

# The Greater Nottinghamshire

Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation

**Safer > Simpler > Stronger**

Our vision for two next-generation councils

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## 1. Foreword

The following messages set out a shared commitment to building a safer, simpler and stronger Greater Nottinghamshire - one that delivers better outcomes for residents, stronger local leadership and a modern, joined-up approach to public services. Together, we are ready to lead a once-in-a-generation reform that creates two next-generation councils, Nottingham Council and Nottinghamshire Council, designed around the people and places they serve.

### **Councillor Mick Barton**

*Leader, Nottinghamshire County Council*

#### **A stronger Nottinghamshire, full of opportunity and pride**

For me, this is straightforward: it's about doing what's right for the people who live and work here.

Residents want councils that get things done - that fill potholes, keep streets clean, support schools and help families when they need it. This proposal will make that happen. It cuts out the confusion, focuses effort where it's needed most and builds councils that work for local people.

The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal strengthens both city and county, so no one gets left behind. This proposal meets the Mayor's ambitions and will work for our health partners. It means more homes and more jobs in the right places, so everyone can live well and be best they can be.

This is about making all of Nottinghamshire stronger, fairer and better for everyone. It's a common-sense plan that puts residents and local businesses first.

### **Councillor Neil Clarke**

*Leader, Rushcliffe Borough Council*

#### **Working with you, shaping stronger communities**

Rushcliffe residents are proud of their towns and villages, where community spirit and local pride run deep. This proposal is about keeping that local connection strong while building councils that have the confidence and capacity to lead regional growth.

From the communities of Bingham and East Leake to the urban edge of West Bridgford, our geography and identity connect naturally with the wider county.

It means more local voice and more choice - neighbourhoods able to shape decisions about their environment, services and future. It gives communities the freedom to take responsibility for what matters to them, supported by councils that listen and act.

Greater Nottinghamshire is about partnership - people, place and purpose working together for a stronger, more confident future.

**Adrian Smith***Chief Executive, Nottinghamshire County Council***Proven to deliver, ready to lead**

This proposal is about shaping the next generation of local government – rewiring local public services to work smarter, act faster and deliver real results for residents. It is an opportunity to reimagine how public services work across Nottinghamshire: simpler structures, stronger leadership, and a genuine partnership between city, county and communities.

Our talented public sector workforce know our communities inside out. By building on our collective strengths, we can build a partnership that brings local knowledge and connections, a record of strong financial management and highly rated children's and adult services. Together with our partners, we have the confidence and capability to deliver change safely.

This plan is ready to go - an implementation blueprint shaped by experience, local insight and ambition. It is about modern, digital councils that use technology and data to improve services, devolve decisions to neighbourhoods and build a future that works for every part of Nottinghamshire.

**Adam Hill***Chief Executive, Rushcliffe Borough Council***Joined-up services that make a real difference**

This proposal is about taking the best of local government and building something better. Across Nottinghamshire, there are great examples of what works - councils that deliver quality services, manage their finances well and understand their residents. Rushcliffe is proud to be one of those examples, recognised nationally for its sound management, innovation and high levels of customer satisfaction.

The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal is our opportunity to take the best ingredients from existing councils and create two new, modern organisations that work seamlessly together. It will bring the right scale, the right geography and the right leadership to make local government simpler, more joined-up and more effective for residents and businesses.

Working alongside Nottinghamshire County Council, we can create councils that deliver consistent quality, better value for money and local services that people can be proud of.

**Together, we are ready to deliver a safer, simpler and stronger future for Greater Nottinghamshire.**

## 2. **Executive Summary:** Greater Nottinghamshire – safer, simpler, stronger: our vision for two next-generation councils

Greater Nottinghamshire is ready to shape the next generation of local government, with councils that are simpler to understand, stronger in delivery and safer for Government to back. The vision brings together the energy of a proud Core City and the strength of a county rooted in community, heritage and enterprise.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rewire local government around people and place. Two new unitary councils, Nottingham Council and Nottinghamshire Council, will replace nine existing authorities, ending duplication and confusion and creating one clear line of accountability in each area. This is more than structural change; it is a complete reset of how local public services work together, aligned with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), the Integrated Care System (ICS) and policing boundaries to form a single, coherent geography for public service reform.

In the future, residents will only need to tell their story once. Whether they need a care package, help with housing or support through their child's school, services will join up seamlessly behind the scenes. Local people will no longer be passed between departments or organisations. They will experience councils that are easy to reach, quick to respond and accountable for the things that matter, from fixing roads and keeping streets clean to improving schools, running libraries, building new homes, maintaining parks and supporting families.

These will be next-generation councils, using data, automation and AI to anticipate need and design services around people's lives. Shared information will allow early help, prevention and better outcomes, not repeat contact and frustration. Through smarter systems and clearer responsibilities, we will spend less on process and more on delivery, reducing costs, improving results and making every pound go further.

For residents, businesses and communities, the benefits will be tangible:

- One council to contact for everything local, ending confusion.
- One plan for each neighbourhood, led by a Neighbourhood Committee with real influence over priorities and funding.
- More choice and local ambition, with communities able to shape how services are delivered, from youth activities to green spaces.
- Shared responsibility between councils and residents, giving people and communities the power to take control of their own futures.

Through Neighbourhood Committees, people will have more say in decisions that affect their area, including how their parks are maintained, how their libraries are used and how streets and public spaces are improved. This will not only give communities influence; it will build confidence, connection and civic pride. Councils will convene local public services, but citizens will drive much of the change themselves, creating a model of shared responsibility that empowers people and communities to act.

These councils will have prevention at their heart, investing in families rather than managing crises. In the future, councils will not need to intervene to get children to school or to support healthy lifestyles because families, schools and communities will be equipped and motivated to do so themselves. Local democracy will be visible again, with councillors leading locally, listening to residents and working hand-in-hand with communities to shape their places.

The new councils will not only serve their residents better; they will create the conditions for sustainable growth and faster delivery. The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal brings together the core city of Nottingham and the wider county in a single, coherent geography that connects innovation with opportunity. It positions Nottingham nationally and internationally, harnessing its world-class universities and its digital, creative, life science and biotech sectors, while drawing on the county's strengths in logistics, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and agri-food. Together, they will accelerate housing delivery, unlock new development sites and link homes to jobs and transport through the Trent Arc corridor. This partnership will power investment across the East Midlands Freeport, Ratcliffe-on-Soar redevelopment, STEP Fusion project and Trent Valley Supercluster, creating a balanced, productive and sustainable regional economy.

By aligning with EMCCA's growth strategy and the ICS's focus on prevention and health equity, Greater Nottinghamshire will lead a whole-system transformation of local public services. It will make it easier for councils, the NHS, the police and local businesses to work together across a single geography, saving money, improving services and delivering results faster.

This vision is rooted in place, in neighbourhoods where residents feel proud of their streets, value their parks and libraries, and trust their councils to deliver. It is built on prevention, helping people and communities to thrive, not just cope. It is shaped around sustainability and opportunity, ensuring growth benefits every part of our region, from the city's innovation districts to our rural market towns.

Greater Nottinghamshire offers the right geography, the right leadership and the right opportunity to meet Government priorities. It is a low-risk, high-confidence proposal, financially sound, operationally ready and supported by a credible implementation plan. It will deliver visible improvements for residents and provide a clear, coherent structure for Government and partners to work with.

Above all, this vision is about the future: councils that work with their communities, not apart from them; a public sector that acts as one; and people who feel both supported and empowered to shape the places they live.

Greater Nottinghamshire will be known as the place where innovation meets inclusion, heritage meets hustle and pride in every community builds a stronger future for all.

### *How the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal meets the Government Criteria*

The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal covers the **whole of the area**, creating two new next-generation councils in a **single tier of local government**. Each Council covers a **sensible economic area** that can support EMCCA in meeting **housing supply** targets and need. Both the Nottingham Council and Nottinghamshire Council have a **balanced tax base**, with neither council dominant or disadvantaged.

The proposal is built on a **shared evidence base**, jointly created by the 9 Nottinghamshire Councils, independently appraised by PwC and CIPFA on behalf of the partnership. This would indicate that by year 3 the annualised savings through LGR and transformation would be **£122m**. Building on our track record of transformation and public service reform, we believe there is the potential for this to rise to a combined annualised total of **£189m savings** can be achieved by year 3, rising to an annual **£235m** for the 2 new councils over 5 years, recognising this would require additional investment to achieve.

Reorganisation will achieve more than creating **safer, simpler, stronger** councils. It presents an opportunity to reform local public services.

Both new Councils will serve populations that will enable them to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. The Nottingham Council will serve a **Core City population of 566k** who live in the more urban, younger, diverse and densely populated parts of our geography. The **Nottinghamshire Council will serve a population of 622k**, with more families and older people, living in sparsely populated towns, villages and rural areas.

A comprehensive implementation plan has been developed that is safe for Government to back, **simple to deliver, strong on credibility**. Importantly, a plan that can be delivered without unnecessary disaggregation, splitting districts or creating additional risk.

**Commissioners have been engaged** throughout and care has been taken to ensure a positive path to the future for the Council in Best Value intervention in our partnership. The two new **councils will be stronger and on a firmer footing**.

The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal is rooted in community. Our proposals are grounded in the **outcomes our residents tell us are most important** and focused on implementing national **Government reforms** – from Families First, to SEND, housing delivery to neighbourhood health. We have built on our existing programme of Public Service Reform to design next-generation Councils, data fuelled and digitally enabled, that will work alongside our East Midlands Combined County Authority and our pan-regional Integrated Care Board.

**Widespread engagement** with our residents, businesses, voluntary and community sector, Town & Parish Councils, our strategic partners, our workforce, our Councillors and Trade Unions has **shaped the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal**.

Having worked so hard as founding partners to create EMCCA, this proposal demonstrates how our new Councils will contribute to the **Inclusive Growth ambitions** and leverage the regional 'heft' an established Mayoral strategic authority can bring. Our Mayor has asked that our proposals

create viable Councils that will act in the best interests of the region, Councils that don't require change to EMCCA's governance, Councils that can deliver the Growth Plan and spatial priorities. **We have responded to all of our Mayor's asks.**

Importantly, our Mayor also requested that reorganisation safely achieves shadow elections in 2027 with new Councils in operation from April 2028. Our implementation plan and simpler approach will **offer guarantees to the Mayor we can meet that timetable.**

Our experience of working with families and communities tells us that strengths-based approaches, anchored in neighbourhoods are critical for public service reform. This is why we have placed **Neighbourhood Public Services at the core of our Greater Nottinghamshire** proposal. Stronger community engagement will deliver genuine opportunities for meaningful neighbourhood empowerment. This recognises that people want more choice and control over their local services and creates a safe, simple and strong framework to **rewire local public services from the bottom-up.**

We have used **existing district areas as the building blocks** for our new unitary Councils. More complex boundary changes have been tested and these do not demonstrably improve the public service delivery or financial case. Our simpler approach will reduce risk for our residents, achieve benefits sooner with a quicker and lower cost transition.

We have provided details of our initial **assessment of Councillor numbers** and an outline of how Neighbourhood Public Service Committees can provide **locally accountable governance structures** to engage and empower residents.

**Local MPs** have been invited to help shape our proposal and a number have, as has our **Mayor**, our **Integrated Care Board** and a number of other partners. The 9 Councils have worked in co-operation with a shared evidence base, common data set, a shared Programme Team and joint Member and Chief Executive oversight. Whilst we have arrived at different interpretations of the optimal geography, we are **committed to working together** to implement the successful proposal for the benefit of our 1.1m residents.

We have flagged some areas where further engagement with Government is sought and we look forward to working together to **create a Greater Nottinghamshire for everyone.**

### 3. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire: Our People, Our Place, Our Potential

#### 3a. Our People

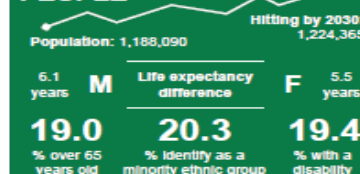
In the heart of England, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire together form a vibrant region with a combined population of just over 1.18 million people. The area is a tapestry of urban and rural life, with 857,013 residents spread across the seven district authorities of Nottinghamshire County, and a further 331,077 living within the bustling boundaries of Nottingham City.

The region's diversity is most pronounced in Nottingham City, where 66% of residents identify as White, compared to 93% in the wider county. Nottingham City is home to a rich mix of cultures, with Asian/Asian British (15%), Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British (10%), and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups (6%) communities. In contrast, Nottinghamshire County remains less diverse, with 88% of its population identifying as White British.

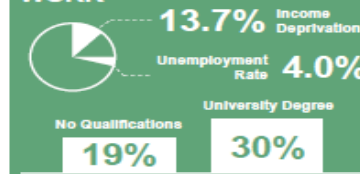
Age profiles reveal further contrasts. Nottinghamshire County has an older population, with 22% aged 65 and over, while Nottingham City's youthful energy is reflected in its higher proportion of working-age residents—nearly 70% are between 18 and 64 years old. Children under 18 make up about 20% of the population in both areas, mirroring national trends. Looking ahead to 2031, the region is set to experience a notable demographic shift. The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to rise by 21%, from 220,126 to 265,661. Meanwhile, the younger age groups (0–17 and 18–64) are expected to see modest increases of 2% and 3%, respectively.

#### Nottinghamshire & Nottingham in Numbers

##### PEOPLE



##### WORK



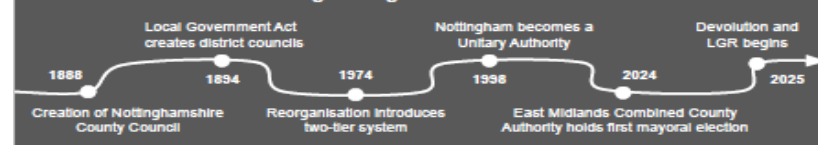
##### ECONOMY

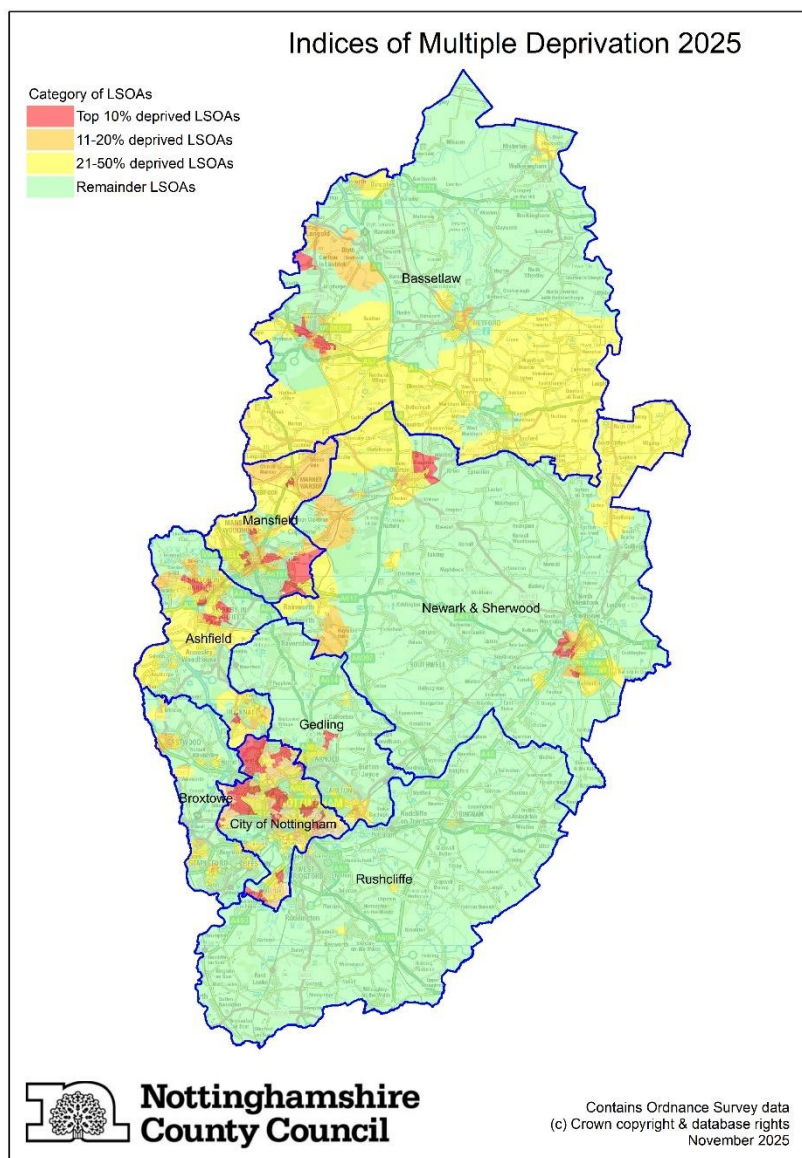


##### CULTURE



#### Serving Nottinghamshire Since 1888...





Population density offers another lens on the region's character. Together, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire average 550 residents per square kilometre—higher than the national average. Yet, when Nottingham City is excluded, the county's density drops to 411 residents per square kilometre, below the national figure.

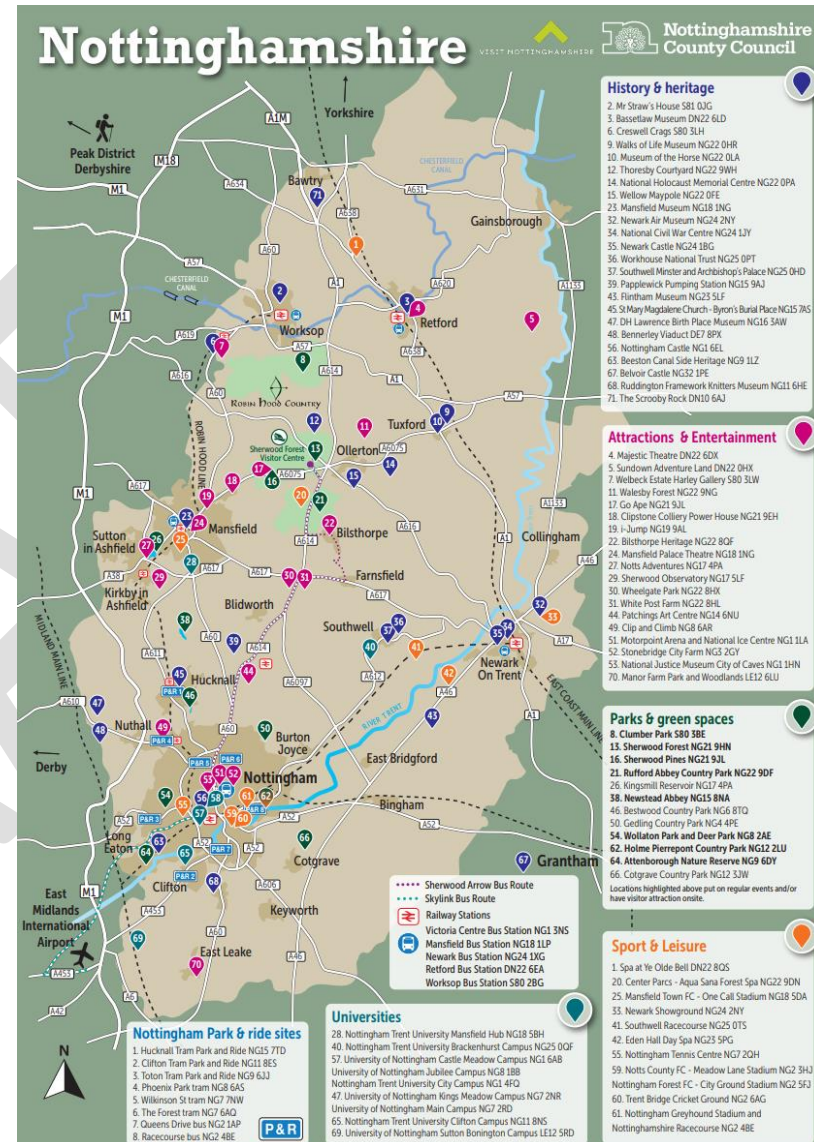
The built environment varies dramatically between the two areas. Nottingham is a city of bricks and mortar, with 86% of its land classified as built-up, while Nottinghamshire's landscape is far more open, with just 12.2% built-up land. Urban living predominates, with 80.4% of the combined population residing in urban settings—100% in Nottingham City and 72.9% in the County.

The pattern of deprivation across the area has remained consistent, posing intergenerational challenges and impacting wider outcomes for people and communities. Both Councils have a lower rate of healthy life expectancy, fewer working age people in employment and lower average weekly wages than comparators. More children live in absolute or relative poverty across both areas and outcomes for people with additional and complex needs require improvement, for example both areas have more working age adults whose long-term care needs are met by admission to residential or nursing care. Whilst these represent sub-optimal outcomes for people, they also speak to challenges for our local economy and translate to financial pressures in the public sector and for the financial sustainability of local Councils. Whilst there are some similarities, this masks significant disparities across the area. Nottingham has the greatest levels of deprivation overall, but with Nottinghamshire experiencing inequality across the current County area - with Rushcliffe and Broxtowe having no lower super output areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% nationally, versus areas like Ashfield and Mansfield who have 11.7% and 13.2% respectively.

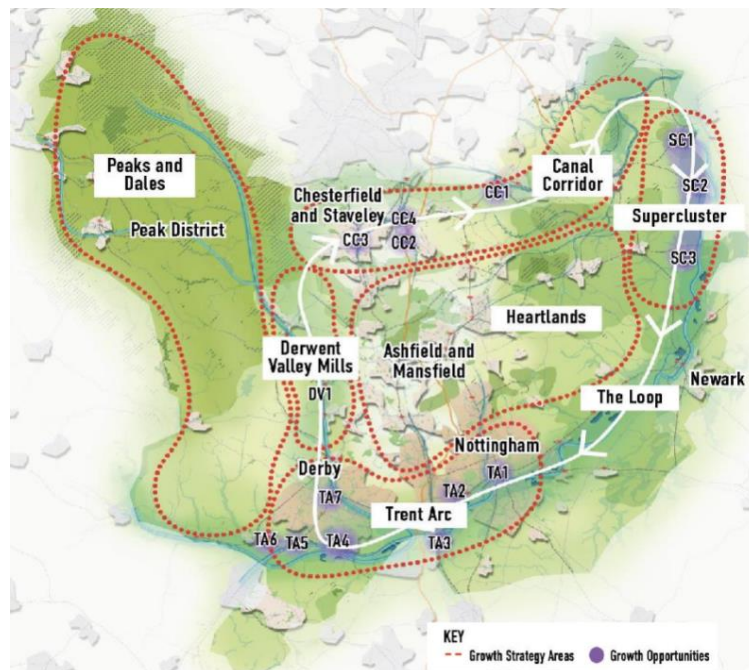
### 3b. Our Place

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are places rich in heritage, history, culture and sport and where innovation flourishes. From a wealth of professional sports teams and facilities that play host to both national and international competitions, to landmarks such as Nottingham Castle, Rufford and Newstead Abbeys, Holme Pierrepont, Southwell Minster, the Lace Market, Clumber Park and Sherwood Forest, both Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have an abundance of attractions and history that residents and visitors can enjoy and be proud of. Nottingham is a major cultural hub and creative centre for the East Midlands and is home to a range of nationally important cultural institutions, including the Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham Contemporary and the Royal Concert Hall.

