practice. This centralised leadership is vital in ensuring thresholds are consistent and that children's cases are managed in line with statutory requirements.
10. The Department operates a single front door for all early help and social care referrals the benefit of which is a single point of contact for agencies as well as consistent application of thresholds and assessment.
11. A single unitary authority could provide opportunities for alignment of children's services delivered by Districts, including reduction of duplication and single referral routes. Such opportunities lend themselves to financial efficiencies through reduced management costs.
12. One of the key areas of work with District Councils is around housing. Currently staff in the department are negotiating with seven different housing authorities for vulnerable families, children with special educational needs and disabilities and care leavers. For some of our vulnerable families or care leavers social workers are sometimes negotiating with two housing authorities for a single case in order to secure a move or to meet the child and family's needs.
13. A unitary council for Leicestershire could create a single local plan that could allow far greater flexibility and range of housing to meet the needs of care leavers, children and their families with a special educational need or disability and other vulnerable families. It could also present opportunity for a consistent

offer to meet needs across the County and flexibility to allow strategies to be put in place to support vulnerable families and children. Services to vulnerable children and families could be better delivered by unifying the services provided by seven different housing and benefits authorities.

### **Community Safety**

14. Community Safety functions are primarily delivered through the District Councils under the governance of 6 separate community safety partnerships (CSPs), Blaby and Hinckley and Bosworth have merged. The CSPs are responsible for the development and delivery of its Community Safety Strategy, across Leicestershire there are currently six separate Community Safety Strategies. The CSPs require attendance from a number of key county-wide partner agencies, including the Police, Fire and Rescue and Probation Services. As a two tier authority there is a statutory requirement to have a strategic safer communities strategy board at a county wide level to bring together the 6 CSP chairs. The CSPs also hold responsibility for carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews in its area. A complex set of partnership and commissioning arrangements are in place to provide a countywide response to this.
15. Supporting the work of the CSPs are seven District Community Safety Teams who hold a variety of responsibilities relating to community safety, including anti-social behaviour, hate incidents, CCTV and crime prevention.
16. A unitary council could present significant opportunities for efficiencies in community safety through the pooling of community safety funding, reduction of duplication in roles and realignment of governance. A unitary council presents an opportunity for a unified community safety service and commissioning arrangements with streamlined community safety partnership governance across localities to ensure local needs continued to be identified and supported. This could also present a positive impact for partners who are currently required to service all Community Safety Partnerships but who operate at a Leicestershire wide level.
17. A unitary council could also create efficiencies in the development of protocols and procedures to deal with community safety issues consistently across the County. In developing a single anti-social behaviour protocol and implementing the new ASB legislation a complex and time-consuming set of negotiations had to take place between the County Council, seven Districts and the Police, which could have been avoided in a unitary structure.
18. A unified Community Safety Partnership could provide the capability to simplify and strengthen the inter-relationship with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Having a greatly simplified structure could be more conducive to promoting enhanced partnership working on cross-cutting issues such as child sexual exploitation.

### **Existing Unitary Council Best Practice**

19. Cornwall Council: Has a single Community Safety Partnership but has recognised the importance of place-based delivery. Crime and anti-social

behaviour is concentrated within Cornwall's larger towns and these are persistent problems, frequently co-existing with other social issues, such as deprivation, homelessness, health inequalities and worklessness.

20. The Community Safety Partnership has co-ordinated effective multi-disciplinary operations in three of the largest towns in Cornwall, responding to specific community problems. These responses have provided a balance of enforcement to address immediate crime and safety concerns, and provided targeted and intensive support to individuals with the aim of achieving longer term, sustainable positive outcomes.
21. Building on this success, Safer Cornwall (the Community Safety Partnership) is re-establishing the Safer Towns programme across ten designated towns. These partnerships are tailored to the needs of each area, with membership drawn from public sector, private and voluntary sector and community groups. They aim to support a co-ordinated, targeted multi-agency approach to complex localised issues utilising consistent tools and interventions, to maximise the benefits to local residents and prevent duplication of effort across all partners.
22. Cornwall Supporting Change in Partnership works with Disabled Children and young people between the ages of 0-18 years and their families and is a preventative approach delivered by trained Parent volunteers. The Cornwall single unitary approach enables the supporting change in partnership team to offer direct practical assistance with benefits and housing.

### **Case Studies**

23. The Children and Family Services Department has identified two service areas where different elements are currently delivered by the County Council and the District Councils, community safety services and anti-social behaviour.

### **Community Safety Services**

#### **Current**

24. In Leicestershire, the seven districts are responsible for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs): local strategic management, the commissioning of the local strategic assessment of crime and disorder, the development of local delivery plans for crime and disorder reduction, tackling substance misuse and reducing re-offending, and the overseeing of performance against crime reduction targets. These arrangements are currently governed through six Community Safety Partnerships and supported by seven community safety teams. Districts are also responsible for providing a response to anti-social behaviour both in terms of perpetrator action and support to victims. Districts each hold responsibility for CCTV in their areas and operate separate CCTV systems and infrastructures.
25. The County Council holds the responsibility for the strategic leadership of Community Safety through the Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board, a statutory requirement due to the current two tier system. The County

Council also provides a co-ordination, policy and commissioning function across domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social behaviour.

26. There is currently significant officer resource required to manage interactions between the County Council and District Councils at both a strategic and operational level, particularly in relation to developing County wide consistent responses to issues such as anti-social behaviour. There are also a number of different commissioning arrangements in place across the Districts and County Council.

### **What could Community Safety Services look like in a unitary authority?**

27. A unitary council could allow a single strategic community safety partnership across Leicestershire and local identification of need and actions delivered through area committees.
28. A unitary council could have a single community safety team and a single point of contact for residents for issues relating to anti-social behaviour, hate crime and community safety. This compares to the current 8 different websites and telephone access points for Leicestershire residents.
29. In addition to this a single unitary authority could allow single co-ordination of CCTV functions. Currently Police and other authorities requiring access to CCTV need to make requests to the 7 different CCTV operatives. A single unitary authority could allow greater join up of resources as well as better targeted use of CCTV for strategic cross Leicestershire purposes.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

#### **Current**

30. The County Council has a community safety team whose primary role is around co-ordination, policy and commissioning. As part of this team the County Council has a team of street based youth workers (IMPACT) working in anti-social behaviour hotspots around the County. The teams are locality based and centrally managed. The County team also employs a number of officers who deliver direct work with young people involved in anti-social behaviour.
31. There are seven separate District Council anti-social behaviour teams all responsible for dealing with anti-social behaviour in their locality. In reality this means there are seven different contact points for reporting anti-social behaviour, seven separate websites with information and seven sets of information on anti-social behaviour.
32. Alongside this there is significant officer resource required to manage interactions between the Districts and County, particularly in relation to the development of county-wide protocols for anti-social behaviour.

### **What could Anti-Social Behaviour Services look like in a unitary authority?**

33. A unitary council could deliver a single anti-social behaviour team incorporating the direct delivery services (IMPACT and ASB workers) and the

anti-social behaviour officers, currently in Districts. This could not only rationalise spend, including management overheads, but could also lead to a far better joined up approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. The rationalisation of spend could allow greater investment in front line services tackling anti-social behaviour in communities. This resource could be deployed to meet needs more efficiently with the removal of current District boundaries.

34. In addition to this a unitary council could allow a single point of contact for anti-social behaviour issues, consistent information and simple communications for the public. A single anti-social behaviour policy could be in place to allow simplified engagement by partners.



## SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE

### ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

#### **Introduction**

1. Consideration of a possible unitary structure for Leicestershire presents an opportunity to consider whether to redesign how services are delivered by local government, and if so what form the redesigned structure should take. The focus is on how better outcomes can be delivered for residents, local business and partner organisations, and how local government can best work with those organisations recognising the challenging times ahead as a result of public sector finance restraints. This appendix, and other appendices prepared in part to facilitate discussion at scrutiny bodies, set out the opportunities that a unitary structure could afford to each service, as well as some examples of best practice from the county unitary councils established in 2009.
2. This appendix should be read alongside the appraisal of options in the Cabinet report. In the 'Opportunities' section and case studies which follow, some of the changes highlighted offer the greatest benefits in a single unitary structure.

#### **Background**

3. A range of services relating to adults and communities are provided by the two tiers of local government. In Leicestershire, the County Council is responsible for adult social care services, libraries, museums and adult education; District Councils are responsible for housing services, arts development and some heritage services.

#### **Opportunities for the Service presented by a Unitary Structure**

4. Services can be better delivered by unifying the services now provided by eight councils. Some of the main opportunities and advantages of this would be:
  - Simplifying services for residents, dealing with a unitary council, providing a single point of contact and easier access to local authority services.
  - Consistency of social care housing and cultural services, one overarching policy, one set of service standards, clear expectations.
  - Reducing administrative and back office costs, without impacting on front line services, enabling more efficient delivery of outcomes for residents.
  - Reducing running costs, for example all eight authorities currently operate client and resident financial and income services– this could be done much more efficiently under a unitary council with rationalisation of revenue and benefit, financial assessment and means testing services.

- Economies of scale – a unitary council would be in a much stronger buying position and better placed to procure and negotiate contracts to achieve best value for Leicestershire residents.
  - Opportunities to explore the combination of services currently delivered by several councils; for example, leisure and cultural services, and housing and accommodation services currently provided by the districts with heritage and learning services together with care and support services currently provided by the County Council, leading to more streamlined, efficient and cost effective service delivery.
5. From a strategic perspective, the Adults and Communities department aims to promote peoples independence, and support local communities through the commissioning and delivery of social care service and cultural enrichment. A unitary authority would facilitate the following strategic opportunities:
- Coherent, universal place making strategies incorporating many elements currently delivered across several councils for the planning, coordination and delivery of accommodation based care services. To provide investment in terms of capital and/or land over a significant period (2019 – 2037) to increase the range of accommodation that exists across the County for individuals receiving support from adult social care. To meet the challenge of an aging population, future accommodation based support must be designed that individuals would both choose to live there and for those with assets, will choose to finance it themselves. There are a number of specific factors that relate to the future of Extra Care and residential care particularly for older people that will be evaluated as the project progresses.
  - A single voice to promote culture and heritage services to governmental and funding bodies such as the Arts Council, Heritage Lottery fund and Heritage England.
  - Clear Accountability for the local government contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of local residents and delivery of services in partnership with the NHS. For example reductions to delayed transfers of care require a unified response to address housing, social care and other regulatory provision.
  - Efficient and streamlined delivery processes in areas where there is duplication of delivery such as the provision of assistive technology and lifeline services to provide a county wide unified offer to residents

### **Existing unitary council best practice case studies**

6. Wiltshire Council, secured the best value from its budget for adult social care through re-procuring its monitoring and response service and wanted to introduce telecare for any of its service users who could benefit. The council developed a business case for mainstreaming telecare and then to manage the transition to the new arrangements. The business case showed that telecare could save the council £2 million a year by reducing the reliance on

domiciliary and residential care, and also identified an opportunity to offset costs by offering the telecare service to private paying customers and designed a benefits framework and roadmap to enable the council to realise the savings.

This was a radical transformation for both organisation and service users. The Council migrated 3,000 customers onto the new monitoring and response provider, safely and without service disruptions. Training took place for 250 council staff to refer service users for telecare. Wiltshire County Council and its providers are now actively promoting telecare to over 10,000 target customers across the county.

7. Cornwall Council has developed a Strategic Business Case to deliver accommodation based care across the County. The purpose of this Strategic Business Case is to transform housing with care and support for older people and adults with learning disabilities who have eligible adult social care needs. The implementation will involve working collaboratively with housing and registered providers to stimulate the market to deliver extra care housing and supported living. This is expected to deliver improved outcomes for individuals living in these forms of housing, as well as provide cost avoidance through diversion away from more expensive and less personalised institutional forms of care. Implementation is enabled by working in partnership both internally (for example with social care staff and with housing) as well as externally (with providers and developers, and with health). Adult Social Care working with colleagues in the housing, planning and economic growth services, ensures that housing for people with eligible social care needs is well placed to be fully represented in local plans and strategic documents to influence the future direction and development of older people's housing and care services.