We benefit from strong partnerships with two local, high performing universities. The University of Nottingham is a research-intensive university, ranked in the World's 100 Best Universities, second in the UK for graduate employability and seventh for research strength. Nottingham Trent University (NTU), Modern University of the Year 2023, has specialisms in creative technologies, art and design, fashion, green sustainable construction, business, medical technologies and health, and sciences including forensics and sport.



## EMCCA's Emerging Spatial Strategy



Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are well placed, with EMCCA, to maximise the opportunities for inclusive economic growth. Whilst our recent past is characterised by the transition away from traditional industries (e.g. coal, textile and clothing), we have seen small businesses and start-ups across a range of sectors, who are now providing the foundations for a strong and vibrant local economy that continues to grow and expand.

Both our urban and rural areas provide the space for innovation and growth. Nottinghamshire offers great opportunities to grow clean energy research and production, automated distribution, advanced manufacturing, materials development and digital and technology (including AI and data) sectors. Nottingham is a young, creative and entrepreneurial city with dynamic businesses in growing sectors and a diverse range of industrial strengths including the Creative and Digital, Health and Life Sciences, E-Sports, Low Carbon Clean Technology and Advanced Manufacturing sectors.

The Trent Valley Super Cluster, centred around three former power station sites in the northeast of the County is at the cutting edge of nuclear fusion technology and capability. The catalyst provided by public investment in STEP is a lever for billions of pounds of inward investment, housing growth and the creation of additional high skills jobs. The developing economic strengths along the M1 corridor and mid Nottinghamshire are part of an ongoing restructuring of the economy to leverage automated distribution, major hubs of advanced manufacturing and materials development, digital and technology (including AI and data). Allied to these developments are associated investments in high tech agriculture, utilising and enhancing the natural characteristics and assets of the Trent Valley. This opportunity also extends to the southern end of the Trent Valley and the East Midlands Freeport area, where the former power station site at Ratcliffe-on-Soar will be redeveloped as a southern hub for clean technology and advanced manufacturing.

### 3c. Our Potential

Our people and place create huge potential for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Ensuring that all people and communities are connected to the opportunities presented by living and working here is at the heart of our proposition. Improving people's life experiences and outcomes, creates a call to action to ensure that the next generation of unitary councils, working alongside the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and other strategic partners, have at their core, a central focus on creating changes to improve people's lives, health, jobs, housing and local economies.

We have a track record of delivery. Both Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council were founding partners of the East Midlands County Combined Authority. Achieving this was based on a shared desire to shift the socio-economic trajectory of a region that had lagged behind for too long. Delivering the first County Combined Authority at pace demonstrates what we are capable of when we get alignment of vision, purpose and outcomes. As constituent Councils, we continue this journey, and this proposal creates two new Councils committed to mobilising local businesses, local anchor institutions and civil society to drive delivery of the shared missions set out in EMCCA's recently published Inclusive Growth Commission.

Local government reorganisation presents a key opportunity for us to reset the partnership landscape to better deliver together for our residents. For local people to benefit from inclusive growth, we need to work together to break down the barriers that stand in people's way of 'good work'. Barriers include a lack of affordable housing, poor health and wellbeing, and weak social connections. To achieve inclusive growth, we need to look beyond the immediate world of employment into the wider factors that also play a role. This is where a reshaped local government and health system have a key role to play in delivering these ambitions.

To deliver for the people of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, our proposal will create a compelling vision for change across the whole system, clear about the outcomes we want to see shift for our people and communities and finding innovative ways to operate across organisational boundaries to achieve this together. We have a responsibility to look across organisations to deliver good value to the taxpayer and to fully leverage our investment to achieve maximum impact for the 1.1m people of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

In order to deliver financially sustainable public services, our partnership in Nottinghamshire is already making the strategic shifts required in the system, focussing on community-based delivery, proactive prevention and a greater use of digital innovation. However, there is more to do. The challenges facing our communities cut across organisational boundaries. We know that issues such as health outcomes, quality and affordability of housing, financial resilience, community safety and wellbeing are deeply interlinked and require an organised public sector to deliver a coherent

local system response. Local government reorganisation will provide the catalyst for greater financial sustainability, create the conditions to reduce fragmentation and inefficiencies and drive greater use of tech and digital.

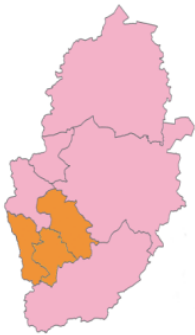
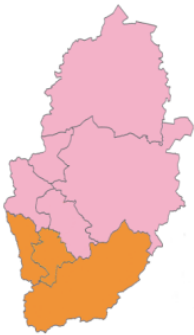
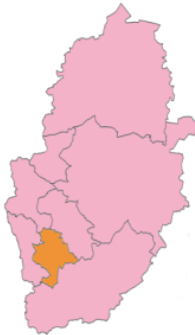
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## 4. Options Appraisal

Work to undertake an evidence based and considered approach to identifying the optimal size and geographical configuration for the new unitary councils was commissioned by all nine councils in January 2025. The intention was that the decision on a preferred option was clearly evidence-informed and data-driven to ensure outcomes are improved and residents' needs are met when considering the criteria set by Government.

The options appraisal is provided in Appendix A and comprises a comprehensive assessment of the three potential models for unitary local government structures that had been shortlisted in the initial analysis of options submitted as part of the interim plan. A wider set of options had previously been considered and discounted for failing to sufficiently meet the Government framework.

All councils initially agreed that the options appraisal should only consider options based on district building blocks, due to the additional costs, complexities and risks associated with implementation, that options involving boundary changes would create. The configuration of the three options considered are set out below:

| 1b<br>Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City +<br>Broxtowe + Gedling                                                                                                                                   | 1e<br>Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City +<br>Broxtowe + Rushcliffe                                                                                                                                   | 2<br>Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                          |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Nottingham City conurbation to include <b>Broxtowe and Gedling</b></li><li>2. The <b>rest of Nottinghamshire</b> becomes a new unitary authority</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Nottingham City conurbation to include <b>Broxtowe and Rushcliffe</b></li><li>2. The <b>rest of Nottinghamshire</b> becomes a new unitary authority</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Nottingham City remains the same</b></li><li>2. The <b>rest of the Nottinghamshire</b> becomes a new unitary authority</li></ol> |

All councils concluded that, as the options analysis sets out, Option 2 should not be pursued as a preferred option as it does not meet the criteria set out in the Government's local government reorganisation framework.

### *Overview of Options 1b and 1e: Options Appraisal Summary*

The options appraisal concludes that whilst the differences are marginal, Option 1b represents a “somewhat stronger fit against the MHCLG criteria compared to other options” (p34).

#### *Option 1b*

This option creates two new unitary councils and aligns to the criteria associated with identifying sensible geographies in that it would see the establishment of one Council serving a primarily urban area and another service primarily towns and rural areas. It also aligns to the requirement to consider how housing supply would be increased in that it provides room for the conurbation to grow.

It would not unduly create an advantage or disadvantage for one or other as part of the wider area and is comparable in terms of the financial analysis completed to date to option 1e. It would meet the requirement to establish new unitary councils serving 500,000 people or more and would deliver efficiencies and manage transition costs. It would also appear to satisfy the criteria relating to areas which include a council in Best Value intervention.

To some extent it would avoid the unnecessary fragmentation of key service areas and would ensure consideration is given to the “crucial services” as set out in the MHCLG framework. Including a greater proportion of rural areas with the city conurbation would require services to provide more tailored approaches and different models of community support. Consideration needs to be given to the benefit of creating two new unitary organisations where population densities and needs are more aligned rather than dispersing this further as would be the case in option 1e.

Finally, it would establish a reasonable basis to support current and future devolution arrangements.

## Option 1e

This option would also create two new unitary Councils albeit they would blend some urban and rural areas. It would find it somewhat harder to satisfy the Government's criteria relating to sensible geographies for that reason. It would align to the criteria in terms of population, delivering efficiencies, providing the means to manage transition costs. It would appear to satisfy the requirements relating to areas which include a council in Best Value intervention. It is comparable in terms of the financial analysis completed to date to option 1b in that the costs and benefits are largely the same.

There are significant sources of future housing supply in the combination of Nottingham, Rushcliffe and Broxtowe to meet the new local housing need estimates and help offset the historic under delivery of housing in some areas which would likely be required by the strategic authority. Delivery of future growth and housing of the wider urban area / 'expanded city' would be controlled by one of the new Councils. However, this option excludes Gedling which is integral to the functioning geography of the Nottingham conurbation and would mean housing and growth decisions required to support economic needs of the conurbation would be made by the more predominantly rural new Council.

To some extent it would avoid the unnecessary fragmentation of key service areas and would ensure consideration is given to the "crucial services" named in the MHCLG framework. Some consideration would need to be given to development of service models that are able to function across two Councils that have a blend of rural and urban areas, one of which would include Nottingham city. Finally, it would also establish a reasonable basis to support current and future devolution arrangements.

## *Reaching a preferred option*

No additional evidence has emerged since the options appraisal was published by Councils in July and September that changes the outcome of the options appraisal. More detailed work has since been undertaken collaboratively across the nine councils on the financial case, and this is included in section 6. Stakeholder engagement has been undertaken, summarised and responded to in section 7. A further independent options appraisal, undertaken by KPMG for Rushcliffe Borough Council published in July 2025 also concluded that 1b is the option that best meets government criteria. This is included in Appendix B. Both Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council believe that option 1b is the optimal geographical configuration for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and best meets the Government's criteria for the following reasons:

- It offers the most coherent, balanced and sustainable configuration for reforming local government across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and delivers new governance at the optimal scale: large enough to be strategic, yet local enough to remain connected

to communities. It achieves a practical balance between urban intensity and rural reach, aligning service design with the way people actually live, work and travel.

- It reflects natural economic and social geographies, avoiding the artificial splitting of the Nottingham urban area or the dilution of rural identity and by contrast option on 1e would mix urban and rural areas, fragmenting service delivery and identity.
- It is coherent in geography, meets the financial sustainability criteria by ensuring a balance between the need for services and the ability of local populations to help pay for them, reflects local identity and natural communities, and maximises the potential for delivery of EMCCA's regional growth and devolution framework in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

We believe this option offers the best opportunity to improve outcomes, strengthen governance, and achieve long-term financial sustainability, enabling Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to lead the way in delivering modern, resilient and people-focused local government.

#### *The City-Council Led option*

Since the joint options appraisal undertaken by the nine councils, Nottingham City Council has subsequently proposed a model which disaggregates its three surrounding districts to create an expanded city, leaving the remainder of Nottinghamshire as a second unitary council. The independent options analysis which has been undertaken and is included as Appendix C, concludes there are marginal differences between the benefits to be derived from this option when compared with options 1b and 1e, but that there are likely to be greater costs and complexity associated with disaggregation. This level of disaggregation is unprecedented in local government reorganisation and would require entirely new statutory change order instruments. It is evident that with this level of complexity, risk cannot be quantified and a timetable cannot be assured. We take the view that this option does not meet the requirement for there to be a strong public service and financial-sustainability related justification that merits boundary changes.

The City Council recently published a report that stated a significantly improved budgetary position compared to their approved Medium Term Financial Plan which was used by the partnership to inform the financial case in March 2025. In light of this, an ask was made by the City Council that the LGR financial case developed by PwC was reviewed to reflect the City Council's updated debt position and modelling. This updated data has not been validated by partner s151 Officers and risks use of inconsistent, unvalidated data across proposals. The City Council update appears to draw on assumptions about the Fair Funding Review (FFR2.0). As MHCLG has not yet responded to the consultation, the assumptions remain unproven and any outcome will not be known until the provisional local government settlement later in the year.

It is welcomed that the City Council financial position is improving. Partner authorities agreed that the use of unaudited and unvalidated data to produce the business cases would undermine the financial analysis provided. A collective decision was taken to continue to use the last known published financial statements and public approved medium-term financial plans.

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## 5. Our Proposal for You

### 5a. Greater Nottinghamshire – safer, simpler, stronger: our purpose and ambition for two next-generation councils

Greater Nottinghamshire is ready to shape the next generation of local government, with councils that are simpler to understand, stronger in delivery and safer for Government to back. The vision brings together the energy of a proud Core City and the strength of a county rooted in community, heritage and enterprise.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rewire local government around people and place. Two new unitary councils, Nottingham Council and Nottinghamshire Council, will replace nine existing Councils, ending duplication and confusion and creating one clear line of accountability in each area. This is more than structural change; it is a complete reset of how local public services work together, aligned with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), the Integrated Care System (ICS) and policing boundaries to form a single, coherent geography for public service reform.

In the future, residents will only need to tell their story once. Whether they need a care package, help with housing or support through their child's school, services will join up seamlessly behind the scenes. Local people will no longer be passed between departments or organisations. They will experience councils that are easy to reach, quick to respond and accountable for the things that matter, from fixing roads and keeping streets clean to improving schools, running libraries, building new homes, maintaining parks and supporting families.

These will be next-generation councils, using data, automation and AI to anticipate need and design services around people's lives. Shared information will allow early help, prevention and better outcomes, not repeat contact and frustration. Through smarter systems and clearer responsibilities, we will spend less on process and more on delivery, reducing costs, improving results and making every pound go further.

For residents, businesses and communities, the benefits will be tangible:

- One council to contact for everything local, ending confusion.
- One plan for each neighbourhood, led by a Neighbourhood Committee with real influence over priorities and funding.
- More choice and local ambition, with communities able to shape how services are delivered, from youth activities to green spaces.
- Shared responsibility between councils and residents, giving people and communities the power to take control of their own futures.

Through Neighbourhood Committees, people will have more say in decisions that affect their area, including how their parks are maintained, how their libraries are used and how streets and public spaces are improved. This will not only give communities influence; it will build confidence, connection and civic pride. Councils will convene local public services, but citizens will drive much of the change themselves, creating a model of shared responsibility that empowers people and communities to act.

These councils will have prevention at their heart, investing in families rather than managing crises. In the future, councils will not need to intervene to get children to school or to support healthy lifestyles because families, schools and communities will be equipped and motivated to do so themselves. Local democracy will be visible again, with councillors leading locally, listening to residents and working hand-in-hand with communities to shape their places.

The new councils will not only serve their residents better; they will create the conditions for sustainable growth and faster delivery. The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal brings together the Core City of Nottingham and the wider county in a single, coherent geography that connects innovation with opportunity. It positions Nottingham nationally and internationally, harnessing its world-class universities and its digital, creative, life science and biotech sectors, while drawing on the county's strengths in logistics, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and agri-food. Together, they will accelerate housing delivery, unlock new development sites and link homes to jobs and transport through the Trent Arc corridor. This partnership will power investment across the East Midlands Freeport, Ratcliffe-on-Soar redevelopment, STEP Fusion project and Trent Valley Supercluster, creating a balanced, productive and sustainable regional economy.

By aligning with EMCCA's growth strategy and the ICS's focus on prevention and health equity, Greater Nottinghamshire will lead a whole-system reform of local public services. It will make it easier for councils, the NHS, the police and local businesses to work together across a single geography, saving money, improving services and delivering results faster.

This vision is rooted in place, in neighbourhoods where residents feel proud of their streets, value their parks and libraries, and trust their councils to deliver. It is built on prevention, helping people and communities to thrive, not just cope. It is shaped around sustainability and opportunity, ensuring growth benefits every part of our region, from the city's innovation districts to our rural market towns.

Greater Nottinghamshire offers the right geography, the right leadership and the right opportunity to meet Government priorities. It is a low-risk, high-confidence proposal, financially sound, operationally ready and supported by a comprehensive and credible implementation plan. It will deliver visible improvements for residents and provide a clear, coherent structure for Government and partners to work with.

Above all, this vision is about the future: councils that work with their communities, not apart from them; a public sector that acts as one; and people who feel both supported and empowered to shape the places they live.

Greater Nottinghamshire will be known as the place where innovation meets inclusion, heritage meets hustle and pride in every community builds a stronger future for all.

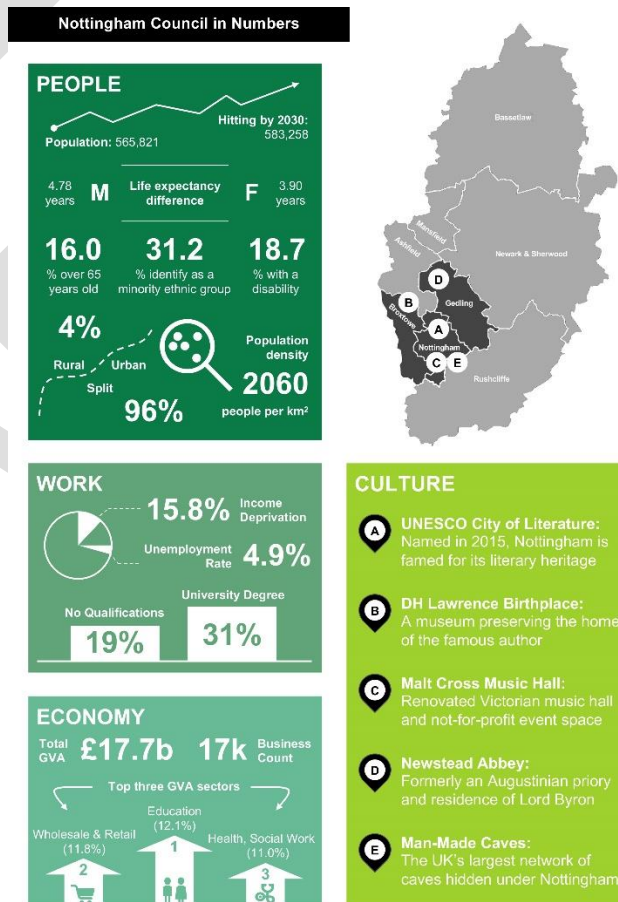
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## 5b. Two new Unitary Councils for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

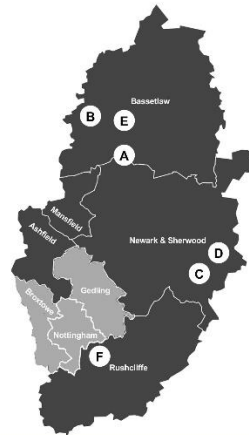
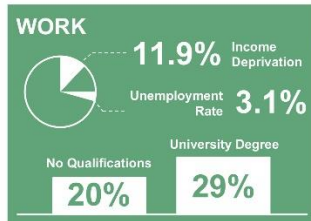
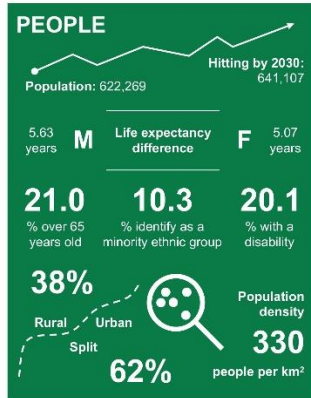
### Nottingham Council

Nottingham Council will unite Nottingham, Broxtowe and Gedling to form a single Core City authority. It will use the city's universities, innovation districts and cultural assets to drive growth and prosperity across the East Midlands. It will:

- Champion innovation, skills and inclusion through partnership with Nottingham's universities and creative industries.
- Lead regeneration and housing growth, professional services and connecting to EMCCA's MedTech and life sciences, digital and tech industries.
- Deliver digital-first public services, using data to personalise support.
- Strengthen civic and cultural leadership, ensuring Nottingham remains a beacon of opportunity and pride.



## Nottinghamshire Council in Numbers



## CULTURE

- A** **Sherwood Forest:** 375 acres of woodland, famous for the legend of Robin Hood
- B** **Creswell Crags:** A limestone gorge with Europe's northernmost Ice Age art
- C** **Stoke Battlefield:** Walking trail through a battle from the War of the Roses
- D** **Newark Castle:** Built in 1135 as a church, later becoming a Royalist stronghold
- E** **Clumber Park:** A historic country park situated in the Dukeries
- F** **West Bridgford:** Home of sport including Nottingham Forest, Trent Bridge and the National Watersports Centre

## Nottinghamshire Council

Nottinghamshire Council will bring together Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe. Rooted in place, prevention and sustainability, it will connect market towns, villages and rural areas to the region's wider growth.

It will:

- Deliver early help and prevention through Family Hubs and hyperlocal Neighbourhood Public Services.
- Champion sustainable housing and infrastructure growth in the Clean Energy Supercluster.
- Support clean energy, food and logistics industries as part of the national green transition.
- Preserve Nottinghamshire's environment and heritage while building opportunity for the next generation.

Together, the two councils will deliver the right geography, the right leadership and the right opportunity to meet Government priorities.

They will:

- Replace nine councils with two new, accountable, next-generation unitary councils.
- Provide a low-risk, high-confidence solution aligned with EMCCA and ICS boundaries.
- Deliver simpler, better and more efficient services through joined-up local government.
- Empower communities and make prevention, sustainability and growth the shared purpose of every local partnership.
- Act as a single, coherent system with other public services, improving outcomes and reducing cost.

Residents will see continuity and improvement, not disruption, with services that are easier to reach, faster to respond and better connected to the things people care about most.

### 5c. Our proposition for neighbourhood working

Our vision is for integrated neighbourhood public services that are **rooted in communities and powered by place**. We will shift the dial on our relationship with people and communities, harnessing the power of community connection and revitalising our social contract with residents to create choice, control and grow social capital. Strong, engaged community and citizen voice will shape the priorities for place and solutions to meet local needs. Aligning community voice to strong place partnership arrangements and democratic structures will revitalise public trust in public services, ensuring people feel connected to and able to shape the decisions that impact them, their families and their communities.

In thinking about how future councils will deliver greater neighbourhood working, we have considered the many ways in which neighbourhoods are defined. Fundamentally, **the definition of neighbourhood must be meaningful to the people who live there** and who it represents. Whilst this proposal outlines some broad parameters for our developing model, considering existing administrative boundaries, with flexibility to reflect individual needs and create space for personal choice and control, the core task as we transition to a new model will be to work together with communities to create a shared and co-designed understanding of neighbourhoods.

Our approach to neighbourhood public services will:

- Strengthen local leadership and neighbourhood empowerment - through strong local democratic representation, the establishment of Neighbourhood Public Service Committees and a greater focus on community voice.
- Improve outcomes and the experience of local people and communities – through implementation of a new public service delivery model that is close to people, located in the community and focuses on the building blocks of good health.

## Strengthening local leadership and neighbourhood empowerment

*“Local government plays an essential role in convening local partners around neighbourhoods to ensure that community voices are represented and people have influence over the place and their valued community assets” (English Devolution White Paper December 2024).*

### Proposed Democratic Structures

The creation of two unitary councils serving over 1.18 million residents of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire provides an opportunity to strengthen the representation of our residents, enhance the transparency of, and engagement in, local decision-making at the same time as increasing the democratic mandate of local councillors.

Residents across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are currently represented by 408 locally elected councillors, the majority of whom operate within a two-tier system. We know that people can find this current system challenging to navigate as they try to access support and services. In the new unitary councils, councillors elected by their residents will represent the full range of services, thus ensuring greater clarity and accountability.

Early modelling work alongside informal discussions with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has led to us to propose that there will be 187 councillors across the two proposed unitary councils, covering 76 wards. These wards are based on the current divisional and ward boundaries. They are areas known to, and recognised by, local residents, existing councillors and the Councils they currently serve. In addition, they meet existing criteria for defining a local community and are therefore considered to be sound building blocks for change. Maintaining the existing boundaries at this stage also ensures that the first elections to the two new Councils can be brought together efficiently and effectively.

Residents living within the proposed Nottingham Council area will be represented by 91 councillors (compared to 158 in the same geographic area currently). Residents in the wider area covered by the proposed Nottinghamshire Council will be represented by 96 councillors (compared to 250 currently). This represents between 4,226 to 4,881 electors per Councillor. These figures are similar to comparator authorities that have already transitioned to unitary status.

Through transition, we will work to ensure that the reduced number of elected representatives are supported, with the right capacity, training, digital tools and officer support. so that they can continue to effectively represent the views of their local communities and fully participate in potential roles available through a Leader and Cabinet model of local governance.

We feel that this presents the best option to ensure strong democratic representation for the people of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire at the launch of two brand-new unitary Councils. It enables us to embed our new governance arrangements, develop a greater understanding of the workload of the new unitary councillors, and provide stability for communities as we gain more insight into the needs of local neighbourhoods. In addition, we consider that this methodology provides a sound basis from which an LGBCE Review for each of the new Councils can take place during the 2027-2031 electoral cycle and anticipate any changes resulting from such a Review to be in the form of small adjustments rather than wholesale change.

### **Beyond 2028**

Jonah, 52, has been involved in the local council for 6 years and understands the system well. He works hard to champion calls for stronger community safety for his area, but often finds it difficult to make change.

**Jonah is able to focus more on what matters most to residents with clearer roles and stronger local forums through...**

- **Stronger Neighbourhood Voice** – Neighbourhood forums are more directly connected to the council itself, making it easier to make the residents' voice heard and drive change.
- **Clearer Responsibilities** – With the transition to a unitary structure, Jonah has to adjust to a new level of his role as a councillor. He spends much more of his time now on campaigning for his residents and stakeholders, while administrative tasks and individual cases are dealt with by experienced service delivery teams.

### *Proposed Neighbourhood Governance Structures*

The creation of new unitary councils offers the opportunity to develop new neighbourhood governance models which can strengthen democracy and give residents and communities more say over the decisions that impact their lives. We have heard through stakeholder engagement that residents want more decisions made at a more local level – that is a level much closer than our previous District and Borough Council boundaries; local to our residents means their neighbourhood. Subject to the forthcoming guidance indicated in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, we propose to:

- Establish **Neighbourhood Public Service Committees** (NPSCs) within new unitary councils, rooted in community and reflecting natural neighbourhoods defined by residents. Initial thinking suggests that these will typically serve a population of 30,000-50,000, although further planning is required to develop the model and consider alignment with other geographical footprints such as GP practices and school catchment areas.
- NPSCs will be formally constituted, with elected councillors representing local areas, and will act as focal points for local partners (e.g., schools, health services, police)
- The model will be flexible and adaptable, accommodating growth and demographic change, and ensuring new communities have governance structures as they develop.

Our early thinking, shaped by feedback from elected Members is that:

- NPSCs will have devolved funds and influence mainstream council spending in defined areas, shaping and prioritising services such as parks, highways, community safety, planning, and grants
- NPSCs will work together to ensure that local residents' views inform decision-making and to maximise involvement in local partnership strategies that are on a larger geographical footprint – e.g. Neighbourhood Health Plans
- Committees will not replace Town and Parish Councils but will co-exist, sharing resources and collaborating to improve local outcomes.
- Voting members will be locally elected councillors, with annual elections for committee chairs.
- NPSCs will operate within council governance frameworks, with responsibilities for scrutiny, community investment, and influencing partner services.
- NPSCs will be as streamlined as possible, avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy and duplication to fully realise the potential benefits of local government reorganisation

## Case Study

The Lengthsman Scheme, which is coordinated across the Council's Highways Service is designed to provide Parish Councils and local community volunteers with the funding and tools to undertake small-scale works to resolve local, community-raised issues. Works completed under this scheme include small-scale grass-cutting, ensuring visibility of traffic signs and tidying roadsides. To support this work, community partners are provided with an annual grant, initial training and basic equipment. This not only extends the capacity for delivery across the network, it also ensures local community concerns are resolved.

The network also benefits from 46 community schemes across the County that respond in the event of flooding. Each community has agreed trigger points for action which could be flood water levels reaching a set marker or a road becoming submerged to kerb level. Once these trigger points are met, volunteers will act.

## Beyond 2028

Andrew, 37, is the founder of a BioTech start up in Nottingham. He is looking to grow his business and is applying to the council for planning permission to build a new lab and office space.

**Andrew's plans to expand his start-up are supported by a system that's more joined-up, locally focused, and easier to work with because of...**

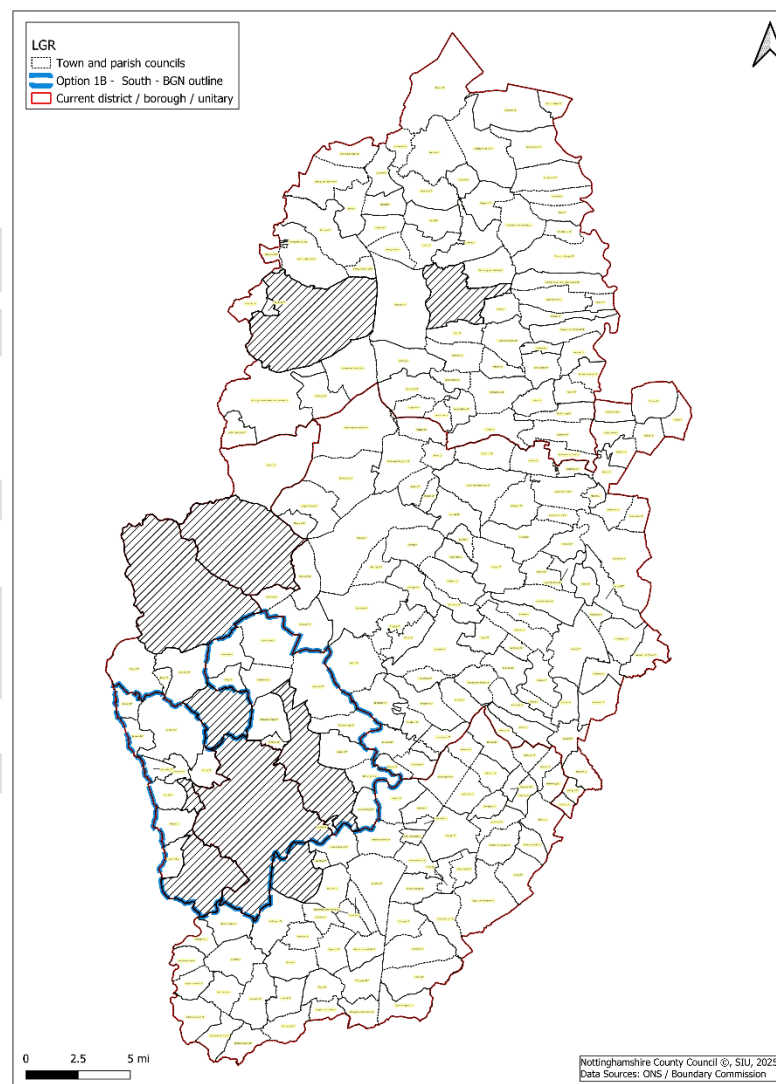
- **Single Access Point** – Andrew is able to easily contact the council for a variety of business needs, without having to work out which council is delivering which. Andrew gets a response to his queries quicker and by people who are connected to delivery.
- **Stronger Neighbourhood Voice** – Due to new democratic structures linked in with the council and budgets, Andrew is able to support his local business at neighbourhood forums, campaigning for town planning that makes sense with the local wants and needs.

### *Strengthening relationships with town and parish councils*

The creation of a new unitary councils across Nottinghamshire, incorporating the establishment of Neighbourhood Public Service Committees, presents an opportunity to enhance and define the relationship with town and parish councils, further empowering local communities and strengthening local democracy. With over 161 town and parish councils across the county, these bodies are often deeply embedded in their communities, trusted by residents, and an important part of local democracy. In the creation of the proposed Nottingham Council, town and parish councils, alongside the new Neighbourhood Public Service Committees, will be key in ensuring that the needs of residents living in the rural areas of Broxtowe and Gedling are considered and prioritised alongside the needs of residents in the city and conurbation.

Engagement with town and parish councils has highlighted an understandably mixed picture in terms of preparedness for local government reorganisation and recognition of potential opportunities, but an appetite in some cases to explore the art of the possible. LGR provides an opportunity to collaborate closely with organisations such as the Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils (NALC) and Rural Community Action Nottingham (RCAN), along with town and parish councils keen to embrace the new ways of working, as a 'coalition of the willing' to identify the successful 'ingredients' for an enhanced way of working, which include financial planning, capacity and expertise, community engagement and long term sustainability, and then seeking to co-develop successful community governance arrangements.

Town and Parish Councils - LGR with county option 1b.



These arrangements could see opportunities for local councils to consider, at their discretion, assuming responsibility for a wide range of community assets and the devolution of practical, everyday services that matter to communities. It will be vital to have clear rules, proper checks, and a shared commitment to making sure the arrangements are financially sound, for both the new councils and the town or parish council. Potential transfers won't be rushed; they'll be well planned and built to last, for those town and parish councils who wish to explore them.

### **Beyond 2028**

Amir, 29, grew up near Newark. After leaving college, he started an apprenticeship in project management. Amir loves to volunteer with his family on the weekend. He spends a lot of time in Nottingham with friends, but wants to build a life in Collingham where he lives.

**Amir's commitment to his community and career is matched by a system that gives him more ways to lead, connect, and grow through...**

- **Community Empowered Activity** – A focus on building local communities provides opportunities/activities for Amir to get involved and make friendships. This also allows him to give back and organise a series of community events, such as a local litter pick himself
- **Neighbourhood Representation** – Councils initiatives to grow neighbourhood voice support Amir, an active community leader, to build a forum for residents and volunteers in Collingham through the local Neighbourhood Public Service Committee.
- **Specialised Unitary Councils** – Amir will be able to access specialised services for Newark and the wider unitary. The unitary will focus an identity around the Trent Supercluster, developing jobs in Amir's area of expertise. Long-term investment will allow surrounding areas to grow, building community and identity closer to home for Amir.

## Linking national policy to neighbourhood implementation

Our vision is to embed local convening structures that create the opportunity for true devolution, building local governance that enables national and regional policy to be grounded in neighbourhood decision-making, integrated planning and public service delivery. Our proposal creates a stronger role for local people to have a voice, ensuring that policy is shaped and informed by Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's residents. We have heard that some residents feel like they're asked regularly for views, sometimes with the same questions asked by different partners, with little tangible difference as a result. We want to see an 'ask once, act together' culture for our public service partnership, streamlining local decision-making and community empowerment so that there are coherent routes for partners to engage with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's residents and for those views to drive change. To achieve this, we would:

- explore opportunities to build on existing structures to strengthen strategic place partnerships to create collaborative spaces, bringing together partners who are able to make decisions about the allocation of partnership resources and models of service delivery. This will enable a more locally responsive system, geared to move from insight and planning to action more quickly, shifting the way we deliver integrated neighbourhood public services together as a partnership in real-time, to deliver a set of shared outcomes, informed by integrated neighbourhood plans
- establish a network of representative forums to strengthen the role of community voice in decision-making. These Forums will receive key data and information, using that evidence and working 'in the open' to agree priorities and co-design solutions. As we work to integrate public services around place, these provide the opportunity to bring together people from existing public service user forums e.g. GP Patient groups, Parent Councils in schools, and representatives from seldom-heard groups, creating a powerful, cohesive voice to inform decision-making.

| <b>National (government)</b> | Government (legislation, guidance and policy reform) |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pan / Regional</b>        | <b>2million +</b>                                    | <b>Integrated Care Board Cluster</b> – commissioning strategic health services<br><b>East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)</b> – strategic authority for D2N2. |
| <b>“Local” (government)</b>  | <b>500,000+</b>                                      | Two new <b>unitary, principal</b> authorities                                                                                                                            |
| <b>“Neighbourhood”</b>       | <b>30,000-50,000</b>                                 | <b>Neighbourhood Public Service Committees</b> , Integrated Neighbourhood Plans and Integrated Neighbourhood Service Delivery                                            |

### *Services close to people and located in the community*

In the two new unitary councils, we propose to create a new public service delivery model that is close to people and located in the community, improving both outcomes and the experience of local people and communities. Our model will prioritise **prevention, early help and the building blocks of good health**. It will work to re-build community connection, creating the conditions for people to be healthy and well and to look out for one another. We will use our collective insights to ensure resource allocation is proportionate and is based on an understanding of local need and disadvantage, strengthening existing community provision where evidence shows it is showing a positive impact. We know that creating a shift towards prevention requires **strong, vibrant and sustainable community assets** that can work with public sector organisations to deliver purposeful, proactive prevention. We will learn from evidence of what works and strong community models, which have taken many years to develop, but provide a blueprint of what good local provision looks like, acknowledging that hyper-local provision cannot be consistent across the whole area.

This proposal acknowledges that the most significant opportunities to improve health and reduce health inequalities across Great Nottinghamshire arise from a coherent and joined up approach to the socio-economic environment that surrounds communities and shapes everyone's health. Just like a sturdy building requires all the bricks to be strong, good health and wellbeing throughout the life course relies on all the right building blocks being in place, such as secure jobs, fair pay, quality affordable homes, good education, strong community connections, and access to nutritious food and reliable transport.

The proposal provides opportunities and examples for public service reform which takes efficient and coherent action across this range of factors rather shifting from an individualistic, silo perspective to one that recognises and addresses the wider determinants of health collectively. It recognises the interconnected lived experience that communities have of intractable barriers to life opportunities which then impact on a wide range of outcomes. For example, that a lack of affordable and reliable access to public transport can limit the ability to take up and keep a good job, particularly in rural populations. Or that living in cold and damp housing leads to poorer health and increased levels of school absence for children, which impacts on their education.

### **Prioritising the building blocks of health**



Source: The Health Foundation , 2024

### Case Study: Cotgrave - an Integrated Neighbourhood Working approach to tackling health inequalities.

In 2023, Cotgrave—a former mining village facing significant deprivation—became the focus of an innovative Integrated Neighbourhood Working (INW) initiative. This approach brought together health, social care, and community services in a concerted effort to tackle health inequalities and empower local residents. The INW model was rooted in community-led solutions, seeking to ensure that essential services and opportunities were accessible within a short distance of people's homes.

The priorities for Cotgrave were shaped by local data and direct conversations with residents, ensuring that the initiative responded to real needs. During the first six months, the most common reasons for social prescribing were mental health challenges, social isolation, lifestyle changes, financial advice, and physical health concerns. To drive progress, the team adopted a 100-Day Cycle, setting clear priorities, building integrated teams, and testing new solutions in rapid succession.

Local Design Teams played a pivotal role, co-designing projects with the community and fostering a culture of change. Through this collaborative process, Cotgrave's residents were not just recipients of services—they became active participants in shaping the future of their community.

Sharing the physical assets of the public sector to create **inclusive community-based spaces**, accessible to all local organisations working in the area, will give the voluntary and community sector (VCS) space to grow. Utilising our open-access community spaces (libraries, leisure centres, family hubs, youth centres etc.) we will create welcoming places for local people to come together and access services and support on their own terms. Creating open and transparent local data and insight profiles and harnessing the power of community voice will enable VCS partners to even more effectively represent the needs of their communities to secure investment in neighbourhood-led solutions and services. We will take the time to invest in co-production and co-design, recognising that our pay-off will be solutions that deliver more sustainable impacts.

Building on the community assets across both unitary councils, we will strengthen our relationship with the voluntary and community sector, working as **equal partners with the sector** to create a consistent organising structure that enables the public sector to engage strategically with VCS organisations. This will enable us to work together within neighbourhood governance and public service delivery models, creating a more connected and sustainable community-based offer. **Community development** roles will be key for our future way of working, ensuring that community members are empowered and supported to lead for their neighbourhoods, creating positive and sustainable change. Our funding model to the sector will shift, creating a more consistent, sustainable outcomes-based model with co-design and co-production at its heart.

People will experience an **integrated, place-based service delivery** model. The model will be designed to offer no wrong front door and create a clear and consistent place-based organising structure across the system, with the flexibility to meet local and individual needs. We will look to the whole partnership, understanding how school communities, neighbourhood policing and communities of faith or interest, would engage with a new place-based public service offer. In particular, our model would maximise the opportunities to align delivery to neighbourhood health, supporting the shifts from hospital to community and from sickness to prevention outlined in 'Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England', and taking the opportunity to embed the learning from Nottingham City's engagement in the National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme across the wider area. Our proposal would also seek to harness the opportunity presented by the move towards population-based NHS provider contracts to maximise their impact in a preventative space for people and neighbourhoods. Further information on the proposed fit between neighbourhood public services and the implementation of neighbourhood health can be found in Appendix D.

### *Holistic support that meets people's needs*

Our future unitary councils will revolutionise the experience of people accessing services by creating place-based multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) that can share one assessment and plan to meet individual needs. Neighbourhood 'huddles', bringing together the skills, knowledge and expertise across the partnership, will employ a truly whole person/family and lead professional approach to understand and meet the needs of people accessing services and those who would benefit from a proactive, preventative offer. Strong data-sharing arrangements and an integrated, partnership data set will enable us to have '**one view**' of the person, understanding customer journeys and utilising machine learning and predictive analytical models to identify needs as they emerge, targeting resources effectively to prevent crisis and escalation into more statutory services. Huddles will draw together the expertise to allow public services to think holistically about how housing, health and social care, education, employment, food and financial security needs and social isolation are impacting peoples lived experiences and leading to poor outcomes. They will work collaboratively to develop creative solutions to meet individual needs, working beyond the boundaries of services or professional expertise to deliver a tailored response and providing the **right help at the right time** to deliver the best outcome for our most vulnerable residents. In our model, public services will be designed to deliver better outcomes now that cost less to the whole system in the long-term.

Services operating at a larger geographical footprint e.g. planning and public safety will be designed to ensure their delivery model still creates connection to the neighbourhood delivery model. Bringing together appropriate elements of regulatory services (environmental health, trading standards, licensing), community safety and emergency planning will create a more **agile and flexible delivery model**, utilising the expertise and intelligence across these services to understand local needs/risks. Tackling illegal and poor practices in local businesses will create a virtuous circle that enables legitimate businesses to thrive and go on to invest in their communities. Aligning spatial planning and public safety into our place-based public services model will create a more community-led, responsive system to tackle the wider contextual factors that lead to people feeling and being less safe, capturing this in integrated neighbourhood planning.

This model represents a shift for the public services workforce, moving towards leadership models that prioritise place and partnership, involving leadership of **multi-disciplinary teams** across the public service system. Matrix management models would guarantee that technical and professional expertise is maintained and developed across Council footprints. Teams would be supported to employ a liberated, relational and tech-enabled practice model, with consistent guiderails to ensure safe and lawful operations, but with the flexibility to self-organise around the needs and aspirations of the people and communities they serve and the excellent community and voluntary services that already exist. Services and support would be delivered in the places that make most sense to that community, by a workforce that deeply understands and cares for the people in their neighbourhoods, working together flexibly to develop evidence-informed solutions to meet local needs.

## Beyond 2028

Fiona, 42, is a GP in Retford. She is working with someone who is struggling to manage tasks, like putting the bins out. Fiona wants to arrange assisted collection and make sure someone can check in on them weekly.

### Fiona's role as a GP is supported by a system that helps her share responsibility and act early through...

- **Prevention First** – Investment into prevention means Fiona is able to raise the request for supporting her patient with daily tasks and carrying out wellbeing checks to the council. Her patient is able to do more due to this support and as a patient with fall risk, this reduces their chances of coming back to Fiona with injuries later.
- **Mutual Partnerships** – Realignment of partnerships means Fiona recognises that providing this support isn't best placed with her, so she refers this patient to the council. This helps balance the workload across the local partnership, supporting both the council and Fiona to do their role. This partnership gives Fiona the space to support in ways better suited to her profession.
- **Tech-Enabled Independence** – Fiona's referral for assisted collection triggers a pathway in the council that suggests other fall prevention opportunities, helping her patient stay safe and independent for longer

## 5d. How our new councils will improve outcomes

This proposal is about making a difference to people's lives, by focussing on the difference that the new unitary councils, working in partnership with each other, with EMCCA, with our partners in the NHS, fire and rescue, the police, schools, colleges and universities, the voluntary and community sector, can make to residents' outcomes. We see that there are many opportunities to be realised through Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and as such, there are five key outcomes which we are prioritising, with a sixth priority focused on how the new unitary councils will work in order to achieve the outcomes:

1. Giving Children the Best Start in Life
2. Supporting People to Reach their Full Potential
3. Driving Economic Growth
4. Delivering Secure Homes and Tackling Homelessness
5. Creating a Connected Place
6. Driving Operational Excellence

Each outcome is aligned with and contributes to the ambitions set out in the proposed Local Government Outcome Framework (LGOF). The proposal focuses on building on current best practice to improve quality and outcomes across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, identifying areas for improvement, and assessing how they can positively impact each of the outcome areas.

| Outcome Area                           | Alignment to Priority Outcomes                                                                                                                      | Ambition                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Giving children the best start in life | <b>Best start in life</b> - Improve early child health, family support and early education to give every child the best start in life               | Reducing the number of children living in poverty                                                                                  |
|                                        | <b>Every child achieving and thriving</b> - Support all children and young people to achieve and thrive in school, at home and in their communities | Improving the attainment, attendance and education, employment and training outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and |

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|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                        | <p><b>Keeping safe and family security (Children's Social Care)</b> - Keep children safe in secure and loving homes and help more families to thrive together</p> <p><b>Child poverty</b> - Reduce and alleviate child poverty to improve children's lives and life chances.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>disabilities (SEND), for children in care and for care leavers.</p> <p>Increasing the number of children with SEND in a mainstream school setting</p> <p>Supporting more children to be helped and protected so that where possible they can live safely at home.</p> <p>Enabling more children in care to live in fostering homes.</p>                  |
| <b>Supporting Adults to Reach their Full Potential</b> | <p><b>Adult Social Care Quality</b> - Care users and carers experience high quality adult social care that is provided by a skilled workforce</p> <p><b>Adult Social Care Independence</b> - Care users are supported to stay independent in their homes where possible, and have choice and control over their support</p> <p><b>Adult Social Care Neighbourhood Health/Integration</b> - Care users are supported by joined-up health and social care services at a neighbourhood level</p> <p><b>Health and wellbeing</b> - People live healthier lives for longer and health inequalities are reduced</p> | <p>Supporting more people to live for more years in good health.</p> <p>Improving the satisfaction / quality of life of carers who are supported by adult social care, including their access to social contact and information, advice and guidance.</p> <p>Enabling more young adults with a learning disability to live independently or with family</p> |

|                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Reducing the number of working age adults with long term care needs living in residential/nursing care.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Driving Economic Growth</b>                     | <p><b>Economic prosperity and regeneration</b> - Foster local economic growth and prosperity</p> <p><b>Transport and local infrastructure</b> - Communities are connected with improved, healthier and greener public transport, enabled by well maintained, enhanced and delivered transport infrastructure</p> | <p>Increasing average weekly pay</p> <p>Supporting more working-age people into employment</p> <p>Enabling more businesses to start ups and fewer to close down.</p> <p>Ensuring more household waste is sent for reuse, recycling or composting</p> <p>Improving roads, so fewer roads should be considered for maintenance.</p> |
| <b>Delivering Secure and Tackling Homelessness</b> | <p><b>Housing</b> - Everyone has access to a decent, safe, secure, and affordable home</p> <p><b>Homelessness and rough sleeping</b> - Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping</p>                                                                                                                    | Reducing the number of children living in temporary accommodation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                       | <b>Multiple Disadvantage</b> - Improve the lives of adults experiencing multiple disadvantage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                        |
| <b>Creating a Connected Place</b>     | <p><b>Neighbourhoods</b> - People feel safe and included in their local community and are satisfied with their local area as a place to live</p> <p><b>Environment, circular economy and climate change</b> - support a healthier, more resilient natural and built environment, including responding to the risks and impacts of climate change to the benefit of communities</p>                                                                                                                                                                         | Improving air quality, so we see fewer deaths caused by air pollution. |
| <b>Driving Operational Excellence</b> | <p><b>Data</b> – Improve data quality, access and use to support better decision making and performance monitoring.</p> <p><b>Services</b> – Simplify and standardise core processes to deliver more consistent, efficient and responsive services.</p> <p><b>People</b> – Strengthen digital and operational capabilities across the workforce to support continuous improvement and innovation.</p> <p><b>Culture</b> – Embed a collaborative, learning culture that supports change, empowers our workforce and enables a flexible operating model.</p> |                                                                        |

### 5.d.i Giving Children the Best Start in Life

We want every child and young person to grow up in a loving, stable home, surrounded by people who care for them and nurture their development. They should feel a strong sense of belonging in their communities, where their identities and experiences are respected and valued. Their environments—at home, in school, and in the community—should be safe and supportive, celebrating what it means to be a child or young person at every stage of development. Community spaces should be safe, welcoming and designed to support their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Our proposal aims to achieve this vision by rooting services in place and shaped by the communities they serve. By grasping the opportunity of the Families First Reforms and building a strong and inclusive system, we will not only improve outcomes for children but reduce the amount of money spent on high-cost services so that more can be reinvested into enhancing community-based services as part of our proposed neighbourhood public service approach.