### **Adult Social Care Services**

#### **Current**

8. Leicestershire County Council commissions and provides adult social care and wellbeing services as required to meet the needs of the local population. This includes
  - (i) advice information and guidance,
  - (ii) assessment and determination of eligibility for funding
  - (iii) support planning and review of care requirements,
  - (iv) charging and financial assessment
  - (v) Protection from harm and abuse
  - (vi) Market shaping, market oversight and development
  - (vii) Care support
  - (viii) Transitions for young people from children's services

9. The districts have responsibility for related functions such as housing, planning, and some matters connected to benefits. The approach and delivery model for housing strategy and development duties currently varies across the districts. There are people currently who are temporarily accommodated in residential placements due to the urgency of the presenting situation, but they would be better placed in community accommodation. The issue is often the time it takes to access accommodation managed by district councils.
10. In some areas, such as assistive technology and equipment to support people to remain in their own home, there is a definite overlap between services; these services are both duplicated and fragmented within two tier authorities leading to increased ambiguity and bureaucracy for local residents and increased cost to local government. Currently there are some district councils who offer lifeline services and others who do not; some offer broader assistive technology support as does the County Council whilst others do not.
11. Whilst the 'Lightbulb' partnership has sought to standardise processes for housing related support across the district councils, the offer to residents remains variable. For example, some Leicestershire districts do not currently allocate all their Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) allocations whilst other districts have needs which cannot be met within their allocation.
12. There are presently unknown influences arising from future charging mechanisms for adult social care. A Government Green Paper on social care is expected later in 2018, following the decision in July 2015 to postpone the introduction of a cap of lifetime social care charges and a generous means-testing regime. It is still expected that a cap on lifetime social care charges will be introduced.
13. A cap and floor mechanism would need additional regulation and safeguards for early work and implementation, to prevent qualifying assets from being protected or excluded by individuals and families. Means testing will be resource-intensive for local authorities and combining this new function with existing district responsibilities for benefits and housing would be efficient in a unitary structure.

### **What could a unitary structure's adult social care offer be?**

14. Moving to a unitary authority presents significant opportunities to join up budgets, strategy, planning and delivery to provide a coherent offer for the public across statutory and discretionary activities relating to adult social care. The examples given below demonstrate how a unified provision delivers improved outcomes for service users and ensures financial sustainability for the future. Within the areas of adult social care and communities and wellbeing, a unitary structure would facilitate a more effective approach to delivering strategic objectives relating to:
  - Strong Economy
  - Wellbeing and Opportunity
  - Keeping People Safe
  - Great Communities

- Affordable and Quality Homes

15. Preventative approaches and demand reduction: The key to long term sustainability of the health and care system is maximising the independence and self-reliance of individuals and communities. A unitary structure for Leicestershire would be able to pull together local understanding of the needs of communities, co-ordinate a wide range of place based initiatives to create an enhanced model for improving community capacity across Leicestershire. For example there is strong evidence that loneliness has a major impact on older people's use of health and care services. A unitary council for Leicestershire would provide a more co-ordinated approach to tackling loneliness, implement best practice more consistently across the county and streamline the support offered to individuals.
16. Supporting People at Home: Unitary councils elsewhere in England have been able to develop a more integrated health and social care offer, working with local NHS partners to take advantage of the enhanced range of services which the unitary council controls. The development of Home First services to support people at home, prevent hospital admissions and improve hospital discharge, and community based neighbourhood health and social care teams would be enhanced through having a unitary authority responsible for housing/homelessness, public health and social care. Patients, service users and families would see improvements through the reduction in duplication and the number of agencies involved, as well as the benefit of more streamlined processes. There would be opportunities to develop an integrated support offer using voluntary and community sector projects, partnership with CCGs and locality primary care, focusing on people who are high consumers of health and care services, embedding existing district council functions into the integrated health and care locality teams, to address the challenges of specific conditions at a local level.
17. Housing Provision: Having a unitary council responsible for housing stock would allow flexibility in the provision of housing to people with Learning Disabilities, Mental Ill Health and Autism. A single strategic housing authority which also commissions social care, has planning responsibilities, and delivers wider infrastructure, would allow the new council to prioritise the development of housing to meet the needs of older adults, people who have frailty and disabled people to provide lifetime homes and alternatives to long term residential care. A unitary council for Leicestershire would create opportunities to develop housing solutions to improve delayed transfers of care from hospitals where the availability of housing can contribute to delayed discharges. The focus would be on improving individual patient care, however over time, a more proactive housing strategy could be developed which both addressed locality level resources and specific demographic features, but also a county-wide strategic housing approach. This would enable patients from hospital to be relocated to more appropriate accommodation for example due to increased level of disability; or because of vulnerability such as homelessness, domestic violence or where there is a safeguarding/exploitation issue.

18. Housing Strategy: A unitary council for Leicestershire would be able to create a single Local Plan to plan for the very significant challenges of meeting the housing needs of an ageing population without the complexity of separate plans and separate housing authorities. A unitary council would allow for adequate resources to be put towards a dedicated strategy and development function. For example, it is currently difficult to provide Lifetime Homes for people with specific housing needs. An integrated approach may help in tackling the shortfall in affordable and retirement housing by extending best practice across the county. This would be of particular benefit to those people who are seeking greater independence and/or are trapped in institutional accommodation or family settings such as care leavers, people with mental health problems in residential care and adults with learning disabilities seeking an independent supported living environment.
19. Assistive Technology, Adaptions and Equipment: A unitary approach for Leicestershire would bring together assessment, funding and delivery of major adaptations, minor adaptations, telecare including lifeline services, community equipment provision and assistive technology and thereby reduce duplication and improve access and responsiveness.. Overall funding and resource allocation can be directed through a more strategic approach to reflect needs across the county. The Lightbulb programme has shown the benefits that can be achieved through taking a 'one council' approach, however these benefits could be further enhanced through development of a unitary council. without the requirement for 8 different governance arrangements
20. Wellbeing: Under the Care Act 2014, upper tier councils, including unitary councils, have a specific duty to meet the wellbeing needs of local people. However, wellbeing cannot merely be met through the provision of adult social care or public health services. District Councils also have many functions and services which contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Housing and infrastructure services, culture and heritage provision, environmental and regulatory services all contribute to the development of wellbeing. A unitary council would both direct and deliver the full range of provision that enhances wellbeing.

### **Communities and Wellbeing**

#### **Existing unitary council best practice case studies**

21. Wiltshire Council is working to deliver a series of Community Campuses that will provide a range of services tailored to local needs of the local community. The Council is also developing Health and Wellbeing Centres across the county. The services offered within a community campus depend on the requirements of the local area and can range from community and clinical space, leisure facilities, catering facilities and youth services alongside specialist services such as housing, revenues and benefits, library, pre-school, fitness suite, and children's centre services. The administrative hubs and campuses provide a safe place to do business, deliver customer services and to integrate with the community and hosts other

public services such as the local Army cadets, Police, History Society and a range of private businesses that lease space to generate revenue.

The campus in Salisbury hosts the headquarters of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. Wiltshire Citizens Advice also moved into the premises in 2016. At Springfield Community Campus (in Corsham) people can visit the library and cafe and try out the gym but the Centre is also a real community hub drawing in local groups to use the facilities. Wiltshire Police has a presence at the Centre, which will also soon be a base for Wiltshire Health and Care. Council staff are also able to use the facility to work from. Social workers work with electronic tablets where they can log key information while on the move, cutting travel time and making administration quicker so they can concentrate on the needs of their clients.

22. The sharing of facilities with key partners is now prevalent throughout the new community campuses, which provide improved facilities and services to local communities across the county. There is a strong feeling that there is one public sector for Wiltshire.

### **Current position**

23. Presently, Leicestershire County Council is responsible for communities and wellbeing services relating to libraries, records, museums, heritage, adult education, creative learning.
24. District Councils provide leisure centres, and other wellbeing and community services on a discretionary basis.
25. Creative Leicestershire, which supports creative businesses, is hosted by the County Council and contributed to by some District Councils.
26. Given that some of this offer is non-statutory, the move to a unitary structure would enable economies of scale and future-proof services which contribute towards thriving communities, and which are valued for wellbeing.

### **What could a unitary structure's communities and wellbeing offer be?**

27. A coherent provision would result from a unitary organisation across wellbeing and community services, and would be structured with the following themes in mind:
  - Cultural/Leisure/Learning offer: A unitary council would present an integrated and holistic culture/leisure and learning offer to the people of Leicestershire. For example, a "culture and learning passport" could improve access to a range of integrated and complementary services that are currently provided in a fragmented fashion. The passport would also allow residents to access services and opportunities across a wider area.
  - Routes into Volunteering: Pathways for people into volunteering would be simplified through an integrated offer comprising support to both

individuals and community led organisations. Currently there are various routes of access and a range of different volunteering opportunities administered separately across the 8 local authority areas, however the establishment of a unitary council could provide a single coordinated volunteering offer

- Adult and Community Learning: A unitary council would enable a larger integrated adult and community learning offer and maximise funding drawn from the Employment and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- External Funding: Leicestershire residents would see a growth in cultural/learning activity by the strengthened position of a unitary council, increasing the ability to lever in external funding from agencies such as Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and the Employment and Skills Funding Agency. A single point of contact would make it easier to do business with a variety of external funders.
- Efficiencies: A unitary authority would drive out efficiencies of scale by pooling budgetary and asset resource, reducing duplication, and maximising use of assets.



## SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE

### HEALTH AND CARE INTEGRATION

#### **Introduction**

1. Consideration of a possible unitary structure for Leicestershire presents an opportunity to consider whether to redesign how services are delivered by local government, and if so what form the redesigned structure should take. The focus is on how better outcomes can be delivered for residents, local business and partner organisations, and how local government can best work with those organisations recognising the challenging times ahead as a result of public sector finance restraints. This appendix, and other appendices prepared in part to facilitate discussion at scrutiny bodies, set out the opportunities that a unitary structure could afford to each service, as well as some examples of best practice from the county unitary councils established in 2009.
2. This appendix should be read alongside the analysis of options in the Cabinet report. In the 'Opportunities' section and case studies which follow, it is logical, however, to presume that some changes offer the greatest benefits in a single unitary structure.

#### **Background**

3. The health and care integration programme, which includes the Leicestershire Better Care Fund Plan (BCF) and its pooled budget of £56m, has been designed to implement an integrated health and care system at a local level in line with national integration policy requirements. The health and care local programme is concerned with the commissioning and delivery of integrated health, care and housing support across Leicestershire, with the programme organised into 10 key themes as follows:
  - Unified Prevention Offer
  - Home First
  - Integrated Housing Support
  - Integrated Domiciliary Care
  - Integrated Urgent Care
  - Assistive Technology
  - Data Integration
  - Integrated Commissioning
  - Falls Treatment and Prevention
4. Delivery of the Leicestershire Integration programme relies on strong partnership working across local NHS and local authority partners and is governed by the Health and Wellbeing Board, with day to day delivery overseen by the Leicestershire Integration Executive.

### **Existing Unitary Council Best Practice**

5. There are a number of examples which illustrate the considerable barriers found in working across current organisational forms in health, care and housing systems, and which also highlight the benefit of improving integrated working
6. Reviews including CQC system reviews (which specifically examine partnership working across health and care organisations in local systems) have identified a key number of themes and issues which support moving to a more consolidated set of organisational arrangements in order to improve the delivery of integrated health, care and housing services. The “Beyond Barriers” report published in July 2018 sets out the issues faced for the care of older people across **20 health and care systems nationally** and highlights the significant complexity and barriers to joint working, including the fragmentation and organisational silo behaviours which inhibit optimum care delivery to citizens.
7. Durham Council: As a Unitary Authority, Durham Council holds overall responsibility for housing which is managed through the Regeneration and Local Services Directorate who oversee the Disability Facilities Grant (DFG). The DFG plays a major part in helping people with disabilities to live independently and remain at home. Over the last year 2016/17 the grant has been used to provide a wide range of adaptations including shower and stair lift installations and home modifications including extensions. The importance of the link between housing status and admission and discharge from hospital is firmly acknowledged and considered as part of providing advice and assistance.

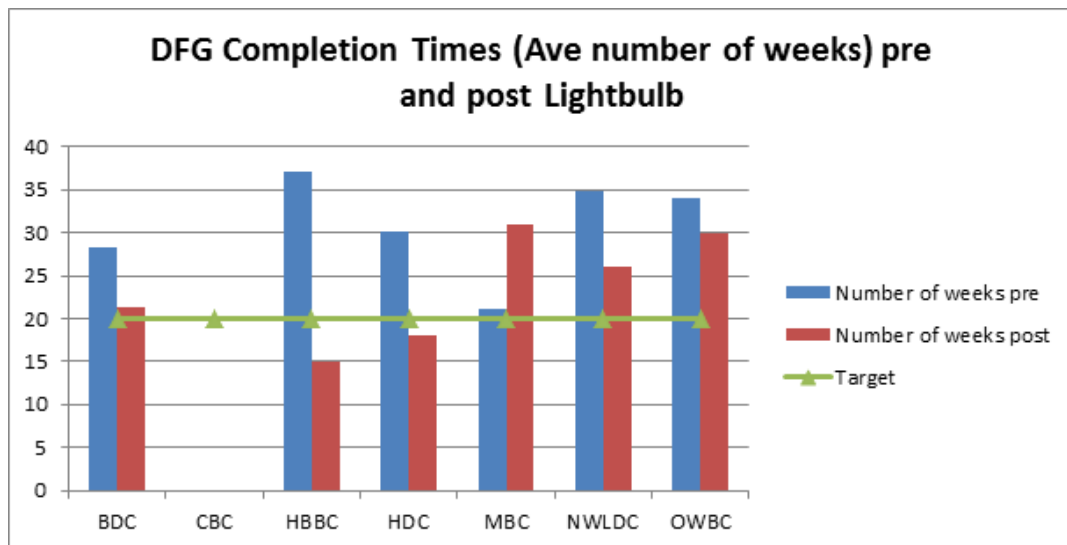
### **Health and care Integration**

#### **Current**

8. The current partnership landscape for health and care integration is very complex and requires the alignment of priorities and resources across the county council, district councils, the two current county Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and two large NHS providers, University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) and Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT).
9. It is currently proposed that the Lightbulb Housing Service, a single service across Leicestershire providing practical housing support, could be developed to incorporate the provision of assistive technology. This will mean that service users could receive advice and support about all aspects of housing, services, adaptations and assistive technology through one service offer for Leicestershire, with one point of contact and coordination.
10. However, the process of designing and delivering an integrated service offer such as this currently requires agreement from all seven district councils. Historically, this process has been time consuming, challenging and duplicative.
11. There are a range of national and local barriers to information sharing which can inhibit the sharing of data between authorities, making analysis time-

consuming or resulting in missed opportunities to bring information together effectively across services and populations so that, for example, services are better planned and targeted to vulnerable service users.

12. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are currently paid to the County Council which then passes the funding on to district councils on the basis of nationally determined allocations. However the need for this funding is variable across the County and the allocations do not necessarily reflect local demand. Some district councils utilise all their allocations whilst others have funding left unallocated.



13. Data relating to Charnwood Borough Council has not been included as it is not following the full Lightbulb model for delivery (it provides its own staff and administration) and data is therefore not collected by the central hub.

### **Opportunities for the Service presented by a Unitary Structure**

#### **Reducing Complexity of Partnership Arrangements:**

14. There is likely to be a consolidation of CCG organisations in their near future and, if this change is coupled with the creation of a single unitary council for Leicestershire, it would bring significant opportunities to reach decisions and enact implementation more quickly where changes are needed to improve outcomes for service users.
15. Simplified governance arrangements through a single unitary council for Leicestershire would streamline decision making. Examples of the need for this include recent work on integrated points of access and the falls treatment and prevention pathway where there have been protracted financial negotiations and governance processes across multiple partners which either stifled innovation completely or delayed evidence based services commencing for a number of months – thus delaying the benefits of achieving greater integration of local services for both citizens and professionals.

#### **Assistive Technology**

16. In a unitary structure there would be a number of benefits in the delivery of the vision for integrated housing and assistive technology

- a. Commissioners could act strategically as one when approaching the market for assistive technology solutions and seek the best value for money for the Leicestershire pound,
- b. A single organisation would be leading the design and commissioning of this service offer, ensuring that there is sufficient flexibility within the model to reflect local communities, and that the technology solutions are planned effectively with NHS partners in the wider context of integrated health, care and housing.
- c. The decision making process would be considerably simplified and shortened, and service users would be able to access the new service much more quickly.
- d. Given the fast moving nature of the technology market and the ongoing innovation in devices there is a need to work at pace in designing and commissioning improved assistive technology and to ensure this work keeps pace with the digital strategies of partner agencies.
- e. Rationalisation of the agencies involved across both LA and NHS settings would also assist partners in working with external innovation partners, such as commercial companies or academic partners in order to test, evaluate and deliver more rapid innovation into operational practice in Leicestershire.

#### Disabled Facilities Grants

17. The position in relation to DFG allocations for major adaptations in the home could also be improved by moving to unitary status, as the allocations coming into Leicestershire could be centralised and profiled more robustly to match demand activity in local areas. Also opportunities to vary the use of DFG allocations e.g. via Regulatory Reform Orders would be easier to coordinate and approve.

#### **BCF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT MONITORING 2017/18**

Authority	Allocation	Actual Spend
Blaby District Council	£499,481	£283,312
Charnwood Borough Council	£846,293	£846,293
Harborough District Council	£385,744	£212,857
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	£439,674	£497,529
Melton Borough Council	£259,427	£130,738
North West Leicestershire District Council	£572,989	£196,739
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	£346,261	£346,261
	<u>£3,349,869</u>	<u>£2,513,729</u>

18. The table above demonstrates there was net £836k underspending against the original DFG allocations in 2017/18, with variable levels of demand across the districts. However District Councils have carried this funding forward and are committed to spending the carry forward in total in 18/19.

### Data Integration

19. Work is currently underway to integrate data held by local government and health partners across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in line with national rules.
20. A single unitary council for Leicestershire would make it simpler and less time-consuming, by reducing the number of data controllers, in terms of the number of local government organisations holding relevant data sets and reduce the complexity of information sharing agreements across multiple agencies. Within a single unitary council, even without integrating data with the health service, there would be access to a much richer picture of the needs of Leicestershire residents.

### Locality Teams

21. Early intervention and prevention services are provided by both the County Council, largely through Public Health, and the district councils. This has meant that the locality teams, made up of primary care, community nursing and social services, are supported by a prevention offer which has been developed in partnership with district councils.
22. Whilst to date arrangements have worked reasonably well, the pace of delivery of a core prevention offer would be enhanced by a unitary council and there would be further opportunities to rationalise spend, management overheads, and release a greater proportion of resource to the front line prevention offer overall.

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## SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE

### PUBLIC HEALTH

#### **Introduction**

1. Consideration of a possible unitary structure for Leicestershire presents an opportunity to consider whether to redesign how services are delivered by local government, and if so what form the redesigned structure should take. The focus is on how better outcomes can be delivered for residents, local business and partner organisations, and how local government can best work with those organisations recognising the challenging times ahead as a result of public sector finance restraints. This appendix, and other appendices prepared in part to facilitate discussion at scrutiny bodies, set out the opportunities that a unitary structure could afford to each service, as well as some examples of best practice from the county unitary councils established in 2009.
2. This appendix should be read alongside the appraisal of options in the Cabinet report. In the 'Opportunities' section and case studies which follow, some of the changes highlighted offer the greatest benefits in a single unitary structure.

#### **Background**

3. The Public Health Department undertakes a wide range of services to fulfil the County Council's statutory duty to take steps to improve the health of the population. These include: commissioning sexual health and substance misuse treatment services, the provision of smoking cessation and weight management services, information and advice services and community capacity building services. It also improves health by action, on its own or in partnership with others such as CCG's and districts, on issues such as air quality.
4. Many public health services are universal and impact on the lives of all of Leicestershire's residents.
5. Under the current two tier system of local government, a number of these functions sit entirely with the County Council, however, districts have a number of functions that affect public health. These include roles in housing, environmental health, sport and leisure services, planning and community engagement.

#### **Opportunities for the Service presented by a Unitary Structure**

6. Services can be better delivered by unifying the services now provided by eight existing councils. Some of the main opportunities and advantages of this would be:
  - Simplifying Public Health services for residents, dealing with a unitary council, providing a single point of contact and easier access to local authority services.

- Consistency of public health services, one policy, one set of service standards and clear expectations.
  - Reducing administrative and back office costs, without impacting on front line services, enabling more efficient delivery of outcomes for residents.
  - Economies of scale: a unitary council would be in a much stronger buying position and better placed to negotiate contracts to achieve best value for Leicestershire residents.
  - Opportunities to explore the combination of services currently delivered by several councils across the county; for example information and advice services currently provided by the districts could be combined with other public health services currently provided by the County Council, such as First Contact Plus; leading to more streamlined, efficient and cost effective service delivery.
  - Administering alcohol licensing (currently a district council function) in a unitary authority would allow a consistent approach to licensing and closer integration with substance misuse treatment services and strategy.
7. From a strategic perspective, the Public Health Department seeks to improve health by working with a variety of partners. A unitary authority would facilitate the following strategic opportunities:
- Coherent, universal place making strategies incorporating many elements currently delivered across several councils. Currently the Department has a partial role to play in all of these objectives. A unitary council would maximise the benefits of any infrastructure or improvement schemes by considering a wider set of outcomes at the design stage. Public Health specialist advice on systematic tools to enable maximised health improvement, such as Health in All Policies (HIAP) or Health Impact Assessment (HIA) can make a big long term difference to health. Currently the County Council, works on a 'coalition of the willing' basis, advising and working with districts to undertake HIA's on their Local Plans and specific developments. A unitary council would enable better working between the planning, housing and economic development functions with improved ability to apply HIA and HIAP principles.
  - A single voice to promote priorities for public health to major bodies such as Public Health England, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government with equal resource and experience available across the area.
  - A single voice to promote public health priorities and service integration with local NHS bodies.
  - Clear accountability for public health issues which are currently split across authorities. Across a range of lifestyle behaviours there is currently a split between service responsibility (County Council) and broader policy responsibility (districts). For instance, the County Council is responsible for the provision of substance misuse treatment services whilst districts are



responsible for alcohol licensing matters, the County Council is responsible for the provision of weight management services, with districts responsible for planning in relation to fast food outlets. A unitary council would enable a more cohesive public health system for Leicestershire, bringing together policy and services in one organisation.

- Streamlined arrangements for responding to outbreaks and incidents. Most aspects of environmental health services have an impact on health. The current district council role in environmental health covers functions such as monitoring and managing local air quality, food safety, enforcing the smoking ban, ensuring compliance with occupational health and safety regulations, and dealing with contaminated land, among others. Longer term work on air quality, and short term work on managing outbreaks and incidents are dependent on complex management arrangements and meetings involving Council partners, and other agencies such as Public Health England (PHE) and the CCG's. Through integration with the regulatory services function, a unitary council would provide a more co-ordinated and consistent approach to delivering this model, reducing the bureaucracy of partnership meetings currently necessary to respond to outbreaks.

### **Existing Unitary Council Best Practice**

8. Durham Council – Comprehensive, consistent programme of tobacco control: Durham Council have set an ambitious vision of “reducing smoking in County Durham to 5% by 2030, to achieve our vision of a tobacco free generation”.
9. In common with Leicestershire, the Council provides a smoking cessation service, including support for vapers, but Durham Council goes beyond this by incorporating a consistent County wide programme of tobacco control in its plans.
10. The whole programme delivers a consistent county wide package of:
  - developing infrastructure, skills and capacity at local level and influencing national action
  - media, communications and social marketing
  - reducing the availability and supply of tobacco products
  - tobacco regulation including a voluntary no-smoking code to make play areas in all parks smokefree and a county wide smoke free homes campaign.
  - research, monitoring and evaluation

### **Case Studies**

11. The Public Health Department has identified two areas where different elements are currently delivered by the County Council and the Districts Councils, the preventative model of public health (also known as the social prescribing model or locality model) and sport and physical activity.

12. It should be stressed that these case studies are designed to represent a brief overview of what a unitary service could look like, and that further, more detailed work would be required to arrive at a fully evidenced, preferred model.