#### Case Study- Family Hubs

A mum, overwhelmed by raising five children on a low income while coping with domestic abuse and her youngest child's autism, found support at the Family Hub. She arrived feeling anxious, isolated, and judged, but everything began to change when she was offered a one-to-one Confidence Course. With encouragement and consistent support, she started to rebuild her confidence and believe in herself again.

What made the real difference was the Family Hub's multi-disciplinary, co-located approach. Professionals from family support, health, autism services, domestic abuse support, employment, and education all worked together in one community space. This collaboration enabled coordinated support, reduced duplication, and built trust—making it easier for the mum to access help and feel empowered. The Family Hub became a safe, familiar place where she could get practical and emotional support from several teams at once.

Over time, she learned to manage her anxiety, advocate for her son, and secure support for him. She began volunteering, gained new skills, found employment, and transformed her family's life—taking her children on new experiences and pursuing further education herself.

Her words capture the impact: **“I feel free. I don't feel trapped anymore. I feel my feelings matter... I FEEL I MATTER.”** Her children noticed the change too: **“Mum's happy now. We go out more and do fun stuff as a family.”**

In order to address the challenge of ensuring more children and young people can help without requiring statutory intervention, in our proposal, **families in need of early support or help** will have access to multi-disciplinary Family Hubs within the neighbourhood public service model,

where system partners across the public and third sector enable holistic support that reflects the realities of family life. These teams will operate as integrated 'one-stop shops', reducing duplication and ensuring that families don't have to repeat their stories to multiple professionals. Support will be timely, coordinated, and preventative—designed to reduce future need and respond sensitively to the long-term impact of SEND, poverty, and neglect. They will build on existing Family Hubs in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire; learning from what is working well and extending this out, tailoring to meet local needs. Creating two single tier unitary councils for the area will enable us to strengthen our approaches to keeping children safely at home, enabling better information sharing across children's, housing, welfare, and community services. Children will be supported to remain within their family network when it is safe to do so, with parent/carers receiving wraparound support to meet the child's emotional, educational and health needs from their local family hub and school.

### **Beyond 2028**

Sarah and Michael have just agreed for their nieces Taylor (7) and Romany (9) to come and live with them rather than needing to go into Local Authority Care. The children have had a difficult and unstable few months, and their aunt and uncle are worried about getting them back into a home and school routine.

#### **Local, joined-up support have helped Sarah and Michael feel more confident and connected in their roles as Kinship Carers**

- **Joined-Up Services** – The family receive wraparound support from their local Family Hub Network, of whom the school is a member. Mental Health and Wellbeing support for the children and Parenting Support for Sarah and Michael leads to a steady improvement in school attendance and emotional regulation.

**Local Support** – Sarah and Michael attend a peer support group at the Family Hub, where they meet other kinship carers in situations similar to their own. They feel less alone with their challenge, and have a new network of people from whom they can gain advice and support.

Fostering Families will be enriched by the same localised support, giving children stability when they have come into the care of the local authority. This robust and reliable support offer will encourage more local families to be Kinship and Foster Carers for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Children. One opportunity for public service reform comes from embedding housing professionals within social care teams, which will strengthen

support for children and families with complex needs and create the conditions to deliver better outcomes. Housing decisions—such as evictions or tenancy prioritisation—can deeply affect stability and often conflict with social care plans to ensure that disruption to family life is kept to a minimum when unexpected life events challenge family stability. Closer integration will allow earlier intervention, better coordination, and more informed decision-making. Similar benefits will be gained from the aggregation of Community Safety with Youth Service and Youth Justice Service to identify and prevent criminal exploitation, anti-social behaviour and youth violence.

#### **Case Study – Family Support and Safeguarding**

For families in need of more specialist help, Nottinghamshire has made progress with its Families First Reforms and has begun to roll out Family Support and Safeguarding multidisciplinary teams - where Substance Use, Mental Health and Domestic Violence Workers sit alongside Qualified Social Workers, Youth Workers and Family Support Workers in locality teams. Families with multiple and complex need can get the support they need to make progress and reduce risk, and through integration with Family Hubs can receive ongoing support in their communities to help sustain the changes made.

Bringing together people services with housing creates another opportunity for public service reform in that we will be able to improve pipeline planning for young people leaving supported accommodation and into independent living. Our care leavers will receive consistent, high-quality support as they transition to adulthood through integrated housing and welfare support.

## Beyond 2028

Jay, 19, has recently transitioned out of supported accommodation. They are determined to live independently in their own flat in Mansfield, while managing a long-term health condition.

### **Joined-up planning and flexible digital tools have supported Jay's move to independent living and allow them to access...**

- **Whole System Action** – Pipeline planning ensures Jay's move from supported accommodation is smooth, with tailored support for tenancy readiness, budgeting, and wellbeing. Housing professionals embedded within social care teams help Jay secure a safe, adapted home that meets their needs, reducing the risk of future crisis or reliance on residential care.
- **Digital Empowerment** – Jay also benefits from virtual family hubs and hybrid technology, allowing them to self-serve when appropriate, while still accessing in-person support at libraries, youth centres, and community spaces when they prefer.

Success will not just mean improved outcomes but will realise significant cost benefits. For example, there are young people currently being cared for in externally commissioned and costly children's residential homes, ready to move into Supported Accommodation, where places are currently taken by young adults ready and waiting for an independent tenancy. Joined up provision of services will enable strategic housing plans to improve the quality of life for many families. Commissioning to secure improved outcomes for children and young people in our care is already a priority across the area, with a mature and evolving integrated commissioning partnership already in place across the EMCCA footprint and delivering efficiencies and improved outcomes through shared frameworks such as the D2N2 Therapies and Children in Care arrangements. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have co-produced a SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy (2024–2027) with the ICB, setting consistent priorities for families across the region. Building on strong relationships and proven impact, the partnership is now exploring regional block contracts for specialist children's homes to further enhance sufficiency and stability. Through the successful aggregation of social care, housing, and planning services, public sector reform will support both unitary councils in their ambition to acquire and renovate additional properties to meet identified gaps in homes for Children in Care (e.g. child specific, solo placements, crisis beds, complex needs).

## *Education and Children with special educational needs and disabilities*

Our commitment to local community-based working in this proposal will support the delivery of the anticipated SEND reforms. Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a school close to their home, alongside their peers, rather than travelling long distances from their family and community. Special schools will continue to play a vital role supporting those with the most complex needs. In the new Nottingham unitary this will involve children with the most complex needs having access to therapeutic support and specialist provision close to their home. In the Nottinghamshire unitary we will seek to reform SEND provision to be more place based, responding to local needs and utilising current district-based specialist provision to respond flexibly through outreach to mainstream schools' place-based SEND units. A network of locally based provision will be developed. Through a hub and spoke model this will improve equity of access to SEND provision across our rural areas whilst reducing the need for lengthy journeys for young people to access the provision that meets their needs and therefore reducing the pressure on local authority transport services.

### **Beyond 2028**

Ilana, 11, attends primary school in Carlton and has speech and language difficulties and is profoundly deaf. Ilana and her family have just moved to Nottingham as they found it difficult to make friends and find support within the area in their previous location.

#### **Connected and inclusive local services have enabled Ilana and her family to access...**

- **Connected Services** – Ilana's school is connected to a multi-disciplinary Family Hub, a one-stop shop where her family can access speech and language support, deaf awareness resources, and housing advice, all without having to repeat their story to multiple professionals.
- **Integrated Neighbourhood Model** – Working closely with partners, Ilana was quickly connected to local services and community organisations. The Nottingham Deaf Society, working in partnership with the council and voluntary sector, provided a welcoming space where Ilana met other children like her, joined inclusive activities, and began to build lasting friendships.

A further opportunity for public service reform involves bringing together planning, housing and social care functions in the future unitary councils so that home adaptations are designed into new housing. This will support children and young people with disabilities to live at home for as long

as they and their families want them to, reducing or delaying the need for residential care later on. This achieves both better outcomes for families, and a financial saving to the public purse. The strength of existing joint working relationships across the councils means the foundations exist to realise this opportunity in the new unitary councils as an early priority.

Our proposal will ensure that every child and young person has access to locally available high-quality further education opportunities, building on and supported by strong partnerships with local colleges, universities, training providers, schools and education providers. The shape of the new unitary councils will leverage the strong inclusive and well-established partnerships with institutions such as West Notts College to support more young people through further education and training from the expanded Nottingham City area. Through integrated transition planning, careers guidance, and place-based support, we will empower young people to pursue meaningful education, training, and employment pathways including apprenticeships and supported internships, especially for those with SEND, care experienced, or facing disadvantage to improve lifelong outcomes. Family Hubs and multi-disciplinary teams will work closely with FE providers to support transitions, deliver wraparound support and ensure that lifelong learning is accessible to all and that transitions into adulthood are smooth, supported, and ambitious.

The County Council has a proven track record of managing the cost pressures in Childrens Services whilst delivering services judged as 'Good' by Ofsted.

As we look to the future, we see further opportunities grounded in Public Service Reform and the implementation of national government reforms in neighbourhoods across the 2 new Councils. Using additional data and analysis from the IMPOWER benchmarking index, we believe there are additional financial benefits to be achieved.

Our estimated Public Service Reform benefits for children and family services are between £39.5m and £92.2m. These estimates are focused on savings to the costs of children's services delivered by achieving better outcomes that cost less through complex transformation.

These opportunities are not reflected in the financial case for this proposal but exemplify the potential for additional savings to be realised through public service reform on the footprint of the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal.

### 5.d.ii. Supporting Adults to reach their Full Potential

We want every person in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to them. Our aim is for all people to have the chance to live a gloriously ordinary life regardless of their age, disability or ill-health.

We aim to achieve this vision by rooting services in place and shaping them by the communities they serve, increasing the focus on the building blocks of good health and wellbeing, through our model of neighbourhood public service. This dovetails with the ambitions for Neighbourhood Health outlined in the NHS 10 Year Plan, and builds on progress made to date through Place Based Partnerships. The forthcoming Casey Review into Adult Social Care offers a timely opportunity to align our new unitary arrangements with national priorities for stronger leadership, clearer accountability, and improved outcomes for people and communities.

The development of a new adult social care system within the new unitary councils will see high quality, sustainable adult social care services that are easy to access, local responsive, and financially resilient, with improvements in people's experience of care and support, strengthened prevention, and resources focused where they make the greatest difference. As people live longer lives, we want to create a place where adults have a better quality of life for longer with shorter time and less reliance on statutory services.

#### **Case Study – Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs)**

Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) support improvements in the health and wellbeing of a defined local community, address health inequalities and tackle issues of health equity. Our approach is to start with relationships as the foundation - building relationships to foster a culture where partners work and learn together, to achieve the conditions where communities actively take control of their health and wellbeing.

The Bassetlaw Ageing Well INT has seen an increase of 11% in falls assessments and support through targeted work with people with moderate to severe frailty. The Bassetlaw Live Well INT has supported 172 people through integrated clinical and non-clinical interventions resulting in improvements across all wellbeing indicators.

The My Support Network, developed by the Newark and Sherwood Local Design Team, provides coordinated information and support to help people remain well at home. To promote healthy ageing and reduce isolation for those over 65 in Newark, Sherwood, and Ashfield, 9 Best Years Hubs with over 5000 attendances, with 81 volunteers supporting and over 70 advanced care plans completed.

The Mansfield Make a Start programme has helped 492 individuals via two hubs.

The Healthy Heart Clinic in Ashfield supported 64 people; half qualified for NHS Health checks, and 25% were identified with high cholesterol and are now receiving care.

Simplified care pathways with two unitary councils responsible for both housing and social care will reduce duplication and delay and enable better support for people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities through joint commissioning with the local NHS. It will enable a more comprehensive approach to early intervention and prevention, building on the current support offer from local Councils and the voluntary and community sector. This will mean that fewer older adults will require formal care and support as they will be provided with the right preventative support in the right place at the right time. It will also help to smooth the transition for young adults with care and support needs to working age.

### Beyond 2028

Jeremy, 76, moved to Bingham when he retired with his wife, Ann. Since she passed away, Jeremy's health has deteriorated rapidly, finding it difficult to leave the house. He was moved into residential care, but more recently Jeremy has built up his independence and his health has stabilised.

#### Modern and Localised Adults Social Care have been able to provide Jeremy with...

- **Right Care at the Right Time** - Improved coordination between health and social care teams, made possible by pooled budgets, Jeremy received timely mental and physical health support. This helped him recover from his health decline and move out of residential care. He now enjoys a fuller social life and has reduced costs due to preventative care.
- **Connected Support** – Nursed noticed Jeremy needed physiotherapy to improve his ability to complete day to day tasks, like getting dressed by himself. This flexible approach to support has helped him out of intensive levels of support to be able to live more independently.

- **Local Access to Services** – Services are now located in places Jeremy naturally visits, like the local supermarket, post office, and community centre. This means Jeremy doesn't have to travel far or use complex systems to get help. It's made it easier for him to stay connected, maintain his independence, and be part of his community.

For prevention, a two unitary, single tier model will enable the pooling of budgets, joint bids for grant funding, and the creation of consistent early intervention support – with the removal of duplication. Given that we know that social contact and access to information, advice and guidance, particularly for carers, are challenges in both Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, we will look at co-ordination of Community Hub type provision through the Neighbourhood Public Service model, offering advice, training, wellbeing, digital care a support solutions and digital inclusion in local areas. We will think about ways to position services so that people can access them easily, which will mean delivering services from spaces such as schools, supermarkets, and libraries – places that people congregate naturally around. We will also work on digital means for people to access help, acknowledging that some people will need support to do so until they are confident using digital access, and that some people will not have digital devices to use.

#### **Case study – Technology Enabled Care**

Barry has a learning disability and difficulty communicating verbally. He lives in his own flat but has an overnight sleep-in worker just in case he needs support in the night. In the past, Barry left his home at night and was unable to find his way home. Additionally, there were also concerns that he may not act appropriately in the event of a fire. In recent months he has started to give non-verbal signs that he does not like having someone with him in his flat all the time, for example by closing his living room door when care workers have moved out of the room so that he can watch the television alone.

Barry liked superheroes so his support team explained that if he had a telecare system, he could press a button and this would summon someone like a superhero to help him. A telecare system was introduced with a call button for Barry, monitored smoke detectors and sensors on his exterior doors which automatically switched on overnight to alert a 24 hour monitoring centre if his door was opened and he left home. Barry's support team worked with him over several weeks so that he got used to pressing the button to call for help and understanding how this worked. Once everyone was happy, Barry's overnight support was gradually withdrawn, and a TEC activity monitoring system was also installed to assess the impact on Barry's behaviour on the nights he was left alone. For the first 2-3 nights he was alone the TEC showed that Barry was a little unsettled, but he then

settled completely and eventually his overnight support ended. His support team subsequently reported that Barry was behaving more independently and was now indicating that he wanted to do more things by himself during the day.

The two new unitary councils will focus on promoting and developing independence skills for younger people with disabilities who live with ageing parents to gain independence skills as early as possible - opening the possibility of supported living rather than residential care.

Moving to a single tier of local government and greater integration with our local public services and community and voluntary sector partners will support a reduction in inequality and provision of more equitable services across the county. With closer alignment to local areas comes better understanding and tailoring of service delivery models for new and different needs where required in more rural and densely populated parts of the two unitary areas. In this way it will address inequity in terms of outcomes, such as life expectancy, for people who have disabilities or need to spend time in hospital.

With one commissioner for each single tier authority, the social care market can be more stable and strategically supported across both preventative and statutory care and support services, and it will be easier to negotiate fair rates, improve quality and invest in workforce development across the sector. This also creates for the potential for exploring joined up commissioning approaches across the area as a whole.

We know that the availability of suitable homes for working age adults is a challenge across the area, leading to fewer adults with learning disability living in their own homes or with family than similar Councils. More young adults (18-64) also have their long-term support needs met through admission to residential or nursing care. The creation of new unitary councils offers the opportunity to address this, through the development of a more coherent housing strategy for the area as a whole, an opportunity for public service reform, which will both improve outcomes and avoid cost.

A further opportunity for reform is the opportunity to simplify the partnership approach to securing pathways for people drawing on care and support into education, training and employment, bringing together the partnership with Further Education colleges, specialist colleges for people with disabilities, Job Centre Plus and local employers to generate occupational opportunities to help people to live well, socialise and combat loneliness and social isolation.

### Beyond 2028

Felix, 52, lives in Worksop with his wife and two children, but has recently been made redundant as the company he worked for is shutting down. He's looking for a new opportunity and wants to do some training in new skills to help the job search.

**A system that is more joined-up will be able to help Felix find opportunities to reskill and find a new position through...**

- **Local Access to Services:** With a single unitary council for one area, Felix can easily contact the council through a central platform, and through key places in the community e.g. libraries & post office, where he might already travel to ask about training programmes.
- **Strategic Services** – Linked to EMCCA priorities, the new council helps Felix find training in in-demand skills. Investment is focused on what's actually needed in Nottinghamshire, rather than broad national targets, helping him prepare for industries with real opportunities nearby.
- **Integrated Services** – Alongside training, integrated services may mean Felix is recommended to access support on managing finances, helping him stay secure while he looks for work and plans his next steps.

We can also simplify working with the EMCCA through their inclusive growth framework, on planning for transport that is accessible and fit for purpose, enabling more people to travel to social groups, volunteering, and employment. This again improves outcomes and avoids cost through increased independence.

The County Council has strong track record of transformation and change in adult social care.

Building on our approach, with prevention, reablement, work with voluntary sector and strong market engagement, we have an emerging Public Service reform programme. Using the IMPOWER benchmarking index, we can see that there is further PSR financial benefit to be achieved through the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal post vesting day. The scale of the financial benefit has been modelled at between £28.3m and £66.3m across services for adults requiring care and support.

The approach to delivering financial benefit at this scale is through complex transformation programmes that focus on better outcomes that cost less, building independence for adults of all age, and working with the market and voluntary sector collaboratively.

These additional financial benefits have been modelled to illustrate the scale of the potential savings the two new Councils could achieve. They have not been included in the financial case but demonstrate the benefit of our public service reform model in the Greater Nottinghamshire Council.

### Beyond 2028

Jenny, 55, has a cleaning business in Mansfield. She recently worked with someone who needed support to declutter their home to make it safe. Jenny enjoyed the work and the connection she made with them and wants to talk to the council about getting them some more help.

#### **Responsive and community-focused services have made it easier for Jenny to...**

- **Making Every Contact Count** – Jenny is able to raise her concerns with the council easily due to the simple website, getting the residents the support they need. Her messages to the council reflect other contact the council has received about this resident, developing a stronger picture of the situation and triggering more intense support.
- **Tailored Unitary Services** – In the more rural unitary, Jenny sees the council's workforce know the area and are responsive to the needs of those in remote locations. She works in a network of partners that visit residents and the strong community is agile to residents needs.

- **Flexible Funding for Real Needs** – With pooled budgets, the council has greater flexibility to respond to individual needs. This means Jenny's concerns can lead to timely, personalised interventions, whether that's home adaptations, social care, or community support, without being constrained by rigid funding streams.

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### 5.d.iii Driving economic growth

The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal will turn EMCCA's inclusive growth ambitions, into reality. The two new unitary councils will enable strategic local leadership, each building on their unique economic strengths. Through the opportunities that local government reorganisation presents, the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire partnership will create a better place to live, work, and thrive – in return we will make a significant contribution to the UK economy and act as strong, reliable partners for the Mayor.

One area is centred on the core city of Nottingham and the urban conurbation with the more urban districts on its existing borders. The other focused on Nottinghamshire's market towns, with their rural hinterlands. The expanded core city will be able to build on the digital, creative and cultural sectors and deliver a significant contribution to EMCCA's growth targets in this way. Complementary to this, the more rural Council will be able to focus on the growth opportunities from clean energy, advanced manufacturing and life sciences. In simple terms, this proposal splits the area into two sensible economic geographies that allow both areas to flourish but not at each other's expense.

This proposal will therefore result in improved 'place-based economic specialisation' and reflects EMCCA's strategy for sector-led, place-based growth. It will help deliver the National Industry Strategy here in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. We will be able to make a significant contribution to EMCCA's targets of raising the average annual productivity growth rate to 2% so that average earnings can rise by £5,700. We will be able to support more people to be in work, our neighbourhood approach particularly helpful in supporting people out of work through ill health. The new Councils will also work with partners to help people have skilled qualifications they need to progress close to home. This option will mean that all our residents see the positives from growth, all our businesses will be supported to thrive and our communities will feel the benefit of local government reorganisation.