### **Preventative model of public health**

#### **Current**

13. The model of public health for Leicestershire County Council places reliance on community based approaches to self help and community capacity building, with First Contact Plus providing universal access to advice and information and Local Area Coordinators supporting more intensive work in defined areas. These services provide support and advice on areas such as affordable warmth, homelessness support and debt advice.
14. These services sit alongside commissioned and in-house delivery of lifestyle services such as smoking cessation and weight management.
15. The full prevention model in a locality relies on partnership working with districts, recognising that districts deliver their own community capacity building and health improvement work in communities (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Locality prevention offer



16. This model has been embraced as the locality prevention offer for Integrated Locality Teams (ILTs) and as the social prescribing model for GPs.
17. In reality, this means seven different locality offers across Leicestershire. There is variation in the local health improvement 'offer' provided by districts, on top of the County wide core offer. Duplication also arises. First Contact Plus has been established as the 'single front door' to prevention services across Leicestershire within that model, but there remain several district points of access to information, advice and health improvement services.
18. Similarly, the provision of support for those at risk of becoming homeless is split, and potentially duplicated, across the seven districts, given the existing district responsibilities as the Housing Authority) and the public health responsibility to improve health in priority groups such as the homeless.
19. This can be confusing to the public and other public bodies and makes the provision of clear, consistent communication messages on the availability of

service on a county wide basis more difficult. Additionally, significant officer time, across local government and the NHS, is required to manage interactions between the County Council and the District Councils at both a strategic and operational level.

### **What could the preventative model of public health look like in a unitary authority?**

20. A unitary council would deliver a consistent model for broader public health services for all residents. Residents would benefit from a single point of access to information, advice and access to services through First Contact Plus. This would include information across the unitary council area on the opportunities provided by the voluntary sector for support.
21. A unitary council would result in a better and more comprehensive service for those at risk of homelessness through the integration of homelessness support and the provision of general information and advice such as First Contact Plus.
22. Economies of scale and the consistent application of evidence based principles to locality based commissioning would enable better value for money.
23. Simplified partnership working arrangements would enable the unified prevention offer to work closely and seamlessly with health and social care partners in Integrated Locality Teams. The same simplified working arrangements for services such as Local Area Coordination would enable more consistent referral pathways by health and other professionals for those individuals in need of help.
24. It would also allow clear, simple communications and access to initiatives which would support the prevention model, maximising participation through ease of use and branding.
25. There would also be other opportunities to integrate other areas, such as healthy public policy initiatives around alcohol and food licensing or smoke free zones, into the overall approach of a unified service.
26. There would be further opportunities to rationalise spend, including management overheads, and release a greater proportion of resource to the front line prevention offer overall.

### **Sport, Physical Activity and Leisure**

#### **Current**

27. Currently the seven district councils are responsible for the provision of leisure services and access to parks. The County Council is responsible for the commissioning of weight management services and broader programmes of physical activity designed to encourage the inactive to become active, commissioned and funded by public health (delivered by districts). The County Council is also responsible for the provision of cycle lanes and other sustainable transport infrastructure and country parks.

28. This involves considerable officer time, notably through Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport, in the coordination and administration of district plans for broader physical activity and a lack of consistent across Leicestershire. There are seven different plans for delivery against an overall framework.
29. At the locality level there is a potential for a lack of join up between the core leisure centre offer and broader county wide work, including taking a broader physical activity approach that encompasses sustainable travel.

**What could the model for sport and physical activity look like in a unitary authority?**

30. A unitary council structure would enable a single programme of physical activity, focussed on priority groups that are currently more likely to be inactive, without the need for the amount of existing officer time in delivering this on a partnership basis.
31. It would establish a clear set of priorities across the unitary council, with efficiencies in the delivery of programmes against the priorities.
32. Simplified management structures would enable a closer working relationship with national partners such as Sport England, and enable funding opportunities from national bodies to be pursued across the unitary area.
33. The bringing together of several council leisure operations would enable efficiencies in the either the direct operation of those centres or in the commissioning of such centres. It would place the core spend on leisure services at the heart of a physical activity model, rather than peripheral to the achievement of an uptake in physical activity among the inactive. The rationalisation of several services into one would also enable closer joint working with programmes designed to promote physical activity through the use of green spaces and switches to greener travel modes.
34. Health partners would benefit from a clear, unitary council wide physical activity pathway into which to refer patients.

## **SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE**

### **ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

#### **Introduction**

1. Consideration of a possible unitary structure for Leicestershire presents an opportunity to consider whether to redesign how services are delivered by local government, and if so what form the redesigned structure should take. The focus is on how better outcomes can be delivered for residents, local business and partner organisations, and how local government can best work with those organisations recognising the challenging times ahead as a result of public sector finance restraints. This appendix, and other appendices prepared in part to facilitate discussion at scrutiny bodies, set out the opportunities that a unitary structure could afford to each service, as well as some examples of best practice from the county unitary councils established in 2009.
2. This appendix should be read alongside the analysis of options in the Cabinet report. In the 'Opportunities' section and case studies which follow, it is logical, however, to presume that some changes offer the greatest benefits in a single unitary structure.

#### **Background**

3. The Environment and Transport Department undertakes a wide range of services including: highway maintenance, waste disposal, bidding for capital funding and delivering major transport schemes, providing school and other specialist transport, providing a network of recycling and household waste sites, maintaining the authority's vehicle fleet, blue badges, parking permits, concessionary travel passes and a range of environmental services.
4. Many of our services are universal (for example looking after the roads and disposing of household waste) and impact on the lives of all of Leicestershire's residents.
5. Under the current two tier system of local government a number of these functions sit entirely with the County Council however in some cases different elements of the same service are delivered by both tiers. For example, district councils collect waste, while the County Council disposes of it. District councils pick up litter and clean streets, while the County Council maintains the roads. In some cases, such as grass cutting, both the County Council and the district councils cut the grass that falls within their responsibility e.g. highway grass by the county and parks by districts.

#### **Opportunities for the Service presented by a Unitary Structure**

6. Services can be better delivered by unifying the services now provided by eight councils. Some of the main opportunities and advantages of this would be:

- Simplifying environment and transport services for residents, dealing with a unitary council, providing a single point of contact and easier access to local authority services
  - Consistency of environment and transport services, one policy, one set of service standards, clear expectations
  - Reducing administrative and back office costs, without impacting on front line services, enabling more efficient delivery of outcomes for residents
  - Reducing running costs, for example all eight authorities currently own, lease and maintain a fleet of vehicles and operate depots – this can be done much more efficiently under a unitary council with rationalisation of property assets, whilst also creating opportunities for maximising the operational efficiency of plant, vehicles and depots
  - Economies of scale – a unitary council would be in a much stronger buying position and better placed to negotiate contracts to achieve best value for Leicestershire residents
  - Better for business – organisations doing business in Leicestershire would deal with a unitary authority, helping to make Leicestershire more attractive for investment
  - Opportunities to explore the combination of services currently delivered by several councils; for example street scene services currently provided by the districts such as fly tipping, street sweeping and dog fouling could be combined with other environmental services currently provided by the County Council, such as grass cutting, forestry and gully emptying; leading to more streamlined, efficient and cost effective service delivery
  - Administering taxi licensing (currently a district council function) in a unitary authority would allow a consistent approach to licensing and closer integration with the management of school and social care transport with third party providers. It would also facilitate targeted enforcement ensuring consistent standards for vehicles and drivers.
7. From a strategic perspective, the Highways and Transport branch focuses a large part of its work on ‘enabling’ delivery of wider outcomes such as economic growth or regeneration and unlocking housing growth. A unitary authority would facilitate the following strategic opportunities:
- Coherent, universal place making strategies incorporating many elements currently delivered across several councils for both maintaining and improving existing key locations such as employment, retail and community centres (including the highway and transport connections) as well as designing new growth areas with opportunities for development to promote green and health initiatives, support aging and growing population challenges. Currently the Department has a partial role to play in all of these objectives. A unitary authority would maximise the benefits of any infrastructure or improvement schemes by considering a wider set of outcomes at the design stage.
  - A single voice to promote priorities for public funding to major funding bodies such as Department for Transport, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government with equal resource and experience available across the area.

- Clear accountability for highways and transport issues which is currently split across authorities. For instance, the County Council is the highway authority and responsibilities include producing the local transport plan, acting as statutory consultee to the planning process, maintaining the function and operation of the highway; district councils are responsible for street cleansing and litter collection, grounds maintenance, regeneration schemes (also undertaken by the County Council), street trading and various licensing issues. A unitary authority would ensure the public had clear visibility of roles and responsibilities as well as providing opportunities around utilisation of equipment, skills and resource.
- Efficient approval and delivery processes – often highway schemes and proposals are linked to wider objectives and may be delivered by the highway authority on behalf of the district. This often requires two sets of approval processes or complex and time consuming legal agreements. A unitary authority would remove the need for this saving time and money that could be used to deliver a larger programme.

### **Existing Unitary Council Best Practice**

8. Durham Council: Significant benefits came from structural changes such as bringing together all the 'place shaping' functions into one unitary authority. Transport, economic development, planning and housing working together on regeneration plans, for example, has proved to be extremely successful, whether implementing the authority's own schemes or as a 'one shop stop' for potential developers. The introduction of a unitary council in Durham has resulted in a strong single focus on delivering economic benefits for the county.
9. Wiltshire Council: As part of the move to a unitary structure, rationalised its estate from 95 buildings to 3 main office hubs and contributed to a 15% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from local authority buildings. The harmonisation of waste services supported a significant reduction in waste going to landfill. Wiltshire's vision for empowering local communities led to the formation of Area Boards which oversee grants that lever in £6 for every £1 spent, agree improvement works for highways and prioritise street scene works. In the first two years as a unitary council, Wiltshire Council increased customer satisfaction by 18%.
10. Wiltshire Council also harmonised waste collection and disposal to improve household recycling performance and reduce waste to landfill from 56% to 37% (a reduction of 19%).

### **Case Studies**

11. The Environment and Transport Department has identified two services where different elements are currently delivered by the County Council and the district councils, waste management and parking.
12. It should be stressed that these case studies are designed to represent a brief overview of what a unitary service could look like, and that further, more

detailed work would be required to arrive at a fully evidenced, preferred model.

## **Waste Management Services**

### **Current**

13. In Leicestershire, the seven districts, as Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs), are responsible for providing kerbside collections of waste and recyclables. The County Council, as the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA), is responsible for the disposal and treatment of the waste collected by the districts. The County Council also provides the network of recycling and household waste sites and waste transfer stations.
14. In reality this means seven different kerbside waste and recycling collection systems operating across Leicestershire. There is variety in collection frequencies (weekly or fortnightly), sizes and types of containers (bins, boxes and bags) and charges (for green, trade and bulky waste collections).
15. The differing service across the county also extends to materials collected for recycling. With the exception of glass and metal, there are significant differences in materials collected which in confusion for residents. For example, for paper at present some district councils collect all types of wrapping paper while others only collect non-metallic wrapping paper and for shredded paper some districts require this to be wrapped separately, while others do not.. A number of districts collect tetra paks while others do not and again for plastic film, some accept plastic film while others do not. These differences cause confusion if residents move between districts or have family and friends in different districts operating different systems. Ultimately however, confusion is likely to lead to higher contamination of recyclable materials which will lead to higher disposal costs. The above provides an illustration of the differences and complexity of waste collection. Table 1 illustrates the broad cross-section of waste systems currently operating in Leicestershire.
16. Each different collection system is also supported by different policies and processes, for example in relation to missed bins, side waste, assisted collections or charges for replacement bins.
17. This can be confusing to the public and makes the provision of clear, consistent communication messages on a county wide basis much more difficult. At present, there is no single point for residents to access information on waste services: the County Council, the seven districts and the Leicestershire Waste Partnership all provide information on waste services on their websites and each authority has a different telephone customer service line.
18. The variation in collection services also means there are a significant number of waste contracts with different end dates and contractual terms. This situation is inefficient in terms of value for money (particularly in relation to the



costs of procurement and on-going contract management), does not allow for strategic planning and optimisation of waste collection rounds across the county and does not make best use of the network of waste depots and other infrastructure.

19. There is also a significant officer resource required to manage interactions between the County Council and the district councils at both a strategic and operational level.

### **What could waste services look like in a unitary authority?**

20. A unitary council would deliver consistent kerbside collection services for residents (e.g. collection frequencies, containers and charges), as well as trade waste services for businesses. It would allow clear, simple communications and access to initiatives which support waste ambitions, maximising participation through ease of use and branding, simplifying waste services for Leicestershire residents.
21. An example of a waste service offered by a unitary council (Durham County Council) is shown in table 2. In contrast to the confusing variety of services as shown in Table 1, the unitary authority offers a streamlined service across the County area.

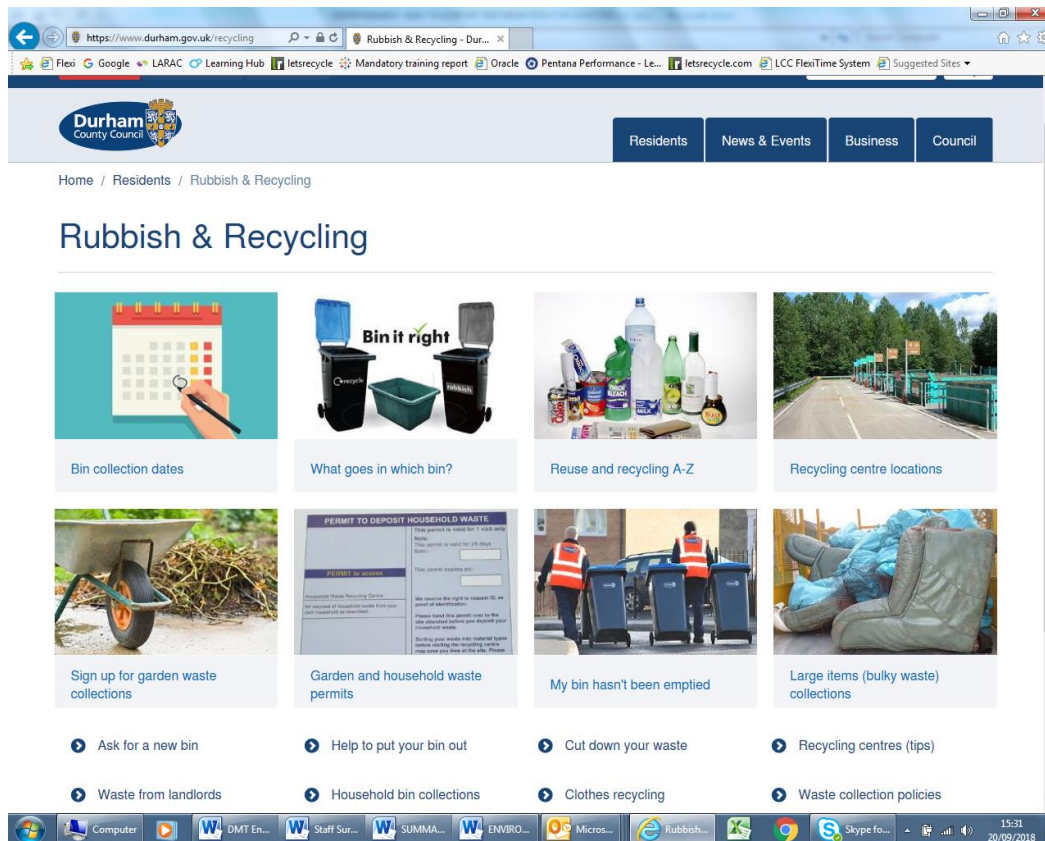
<b>Residual</b>	<b>Recycling</b>	<b>Green Waste</b>	<b>Bulky Waste</b>
Standard Bin Fortnightly	Standard Bin and Box Fortnightly	Standard Bin or Bag Fortnightly £30	6 small items £16. Each additional small item £2.50  3 large/DIY items £16. Each additional large item £5.00  Exception items £32 per item

Table 2 Durham County Council waste collection service.

22. Residents would also benefit from a single point of access for all core waste services which would reduce duplication of effort on their part and be easier to understand.
23. For example, the Durham County council waste 'home' page provides a single point of access for residents for both waste collection and disposal services, including:
- Bin collections
  - Recycling
  - Household waste recycling centres
  - Garden waste collections

- Missed bins
- Bulky waste collections

24. This compares to nine different websites in Leicestershire – the County Council, the seven district councils and the Leicestershire Waste Partnership – which all contain information on waste services.



25. Waste policies (for example in relation to missed bins, assisted collections, side waste etc.) would be the same across the unitary authority area, reducing duplication, simplifying communications and providing consistent services for residents.

26. A unitary council would also give opportunities to deliver a whole system approach to waste services offering value for money through optimising the configuration of waste collection rounds, making efficient use of infrastructure by rationalising waste depots, utilising co-location opportunities and maximising contractual buying power.

27. There would also be opportunities to integrate other tasks such as litter, fly tipping and enforcement into the waste service provided by the unitary council allowing the services to be flexible and responsive to residents' needs.

28. A holistic waste service would enable decisions across the whole spectrum of waste management functions, delivering savings through the streamlining of management, back office systems, procurement, direct service provision and contract management functions, and a better customer service experience.

## **Parking Services**








### **Current**

29. Currently the seven district councils are responsible for off street parking; the County Council is responsible for on street parking and residents' parking schemes. The current Civil Parking Enforcement Partnership activity is coordinated through a Parking Board whose membership is made up of the County Council and seven district councils. Powers to enforce on street parking restrictions are currently delegated by the County Council to the districts with the County Council providing a processing service in respect of all issued penalties across the county.
30. Within the current system six of the seven districts charge for the majority of off street parking. Tariffs vary from district to district and different systems and contracts are in place to administer parking across the county.
31. This can be confusing for the public as they encounter different charges and regulations when parking in different locations within the county.

### **What could parking services look like in a unitary authority?**

32. The County Council, in its role as a Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to ensure the efficient movement of traffic on the roads of Leicestershire. Consideration of on street parking forms a part of this responsibility. A unitary authority with responsibility for on and off street parking would be able to maximise the efficiency and availability of off street parking to support this statutory duty.
33. A unitary authority would enable a single policy covering on and off street parking, applying a consistent and simpler approach for parking, permitting and traffic regulation. Similarly it would also enable a consistent approach to parking charges, civil enforcement and appeals delivering savings across procurement, contract management and back office functions.
34. Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) resource could be more efficiently deployed with the removal of current district boundaries.
35. In addition, having total control of parking would allow a more considered and universal approach to determine where funds are best invested, for example in highway or car park maintenance, or providing additional parking where this would complement sustainable growth.
36. There would be opportunities for a unitary authority to explore the integration of many other aspects of street activity, for example identifying street lighting, sign, footway or highway defects into a revised Civil Enforcement Officer / inspection role.

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Operator		glass		metal		paper		cardboard		plastic		textiles	
		Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?
 Blaby District Council <small>the heart of Leicestershire</small>	In-house	YES		YES		YES		YES		YES		YES	 mind <small>Your better mental health</small>
	<b>Frequency:</b> Residual / recycling collected on alternate weeks. Garden waste collected fortnightly (monthly Dec to Feb)  Casepak contract from 1.6.18	Bottles and jars	140ltr or 240ltr depending on household size <b>GREEN</b> lidded wheeled bin (can buy additional space)	Drinks cans, food tins, empty aerosols, clean foil and foil trays	140ltr or 240ltr depending on household size <b>GREEN</b> lidded wheeled bin (can buy additional space)	Envelopes, junk mail, magazines, newspapers, paper, shredded paper, catalogues and directories, wrapping paper (non metallic)	140ltr or 240ltr depending on household size <b>GREEN</b> lidded wheeled bin (can buy additional space)	Cardboard fruit & veg punnets, cardboard sleeves, cereal boxes, corrugated cardboard, egg boxes, tissue boxes, toilet roll and kitchen roll tubes, food and drink cartons (tetra pak)	140ltr or 240ltr depending on household size <b>GREEN</b> lidded wheeled bin (can buy additional space)	All plastic bottles, plastic food pots, tubs and trays, carrier bags, plastic cutlery. <b>No black plastic, hard plastic, or plant pots and seed trays</b>	140ltr or 240ltr depending on household size <b>GREEN</b> lidded wheeled bin (can buy additional space)		
		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly	

Operator		Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?
 <p><b>Charnwood</b> Leading in innovation</p> <p><b>serco</b></p> <p>Casepak contract from 12.5.18</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> Residual / Recycling collected on alternate weeks. Garden waste collected fortnightly (monthly Dec-Feb)</p>		YES		YES		YES		YES		YES		No	
		Bottles and jars	240ltr <b>GREEN</b> Bin Additional recycling can be placed in clear sacks	Drink cans, food tins, empty aerosols, clean foil and foil trays	240ltr <b>GREEN</b> Bin Additional recycling can be placed in clear sacks		240ltr <b>GREEN</b> Bin Additional recycling can be placed in clear sacks	Cardboard fruit & veg punnets, cardboard sleeves, cereal boxes, corrugated cardboard, egg boxes, tissue boxes, toilet roll and kitchen roll tubes, food and drink cartons (Tetra Pak), clean pizza boxes, flattened cardboard boxes (remove any tape, string, polystyrene)	240ltr <b>GREEN</b> Bin Additional recycling can be placed in clear sacks	All plastic bottles (with lids), plastic pots, tubs, trays and punnets (including lids), plastic packaging film, carrier bags. <b>No black plastic, polystyrene,</b>	240ltr <b>GREEN</b> Bin Additional recycling can be placed in clear sacks		
		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Not Collected	

Operator		Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?
 <p><b>District of Harborough</b> Environmental Services</p> <p><b>FCC Environment</b></p> <p>Casepak contract from 1.4.18</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> Residual / Recycling collected on alternate weeks. Garden waste collected fortnightly</p>		YES		YES		YES		YES		Yes		NO	
		Bottles and jars	<b>Blue</b> Lidded wheeled bin	Drinks cans, food tins, empty aerosols, clean foil and foil trays	<b>Blue</b> Lidded wheeled bin	Envelopes, junk mail, magazines, newspapers, paper and shredded paper, catalogues and directories,	<b>Blue</b> Lidded wheeled bin	Cardboard fruit and veg punnets, cardboard sleeves, cereal boxes, corrugated cardboard and cardboard boxes, egg boxes, toilet roll and kitchen roll tubes, food and drink cartons (tetra pak)	<b>Blue</b> Lidded wheeled bin	Plastic drinks bottles, plastic food pots, tubs, trays and punnets with lids, (No black plastic, plastic food packaging or carrier bags)	<b>Blue</b> Lidded wheeled bin		
		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Not Collected	




Operator	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?
 In-house  Casepak contract from 1.4.18  <b>Frequency:</b> Residual / Recycling collected on alternate weeks. Garden waste collected fortnightly	YES		YES		YES		YES		YES		YES	
	Bottles and jars	Black Bin with <b>BLUE</b> Lid	Drinks can, food tins, empty aerosols, clean foil and foil trays	Black Bin with <b>BLUE</b> Lid	Envelopes, junk mail, paper, magazines, newspapers, paper, shredded paper (wrapped to prevent it escaping), catalogues and directories, wrapping paper (not metallic)	Black Bin with <b>BLUE</b> Lid	Cardboard fruit & veg punnets, cardboard sleeves, cereal boxes, corrugated cardboard, egg boxes, tissue boxes, toilet roll and kitchen roll tubes, plain greeting cards, food and drink cartons (tetra pak)	Black Bin with <b>BLUE</b> Lid	Plastic bottles, Food pots, tubs, trays and punnets (with lids) bottles, Plastic trays. <b>No packaging film or carrier bags. No black plastic</b>	Black Bin with <b>BLUE</b> Lid	Clothes, paired shoes, linen (bedding and table cloths), towels, curtains, bags and belts. Not duvets, quilts, cushions and pillows.	<b>Red</b> sack or resident can put in clear sack
	Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly	