#### *Nottingham's success is a catalyst for Nottinghamshire's future success*

Nottingham is one of the UK's core cities and home to two world class universities. Realising the city's growth ambitions is crucial to delivery of EMCCA's inclusive growth plans and puts the city's sustainable expansion as a core principle. Nottingham currently has identified its growth plans to create 12,000 new jobs by 2030, generating £500 million in additional GVA. It also seeks to secure £4bn of regenerative investment in the city to enhance quality of life and create a contemporary, clean and globally competitive centre. The two unitary councils we are proposing can help make this a reality and allow even further growth, be more ambitious and leverage the potential that Broxtowe and Gedling boroughs bring as part of a wider unitary including Nottingham.

Nottingham is already home to dynamic sectors like Creative and Digital, Health and Life Sciences, and Manufacturing. The city also boasts excellent educational institutions, impressive sustainable transport connectivity, an exciting regeneration agenda and a strong cultural, heritage and sporting offer. This proposal allows Nottingham to continue to focus on these strengths and in turn deliver EMCCA's growth plan (our local interpretation of the Country's Industrial Strategy).

In this option, the two universities will have the right conditions to drive **innovation** across the city and the broader sector benefits. The University of Nottingham (UoN) has recently launched an Innovation District (UoN Innovation Park) in Nottingham's city centre that connects research, industry and community. This option will ensure that Nottingham is a place where innovation is not only generated but also harnessed to make a difference locally, nationally and globally. The universities are place anchor institutions and the significant student population that live in and around Beeston (in Broxtowe), means the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal provides the framework for the full economic benefit to be felt across the city-based Council.

Furthermore, improved public transport links, such as tram extensions and revived rail routes, will connect residents across the wider Nottingham area to employment centres, reduce congestion, and open up new opportunities for all communities. Specific **tram extensions** within the newly formed city-based Council would connect Gedling residents to the city centre, where the current A60 road network is congested and creates a barrier to access education and work opportunities. Better connections to Broxtowe and Derby city will also be made easier through this partnership.

### Beyond 2028

Kate, 64, runs a popular bakery in Nottingham. Her sales have been rocketing the past two years and she's looking to hire a new team of 5 people to set up a new bakery closer to the train station.

#### **Strategic investment and growing commuter links are boosting Kate's business through...**

- **Targeted Growth** – Sitting in the Trent Arc, Kate sees her customers increase as more and more workers are travelling between Derby and Nottingham. With EMCCA's targeted investment in the Trent Arc, tailored to the Nottingham area, local investment, planning, and community services have been designed to enable growth. Businesses have set up along the route and commuters are frequently stopping in Beeston to pick up a coffee on their way to work or as a destination for working lunches.

### *Nottinghamshire's growth potential will also flourish*

The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal also frames the Nottinghamshire Council area with the best chance to succeed. It will allow this unitary Council to build on the priority growth sectors that is part of the area's heritage and current strengths. The Nottinghamshire Council will focus on delivering inclusive growth across the main priority sectors of the clean energy, advanced manufacturing and visitor economy – all of which sit firmly in the areas economic specialisms.

**Digital connectivity** is a key enabler for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, as identified in EMCCA's growth plan. The Nottinghamshire Council will spearhead a digitally connected regional economy, fostering innovation in smart manufacturing, logistics, and public services. Investment in full-fibre and 5G connectivity could add £0.5 billion a year in GVA by 2030, supporting up to 4,700 new jobs. A thriving digital infrastructure will also boost small business productivity, enhance data-driven public services, and connect residents to opportunities in the knowledge economy. By including Rushcliffe into the more rural Council, this will ensure that the connectivity issues that the rural parts of the borough have will still remain a priority. Businesses in Gedling and Broxtowe will in turn benefit from the focus the Core City brings to improving capacity and network speed – benefiting directly from being part of a 'smart city'.

The creation of a **North–South Clean Energy Corridor** (linking EMCCA's Trent arc and Super Cluster areas) including Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Staythorpe, West Burton and Cottam. Work that is underway to position Nottinghamshire as a national leader in clean energy innovation and the STEP Fusion programme will be a catalyst for further complementary growth. This corridor will be supported by upgrades to key transport routes (e.g., A614/A6097) and new investment in housing, health, and education are intended to make sure that growth is both sustainable and inclusive. Nottinghamshire Council will continue to sponsor the growth potential of the Ratcliffe-on-Soar site and through the addition of the STEP fusion investment over the last few years, this proposal ensures that the momentum building quickly around these key new sectors are built upon, without any disruption or delay. Importantly, key relationships between people working on these projects will have the certainty of consistency to drive the inward investment required with partners in business, academia and Government.

#### **Beyond 2028**

Rohan, 59, is a mechanical engineer in Lincoln. He is looking for a new career move, to support his family as he saves for retirement. Rohan loves his current local neighbourhood in Lincoln and has recently finished paying his mortgage. He is a father of two, both of which have both moved to Bristol to study at university.

### Strategic investment and improved infrastructure are opening up new career opportunities for Rohan through...

- **Coherent Inward Investment** – Living near the Trent Supercluster, Rohan benefits from supported transport links into the area. He is able to commute faster to work and, soon after, is able to get a job at a company located in Nottinghamshire. This is newly relocated company has chosen north Nottinghamshire as a base to be close to the STEP fusion programme and the clean energy growth opportunities.

### *Town Centre regeneration*

Greater Nottinghamshire has the ambition, assets and sites to drive large-scale town centre regeneration but under the current system, delivery in some cases has been slow, or inconsistent. The proposed Councils will be ready and able to lead the way in regenerating city and town centres, that have been hindered by the current system.

The introduction of two new unitary Councils has the scope to rejuvenate our town centres, giving each area the skills and resources it needs to drive regeneration. By working with EMCCA, these Councils can coordinate their efforts across their areas, making regeneration more joined-up and effective. While the existing Councils have done well leveraging partnerships and government funds, moving to simpler, stronger all-purpose Councils presents a golden opportunity to unlock land, improve town centres, and attract investment in a much more strategic and impactful way.

The Combined Authority is pulling together an investment pipeline aimed at boosting inclusive growth. Both future Councils will seek to work with EMCCA to look at new delivery vehicles like Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs). These MDCs would be able to assemble land, pull in investment, and get complex multi-partner projects off the ground, but they need to work at a large enough scale and cover functional areas to really make a difference.

We have heard from developers and investors in developing the Greater Nottingham proposal. They recognise the many strengths in the current arrangement, but look for greater simplicity, stronger Councils able to partner with the private sector and provide certainty and consistency. Building on recent work between the City Council and Homes England, the Nottingham Council would continue to target investment in high-impact areas like Broadmarsh and growth corridors such as the Trent Arc. The new Councils will make it easier to align both public and private investment, with clearer governance and streamlined decision-making. They'll also be better placed to attract long-term funding for housing, infrastructure, and commercial development.

The new model boosts place leadership and keeps Councils connected to local communities to understand and respond to their unique needs. Neighbourhood Public Service Committees and active Town Boards, like those in Mansfield and Ashfield, will play a key part, bringing together

residents, businesses, and leaders to co-create long-term regeneration plans. Our Councillors and residents told us they want their town centres to feel safe, to be clean, with things to do and places to go they can enjoy. By integrating 'place based' services such as highways, street cleansing, management of public realm and public safety, we can help revitalise our town centres. The Greater Nottingham proposal provides a safer, simpler, stronger approach designed to speed up regeneration, target growth to the places that need it most, and deliver real improvements in quality of life and opportunity for local people.

**Visitor economy** is a key growth ambition for EMCCA, with expectations of increasing the number of visitors by 50%. This is ambitious, but the future Councils will help significantly to meet these targets. Both councils would build on the existing focus areas of Robin Hood and 'Sport as a Spectacle' in its Visitor Economy framework. This will rely on increasing people's visits when they come to watch a professional sports match in the south of the county (world class football and cricket) or come to see the home of the legendary Robin Hood (in the north of the county). Plans are already being worked on to encourage overnight stays, linked trips and longer visits. By including Rushcliffe in the more rural Council, this work will be able to continue in a coherent way through the next few years of transition. This will allow the city to concentrate on city centre-based visitor activity, cultural and event planning. The impact on the whole of the economy would be significant, as data shows most people (90%) stay for the day and spend on average £52 per visit, compared to the 10% that stay overnight, who spend on average £257 per visit in the local economy.

### *As two next generation Councils collaborating with EMCCA, we can deliver inclusive growth*

This proposal is centred on creating a partnership between Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, where there is a single, unified voice for the place with EMCCA. There will be a clear message that this region is open for business and both new Councils will have clear growth strategies and coherent areas of focus. This will be more attractive to new business and **inward investment** by providing clarity and will build confidence for private funders and investors.

A simpler, unitary structure means services will be designed around people and business, not bureaucracy, reducing duplication and ensuring quicker, more joined up decision-making. With resources better aligned and the opportunity to maximise efficiencies, the councils will offer business, developers and investors more certainty, stability and simplicity of support in partnership with EMCCA to turn the **Opportunity Escalator** into a reality.

EMCCA's Inclusive Growth Commission recommended the 'opportunity escalator' as an approach to ensuring inclusive growth. By creating two new all purpose unitary Councils, we will reduce the complicated employment and skills landscape, as currently there are eight different local Councils all using the various funding streams to deliver a variety of training programmes and initiatives, over numerous providers. Whilst, we

have a history of collaboration and joint commissioning across the county/city, the opportunity to support our residents to access the 'opportunity escalator' is much greater with only two Councils going forward. Barriers to access the 'opportunity escalator' including transport issues, poor health and low social capital could be better addressed. This will increase the chances of residents being able to move up the escalator and transition into better paid, more secure jobs through training and upskilling.

### **Beyond 2028**

Alia, 27, is working as an accountant in Cotgrave but is looking for a new role. She wants to support her long term career in the area and is keen to build her skills for the future. Alia loves her community and wants to settle in Ashfield with her partner.

#### **Focused local investment and opportunities for growth are helping Alia build a future in her community and open up...**

- **Targeted Growth** – Living along the Trent Arc, Alia feels the push for economic growth near her area. The Option 1b structure allows each council to focus on specific growth areas, so Alia sees large investment into business near her. A new business sets up in the next town over that has a bustling finance department. Alia is able to join as a manager with room to promote after a few years, as she can access the 'opportunity escalator' and gets the training she needs to progress.

This option will deliver the government's National Industry Strategy through delivering EMCCA's growth plan, based on our areas' strengths and knowledge. It will unleash the true potential of the Core City of Nottingham, whilst also allowing the rest of the county to grow significantly, collaboratively, not competitively – this complementarity will be a core strength. Each new authority will have its own focused and coherent priority growth sectors and both Councils will have inclusive growth at their heart. The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal will sign up to and back EMCCA's inclusive growth framework and will ensure that growth works for everyone – not just those in high-growth sectors or the better paid jobs – by creating pathways into good jobs, supporting communities, and attracting investment.

The focus on high-value sectors across both new authorities, such as advanced manufacturing, life sciences, creative industries, and clean energy, will create jobs for the future with education settings and providers being encouraged to play their part in supporting residents through targeted training and apprenticeships. This partnership will allow Nottingham to fulfil the potential of its core city status and its success will help to ensure Nottinghamshire success. By allowing the work to continue to position Nottinghamshire as the clean energy leader, this will then further stimulate growth across the region.

#### 5.d.iv. Delivering Affordable Homes and Tackling Homelessness

We are committed to being an active partner in delivering on the ambitions that the Mayor and the Government have set out. The Government is focussed on delivering 1.5m new homes along with the critical infrastructure that underpins economic growth and has set out revised housing targets for all local areas. Building the new homes needed by our growing and changing communities is important, but so too is ensuring we build homes, not houses, and that we improve quality of new and existing properties.

In delivering more housing and economic growth for the area, it is essential that we work closely with the Mayor and EMCCA. The strategic authority will drive housing growth through a combination of devolved powers, strategic investment, and targeted regeneration initiatives, reshaping how housing delivery responsibilities are managed across Nottinghamshire and the wider region. EMCCA's Growth Plan aims to deliver over 100,000 homes across the region, including 1,400 homes on brownfield sites by 2026 through a £16.8 million Brownfield Housing Fund. To achieve this and contribute to the Government's target of 1.5 million new homes, there are a number of major regeneration zones underway including Trent Arc and Supercluster, which collectively will unlock £4.6 billion in economic value and 52,000 new homes.

Wider partnerships with Homes England are also underway to revive stalled developments, such as the Chronos Richardson site in Nottingham, the Nottingham War Rooms, and Bowbridge Road in Newark, with the intention of delivering hundreds of new homes.

The latest data<sup>1</sup> for the number of new homes completed in each local authority in 2024/25 shows the size of the challenge to meet these targets by the new unitary authorities in this proposal. Under the revised targets set out by the Government, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire would need to build over 2,100 more homes per year, an increase of 60% on 2024/25. The target for the area combined represents 52% of EMCCA's 10-year Growth Plan target for the region (10,860 per year by 2035).

In shaping this Greater Nottinghamshire proposal, we have taken this challenge and ambition from the Mayor to heart. To tackle this challenge and ensure we deliver on the ambition set out above, we will replace fragmented delivery with a joined-up, countywide housing strategy and integrated planning and development functions that align and accelerate affordable housing, regeneration, and infrastructure priorities. To do this we are committing to the following:

- Streamlining planning and delivery across local and regional government.

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<sup>1</sup> [Indicators of House building, UK: permanent dwellings started and completed by local authority - Office for National Statistics](#)

- Focus on regeneration-led development on brownfield land and sustainable expansion in towns and villages with strong local identity.
- Adopt a “One Public Estate” model, strategically deploying public land for affordable housing and regeneration.
- Establish one shared digital housing register and allocations system, simplifying access for residents and ensuring transparency.
- Prioritise affordable and social rent homes, particularly for families and key workers.

The strategy will support the EMCCA’s Local Growth Plan, Mayor’s Transport Plan and the Spatial Development Strategy. As a result, we will see more than 52,000 new homes unlocked through strategic regeneration zones such as Trent Arc, Canal Corridor, and the Supercluster, the delivery of 1,400 brownfield homes by 2026, contributing to EMCCA’s 100,000-home regional target and £4.6 billion in economic value generated through housing-led regeneration.

### *Delivering Affordable Homes*

The creation of two new, next generation Councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire offers a transformative opportunity to address affordable housing needs across Greater Nottinghamshire. Affordable housing delivery will be a key priority for the new authorities, bringing opportunities to strengthen our approach and deliver the change that our economy needs. Both unitary authorities will enable housing supply to exceed housing need levels across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to support the East Midlands Mayor Inclusive Growth Plan to deliver over 100,000 homes across the region. This is aligned to help achieve the Government’s mission to deliver 1.5 million homes nationally.

The two unitary Councils will provide for significant opportunities for future growth. The Nottinghamshire Council will bring large land availability together creating a countywide mechanism that can “super-charge” housing and economic development in the county. It creates a complimentary Nottingham Council focussed on urban regeneration and higher density developments with limited greenbelt release to support development where needed.

The East Midlands Inclusive Growth Plan includes the “Super Cluster” growth area that will be able to unlock investment and new jobs along with new housing growth. Improvements to the A6097/A614 that runs through the heart of the countywide authority area will also serve to support new housing growth through the spine of the Nottinghamshire Council area. The countywide authority will be able to focus on growth which makes the most of its strengths and assets in its rural communities, market towns and villages and industrial heartlands. Significant barriers to employment include lack of affordable housing and transport. So, the Nottinghamshire Council will be able to develop a model for a growing local economy by building homes that meet healthy homes standards, needed by a vibrant growing local workforce, and connected communities which overcome barriers to social inclusion and mobility through a revitalised county-wide transport approach.

The creation of a Nottingham Council will enable housing supply to be met without needing to place significant reliance on greenfield land, because of the large potential for additional residential housing development in Nottingham on brownfield land. Within this area there is a sufficient 15-year housing supply to promote urban place making allowing for urban regeneration to harness an “urban renaissance” with greatly improved sustainable travel. This will help maximise previously used land within the area and help realise the ambitions for the East Midlands Inclusive Growth Plan that includes the Trent Arc cluster alongside the neighbouring emerging South Derbyshire unitary Council.

The borders of both unitary Councils support non-competing growth strategies between the two areas, allowing for each to specialise and build reputation in different areas. This allows the new Councils to target investment fully towards focus areas, without having to compromise on budget and service focus.

We have listened to the feedback of the developers and investors we talked to about our proposal. By unifying planning, delivery, and asset management, this proposed option enables a strategic, joined-up approach that breaks down traditional silos and maximises the social value of public land through the one-public estate approach. The configuration of these two new Councils will allow for coherent and consistent strategic planning and delivery, best practice sharing, and the strategic deployment of land assets, prioritising social value and community outcomes. We are supportive of both large-scale regeneration and small-scale, community-led schemes, and will enable the implementation of a single digital platform for the housing register and a unified allocations policy.

The evidence base shows a significant and growing need for affordable housing, particularly for social housing and affordable rent, with acute affordability challenges in some areas. This proposal will mean we are better placed to maximise delivery, align housing with infrastructure, and ensure that specialist needs are met. In summary, this option will enable Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to move from fragmented, siloed delivery to a unified, strategic, and outcomes-focused approach, delivering more affordable homes, making best use of public assets, and ensuring that social value is at the heart of housing delivery.

#### **A case study in delivering inclusive growth**

The emerging proposals for significant redevelopment of the Trent Valley power stations is an example of how this option would benefit future development. All of the major, large scale clean energy production and AI growth zone sites from Ratcliffe on Soar to West Burton would fall within the planning remit of one Council. Through the Mayor’s Spatial Development Strategy, a planning policy framework could be adopted to allow the entire Trent Valley to become a home to green power and transform energy supply and distribution. In this way the emerging “Super

Cluster” proposal centred on the north Nottinghamshire sites of West Burton, Cottam and High Marnham could be extended into something bigger and better for the East Midlands and for the UK.

Equally having the entire Trent Valley under one Council allows a comprehensive plan for mineral development, biodiversity expansion and recreational development to be brought together which has never been possible under two tier and multiple Councils. This proposal would also bring together authorities covering the Sherwood Forest area and assist the continuation of visitor promotion centred on the ancient Forest and attractions around Mansfield, Worksop, Newark and Southwell.

In transport terms the A6047/A614 corridor improvement scheme linking the A46 at Newton with the A1 at Appleyhead is a case study of a transport project (now with Government funding approved) spanning the Nottinghamshire Council area, which will assist in releasing land for housing and would be managed by the single unitary authority under this proposal.

The Nottinghamshire Council will need to plan for the needs of a lower density population, more geographically dispersed. A new housing strategy can address how both the type of new housing being developed and the adaptation of existing housing will support healthy, active and independent living for older people in well connected, resilient communities. Nottinghamshire Council would intend to draw from existing best practice locally and learning to support an innovative approach to meeting the unique needs of its towns, villages and rural communities for affordable, safe and secure homes.

### *Leveraging wider devolution and investment for local benefit*

We will use our stronger, unified voice as part of the ‘heft’ that a Mayoral strategic authority brings, we will secure investment and devolved funding that delivers long-term housing and regeneration benefits. The two new Councils will work together with EMCCA, coordinating access to integrated housing settlements and grant funding from central government to maximising opportunities for accelerating and increased housing delivery.

Greater stability in housing investment and regeneration funding will help ensure continuity of programmes despite market fluctuations and most critically, we will be better placed to provide the housing that local residents needs as well as providing certainty of the crucial services that some of the most vulnerable members of our local community need.

## *Supporting Independent Living and Vulnerable Residents*

We will ensure housing supports people at every stage of life — from care leavers to older adults — enabling independence, wellbeing, and dignity. Expanding supported housing for adults with complex care needs and reducing reliance on institutional care settings is a priority for us. A coherent housing strategy across the whole area will actively support independent living, adapted housing, extra care, supported housing and downsizing accommodation; we can support people to downsize which means they can remain living independently and more capacity is created for families needing larger accommodation. This supports our aims to support people to live safely in their own homes in strong and thriving neighbourhoods for as long as possible. This reduces the use of residential care for working age and older adults which both improves outcomes and reduces cost.

We are also committed to standardising the experience for Nottinghamshire's care leavers by coordinating housing and council tax exemption policies and guaranteeing consistent access up to age 25 across both Councils.

We will also seek to fully Integrate housing with health, social care, and community services at the neighbourhood level, ensuring holistic support for vulnerable residents and improve housing quality, accessibility, and energy efficiency, contributing to healthier living environments for all.

### **Case Study: Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)**

The transition from nine councils to two unitary authorities this proposal supports a more efficient, responsive, and integrated DFG service aligned with health and care priorities. LGR offers a pivotal opportunity to transform DFG delivery. Drawing on Leicestershire's successful Lightbulb model, this approach proposes:

- **Unified service delivery** through consistent policies, digital platforms, and integrated teams.
- **Proactive support** for hospital discharge, independent living, and urgent health needs.
- **Streamlined governance** enabling expansion into wider adult and children's services.

ARK Consultancy's review highlights disparities in resources and delivery across districts. A unified model would ensure:

- Equitable access and performance.
- Alignment with national Foundations review.
- Cost-effective, person-centred solutions tailored to urban and rural needs.

### *Delivering the Housing Growth Agenda through a new modernised Local Planning Authority*

The creation of new safer, simpler, stronger Councils across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire offers an exciting opportunity to create a new, next generation local planning authority that will provide a highly efficient service, to achieve the positive outcomes of the growth agenda and positive place making.

The reorganisation will aim to simplify governance structures, to improve efficiency, and deliver better outcomes for communities and will lead to key benefits. It will give the opportunity to develop a Nottinghamshire professional planning academy to improve planning service delivery to ensure there is highly skilled and experienced planning professional to deliver future housing growth – replicating our effective models of recruitment pathways in other specialist fields. This will respond to the Government's drive to invest in the planning profession. The new larger planning teams will be able to absorb workload fluctuations and provide specialist expertise, such as minerals and waste planning as well as provide a compelling offer to planning graduates and talent in the sector.

This provides a new opportunity to help support and unlock sustainable economic growth through a streamlined integrated local planning authority with the capacity and strategic vision to drive development at scale.

Delivery of a planning service through a new unitary planning authority will consolidate functions, enabling a more coherent approach to spatial planning, housing delivery, and infrastructure investment. This alignment supports the ambitions of the Government's proposals to reform the planning system, which calls for simpler governance structures to accelerate growth and improve public services.

As planning processes will be simplified it will become a single point of contact for residents, businesses and decision-making reducing confusion and will improve planning capacity for major infrastructure and housing projects. This will help speed up the decision-making process along with providing opportunities for digital transformation and modern service delivery. This will result in higher quality planning applications and decisions. In approving applications, the new unitary planning teams will also ensure aspects of building control and planning enforcement are strengthened. This will offer greater assurance to Fire Service partners and residents, particularly those living in higher risk buildings.

In terms of policy, the new local plan will cover larger geographies which will enable strategic alignment and integration with other strategies for transport, environment and economic development to support long term growth and sustainability objectives. It will also align with EMCCAs Inclusive Growth Strategy and Spatial Development Strategies.

Broxtowe, Gedling, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe have, over recent years, worked jointly on the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP). This collaboration was primarily driven by the Duty to Cooperate and the absence of a regional or sub-regional planning framework to address cross-boundary strategic issues – particularly Nottingham City's previous inability to meet its own housing needs. Gedling has recently withdrawn from the process due to specific local circumstances.

With the Duty to Cooperate set to end, and regional planning set to be reintroduced when EMCCA assumes the role of strategic planning authority, the need to address strategic planning matters at the local plan level will become less critical. EMCCA will be responsible for establishing future development requirements and the broad spatial distribution of new development. An important consideration in designing this reorganisation proposal is that recognition that should the Nottingham conurbation require future expansion, it will be EMCCA's role to determine where that expansion should broadly occur, regardless of where the boundaries between the two new unitary authorities are drawn.

The work to prepare and adopt the GNSP is scheduled to conclude prior to the establishment of the new unitary authorities. Following this, it is likely that the two new councils will wish to work with EMCCA to prepare their own new-style Local Plans under the reformed national planning system and to move forward and address some of the limitations and constraints of the system to date. The new Mayoral Spatial Development Strategy will provide a strategic planning framework to guide future growth across the wider Nottingham area and the strategic context for preparation of new local plans.

Under the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal, the Nottingham Council will be able to focus its local plan policies and proposals on urban renewal, brownfield regeneration, and more concentrated urban development. The Nottinghamshire Council will be better placed to prepare policies and proposals that support and, where necessary, grow its rural communities, market towns and villages and industrial heartlands. For example, its local plan will be able to establish a coherent and complementary planning framework for the significant redevelopment proposals emerging for the Trent Valley power station sites, including Ratcliffe-on-Soar, that are located within the new unitary authority.

### **Ensuring good quality housing**

Bringing together Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's boroughs and districts under a unified housing management system offers significant advantages in strategic planning and service delivery. Two unitary authorities can develop and implement county-wide housing strategies that address affordable housing needs, homelessness prevention, and sustainable development more effectively than fragmented governance. This consolidation enables better coordination with other public services such as adult social care, planning, and public health, ensuring that housing policies are integrated into broader efforts to support community wellbeing.

The proposed geography would provide a Nottingham housing stock of 28,931, with the Nottinghamshire Council housing stock being 25,151. Condition across the whole stock is similar, along with average EPC ratings of C or D. The geography within this proposal provides clear synergies in managing housing stock that has shared characteristics in terms of the urban setting, including higher density homes concentrated in a smaller geographic area providing for a more streamlined delivery model due to centralised services, access to public transport, better connectivity and workforce to manage the estate. The Nottinghamshire unitary will deliver a unified housing management structure promoting efficiency and consistency with shared procurement, maintenance, and administrative systems to reduce duplication and lower costs, while modern digital platforms can streamline tenant services and improve responsiveness. Residents will benefit from consistent service standards across the county, and local delivery hubs can preserve community-specific knowledge and engagement. Overall, this approach strengthens accountability, simplifies governance, and enhances the ability to respond to housing challenges with agility and economies of scale.

Crucially, this unified approach also supports the delivery of better quality homes. With consistent standards and oversight, the new authority can ensure that all housing—whether new builds or existing stock—meets higher safety and quality benchmarks and full compliance with Awaab’s Law. Centralised governance allows for faster response times, better monitoring, and more accountability, helping to prevent the kinds of health hazards that led to the tragic death of Awaab Ishak. By embedding these protections into a county-wide housing strategy, Nottinghamshire can raise the standard of living for all tenants and ensure that safe, decent housing is a right, not a postcode lottery.

## *Tackling Homelessness Through Integration and Prevention*

We are committed ending the cycle of homelessness through prevention, early intervention, and joined-up services that leave no one behind. LGR will support a single unified transformation programme for housing and homelessness that will support ending the cycle of homelessness through a prevention framework that ensures consistent standards and equitable access, regardless of location.

National evidence tells us that a person centred, multidisciplinary and integrated approach is the most effective way of preventing and relieving homelessness and rough sleeping. The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal places this approach at the centre of addressing homelessness.

Homelessness is often thought to be an urban issue, but around 28,000 people are homeless in rural areas nationally—a figure that has increased by 73% since 2018. It has severe health impacts, with affected individuals experiencing much worse physical and mental health outcomes than the general population. The causes of homelessness are complex, involving structural factors like lack of affordable housing and rising living costs, as well as personal events and health issues; preventing homelessness for one year can save the public sector about £10,000 per person, given the annual cost is estimated at £38,736

Families with children living in temporary accommodation is a challenge in our area, with 210 households in temporary accommodation according to the latest published data for April-June 2025, including 96 families with children and 10 of those families had stayed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation longer than 6 weeks. Homelessness places a significant cost on families, and bed and breakfasts are widely recognised as unsuitable for households with children.

Homelessness prevention is a key indicator. Nottingham City has prevented 41.4% of homelessness and Nottinghamshire (all districts) has prevented 59.5% (MHCLG). The shift to two new unitary councils will result in a shift in distribution of homelessness to the City authority with the inclusion of the suburbs. The County authority will have more rural and market town homelessness that require different approaches to city homelessness.

The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal is expected to provide better distribution of need across housing domains (households owed relief duty, households in temporary accommodation, households owed prevention duty and rough sleepers) between the two new unitary Councils compared to current geography, this was key evidence in the options appraisal that supports the geography underpinning this proposal.

Rural areas face specific challenges. Limited transport options, rural economic decline and the associated impact on wages and job opportunities, physical isolation, reduced access to support services, as well as the likelihood of homelessness being 'less visible' all mean that addressing and preventing homelessness in rural areas requires an approach that is particular to the needs and characteristics of the population and geography.

This proposal will improve outcomes and provide a more seamless approach to providing support. We envisage a joined-up approach to tackling homelessness for each of the two new unitary Councils, bringing together the existing strengths and learning from our partnerships and capitalising on existing assets to provide the diversity of accommodation required to offer services that support prevention and relief of homelessness.

There are 4 pillars that the two new unitary Councils will each need to develop

1. A cross-council Homelessness strategy that has a unified approach to the unique needs of the populations.
2. A Single Housing register that supports a single point of access and allocations.
3. A unified data, intelligence and innovation platform that supports resilience, pooling of homelessness resources and data sharing
4. Strengthening existing strategic partnership approaches to tackle the causes of homelessness and create space for joint working across the two Councils.

Pillar 1. A unified cross-council Homelessness Strategy with a “One Door” approach, ensuring every resident can access support through a single digital entry point per unitary council. Delivery of this ambition will be through a hub-and-spoke model for homelessness services to support the urban, rural and market town populations, combining local accessibility with strategic coordination to create a single homelessness pathway the new Councils.

Pillar 2. A key advantage of the unitary approach will be a single housing register and allocations policy supporting flexibility across the two proposed councils. Aligning local connection criteria enables more responsive support for those needing a fresh start. Rushcliffe Borough Council has strong performance in early intervention and low temporary accommodation use can be scaled across the new unitary councils. Existing collaboration via the Notts Housing Group provides a solid foundation for joint commissioning and multi-agency support.

Pillar 3. The One Door approach would provide consistent, responsive services that prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, and provide rapid, effective wrap around support regardless of where they live. Partners and workforce would experience streamlined processes, strong local

partnerships, and the ability to innovate and share best practice. The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal enables a countywide, integrated homelessness prevention and support service across the area. A unified strategy with joint commissioning and shared digital systems ensures:

- **Fair access**, localised solutions and better outcomes.
- **Centralised triage** and a hub and spoke model for efficient, responsive services.
- **Unified policies and platforms** to improve asset use and reduce reliance on agency workers.

Pillar 4. Across the new unitary councils there would be strengthening and building of the existing partnerships between housing, health, and social care teams through the Notts Housing Group and Integrated Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI). The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal offers the ability to create a unified, county-wide Navigation and Outreach Service to address rough sleeping and broader health determinants. Nottinghamshire's proven multi-agency RSI model integrates housing, health, mental health, and substance use professionals to deliver assertive outreach and coordinated care. The RSI model features central referral hubs, integrated assessments, and tailored responses—urban areas benefit from rapid specialist services that would be delivered by the Council. Rural areas would receive mobile outreach. Strong public health working at place level is in place and would support the identification of vulnerabilities like hidden rural homelessness and drive system-wide improvements.

The Greater Nottinghamshire proposal for a rural/market town approach supports local strengths, enables flexible service delivery, and fosters deep collaboration with public health and neighbourhood working. Councils with similar geographic challenges are grouped to tailor services and protect rural needs.

If the two new unitary councils can prevent half of those individuals experiencing homelessness it could yield a reduction in public costs of £220,000 per year with a significant health benefit to individuals. However, the annual figures of individuals rough sleeping are much higher and both rural and women's rough sleeping are vastly underrepresented in these figures, so potential savings are likely to be far higher. The proposal builds on existing successful approaches in Rushcliffe's model where a nurse specialist engaged a rough sleeper within 72 hours, leading to permanent accommodation. This would support more people into a safe and secure home.

## Beyond 2028

Charlotte, 22, is a recent care leaver from Newark-on-Trent. Since leaving care, she has been unable to find suitable housing, so is living in a residential home.

**Charlotte's move out of care has given her clearer options, wider reach, and a fairer shot at independence through...**

- **Unified Housing Support** – Charlotte can access housing services through a single, integrated team and central referral hub. This means quicker, clearer guidance on affordable housing options and support.
- **Wider Access to Homes** – A digital housing register and unified allocations policy gives Charlotte access to a broader range of housing across the county, not just in Newark-on-Trent, improving her chances of finding a suitable and affordable home.
- **Better Planning and Infrastructure** – With a central planning hub, housing development is better aligned with transport, schools, and services, making it easier for Charlotte's family to settle in a well-connected neighbourhood.
- **Integrated People and Place services** – Housing is built into Charlotte's transition plan from care, helping ensure independent accommodation is ready when she is, reducing costs and improving outcomes.

### 5.d.v. Creating a Connected Place

Our vision is for integrated neighbourhood public services that are rooted in communities and powered by place.

Across both new Councils in this proposal, we want people to feel safe, connected and a valued part of their local community. Regardless of geographical boundaries, the region has a huge amount to offer, and we want people to recognise Nottinghamshire, and the wider East Midlands region, as somewhere great to live, work and visit.

This means there needs to be a focus on continuing to improve infrastructure, driving improvements in transport connectivity, preserving the natural space we are surrounded by and continually improve our natural and built environment.

#### Highways Services

A well-managed and developed highway network is a fundamental enabler to the economic vitality, connectivity, and resilience of Nottinghamshire. It is a critical enabler to increasing economic productivity, unlocking housing development, underpinning town centre regeneration, supporting active travel, improving public realm quality, and facilitating private sector investment. Our proposal, to establish two new Unitary Authorities, presents a significant opportunity to enhance the strategic delivery of highways services as a key cog in the overall system.

The removal of the two-tier system will deliver multifaceted benefits to the communities of the Nottingham region. These include:

**Highways as a catalyst for development and regeneration:** Integrating the Local Plan making and highways functions, which are currently fragmented across multiple councils and the two tiers of local government, will accelerate strategic planning and delivery of housing and economic development. Having two new Unitary Authorities, each responsible for Local Planning and housing allocation, whilst also being the statutory authorities for the functions of highway and flood risk management will result in better quality decision making whilst also providing significant regulatory relief for urban development. In particular, the bureaucratic processes of statutory consultation processes between councils/local authorities will be streamlined, resulting in fewer legal challenges to planning decisions, more resilient and better-connected housing development which can be delivered at a faster pace and for enhanced value for money.

**Customer Experience:** Consolidated service delivery will provide a highways “one-stop-shop” for communities, developers and investors, reducing confusion and improving customer satisfaction. Without the fragmentation caused by the two-tier system, the two new authorities will be significantly more accountable, agile and able to respond to community and customer demands. The two new authorities will also be able to

share resources and provide cross-boundary support during severe weather events and other emergency incidents. This will ensure they put community wellbeing at the heart of their emergency response and recovery, whilst also providing clear and consistent public communication/information.

**Operational Efficiency** The economies of scope and scale created by our proposal will enable a reduction in duplication and management overheads whilst also delivering cost efficiencies by aligning the functions of highways maintenance, street cleaning, verge mowing, drainage maintenance and grounds maintenance. Via East Midlands Ltd, the County Council's wholly owned highways delivery company, would be well positioned to provide an integrated highways maintenance and construction services across both the new authorities proposed.

The proposed urban/rural split enables tailored and effective highways service delivery:

- The more urban nature of the proposed **Nottingham Council** area allows a focus on high-density infrastructure, integrated transport, and public realm improvements to support footfall and economic activity in the city and town centres.
- Given the more rural composition of the proposed **Nottinghamshire Council**, the emphasis will be connectivity, resilience, and access to market towns, with opportunities for landscape-sensitive infrastructure and active travel routes.

This geographic alignment will allow each authority to prioritise investment and service delivery based on local needs and characteristics, enhancing regeneration outcomes.

The proposal offers a strategic and integrated approach to planning for housing and economic growth, which is enabled by well-planned, quality highways infrastructure. It streamlines the regulatory planning processes to deliver sustainable and resilient communities, inclusive growth and town centre revitalisation across Nottinghamshire at an accelerated pace and greater value for money, making it a cornerstone of successful local government transformation.

## Waste Management

The government's Simpler Recycling initiative aims to increase household recycling rates across the country to 65% by 2035<sup>2</sup>.

In 2023/24, average household recycling rates in England were 42.3%. In Nottinghamshire, the rate varies dependent on location between 26.7% to 47.4%<sup>3</sup> highlighting the level of improvement required in the coming decade. This proposal demonstrates how the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal can support the two new Councils to reach this target.

The creation of two new unitary councils will enable a better strategic integration of waste services, creating single authorities with oversight of the services removing the fragmentation seen in two-tier systems, where strategic and operational misalignment can delay or complicate delivery.

Creating two unitary authorities under this proposal aligns with national agendas such as:

- Net Zero & Circular Economy: Supports environmental goals through integrated waste strategies.
- Public Service Reform: Promotes efficiency, accountability, and innovation.
- Simpler Recycling – providing a uniform and consistent approach to recycling across the country
- Infrastructure & Investment: Enables strategic planning and sustainable growth.

It will bring operational efficiency and cost savings through centralising of procurement, reduced administrative overheads and economies of scale. Examples from other areas e.g. Cornwall and Durham show long-term savings and improved service delivery.

Integrated waste authorities can also align disposal and collection strategies, invest in low-carbon infrastructure and accelerate adoption of smart technologies e.g. AI routing and automated sorting.

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<sup>2</sup> [Simpler Recycling in England: policy update - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>3</sup> [UK statistics on waste - GOV.UK](#)

Creating two unitary councils will enable systems that will make recycling easier. Residents will be able to recycle the same materials whether at home, work or school. A universal standard will ensure that everything that can be collected for household recycling is collected. Through Simpler Recycling, all householders will receive a comprehensive and consistent set of waste and recycling services. This will enable householders to recycle as much waste as possible.

The new councils will be able to better plan depot locations, fleet electrification and develop circular economy initiatives creating savings from efficiencies that can be reinvested into infrastructure and innovation.

The unitary council areas outlined in this proposal will bring particular benefits to waste services as it specifically aligns with natural catchments, EMCCA spatial strategy, and builds on the existing partnerships between the councils.

The complexity of Waste Services and its existing contracts in Nottinghamshire creates both challenges and opportunities under LGR. To maintain contract integrity and avoid costly termination or complex novation, close cooperation between the new authorities will be required. This proposal therefore advocates the development of a shared Waste Authority model across Greater Nottinghamshire's new Councils, this enhanced strategic alignment already exists in the agreed Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Joint Waste Strategy and this would be used as the basis for the new model as part of this proposal.

Using modelling from the IMPOWER benchmarking index, we believe that there are financial benefits to be achieved through the integration of waste collection services under our preferred LGR model, including the potential to exceed national recycling performance across the Greater Nottingham area. This would enable proportionate reductions in residual waste collection and disposal infrastructure costs to deliver further savings via more efficient and fully integrated waste collection services. Additionally collection and packaging reforms will further reduce demand in residual waste collection and disposal functions.

Local Government Reorganisation on the geography proposed will enable prioritisation of the behavioural changes necessary to transform and maximise public access to the new delivery model described. The IMPOWER modelling suggest that alignment of waste collection and disposal functions and associated delivery of simpler recycling could deliver further efficiencies of between £8.3m and £19.4m.

### **Case study: Waste and Recycling – developing frontline “Community champions”.**

The move to a unitary Council offers a chance to align waste and recycling services, improving efficiency and consistency across the county. Our frontline crews—present in every neighbourhood—will become **community champions**, using mobile tech to report issues in real time.

From identifying potholes with under-vehicle cameras, flagging concerns about vulnerable households, or recognising and acting upon localised flood risks, they’ll play a key role in prevention and early intervention across communities in every neighbourhood.

We’ll build a multi-skilled, place-based workforce, coordinating tasks like road repairs, litter picking, and grass cutting under single road closures to reduce disruption and improve service delivery. That is real integration in neighbourhoods of the services that people care so much about on their doorstep.

By enhancing digital tools and data literacy, our workforce will make better decisions and provide faster, more accurate support. A “one front door” model will empower them to respond to neighbourhood needs while balancing outcomes with financial awareness.

### **Arts, Leisure and Culture**

Arts, culture, and leisure services are vital enablers of positive social, educational, and health outcomes. They support economic opportunity via education, as well as a preventative approach to wellbeing by encouraging community participation and healthier lifestyles. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire already demonstrate strong, community-focused delivery in these areas. The proposed move to two new Unitary Authorities offers an opportunity to sustain and enhance these services through more strategic, joined-up delivery.

A key benefit is the ability to unify services previously split across a two-tier system, enabling equitable access by all parts of the Nottinghamshire community and a greater consistency of service provision and the outcomes across libraries, leisure centres, and cultural programmes. For example, creating a single heritage service in each authority—linking museums, archives, and libraries—would improve efficiency and community access. The model also allows for tailored provision and greater connectivity, based on the distinct needs of urban and rural communities created by the proposal. For example, the two Unitary Authorities will be well placed to work in collaboration with the East Midlands County Combined Authority to ensure public transport provision ensures equitable access to these important cultural facilities, regardless of where in the Nottinghamshire region people live.

### **Case Study: Inspire**

Established in 2016, Inspire is a charitable trust delivering libraries, adult learning, archives, arts, and music services across Nottinghamshire County Council's current area. Operating independently from the County Council, it combines public service values with commercial agility, drawing in external funding and fostering community ownership.

Inspire's scalable infrastructure, strong governance, and partnerships with councils, schools, and national bodies place it in a strong position to provide a cost-effective solution for expanding cultural and learning services across the new council areas.

### ***Natural Spaces and the Historic Environment***

The creation of two new unitary councils in Nottinghamshire presents a major opportunity to enhance the county's natural and historic environments. Through the coordinated Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), the proposal supports improved public health, biodiversity, and community cohesion. Nottinghamshire's historic towns and rural landscapes, shaped by medieval development and less modern urbanisation, benefit from tailored planning approaches.

The proposed urban and rural focused councils allow for targeted, sustainable strategies. In the Nottingham Council urban areas, though more spatially constrained, can still enhance biodiversity and public access to green spaces. For the Nottinghamshire Council, rural areas offer potential for landscape-scale nature recovery, including woodland creation and biodiversity projects with landowners.

Greater Nottinghamshire's diverse natural features—such as the River Trent and National Character Areas—support this strategic approach. Overall, the proposal offers a more integrated, neighbourhood-sensitive model for green space planning, delivering long-term environmental, health, and social benefits.

### ***Parks***

Parks continue to be a well-loved and integral part of the fabric of all our communities. Their value extends beyond traditional playgrounds, taking place in varied environments that help build life skills, independence, and community connections.

This informs a broader vision for an inclusive, sustainable parks service that promote physical and mental wellbeing. The goal is to provide accessible, affordable opportunities for all, helping to reduce health inequalities. Addressing the differing needs of rural and urban communities is key: rural areas require improved transport and digital access, while urban areas benefit from integrating open spaces and parks with healthcare through GP referrals and social prescribing. This ensures the service continue to meet diverse community needs.

Management and maintenance of a consolidated parks estate by the proposed two unitary councils will deliver efficiencies of scale and scope. For example, parks and playgrounds have many similar assets to highways, such as footpaths, small built structures and areas of grass needing mowing. The proposed new councils will be able to create centres of excellence for asset management that will lead to cost savings during procurement and integrated service delivery.

### **Beyond 2028**

Dianne, 67, loves to visit the area but lives in Loughborough. She frequently travels into Nottingham centre to explore the city. This year, her grandchildren are turning 7 and 9, so she's looking forward to taking them to Wollaton Park.

#### **Dianne's regular visits to Nottingham become more valuable because...**

- **Community Empowered Activity** – With community focussed leadership, the community has set up new societies and events for her to take part in, like the book club she has recently joined. Dianne loves to get involved in the Nottingham community, especially as she visits so often and is looking to now give back.
- **Strong Nottinghamshire Culture** – Dianne used to travel to Nottingham for the events and shopping but now comes in because of its strong focus on culture. She is proud to bring her grandchildren to the area.
- **Transport** – With less limitations across borders, connectivity has increased and has built an easier route into the area for Dianne. She can now travel into Nottingham, get further into the county, and travel with her grandchildren without needing a car.

## *Public Safety*

We want to enhance public safety by creating more integrated, coherent service delivery, better alignment with hyper local community needs, and more targeted use of resources. It is acknowledged that crime, harm and risks vary significantly across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, reflecting diverse socio-economic conditions, population densities, and local challenges in different neighbourhoods.

Nottingham City experiences a disproportionately high share of crime within the region, accounting for 40.6% of all recorded offences in 2024/25 and over half of specific crimes such as robbery and drug offences. Serious violence rates, including homicide and possession of weapons, are notably higher than national averages, partly due to proactive policing strategies like dedicated knife crime teams. While domestic abuse rates in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are below national averages, the urban environment—characterized by high population density and economic disparity—contributes to elevated levels of violent crime, anti-social behaviour, and complex issues such as gang activity. The concentration of nightlife and commercial areas further increases the risk of public order offences and alcohol-related crimes, highlighting the need for robust law enforcement and targeted community safety initiatives.

In contrast, rural districts such as Newark and Sherwood or Rushcliffe face different public safety challenges. These areas generally have lower overall crime rates but are more susceptible to acquisitive and rural crimes, such as theft of farm equipment and livestock, as well as issues like flooding. The relative isolation and reduced police presence can make these communities attractive targets for organised crime, while barriers to accessing support services can exacerbate problems like domestic abuse and substance misuse. Suburban areas like Broxtowe and Gedling experience a mix of urban and rural crime patterns, including property crime and youth-related anti-social behaviour. This diversity in crime types and risk factors across the region underscores the need for a nuanced, place-based approach to public safety—one that addresses both the acute challenges of urban centres and the unique vulnerabilities of rural and suburban communities

## *A unified approach to protection and safety*

This proposal supports better alignment of public safety services, enabling targeted interventions, improved resilience, and commercial growth through ventures like ARBA (Assured Regulatory Business Advice).