Operator	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?
 <b>Biffa</b>  Casepak contract from 1.10.18  <b>Frequency:</b> Residual / Recycling collected on alternate weeks. Garden waste collected fortnightly	YES		YES		YES		YES		YES		YES	
	Bottles and jars	240ltr <b>BROWN</b> wheeled bin	Drinks cans, food tins, clean foil and foil trays, empty aerosols	240ltr <b>BROWN</b> wheeled bin	Envelopes, junk mail, magazines, newspapers, paper, shredded paper, catalogues and directories, plain wrapping paper	240ltr <b>BROWN</b> wheeled bin	Cardboard fruit & veg punnets, cardboard sleeves, cereal boxes, corrugated cardboard, egg boxes, tissue boxes, toilet roll and kitchen roll tubes, food and drink cartons e.g. Tetra paks	240ltr <b>BROWN</b> wheeled bin	Plastic bottles (with lids), plastic pots, tubs, trays and punnets (with lids). <b>No black plastic.</b>	240ltr <b>BROWN</b> wheeled bin		Carrier bag left next to the recycling bin
	FORTNIGHTLY		FORTNIGHTLY		FORTNIGHTLY		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly	



Operator	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?
 In-house  <b>Frequency:</b> Residual / Recycling collected on alternate weeks. Garden waste collected fortnightly	YES		YES		YES		YES		YES		YES	
	Bottles and jars (separate box)	55lt <b>RED</b> Box	Clean food tins and drinks cans, empty aerosol cans, clean foil and foil trays	55lt <b>RED</b> Box	Envelopes, junk mail, magazines, newspapers, paper, shredded paper (in a carrier bag to prevent it escaping), catalogues and directories, wrapping paper (all types). Extra paper can be placed in a clear plastic bag by the side of the blue bag.	<b>BLUE</b> bag	All types of flattened household cardboard including: cereal boxes, corrugated cardboard boxes, cardboard sleeves and food packaging, greeting cards, kitchen and toilet roll tubes. <b>No food and drink cartons (tetra paks).</b>	<b>YELLOW</b> weighted bag (collected on same vehicle as the garden waste)	All plastic bottles (with lids), plastic pots, tubs, trays and punnets (including black plastic). <b>No carrier bags, bubble wrap, polystyrene or packaging film</b>	55lt <b>RED</b> Box	Collected on the same vehicle as the red boxes and blue bag	Clothes and shoes in a carrier bag next to the red box
	Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly	



Operator	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?
 In-house  Casepak contract from 1.4.18  <b>Oadby &amp; Wigston BC</b> <b>Frequency:</b> Residual and Recycling collected weekly. Garden waste collected fortnightly	Yes		YES		YES		YES		YES		No	
	Bottles and jars	Green wheeled bin with BROWN lid (additional bin £17)	Drinks cans, food tins, empty aerosols, clean foil and foil trays	Green wheeled bin with BROWN lid (additional bin £17)	Envelopes, Junk mail, Magazines, Newspapers, Paper and Shredded paper, Catalogues and directories, paperback books	Green wheeled bin with BROWN lid (additional bin £17)	Cardboard fruit & veg punnets, Cardboard sleeves, Cereal boxes, Corrugated cardboard and Cardboard boxes, Egg boxes, Tissue boxes, Toilet roll tubes, Plain greetings cards	Green wheeled bin with BROWN lid (additional bin £17)	Plastic bottles, plastic food pots, tubs, trays and punnets (including lids) and carrier bags. <b>No packaging film, Black plastic, plant pots and seed trays.</b>	Green wheeled bin with BROWN lid (additional bin £17)		
	Weekly		Weekly		Weekly		Weekly		Weekly		Not Collected	





electrical		batteries		Green waste		Residual		Bulky Waste		Clinical		Trade		Replacement Bins
Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	
YES	 Mind Bag	YES		YES		YES		YES	Check website for allowable items	YES no charge		YES	Range of container sizes. Charges vary depending on size of container provided	
				Clear plastic bag (supplied by resident)	£24 for 140ltr, £36 for 240ltr pa or £5.20 for 3 bags	140ltr /240ltr <b>BROWN</b> lidded wheeled bin or degradeable garden bags	Larger residual waste bin available for annual charge <b>No garden waste, no paint, no builders rubble/waste, soil or concrete</b>	140ltr / 240ltr (depending on size of household) <b>BLACK</b> lidded wheeled bin	1-2 items £20 3-4 items £28 5-6 items £40 7+ items book a quote online	Online service (or by phone with additional £2 charge)	<b>Clinical waste</b> Request this service via your Health Centre/Doctor's Surgery <b>Sharps boxes</b> obtained by prescription	Collection on Thursdays for sharps boxes. Request this service online through Blaby District Council website	Refuse and trade recycling collected	Do not charge VAT for businesses in the district
Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		As arranged						Bins damaged through normal wear and tear are replaced free of charge. Charge of £30 for a new bin if damaged deliberately.



Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Replacement Bins
No		No		YES		YES		YES	Check website for allowable items	YES no charge		YES	Wheeled bins ( 1100 litre, 660, 240)	Replace broken black bins with 180 litre bins (no charge). Individual circumstances will be looked at when requesting an additional black bin. The additional bin will be 180 litres.
				240ltr brown wheeled bin, charged at £40 pa by direct debit pa or £45 No animal bedding, meat, fish, cooked foods, large branches or logs, metal, plastic, glass, stones or gravel	240ltr <b>BROWN</b> wheeled bin		180ltr <b>BLACK</b> lidded wheeled bin	Up to 3 free collections a year (or 9 items), then £15 a collection	Collected on a Monday	<b>Clinical waste</b> arranged through GP or district nurse, either one off or regular collection <b>Sharps boxes</b> obtained by prescription	Collections on Wednesdays <b>Sharps</b> - ring 01509 634563 by 5pm Tues for collection that week	New service being launched for <b>General Waste</b> commercial.waste@charnwood.gov.uk or 01509 634930		
Not collected		Not collected		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		As Arranged		As arranged		As arranged		

Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Replacement Bins
NO		No		YES		YES		YES	Check website for allowable items	YES no charge		YES	Wheeled bins (1280, 1100, 770, 360, 240)	online form for requesting replacement bins. Lost, missing or damaged - charge usually made. Damaged during collection - no charge
				£40 pa No Soil, turf, food waste, animal waste, pet bedding or cardboard.	240ltr GREEN wheeled bin	No batteries or lighters	180ltr BLACK wheeled bin (can be swapped for 140ltr)	3 large items or 12 sacks of waste £33		Clinical waste by assessment/ arrangement - need to complete an application form Sharps boxes obtained through prescription	Sharps boxes - need min of 2 for collection	Mixed recycling and General Waste	Recycling montly or fortnightly (or weekly in Harborough) General waste monthly, fortnightly or weekly	
Not Collected		Not collected		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		As arranged		As arranged		As arranged		

Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Replacement Bins
No		No		YES		YES		YES	Check website for allowable items	YES no charge		YES	Wheeled bins (1100 litre, 660 litre, 240 litre)	New residents and new builds charged £24 Replacement bins not charged if only once in 5 year period
				£24 pa for 240ltr or 140ltr Brown wheeled bin No soil, turf, treated wood, garden tools, food or animal waste, general waste, cardboard, slabs, stones or rubble	240ltr or 140 ltr BROWN wheeled bin		240ltr BLACK wheeled bin	1-3 items £15 4-5 items £25, then an extra £6 per item		Clinical waste collections set up through GP or district nurse. Needles/sharps boxes obtained on prescription.	Sharps boxes collected on a Weds between 7am and 4pm (can arrange specific time). Need min of 3 for collection or take to Jubilee Bld LE10 3DU	Mixed recycling and General Waste	Recycling and General waste either weekly or fortnightly	
Not Collected		Not Collected		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		As arranged		As arranged		As arranged		

Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Replacement Bins
Yes	Carrier bag left next to the recycling bin	No		YES		YES		YES	Check website for allowable items	YES no charge		NO		To be updated from October 2018
				Green waste club - £57/year or £4.75/month	240ltr <b>Green</b> wheeled bin		240ltr <b>BLACK</b> wheeled bin	1 item £18.70 2-5 items £31, 5+ add an extra £9 for each additional item	White goods (fridge/freezer) £25.60 for one and then £31 up to 5 items discounts for some benefits	<b>Clinical waste</b> collections set up through GP or district nurse <b>Sharps boxes</b> obtained on prescription	Ring 01664 502502 to register for <b>Sharps box</b> collection. Collections usually quarterly			
Fortnightly		Not Collected		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		As arranged		As arranged		Not Collected		

Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Replacement Bins
No		NO		YES		YES		YES	Check website for allowable items	YES no charge		YES	Choice of bins offered depending on needs	No charge for extra recycling containers. Charge of £25 for refuse bin if damaged deliberately, otherwise no charge to replace.
				240ltr bin is available on request (no additional charge)	240ltr BROWN lidded wheeled bin		180ltr BLACK wheeled bin	1-3 items £23 4 items £28, 5 items £33, 6 items £38		Yellow clinical waste sacks and yellow sharps boxes. Sacks and boxes supplied by the NHS	Collect on Tuesdays this needs to be arranged by the Friday before. Collection can be arranged by calling 01530 45 45 45	Refuse and recycling collections. All collections priced on a standard weekly cost.Call 01530 454 584	Collection normally weekly but can be changed depending on requirements	
Not Collected		Not Collected		Fortnightly		Fortnightly		As arranged						

Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Collected?	How?	Replacement Bins
No		NO		YES		YES		YES	Check website for allowable items	YES no charge	register online	NO		Currently recycling bins are replaced free of charge if lost or stolen. Currently collect residual waste in black sacks.
				1 x 240ltr or 2 x 140ltr for £35 pa. Additional bins charged at £20 No cardboard, metal, plastic, food or animal waste, soil, bricks, rubble or general waste	240ltr or 140ltr GREEN wheeled bin	3 x 40ltr black bags or 1 x 80 ltr dustbin and 1 x 40 ltr black bag No metal, plastic, cardboard, food or animal waste, hazardous waste, glass, sharp objects, soil, bricks or rubble	40ltr <b>BLACK</b> bags (supplied by council) or 80ltr dustbins (purchased by householder)	1 item £21, each additional item is an extra £4	Clinical waste collected at request of medical profession. <b>Sharps boxes service</b> obtained by prescription.					
Not Collected		Not Collected		Fortnightly		weekly		As arranged						



## SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE

### ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

#### **Introduction**

1. Consideration of a possible unitary structure for Leicestershire presents an opportunity to consider whether to redesign how services are delivered by local government, and if so what form the redesigned structure should take. The focus is on how better outcomes can be delivered for residents, local business and partner organisations, and how local government can best work with those organisations recognising the challenging times ahead as a result of public sector finance restraints. This appendix, and other appendices prepared in part to facilitate discussion at scrutiny bodies, set out the opportunities that a unitary structure could afford to each service, as well as some examples of best practice from the county unitary councils established in 2009.
2. This appendix should be read alongside the analysis of options in the Cabinet report. In the 'Opportunities' section and case studies which follow, it is logical, however, to presume that some changes offer the greatest benefits in a single unitary structure.

#### **Background**

3. This paper covers the growth agenda and includes within its scope economic development, planning (including the strategic planning of future housing provision), and strategic property and housing services.

#### *Economic Development*

4. The County Council takes a corporate approach to supporting the economy recognising that all services have an impact on the county's economic performance. As an employer and purchaser of goods and services the Council ranks as an important organisation in the county. It is, however, in its roles as service provider that the Council makes the largest impact. The provision of transport infrastructure (E&T), the rollout of superfast broadband (Chief Executive's), influencing educational provision and standards (CFS), investing in and managing workspaces (Corporate Resources) and the provision of adult learning services (A&C) are all examples of service provision supporting economic growth. The Council's economic priorities are set out in the Enabling Growth Plan and activity is supported and coordinated by an Economic Growth Team in the Chief Executive's Department and overseen by a corporate Enabling Growth Board.
5. District Councils are also employers and purchasers of goods and services. District Council services which contribute to economic growth include planning (specifically in relation to the allocation of sites for employment and housing growth and the processing of planning applications from businesses) and environmental health. Most District Councils have either a small economic development team or a dedicated economic development officer, and activities supported include town centre regeneration, jobs fairs, tourism,

broadband promotion, workspace provision and business grants and networking.