A unified protection and safety service in each unitary authority will combine a range of regulatory services including Environmental Health, Licensing, Community Safety, and Trading Standards to streamline inspection and enforcement, improve customer experience, and enhance business compliance and vitality. Businesses will benefit from a single point of contact and assured advice, with existing partnerships like ARBA

ready for expansion. (ARBA is a joint working agreement between Rushcliffe Environmental Health and County Trading Standards teams to provide Primary Authority Partnerships services to business.). The service would integrate multidisciplinary regulatory teams aligned to geographical patches but with shared strategic leadership and management to further streamline the business relationships, inspections and processes, establish a single customer front door whilst improving outcomes and efficiency across teams. The flexibility and resilience of the team would allow capacity and capability to be scaled up and down depending on local and business needs.

The approach will allow a more holistic regulatory approach to tackling local community safety concerns such as targeting fraudulent businesses that transact counterfeit goods/ services, create spaces for modern slavery, drug related crime, poor food safety practices, noise disturbance or antisocial behaviour. The approach would also build on current expertise seen in the Rushcliffe Borough Council multidisciplinary regulatory team approach and the County Council's Trading Standards team (who already hosts the nationally commissioned regional investigation unit, delivers some trading standards services on behalf of Nottingham City and maintains primary authority relationships with major local businesses like Boots and Wren.)

#### **Case Study: Joint Enforcement Activity with Environmental Health and Licensing Authorities**

Trading Standards has been actively collaborating with Environmental Health teams to address concerns surrounding the distribution of illicit tobacco products through retail outlets. Recent joint operations with Licensing in Mansfield have targeted premises suspected of selling illegal tobacco while holding valid alcohol licences, highlighting potential regulatory breaches.

Additionally, intelligence has indicated that certain retail premises may be used for non-commercial, domestic purposes—such as shop workers residing on-site. In response, coordinated inspections have been conducted alongside Environmental Health Housing Teams in Ashfield and Bassetlaw, concurrently with Trading Standards' investigations into illicit tobacco sales.

These multi-agency efforts underscore a strategic approach to tackling illegal trade and ensuring compliance with Trading Standards Regulations and Housing Regulations.

A Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will cover each unitary footprint (i.e. two CSPs in total) and benefit from hyperlocal approaches tailored to each authority's needs and Integrated Neighbourhood Public Service approach. For example, the Nottingham unitary CSP will focus on issues like serious violence, homelessness and youth violence, while the Nottinghamshire unitary will address acquisitive crime, ageing, isolation, rural impact and hidden deprivation. A public health approach will be embedded across both CSPs to ensure the 'causes of the causes' are identified

and data-driven planning will support targeted interventions, improving outcomes in antisocial behaviour, domestic abuse, serious violence, and modern slavery. Stronger links will be developed into hyperlocal delivery of Integrated Neighbourhood Public Services to further integrate existing work of Community Safety Partnerships with local communities, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottinghamshire Police's neighbourhood policing approach and wider Health and Wellbeing Boards.

This proposal enables better alignment of the Community Safety Agreement (2025–2027) metrics (domestic abuse crime rates, serious violence incidents, youth justice entries, and perceptions of safety) with hyperlocal needs including rural crime, supporting integrated, preventative approaches that reduce reliance on costly services. It will also provide a strong platform for the forthcoming Duty to Collaborate (part of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024) which will require statutory commissioning organisations to work together to commission victim support services for serious violence, sexual violence and domestic abuse.

#### **Case Study: System approach to Domestic Homicide Reviews**

The future centralisation of Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) processes will enable the new unitary councils to develop a single model which includes cost efficiencies by bringing reviews in house and ensures that the learning for DHRs is disseminated through the system. Cost avoidance methods will be undertaken in the County in 2026 and this will shape the future centralised approach. It is difficult to predict the future DHR rates, however there are advantages to reducing the current number of CSPs and pooling budgets to provide more resilience across the whole of Nottinghamshire for fluctuations in DHR demand and cost pressures.

Emergency planning and business continuity will be strengthened through a single council resilience team across both unitary councils, improving mutual aid and response coordination. The team would maintain geographical teams across each unitary, however have shared strategic leadership across Greater Nottinghamshire with a strong connection to the newly created Local Resilience Forum (LRF) hub for Nottinghamshire hosted by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue. This would build on the Nottinghamshire team model who currently deliver Emergency Planning Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for all seven districts and borough councils, with three having an extended SLA for a more comprehensive service.

The approach also aligns with potential regional changes under EMCCA, including the potential to develop a Multi-Agency Contingencies Unit which would align with Police and Fire and Rescue boundaries and have the potential to enhanced delegated duties to local Strategic and Tactical Coordinating Groups. The proposal supports aligning key risks within each unitary authority, for example the future Nottinghamshire Council being more focused around the flooding risks of the River Trent, animal health, safety at sports grounds with the future Nottingham Council needing

stronger response around City centre risks such as antisocial behaviour and serious violence. Both councils will need to consider work of CONTEST and PREVENT to reduce the risk of terrorism locally.

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### 5.d.vi. Operational Excellence

To realise our ambition for two modern, digitally enabled, and vibrant local authorities, we must fundamentally transform how local government operates. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is more than structural change—it's a shift in how we operate at our core. A clear and cohesive Target Operating Model (TOM) will guide this transformation, aligning people, processes, technology, governance, and structures to deliver our vision and strategic objectives. It enables both future authorities to leverage their strengths while working strategically toward shared goals. This framework is essential to delivering our ambitions across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

#### *Design Principles*

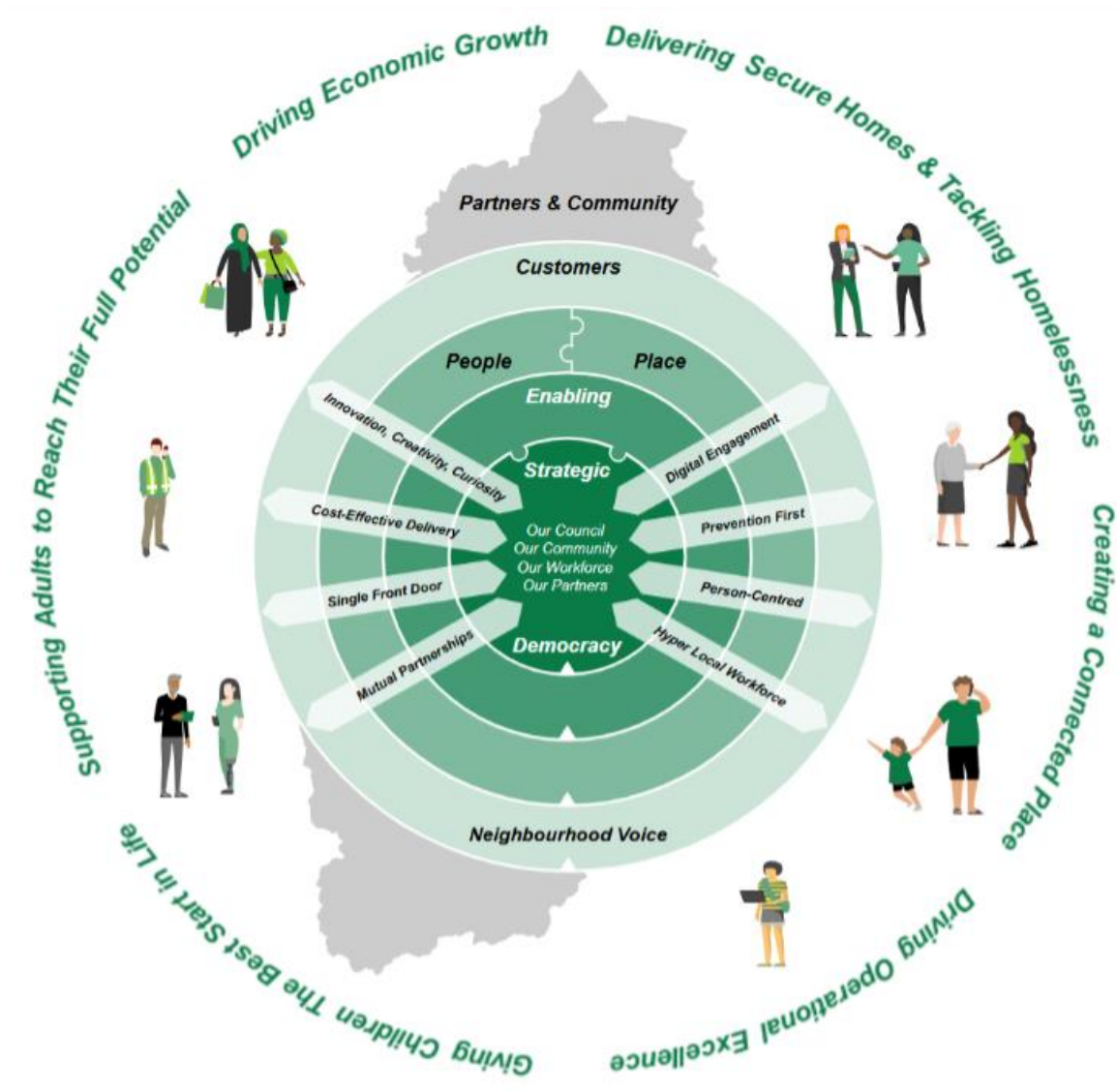
A set of design principles have been created to underpin all components of the two future councils. The principles will strategically direct our decisions as a more detailed operating model is designed.

| Design Principle               | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Prevention First</b>        | Prioritising early intervention and prevention, ensuring support is provided at the right time and right place to reduce long-term demand and improve lives. Working hand-in-hand with our partners to achieve our combined prevention goals.                                                                    |
| <b>Cost-Effective Delivery</b> | Delivering services in the most cost-effective way, making smart use of resources, partnerships, and technology to maximise impact and minimise waste. Making the best use of public funds by prioritising spending, delivering services that offer clear value, and being transparent about costs and outcomes. |
| <b>Digital Engagement</b>      | Digital self-service will be the primary starting point for all interactions, enabling residents to access support quickly and easily, reserving officer time for complex needs. Residents will not be left behind, whatever their digital ability.                                                              |
| <b>Single Front Door</b>       | We will create a joined-up single access point for all council services, using human interaction where empathy, judgement, or tailored support is needed. Multiple contact options all routing through one unified front door.                                                                                   |

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Innovation, Creativity &amp; Curiosity</b> | We will be a creative organisation that embraces innovation, continuously seeking new ideas and approaches to improve services and meet evolving community expectations. We will support a culture of curiosity encouraging ownership and collaboration across services.                                                    |
| <b>People-Centred Decision Making</b>         | We will do the right thing for each stakeholder balancing local responsiveness with a “One Council” approach. When needed services will be designed, prioritised and delivered locally, always aligned to shared values and standards.                                                                                      |
| <b>Hyper Local Workforce</b>                  | Building a workforce that reflects and responds to the unique needs of our communities, recognising the differences between rural and urban areas across the unitary. By recruiting, retaining, and deploying workforce locally, services will be delivered by people who understand the places and communities they serve. |
| <b>Mutual Partnerships</b>                    | Working flexibly and collaboratively with partners to ensure services are delivered by the right organisation at the right time, always focused on best outcomes for residents.                                                                                                                                             |

### *High Level Target Operating Model*

The core components of our target operating model have been developed to enable the delivery of the ambitions in the proposal through two high performing councils. The work to date has been informed by workforce and community engagement, and this will continue as part of implementation planning.



- **Communities and residents** are at the centre of our delivery model, connected through services delivered by our **Councils** and our **partners**.
- Our **strategic and enabling services** sit at the core of the Councils defining the organisations' future direction and how they will achieve their strategic goals. The strategic layer will bring the local community together with a strong external-facing role, connecting with EMCCA, wider partners, and supporting the local economy. Our enabling services will support our ability to deliver services and change effectively. This includes support such as governance, technology, HR, financial and information management, and process optimisation. This will be a proactive, innovative service that is led by data and focused on delivering the future vision of both councils.
- **The People & Place** layer depicts the direct delivery of services to communities. Reflecting our commitment to efficient, effective, and locally responsive service provision, shaped by the needs of people and places.
- Our approach to our **customer** is shaped by **Neighbourhood Voice, shown as a connecting thread**, linking the community to democratic structures and influencing every layer of the operating model. The focus will be on how residents and service users engage with the organisation. It ensures that customer interactions are streamlined, accessible, and aligned with the organisation's ambition to put residents at the heart of service design and delivery. A clearly defined Customer layer, with effective digital self-serve, triage, and prevention service will support residents to access the correct support while delivering financial benefits for the unitary councils.
- **Partners & Community:** This layer is integral and will involve interactions with key community stakeholders, such as the emergency services, health providers, hospital trusts, ICB and Parish Councils. It ensures the future councils' flexibility in their role, whether leading, supporting, or enabling services to be delivered by the right organisation at the right time.

Two of the key strategic and enabling functions where we see significant opportunities to have a transformative impact as we implement two new unitary councils are in Data, Digital and Information and Commissioning and Procurement. The opportunities are highlighted below:

#### *Data, Digital and Information*

Technology and data, will be central to delivering efficient, responsive services. The transition offers a chance to modernise systems, improve data use, and adopt digital tools that enhance insight, coordination, and decision-making.

A single digital front door will provide seamless, 24/7 access to services via self-service tools, AI, and familiar platforms like WhatsApp. Digital triage will guide residents to the right support, reserving human contact for complex needs. A connected (Customer Relationship Management) CRM will streamline service delivery, reducing hand-offs and enabling faster responses.

Services will be delivered through a unified, digitally enabled People and Place layer. Consolidated systems will improve integration, reduce duplication, and support proactive, community-focused delivery. Officers will use modern tools and cloud-based platforms, including AI and RPA, to automate tasks and focus on high-value work. A new digital framework will boost workforce capability, enabling employees to adapt and improve services directly. The new service will be based on a robust and cyber compliant service.

Smart infrastructure (e.g. Internet of Things IoT, Long Range Wide Area Networks LoRaWAN) will enhance asset visibility and support services like street lighting, gritting, and care alerts for vulnerable residents.

While both unitary council residents will share core digital national infrastructure (broadband providers), each will tailor technology to meet local needs. Greater system integration will ensure a seamless experience for residents, businesses, and visitors across boundaries. In the City, digital tools will support urban services and sectors like culture and hospitality. In the County, the focus will be on improving rural connectivity and using smart tech for service delivery and environmental monitoring. This shared yet flexible approach will enhance efficiency, improve services, and support long-term sustainability.

### *Commissioning and Procurement*

To achieve the new unitary' councils' goals of *Cost-Effective Delivery*, *Prevention First*, and centring *Innovation*, the approach to commissioning and procurement will be critical, balancing:

- Collaborative and Inclusive Commissioning
- Value for Money
- Economic Growth
- Social Value
- Simplification
- Strategic Market Shaping
- Integrated and Holistic Services

This describes a function that works for the public good, unitary goals, and actively builds innovative ways of working. To set up this shift, we will work to:

1. **Create a culture of balance:** where contract arrangements are assessed by their social value alongside their cost; their equity with their impact. This is a tightrope of decision-making, where Commissioning and Procurement will be an intelligent function supporting the councils' visions.
2. **Use digital to get the best results:** where the function will move into the digital age, using digital platforms to streamline operations and magnify supplier engagement. We will use procurement dashboards for data-driven decisions, including highlighting when contracts are ending, where there is higher risk, or how frequently suppliers have been contacted.
3. **Build personal relationships to innovate:** the greatest social value and efficiencies come from trust-based relationships with providers, who understand us and our missions. We will move beyond transactional relationships to empower our Commissioning and Procurement function and suppliers to be creative in delivery.
4. **Deliver shared efficiencies:** where contracting is consolidated wherever possible to deliver shared services with greater value for money. We will simplify our contracts to bring together our market-shaping power. By pooling our budgets, we will be able to procure services at lower cost with stronger negotiations.
5. **Promote Alternative Delivery Models:** where unitary councils lean into novel ways of delivery services. We currently use Alternative Delivery Models across multiple districts to provide highways, library, and cultural services effectively and collaboratively. These models will allow us to bridge between areas and the two unitary councils to consolidate services even further where provision at scale is preferable.

## *Our workforce at the heart of the future operating model*

In addition to the headline design principles and core components of the future target operating models, we have done some further thinking on the future ways of working that will be key to achieving the ambitions outlined in this proposal. They are informed by engagement work we have done with our workforce.

### *Leadership and Management*

Leadership across the future Councils will be visible, inclusive, and system-minded, setting a consistent tone while recognising differences and fostering a sense of belonging. Leaders will be equipped to navigate complexity, support colleagues through change, and champion innovation and curiosity across services.

Leadership will be distributed, enabling agile decision-making and cross-functional collaboration. Leaders will champion inclusion and real impact for our residents, delivered through a highly competent workforce, possible because we genuinely support wellbeing and development. Strong leadership and a positive culture will drive a responsive, high-performing workforce aligned to our vision and committed to delivering public value. Managers will be supported to act as coaches and mentors, embedding reflective practice and continuous learning into everyday work. They will help the workforce grow in confidence, develop their skills, and reach their full potential, particularly through place-based leadership that understands and responds to local needs.

#### **Case Study: East Midlands Leadership Transformation Programme (EMLTP)**

As public sector partners, we face increasingly complex demands in delivering services within a challenging financial context, and multifaceted social and environmental settings. Change is now a constant feature of our environment and in this context, resourcing and developing talent pipelines can be very challenging.

We sought to bridge this gap by developing and procuring a leadership course for middle and senior managers across public sector organisations in the East Midlands, to build relationships, develop leadership capacity and capabilities and create opportunities to implement innovative solutions and work better together to deliver great outcomes across the region.

The EMLTP is a nine-month leadership development initiative for middle to senior managers. Delivered by Nottingham Business School (Nottingham Trent University) in collaboration with a regional steering group, the programme aims to build leadership capacity to address complex public service challenges. Current participants are from Nottinghamshire County Council, EMCCA, Nottingham City Council, Ashfield District Council, Fire, Police, NHS Trust and ICB. The programme covers core components needed for public sector leadership; Personal & Professional Development, Leading in Organisations and Systems, Communication and Change, Using Data-Driven Approaches, Innovation and Creativity.

The programme fosters collaboration, strategic partnerships, and system-wide thinking and ways of working, with specific projects set by the participating organisations to address real life challenges with a cross sectoral team and to work on solutions for system wide public sector issues.

The programme offers a unique opportunity to develop leadership confidence and drive public service reform across the region.

### *Workforce Model: Matrix and Place-Based Working*

Our workforce is essential to delivering high-quality, responsive services. This is a unique opportunity to build two inclusive, community-rooted organisations with a shared culture of excellence, innovation, and continuous learning, both employers of choice with clear visions and strong local employment pipelines.

Our workforce will reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and be equipped to work across systems. To meet evolving community needs and deliver the neighbourhood model, the workforce model will be built on matrix and place-based working.

**Matrix working** will enable Officers to move across services and projects, aligning skills to need, encouraging collaboration to develop creative solutions for communities while supporting career growth through varied, meaningful roles.

**Place-based working** ensures our delivery model is close to our residents and located in the community. We will organise teams around local services and assets, improve deep understanding of local needs and enable a convenient, coordinated responsive approach. Local leadership will be empowered to navigate complexity and deliver joined-up services.

A **flexible employment framework** will use project-based roles and adaptable role profiles, valuing behaviours and experience alongside qualifications. Employees will be encouraged to work where they add most value, using local knowledge and making decisions close to the customer. Data and insights will inform place-based resource allocation responding to local need and disadvantage.

While the overall workforce vision will be shared across both new authorities, with a focus on inclusion, agility, and community connection, the approach will be shaped by the distinct characteristics of urban and rural communities.

The workforce strategy for the proposed Nottingham Council will reflect the diversity and density of city life. Recruitment pipelines will be strengthened through partnerships with Nottingham universities with a focus on inclusivity. Roles will be designed to reflect the lived experience of residents, with Officers working from neighbourhood bases rather than a central base, staying visible and engaged in local areas. Travel support may include discounted tram and bus schemes to suit urban commuting patterns.

The workforce model for the proposed *Nottinghamshire Council* will be built around flexibility and reach. Our workforce will operate across a wider geographic area, supported by touch-down centres in towns and villages to stay connected to communities. Partnerships with colleges and universities in Mansfield and South Yorkshire will help build local training and recruitment pathways, particularly in hard-to-fill roles. The employment offer will reflect rural realities, with support for lease cars, mileage reimbursement, and agile hybrid working to reduce travel time and improve access to services. Employment opportunities will focus on local areas where the workforce understand the needs of the communities while also improving economic employment opportunities in those areas.

This tailored approach will ensure both councils can attract, retain, and support a workforce that reflects the communities they serve and is equipped to deliver responsive, place-based public services.

By aligning people, skills, and leadership with the needs of a modern unitary authority, the proposition supports better service delivery, stronger recruitment and retention, and a healthier, more empowered culture. These benefits will be felt across both councils, both financially, through greater efficiency and reduced duplication, and non-financially, through improved job satisfaction, stronger community connections, and better outcomes for residents.

A practical example of this approach in action is the following case study, which demonstrates how place-based workforce planning and local employment pipelines are being used to address service needs and long-term recruitment challenges:

**Case Study:** Tackling social work workforce pipeline, employment outcomes and service needs.

The initiative aims to address persistent social worker shortages, particularly in Mansfield, Ashfield, and Bassetlaw, and reduce reliance on costly agency workers, which at the time was costing NCC over £7 million annually. To address this, we have developed a new BA (Hons) Social Work degree delivered by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) at Vision West Nottinghamshire College, Mansfield, in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC).

A programme has been set up to support up to 25 students per year, ready for employment from 2028, with NCC funding ten places annually through bursaries covering tuition and living expenses. The total cost per cohort will be significantly lower than funding agency social workers. The course will target local residents, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, offering a pathway into social work and enhancing workforce diversity and retention. This supports our proposed delivery model of a workforce that close to people and located in the community.

Existing training routes, including apprenticeships and postgraduate schemes like Approach, Think Ahead, and Step-Up, have improved recruitment but haven't significantly reduced agency spend. The new degree complements these efforts and aligns with NCC's People Strategy to invest in workforce resilience.

A "test and learn" approach will be adopted for the initial cohort which started in September 2025, with a review to inform future cohorts. Contracts will be introduced to ensure students remain with NCC post-qualification or repay the bursary.

This initiative is expected to yield long-term savings, improve workforce stability, and better serve local communities by developing a sustainable pipeline of qualified social workers in areas where we struggle to recruit.

## Culture

Our culture will be built around community, collaboration, and continuous improvement, creating a shared sense of purpose across the workforce. We are committed to building two organisations that are employers of choice, recognised for excellent work practices, a positive culture, and exceptional leadership.

We will foster a culture that is:

- Honest, transparent, and rooted in integrity
- Curious and innovative
- Empowering and engaging
- Community-centred

This culture will support our test, learn, and grow approach, where employees are encouraged to explore new ways of working, use data and feedback to improve outcomes, and embrace change with confidence.