6. A Local Economic Development Officers Network (LEDON) including the City and County Councils, Districts and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) meets to share information on economic growth matters. Both the County Council and District Councils are represented on the LLEP Board and its various sub-groups.

### *Planning*

7. District Councils are responsible for most local planning matters, with transport and minerals and waste planning being functions carried out by the County Council.
8. Each local planning authority is required to produce a Local Plan which sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. Currently, each District Council in Leicestershire is required to produce a Local Plan. The County Council produces a Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
9. District level local plans are underpinned by extensive transport modelling work carried out by the County Council. This modelling is essential to demonstrating that local plans are robust and deliverable in terms of the infrastructure needed to support the growth.
10. Both tiers collaborate on strategic planning matters through the Members Advisory Group and its supporting officer groups. Information sharing is conducted through a Planning Officers Forum.

### *Property and Housing*

11. Each authority selects its own property development strategies and this can lead to competition for commercial tenants by separate estates teams across the county all trying to promote their own sites at the expense of other authorities.
12. Each council applies for funding for property initiatives independently of each other to bring forward schemes which sometimes are in conflict/competition with property proposals other authorities are promoting. There is a certain amount of coordination via the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership.
13. In terms of housing services the District Councils are local housing authorities. At present there is some duplication and a mix of roles across the county of the administration and property management of the housing functions and stock. There are currently three districts with their own housing stock (Charnwood Borough Council, Melton Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council). Although not a local housing authority the County Council has identified affordable and quality homes as a priority

outcome and many County Council services have a direct impact on housing provision.

### **Opportunities presented by a Unitary Structure**

#### *Economic Development*

14. Services could be better delivered by unifying the activities now provided by eight councils. Some of the main opportunities and advantages of this would be:
  - Simplifying local government services provided to businesses, employees, trainees and those out of work in the county providing easier access to services;
  - Consistency of economic development policies and services;
  - A rationalised, resilient and effective economic development service would be created, facilitating the employment of more specialists (e.g. in relation to skills, or business support) in place of individual authorities employing generalist ED officers;
  - A more streamlined local government interface with the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, the Midlands Engine, Government, potential investors and developers, and local businesses.
  
15. A unitary structure could also facilitate the following strategic opportunities:
  - Increased prospect of significant devolution of funds and powers from central Government. Greater chance of governance arrangements being agreed which would enable effective strategic decision-making and investment prioritisation across the Leicester/Leicestershire functional economic geography.
  - Simplification of local business rate pooling and a more streamlined decision-making process to re-investing these funds in to council services and to support economic growth, in line with the Strategic Growth Plan and Local Industrial Strategy.
  - Coherent, unified place making strategies incorporating many elements currently delivered across several councils. Maintaining and improving existing key locations such as employment, retail and community centres as well as designing new growth areas which promote green and health initiatives and support the challenges of an ageing and growing population. A unitary structure would maximise the benefits of infrastructure and / or improvement schemes by considering a wider set of outcomes at the design stage.
  - A unitary structure would simplify the promotion of priorities for public funding to major funding bodies such as Department for Transport, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government with equal resource and experience available across the area.

#### *Planning Policy*

16. Strategic Planning: Currently the Strategic Growth Plan to 2050 is being prepared by a partnership of 9 local authorities and the LLEP. A unitary

structure would create a much less complex and more resilient partnership working context. Closer alignment with the LLEP's Strategic Economic Plan/ Local Industrial Strategy would be facilitated.

17. Local Plan: Through a unitary structure, Leicestershire could see a reduction from eight Local Plans to a single Plan. This would include strategic and local policies, and incorporate the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Data, research, preparation, consultation, publicity, submission, examination would all be streamlined. This would allow for a more strategic and integrated approach to be taken to providing the planning framework for the delivery of key infrastructure and development. A more resilient and effective local planning service would be created.
18. Development of Specific Sites: A unitary structure for Leicestershire would be able to plan more effectively for the development of specific sites by pooling resources and having a strategic knowledge of the requirements for the whole county.

### *Development Management*

19. In the current two-tier system those making planning decisions at district council level are not responsible for the mitigation of many key impacts, for example on roads, schools and flooding. This disconnect, which has an impact on s106 negotiations, would be addressed in a unitary structure.
20. Heritage: A unitary structure for Leicestershire would be able to consolidate the database of all listed buildings, ancient monuments, conservations areas and heritage assets for the whole county currently held by the County Council, along with County Council expertise currently provided to the District Councils under a Service Level Agreement, with district council heritage officer expertise. Prospective developers or members of the public would be able to access pre application or general advice more easily rather than going to both the Local Planning Authority and the County Council, or the Local Planning Authority liaising with the County Council for information exchange and advice.
21. Environment: A unitary structure would be able to rationalise Tree Preservation Orders, biological records, landscape expertise and environmental projects, projects, as well as ecology expertise which is currently provided to District Councils under a Service Level Agreement. Again, this would enable prospective developers or members of the public to access advice and information from one organisation.
22. Transport: The County Council, as highway authority, is a statutory consultee and in that capacity submits comments on development proposals and applications. Where there is a difference of view between the upper and lower tier authorities this can lead to a perception in the community that one organisation is 'blaming' the other. The elimination of this aspect of the planning process through the establishment of a unitary structure would bring significant benefits to local communities and the planning process.

23. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106 Policy: Currently there is no CIL in the County. All developer contributions are via s106 negotiations with all seven districts and developers. Under a unitary structure there would be only one planning authority signatory to any s106 (currently the County Council is enabled to be a signatory above all other infrastructure providers because it is a planning authority in its own right) thereby streamlining and speeding up the process for developers and communities who would benefit from any service infrastructure provision. CIL has not been introduced in any district to date. A CIL at a unitary level would be more cost effective to introduce (reduction in the number of managed systems from seven) and would save time and effort on s106 negotiation and be more open and transparent to communities and developers.

### *Property and Housing*

24. This section includes strategic property services which make a significant contribution to the growth agenda. Other property service activities are covered in a separate appendix.
25. Property development: More effective marketing of income-producing assets in an integrated way across the county would remove confusion, unnecessary competition and improve returns.
26. By having an effective, efficient co-ordinated approach to asset management, the potential exists to bring forward development opportunities from the combined portfolios in a manner that would maximise not only delivery of housing numbers and employment land, but would also provide opportunities to maximise both financial, economic and community benefits, ensuring that value for money would be achieved in the delivery and timing of essential infrastructure.
27. A robust asset management challenge would lead to a more streamlined customer-led profile that would maximise income, reduce operating costs through a co-ordinated repairs and compliance regime and, with the property portfolio being rationalised would release inefficient units for sale/redevelopment (for new housing for example).
28. Statutory Housing Function and Strategy: A single authority approach to the statutory housing function would allow a new unitary authority to determine how best to address county-wide issues and allocate scarce resources. This would also lead to a reduction in the administrative costs of providing housing services.
29. As noted above a unitary council for Leicestershire would create a single local plan to address the very significant challenge of meeting housing requirements without the complexity of separate plans and separate housing authorities.
30. The approach and delivery model for housing strategy and development duties currently varies across the districts. A unitary authority would allow for

adequate resources to be put towards a single dedicated strategy and development function.

31. Potential savings exist by incorporating one system for maintenance and repair costs, and there would be increased certainty when programming the future spend on major repairs.
32. A centralised choice based lettings system would be cheaper to administer than there being one in each district. It would also make the process easier for registered partners to deal with one authority rather than seven.
33. The residents of Leicestershire should have access to more properties to bid for and this is important for those in priority need in a district that has few vacancies and a clear priority waiting list can be consistently applied.
34. A countywide co-ordinated approach would ensure sites are assembled and bought to the market quickly to meet needs identified in the Strategic Growth Plan. Such an approach would both ensure that the distribution of housing best meets the needs of the wider community and the economy and increase confidence across the area that housing delivery would provide value for money and be brought forward in a timely manner. In addition the potential exists to achieve acceleration of housing delivery, helping to meet the housing need identified in the Strategic Growth Plan.
35. A countywide housing company/department would enable one organisation to provide a comprehensive range of new homes across all tenures. This would avoid the current necessity of each authority creating their own company and minimise overheads.
36. The New Homes Bonus could be used to accelerate site development. This would generate a receipt or revenue stream created through the delivery of homes that could be used for other services, whilst meeting local housing needs.
37. External Funding for Economic Growth: There would be growth in economic development through residential, office and industrial activity through the strengthened medium of a unitary council.
38. A single point of contact would make it easier to do business with a variety of external funders. This would increase the ability to lever in external funding from agencies such as LLEP, Homes England. Derelict land and accelerator funding would bring forward brownfield land for development more quickly and, through single ownership, a more effective strategic infrastructure implementation process could be achieved.

## **Existing Unitary Council Best Practice**

### *Economic Development*

39. Wiltshire Council: When Wiltshire consisted of four districts and a county council there was no economic development policy. There now exists a Wiltshire-wide approach to economic development, allowing the council and its partners to support economic growth and the development of key industries such as high-tech and life sciences and of medium sized enterprises. This improves the future prospects of residents and businesses. A unitary structure has also enabled it to more effectively implement government policy (health and social care integration, and the LEP/City Deals processes, for example).

40. Cornwall Council: A peer review of Cornwall Council concluded the following:

Through the devolution deal the Council brokered, it has piloted the retention of 100% business rates, has a relatively good revenue and council tax base and is seeking to stimulate the economy and promote housing growth whilst attending to the key infrastructure requirements that make this sustainable. Additional investment in the £8m Local Growth Fund is helping to finance large scale enhancements to the bus network that are crucial to Cornwall's longer term economic growth ambitions.

### *Planning*

41. Northumberland Council: Has developed a single local plan with consistent data and methodology for evidence gathering across the county. It has been possible to reduce the number of staff involved in making Local Plans by approximately 50 percent. Due to the evidence base being disparate at the time of unification and the different districts being at various stages in the development of Local Plans, a lot of work was needed.

42. Cornwall Council: Has protocols in place with parish and town councils and generally requires their agreement before planning application is granted. This is partly because of the large area that the council covers and partly because of the significant proportion of independent members (20%) and the need to reflect strong local independence.

43. Unification has smoothed the internal operations of planning processes compared to the previous two tier system in terms of highway, environmental health and environmental consultation processes as well as better access to specialist planning expertise. Officers feel that having a single tier of local government has resulted in improved processes.

## **Annex: How Economic Growth Is Organised in Other Unitary Counties**

### **Cornwall Council**

An Economic Growth and Development Directorate has responsibility for:

- Economic growth - including economic development and culture, external investment and the Local Enterprise Partnership;
- Transport and Infrastructure - including Transport Planning Strategy, integrated public transport, highways and network management and strategic transport schemes;
- Planning and sustainable development - including strategic planning, delivering the Local Plan, sustainable energy, sustainable growth and innovation, development management, highway development management and historic building advice; and
- Housing - including a Housing Strategy and Partnerships, affordable housing, private sector housing, housing commissioning, Cornwall Home Solutions,

Cornwall Development Company, an arms length economic development company, delivers a bespoke, business facing service and the economic vision and strategy for Cornwall.

### **Wiltshire Council**

An Economic Development and Planning Directorate plans for the sustainable growth of Wiltshire, meeting the needs and aspirations of communities whilst mitigating the impact of future growth on the wider environment. It seeks to achieve this through the provision of a county-wide, integrated statutory land-use planning, economic regeneration and skills service. Its goal is to ensure that Wiltshire's communities remain sustainable and resilient.

An economic development team focuses on:

- Economic strategy and delivery.
- Delivering a proactive workspace Inward
- Delivering skills that businesses need.
- Improving higher education provision and graduate workforce.
- Providing incubation, start-up and growth services to businesses.
- Bespoke support for innovation.
- Tourism marketing and development and tourist information centres

The Housing Service delivers a single Housing Strategy. One of the key priorities is to ensure that best use is made of the existing stock and working with partners, that the supply of decent new affordable homes in Wiltshire is increased.



**SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE****REGULATORY SERVICES****Introduction**

1. Consideration of a possible unitary structure for Leicestershire presents an opportunity to consider whether to redesign how services are delivered by local government, and if so what form the redesigned structure should take. The focus is on how better outcomes can be delivered for residents, local business and partner organisations, and how local government can best work with those organisations recognising the challenging times ahead as a result of public sector finance restraints. This appendix, and other appendices prepared in part to facilitate discussion at scrutiny bodies, set out the opportunities that a unitary structure could afford to each service, as well as some examples of best practice from the county unitary councils established in 2009.
2. This appendix should be read alongside the appraisal of options in the Cabinet report. In the 'Opportunities' section and case studies which follow, some of the changes highlighted offer the greatest benefits in a single unitary structure.

**Background**

3. Public protection services delivered by local authorities encompass trading standards, environmental health, licensing, planning and building control. A broad outline of the core activities is listed below.

**County Council - Trading Standards Service**

- Unfair trading – doorstep, high street and e-crime
- Animal and public health
- Food standards
- Product safety
- Weights and measures
- Business advice
- Age restricted products (tobacco, alcohol, knives, fireworks etc.)
- Licensing for storage of petroleum and explosives

**District Councils**

- Environmental protection (air pollution, noise pollution, nuisance, fly tipping)
- Disease control
- Food safety
- Health and safety
- Pest control
- Business Advice
- Building control and private rented housing standards
- Alcohol, Taxi and entertainment licensing

4. Trading Standards supports economic growth by helping businesses to understand regulatory compliance, and by tackling rogue trading that undermines reputable businesses and consumer confidence. It also has a role in directing local businesses to other support that councils can provide.

### **Opportunities for the Service as a Result of Local Government Reorganisation**

5. Prioritisation of Resources: A unitary council would be better placed to make intelligence led decisions on prioritising different elements of these services based on local circumstances and need. When visiting or advising businesses, officers who are competent in one aspect of public protection would be in a position to identify issues straddling licensing, environmental health, trading standards and licensing. This joined up approach would be of more use to businesses and is aligned to Government policy. A number of regulatory consultations are underway, for example, the Food Standards Agency Regulating our Future Programme, all of which aim to reduce the regulatory burdens on business. A unitary council would provide a more holistic and risk based approach to inspection and advice to Leicestershire businesses.
6. Removal of Current Enforcement Overlaps: There are regulatory overlaps that currently exist within district and county public protection services. For example, trading standards tackle food safety issues around product description whereas district environmental health services are concerned with food hygiene. Both services report their findings to the Food Standards Agency. Trading Standards is engaged in age restricted sales enforcement which by implication has strong links to the licensing of premises and the registration of food premises, both administered by the district councils.
7. Efficiencies: In the context of substantial funding cuts, all local government services are under pressure. However, there are additional challenges specific to public protection services, which have a huge range of statutory responsibilities, are relatively low profile, and have not been prioritised or protected. There is an increasingly urgent need for councils to think seriously about the key priorities for these services, and the most effective ways of delivering them in the future. A unitary council regulatory service would be more able to respond to local priorities and have more influence in terms of liaison with the national regulatory bodies.
8. Income Generation: Whilst Leicestershire Trading Standards currently receives funding from National Trading Standards to monitor the safety of products entering the market place via East Midlands Airport, there would be greater opportunities for a unitary regulatory service to bid for other similar funding streams. A unitary council regulatory service would be far better placed to generate income from a second tier business support service, in effect a one stop shop for Leicestershire businesses.

### **Existing Unitary Council Best Practice**

9. Cornwall Council: Established an innovative Business Regulatory Support Hub (BRS) to allow businesses to access advice and support easily from a pool of experts from Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing.

Businesses in Cornwall will also be referred on to other services as necessary, including the Growth Hub, planning, building control and the fire service. The website had approximately 13,000 users in 2017, extending the impact of the service. The success of this project in making the council more open to business queries is clear. In its second year of operation, BRS dealt with a total of 1,667 enquiries from businesses, up 47% from 2016. Seventy-three per cent of these businesses received free advice, while 20% went on to purchase a service. Proactive support for businesses remains important, with the hub reaching 2,850 businesses in 2017, of which 1,200 were start-up businesses. Business satisfaction with the service has been 99%.

10. By working together, Cornwall's regulatory services were able to save 57 posts that were at risk due to financial cutbacks. Significantly, the council has been able to retain staff with expertise in specific legislative areas that would otherwise have been lost. In 2017/18 over £1m of income was generated for the Public Protection Service from the BRS programme and associated impacts.
11. Durham Council: has set up Better Business For All (BBfA), a voluntary partnership which provides help and support to businesses to make sure they comply with the law, making it easier to 'get it right first time' and helps businesses grow. It brings together businesses and the regulatory services in the Durham area (including Environmental Health, Licensing, Trading Standards and the Fire and Rescue Service) as well as the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). Its aim is to change the culture of how businesses and regulators work together, so it provides what businesses need from it in order for them to grow and prosper. It focuses on smaller businesses, as these often need the most help.

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## SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE

### CORPORATE RESOURCES: COMBINED PROPERTY SERVICE

#### Introduction

1. Consideration of a possible unitary structure for Leicestershire presents an opportunity to consider whether to redesign how services are delivered by local government, and if so what form the redesigned structure should take. The focus is on how better outcomes can be delivered for residents, local business and partner organisations, and how local government can best work with those organisations recognising the challenging times ahead as a result of public sector finance restraints. This appendix, and other appendices prepared in part to facilitate discussion at scrutiny bodies, set out the opportunities that a unitary structure could afford to each service, as well as some examples of best practice from the county unitary councils established in 2009.
2. This appendix should be read alongside the appraisal of options in the Cabinet report. In the 'Opportunities' section and case studies which follow, some of the changes highlighted offer the greatest benefits in a single unitary structure.

#### Background

3. The two tiers of local government in Leicestershire have different responsibilities; the County Council is responsible for the full range of adult social care services, libraries, museums, highways and education. District councils are responsible for housing services, planning, and waste collection. In some cases, such as depots, there is a definite overlap between services; in other cases such as supported living, the two tiers of local government are heavily reliant on each other to deliver their services. In others there is sequential overlap e.g. various waste and recycling collection by 7 districts and strategic waste disposal and recycling by counties giving a lack of clarity for customers.

#### Opportunities for the Service as a Result of Local Government Reorganisation

#### Effective Asset Management

##### Current

4. Asset management is currently split over the County and Districts with duplication of offices, depots, parks and other provisions including support services e.g. finance and HR which currently operate as separate entities across each council.

#### What would Asset Management Look like in a unitary authority?

5. A Unitary Authority would ensure effective property management by establishing centralised control of its estate within one department. A single Strategic Property Team would be made responsible for centralised property decisions throughout the lifecycle of a property asset, including leases, management, sales and the procurement of buildings.
6. A single asset management structure and single body would allow more streamlined and effective asset management and strategic land use planning for all local authority land giving clear and un-conflicted strategic direction for any land use and disposal.
7. Such a structure would prevent the duplication of property function and facilities thereby improving efficiency, reducing management costs, and enabling asset management strategies to be more easily reviewed. The portfolio could then be restructured allowing underutilised or uneconomic sites to be released for housing or other more beneficial uses thereby generating capital receipts or providing wider community benefits. The retained land could be combined into cohesive and effective holdings to promote the efficient delivery of service area requirements e.g. combining all industrial estates into a focused economic delivery tool and revenue generator with reduced operating costs.
8. A unitary authority would enable efficiencies of scale to be maximised by pooling budgetary and asset resource, reducing duplication, and maximising use of assets. This would be supported by a single point of data and terrier mapping to identify and record all land held by the new authority. Through robust strategic rationalisation of holdings, surplus land would be released for development and capital and revenue generation.

### **Capital Works (Construction) Procurement and Performance**

#### **Current**

9. Each authority procures its own works and decides its own procurement strategies exclusive of what other authorities are doing.

#### **What would the capital works programme function look like in a unitary authority?**

10. The restructure would represent an opportunity for all construction works to be delivered more efficiently through a single project management office procuring and delivering streamlined procurement routes to ensure that costs are minimised and quality improved through performance management.
11. The combined increased capital programme for construction works would benefit from an increased focus on greater performance management and quality assurance in relation to the performance of the public sector estate design through to delivery.

## **Office Space and HQ**

### **Current**

12. Each council has its own properties for front line and back office support functions. Multiple branding and often several service point locations in the same locality result in lack of clarity for service users.

### **What would the HQ and locality function look like in a unitary authority?**

13. Modelled on a single unitary council, having a unitary council responsible for all authority office provision on a hub and spoke model using the County Hall campus would maximise the efficiencies and reductions in operating cost that would be achievable with all 'back office' and governance functions at a single location.
14. Direct services to the public would be provided through reduced, fully co-located service hubs in the localities tailored to the needs of the community. This would enable the substantial rationalisation of current office space and through evidence based decision making, the release of buildings and sites for redevelopment reducing both revenue spend and increasing capital generation.
15. Alternatively the surplus space could be leased at commercial rates to tenants to generate revenue to support services across the county.

### **Pooling of property assets**

16. Currently there is a large number of assets with duplication of functions and others that are underutilised e.g. all councils have depots for vehicles and storage and used for waste collection and recycling.
17. By reviewing these pooled assets both for these examples, and across the portfolio, sites could be reviewed and rationalised, releasing land for more appropriate uses. There are a number other property opportunities that would result from the proposals and benefits of unitary status. These would be reviewed and only those required for future service need retained. The remainder would be released for development as a result of co-location and focusing of service need in a unitary structure. This resulting programme of asset release would continue to generate a stream of capital receipts and reducing maintenance and operating costs.

## **Existing Unitary Council Best Practice**

18. Wiltshire Council: Since the council became a unitary authority in 2009 one of its main focusses has been to transform the organisation so it is much more efficient, streamlined and makes better use of its employees and buildings plus the council has worked positively with partners such as local health services, Wiltshire Police, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue and the Ministry of Defence to make efficient use of facilities and services.

19. The Council has reduced its property portfolio from 95 buildings down to three main hubs, with net savings of over £5m per year. Its three main hubs provide a range of council services convenient for residents. The NHS, police, fire and rescue, and community group partners also share space and facilities in the 3 hubs making much better use of public money.
20. The Council has also harnessed new technology into the workplace ensuring employees are much more flexible and enabled to work at a number of different locations across the county with ease. With a desk ratio of around one to three the technology helps people work remotely and encourages staff to work alongside people from different services areas and organisations enabling the sharing of ideas and resources.



## SERVICES IN A UNITARY STRUCTURE

### CORPORATE RESOURCES: REVENUE COLLECTION

#### Introduction

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#### Current

3. Council Tax and Business Rates are currently collected by the seven districts, although some do have a shared arrangement for the transactional element of the service. This means there is duplication with separate management structures, collection systems and processes and policies across the county. Collection performance, especially for Council Tax, could be improved.

#### **What would Council and Business Rates service look like in a unitary structure?**

4. The benefits would materialise at both an operational and strategic level.
5. A unitary structure for Leicestershire would operate at a scale that would ensure best practice systems and processes would be adopted across the county with this improving the effectiveness of business rates and council tax collection. In addition, economies of scale and reduced management would lower collection costs.
6. As well as these obvious benefits there are real tangible benefits around economic development. The current split of business rates and council tax (including New Homes Bonus) between county and districts means some of the strategic economic development levers are just not used. There is also inherent confusion given the complexities of the existing system. Examples of improvements are set out below:
  - There is the potential for discretionary business rates discounts to be used to encourage economic development in certain locations and to encourage certain types of business to locate in Leicestershire. The current structure does not allow such encouragement to be effective.

- As the business rates generated are split between districts and the county it is often very difficult to ensure the appropriate level of investment is made in infrastructure both to encourage investment and to cope with the impact of development. The major infrastructure investment is generally in transport and schools and the tax benefits from growth are not received by the organisation responsible for the investment in these services.
  - The simplification of the business rate system would lead to better relationships with the LLEP and enterprise zones.
7. Discretionary Council Tax discounts and exemptions could be used in a similar way as levers to deliver policies around housing, social inclusion and economic development. This would involve a much more considered policy approach around these areas linking tax policy to other social policies to help deliver objectives ranging from bringing vacant homes into occupation to council tax discounts and incentives for vulnerable groups. This approach would be more successfully delivered at a unitary county level.