### *Approach to change*

Our approach to change will be collaborative, working with people, communities and partners to co-design our future model to meet local needs and support the diverse drivers of change across the system. We will be strengths-based, building on the strong foundations and local assets that already exist across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. We will learn from others, benefiting from the knowledge of what has worked well elsewhere to accelerate successful delivery of change. We will work together with the workforce, utilising a test, learn and grow approach to enable iterative and timely change that is informed by the people working day to day in our communities, as well as communities themselves. Change will design in flexibility to meet local needs, but with common and consistent elements coming together to create the framework or scaffolding for coherence across the local area e.g. asset-based practice models, one public estate, etc.) We will adopt a comprehensive impact framework that blends quantitative outcomes with qualitative insights, working with partners and communities to co-design meaningful, shared indicators of success and using qualitative methods to capture the lived experiences of local people and the social value of our investment.

## Civic pride and traditions

Local Government Reorganisation in Nottinghamshire presents both opportunities and challenges for the preservation of civic and ceremonial traditions, which are important for the local sense of identity.

Nottinghamshire is proud of the tradition and contribution of the Lieutenancy. Our Lord Lieutenant and Deputy Lieutenants are an important part of civic society and nurture our community's connection with the King. The Nottinghamshire Lieutenancy has a long heritage of supporting His Majesty the King and the Royal Family across the County. It also acts as a 'bridge-builder', connecting individuals, charities, businesses and networks, all of which contribute to our community's sense of belonging to Nottinghamshire.

Alongside its responsibility to represent the Crown, the Lieutenancy aims to support Nottinghamshire by serving the community and encouraging participation, voluntary activities, and achievement among all groups and sectors. Its focus includes promoting the county's people, culture, diversity, heritage, and history.

The law defines the County of Nottinghamshire as the ceremonial lieutenancy boundary, and we are pleased that this reorganisation will not change that. The decision as to which of the two new unitary councils provides the Clerk to the Lieutenancy, in accordance with the Lieutenancies Act 1997, will be made by the Lord Lieutenant. Currently, this support is provided by Nottinghamshire County Council, but future arrangements will need to be agreed with the Lord Lieutenant and the new administration(s) within the Nottinghamshire boundary. Typically, though not universally, this support is hosted by a County, City, or District Council.

Our proposal includes an expectation that, in addition to the Lieutenancy, we ensure that our other civic arrangements are protected. We will seek to work together with Government to ensure this happens. This includes the Lord Mayor of Nottingham and the High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire. It is important to distinguish between the ceremonial Sheriff of Nottingham (a civic role within the City) and the High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, which is a shrievalty appointment independent of any council, although the Lieutenancy and civic offices work closely with both the High Sheriff and the Undersheriff.

We would ask that charter status be preserved or maintained via transitional provisions so that the historic and ceremonial rights and privileges of local communities are preserved. For example, with our proposal to create a new Council to serve the urban population, we would wish to consider how the Lord Mayor's civic area would reflect the whole District building blocks of Gedling and Broxtowe, subject to appropriate approvals for the impact on the Royal Charter.

In addition, we note that the Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018 make reference to the role of Aldermen. We assume similar provisions would apply under LGR to ensure that the rights and courtesies associated with the title of Alderman are carried over and honoured by the new authority.

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## 6. The Financial Case

LGR presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to rationalise and make radical change to patterns and methods of service delivery. This proposal demonstrates that two sustainable and financially resilient Councils can be created from the nine current Councils. It further suggests that good and effective service transformation can result, resulting in radical improvements to the experience of residents.

The financial challenges faced by all Councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are well documented in respective annual budget reports and subsequent monitoring updates. Published Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) positions as of 31 March 2025 were used as a consistent baseline across all authorities to project the potential revenue budget position for the two new authorities. This results in a forecast budget gap of £83.6m in 2028/29 alone. A cumulative budget gap of £114m from 2025/26-2028/29 has been projected, and this is dependent upon the delivery of £74m of savings and earmarked reserve usage over the next two financial years. This modelling only reflects what is known or anticipated today. This structural deficit has arisen from the demand for, and cost of, services significantly outstripping available funding.

Significant activity is, of course, being undertaken by individual authorities to ameliorate this financial position over the life of their MTFSs which would further shape the projected financial position for the new authorities. Nevertheless, LGR will be undertaken in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in a context of significant financial pressure and uncertainty (including, for example, the potential variable impact of anticipated national policy changes such as the Fair Funding Review).

This demonstrates why transparency and strong oversight of financial commitments outside of current budget plans and decision-making will be essential throughout implementation. This will help set strong organisational and financial foundations for LGR, and to maximise the realisable benefits through streamlining local government arrangements in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The financial case is summarised below, and detailed in full in Appendices E and F.

## Overall Financial Case

| Potential day 1 financial position (c. 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2028) (combined for both authorities) |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Total income                                                                                       | £1,242.3m  |
| Total expenditure                                                                                  | £1,325.9m  |
| Net position                                                                                       | -£83.6m    |
| Reorganisation Costs and Benefits                                                                  |            |
| Gross annual reorganisation savings                                                                | £30.6m     |
| One-off transition costs                                                                           | £35.7m     |
| Payback period                                                                                     | 1.34 years |
| Cumulative net saving after 5 years                                                                | £80.5m     |
| Transformation benefits                                                                            |            |
| Recurring annual transformation savings fully delivered by year 5 - Base                           | £67.6m     |
| Recurring annual transformation savings fully delivered by year 5 - Stretch                        | £91.2m     |

### Projected Unitary Authority Day 1 Positions

| <b>Potential day 1 financial position (c. 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028)</b> | <b>UA 1</b><br><i>(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)</i> | <b>UA 2</b><br><i>(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Total income                                                             | £648.5m                                                                                 | £594.4m                                                       |
| Total expenditure                                                        | £672.1m                                                                                 | £653.7m                                                       |
| Net position                                                             | -£23.6m                                                                                 | -£59.4m                                                       |

As stated above, the calculation of projected 2028/29 cumulative budget gaps is based on current MTFs positions as of 31 March 2025. Notwithstanding the potential impact of changes to individual forecast positions, it is likely there will be budget gaps and the potential cashable benefits from reorganisation will be required to plug these gaps in the first instance. This will also be subject to understanding the impact of Fair Funding Review particularly on the upper tier authorities given their people service challenges.

| <b>Potential Assets and Long-term Liabilities (c. 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028)</b> | <b>UA 1</b><br><i>(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe)</i> | <b>UA 2</b> <i>(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Total assets                                                                     | £4.3 billion                                                                            | £4.7 billion                                               |
| Long-term Liabilities                                                            | £1.1 billion                                                                            | £1.2 billion                                               |
| Net Long Term Assets                                                             | £3.2 billion                                                                            | £3.5 billion                                               |

### Apportioned savings and costs of Local Government Reorganisation by Unitary Authority

The tables below set out the estimated costs and benefits of LGR for each proposed Unitary Authority. The benefits of local government reorganisation are calculated by modelling the savings realisable across four domains:

- **Workforce:** including reductions in Senior Leadership costs, and consolidation of FTE through consolidation of duplicated functions across front and back office and teams delivering frontline services to residents;
- **Third Party Spend (TPS):** reductions in addressable spend across service areas;
- **Democracy and member costs:** benefits from reducing the total number of councillors (and concomitant Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) and the number of elections required across the region;
- **Property:** benefits from reduced operational expenditure spend on rationalised assets.

| UA                                                                                     | Annual saving gross | One off transition costs | Payback Period | Cumulative saving net after 5 years | Cumulative net saving after 10 years |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>UA 1</b> ( <i>Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe</i> ) | £23.5m              | £21.4m                   | 0.91 years     | £68.0m                              | £185.5m                              |
| <b>UA 2</b> ( <i>Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling</i> )                           | £7.1m               | £14.3m                   | 3.03 years     | £12.5m                              | £48.0m                               |

It should be noted that the apportionment of benefits and costs across the two new unitary authorities is not equal. In particular, as UA2 would consist of an existing Unitary Authority in the form of Nottingham City Council, and the adjoining districts of Broxtowe and Gedling, the benefits this authority would receive *specifically* as a result of Local Government Reorganisation are by definition lower than for the unitary authority consisting of the aggregation of five district councils and 73% of the current Nottinghamshire County Council area and population. Nevertheless, while costs arising from salary alignment and redundancy costs would accordingly differ between the organisations, the wider process of establishing the new organisations and required models of service provision are of comparable scale and complexity and thus would require similar investment to manage the transition.

| Type of transition cost                           | UA1<br>(Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield,<br>Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe) | UA2<br>(Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling) |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| External transition/design/implementation support | £4,270,000                                                                  | £4,270,000                                     |
| Internal programme management                     | £1,903,200                                                                  | £1,903,200                                     |
| ICT (integration, migration, licensing)           | £1,192,500                                                                  | £1,192,500                                     |
| Comms & rebranding                                | £366,000                                                                    | £366,000                                       |
| Public consultation                               | £205,875                                                                    | £205,875                                       |
| Organisation closedown                            | £152,500                                                                    | £152,500                                       |
| Creating the new councils                         | £610,000                                                                    | £610,000                                       |
| Redundancy costs                                  | £3,902,683                                                                  | £998,018                                       |
| Salary alignment                                  | £5,375,473                                                                  | £1,246,258                                     |
| Contingency                                       | £3,387,927                                                                  | £3,387,927                                     |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>£21,366,157</b>                                                          | <b>£14,332,277</b>                             |

### Post-reorganisation transformation costs and benefits

LGR has the potential to be a catalyst for wider transformation that can realise additional financial and non-financial benefits. As part of the financial analysis, assumptions have been developed to quantify the potential benefits realisable through innovation in operating model and service delivery models through ambitious public sector reform following reorganisation.

| Category                                      | Base % | Stretch % | Rationale                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Front office Officers                         | 6.0%   | 10.0%     | Additional workforce efficiencies, such as reduced average handling time and increased first-contact resolution rates, are realisable through redesign of customer interfaces and pathways, including implementation of digital and agentic AI technology.                                                  |
| Service delivery Officers                     | 3.0%   | 5.0%      | Reimagining of models of service delivery through implementation of Neighbourhood Public Service models, such as co-located health and social care teams, reducing service duplication and enhancing multi-disciplinary collaboration, leading to faster response times and improved resident satisfaction. |
| Back office Officers                          | 7.0%   | 8.0%      | Additional workforce efficiencies through reducing duplicative and repetitive activity across enabling and strategic functions, through redesign of operating models and implementation of digital and agentic AI technology.                                                                               |
| Third party spend                             | 2.5%   | 3.0%      | Reduction in third party spend through innovation in procurement strategy and commercial management, including maximisation of alternative delivery models to further drive efficiency in external spend.                                                                                                   |
| Income (sales, fees and charges / commercial) | 1.3%   | 1.7%      | Leveraging and strengthening commercial capabilities to increase income generation (including through alternative delivery models and Teckal companies and joint ventures).                                                                                                                                 |

| UA                                                                            | Transformation scenario | Annual gross saving | Projected costs | Payback Period | Cumulative net saving after 5 years |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>UA 1</b> (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe) | <b>Base</b>             | £33.9m              | £16.2m          | 1.45 years     | £110.0m                             |
|                                                                               | <b>Stretch</b>          | £45.6m              | £25.8m          | 1.63 years     | £145.5m                             |
| <b>UA 2</b> (Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling)                           | <b>Base</b>             | £33.7m              | £16.3m          | 1.47 years     | £110.1m                             |
|                                                                               | <b>Stretch</b>          | £45.5m              | £25.8m          | 1.63 years     | £144.7m                             |

*As part of the full financial case, alternative transformation scenarios have been explored to model different phasing of transition costs over multiple years.*

### Summary of the base financial case

| UA                                                                                     | Projected 28/29 Cumulative budget gap | One off reorganisation transition costs | Projected benefit from reorganisation | Projected transformation costs (base) | Projected transformation benefits (base) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>UA 1</b> ( <i>Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Rushcliffe</i> ) | £43.5m                                | £21.4m                                  | £23.5m                                | £16.2m                                | £33.9m                                   |
| <b>UA 2</b> ( <i>Nottingham City, Broxtowe and Gedling</i> )                           | £70.9m                                | £14.3m                                  | £7.1m                                 | £16.3m                                | £33.7m                                   |

The information above demonstrates that LGR could drive benefits from a reduction in duplicated roles across leadership, front office service delivery, back office internal and enabling services and strategic roles. There will also be potential benefit from reduction in addressable spend across all in-scope service areas, numbers of Councillors and streamlining of elections.

## *Risks and Considerations*

The financial analysis provides a projected opening income, expenditure and balance sheet position for the two proposed unitary authorities, as well as quantifying the potential benefits realisable through LGR and additional post-reorganisation transformation activity. Necessarily, however, there are wider risks and considerations which may affect this projected position, which we will monitor closely throughout the implementation period in the run-up to vesting day for the new authorities.

### *Disaggregating the Nottinghamshire County Council (“NCC”) budget*

NCC represents approximately two-thirds of the total net spend of all 9 Councils. The size and scale of the organisation means that it has the flexibility to direct service resources to where demand is greatest and this is not always the same as the drivers of local tax and government funding streams. As such, any assessment of the financial sustainability and resilience of future unitary authority options must begin with a clear understanding of how NCC’s budget is currently allocated across the county and how this aligns with the distribution of funding from council tax, business rates and grants. Similarly assimilating the risks and opportunities from the districts and the City Council has been assessed, which applies to key areas such as housing and homelessness.

To support this analysis, a collaborative approach across all S151 officers has been taken to disaggregate NCC’s budget, ensuring transparency and shared understanding among all partners. The methodology has been subject to independent scrutiny and challenge and has revealed that the distribution of Adult Social Care expenditure is the most significant driver of financial surpluses and deficits across the county when compared to available funding as Adult Social Care accounts for the largest single area of expenditure within NCC (and Nottingham City Council). Spend on Adult Social Care is forecast to almost double between 2025 and 2040. This is driven by increases in both unit costs and demand. The largest spend outlays across all unitary formations are focused in the north of the county due to higher service need in Ashfield and Mansfield but wider changes in market conditions or demand across the area could also affect the financial and service delivery context the new authorities would operate in.

### *Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA)*

The following district and unitary authorities within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire currently have an HRA: Nottingham City, Broxtowe, Ashfield, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood and Bassetlaw. Where there are existing HRA in place within current district or unitary authorities, these will need to be combined within the new unitary authorities. The proposed option of two unitary authorities provides an opportunity for operating the

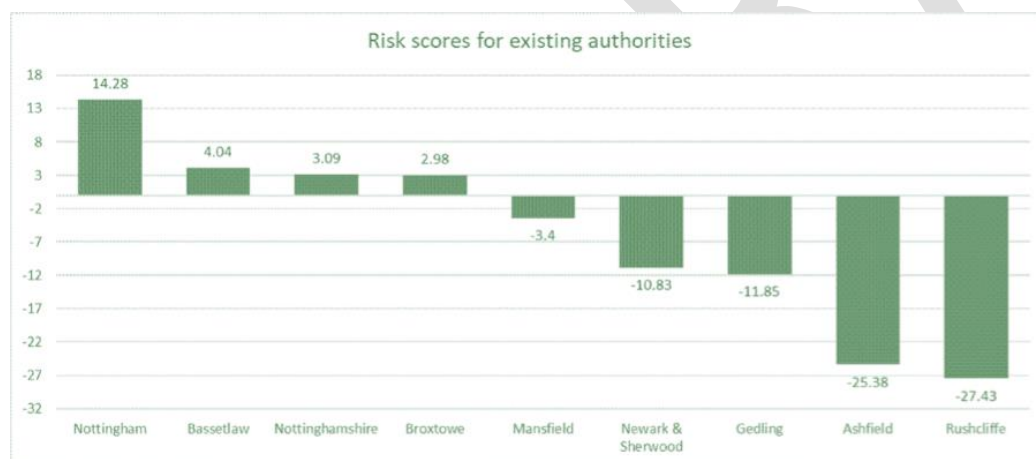
HRA at a larger, more efficient scale, increasing the flexibility to take a more strategic approach to housing management and meeting the needs and requirements of tenants.

### *Council tax harmonisation*

A further consideration for ensuring financial sustainability of the new councils is the level of council tax income they require, and how this affects what residents will be required to pay in the future. Currently council tax band Ds differ across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. As part of reorganisation, the combined current council tax band Ds for City, district & borough and the County councils will need to be harmonised to a single set of charges for each unitary within seven years of vesting day. Unitarisation could potentially improve efficiency and effectiveness on tax collection. The new unitary authorities will, however, need to decide how to harmonise council tax for their areas. Modelling has been undertaken as part of the wider financial case to illustrate the potential options available.

### *Financial resilience*

We have applied CIPFA 's Resilience Index over our existing Council footprint. As the analysis shows there is a significant range of Risk Scores, with the well-publicised issues around the City Council influencing their score. With an average score of 21 across all Unitary authorities it is still performing relatively well.



Applying the Index to the proposed Authorities shows an improvement in the Resilience, demonstrating that LGR will be of benefit to the population of the area:

| New authority   | Comprised of                                                                                | Risk score | Top 3 risk metrics                                                        |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nottingham      | Gedling, Broxtowe, Nottingham and 27% of Nottinghamshire CC                                 | 8.18       | Reserves/Income, Growth Above Baseline, Overspend (£000)                  |
| Nottinghamshire | Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Ashfield, Rushcliffe and 73% of Nottinghamshire CC | 7.07       | Reserves Sustainability Measure, Unallocated Reserves, Change In Reserves |

Both of these Councils show a significant improvement over the current situation but also, we understand compare favourably to Councils across the Country and well below the current average of 21 for Unitary authorities.

### *Fair funding*

At the time of preparing this proposal, Government is evaluating the results of the Fair Funding Review (FFR). As we await the outcomes of the Review it has not been possible to model the impacts. However, all indications from the work that has been undertaken tend to suggest that overall the area of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are likely to be net beneficiaries, although this could change dependent on Government Policy changes as a result of the consultation on FFR. Whilst there will be gainers and losers from the calculations we have performed, the net position is considered to be favourable. That would result in further improvements to the already anticipated sustainable position of the two proposed authorities.

### Assurance over the financial analysis

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

### Additional benefits that could be achieved through public service reform

The financial case for the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal assuming transformation stretch is achieved can be summarised as:

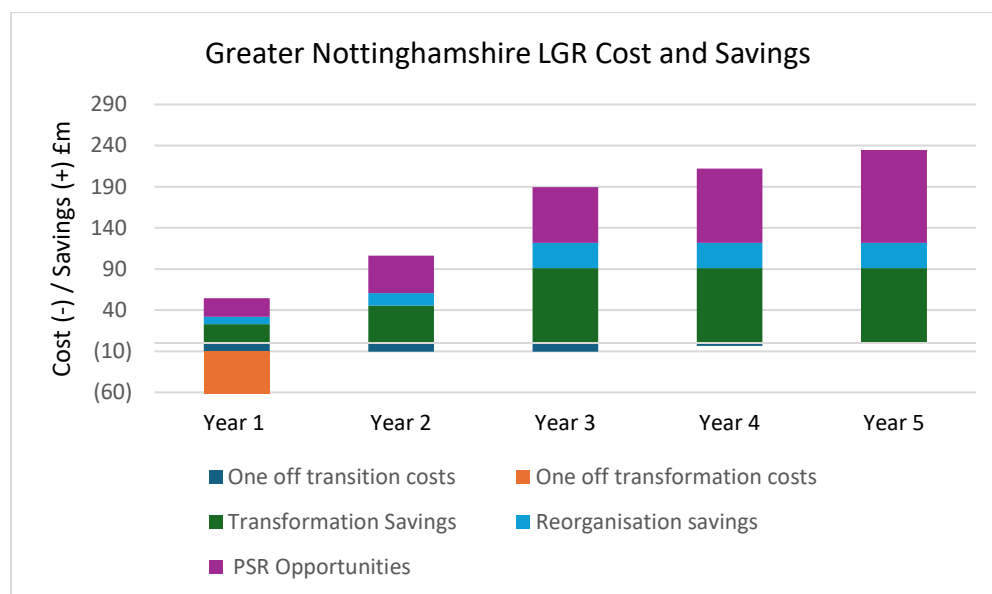
|                                    | Projected 28/29<br>Cumulative<br>budget gap | One off LGR<br>transition<br>costs | Projected benefit<br>from LGR | Projected<br>transformation<br>costs (stretch) | Projected<br>transformation<br>benefits (stretch) | Cumulative net<br>saving after 5<br>years |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>The Nottinghamshire Council</b> | £43.5m                                      | £21.4m                             | £23.5m                        | £25.6m                                         | £45.6m                                            | £145.5m                                   |
| <b>The Nottingham Council</b>      | £70.9m                                      | £14.3m                             | £7.1m                         | £25.9m                                         | £45.3m                                            | £144.7m                                   |

The case reflects the practical and efficiency savings that can be realised with fewer Councils as well as the benefits from working in larger, single tier authorities. In addition to these however this proposal believes that the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal offers greater opportunity go further and to utilise the experience in the local government partnership to make real and effective savings through public service reform.

The County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council have a reputation for financial prudence and a track record of good and effective service delivery across the full range of unitary council activities. By focussing on our knowledge, experience and track record in delivering Adult and Children's Services in particular, and based on the IMPOWER benchmarking index, we believe that further savings opportunities exist through our emergent Public Service Reform programme. Our vision for realising this opportunity is evidenced throughout this proposal and summarised below:

- Creating joined-up approaches to housing and social care that ensure aligned planning and delivery of services to further improve quality of life for people, through:
  - Closer working and a multi-disciplinary approach will increase the ability to identify earlier housing interventions and enable better co-ordination, decision making and tailored support.
  - Better planning and provision for children leaving care or moving into adult social care.
  - Having a clear approach to home adaptations to enable children and adults with disabilities to stay at home for as long as possible, rather than needing to move into specialist homes.
  - Ensuring the right balance and allocation of supported living housing and extra care to promote independence and improved wellbeing
  - Taking a whole area approach to planning, delivery of affordable housing, housing management and asset management.
  - Developing a unified place-based homelessness strategy.
- Developing community and place-based approaches that prioritise local need, deliver system-wide collaborative solutions, and strengthen relationships between Councils, Residents and Partners, including:
  - Community hub type provisions providing a co-ordinated approach and way to access a range of service in local areas
  - Strengthened partnership responses to care and support, particularly around access to education, training and employment
  - Greater integration with the Voluntary and Community Sector to maximise community support.
  - Opportunities to improve connectedness through improving public transport links.

Based on the comparison of current service outcomes and costs to statistical neighbours, IMPOWER's benchmarking index data indicates a potential opportunity to deliver productivity savings in the region of £94.9m to £221.8m across critical services, and between £67.8 to £158.5m when just considering social care services for children and adults. This data provides a broad indication of potential financial impact but is not included in the validated financial case as it is illustrative. The graph below shows the potential for additional savings through public service reform (PSR), over and above the validated financial case.



The implementation plan set out later in this proposal demonstrates the extent of our planning for transition from the 9 Councils of today to the 2 new Councils of the future. Our comprehensive plan for implementation offers a low risk, high credibility plan that is based on our experience of delivering successful complex transformation programmes and large-scale organisational change. To that end, we estimate that the combined impact of our proposed approach to implementation could achieve £189m annualised efficiency savings by year 3 post vesting day of the two new councils, rising to an annualised figure of £235m by year 5. In addition, our proposed approach to implementing the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal will save £550k from the one off LGR transition costs. Delivering the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal is not only safer, simpler, stronger but also at a lower cost.

Whilst these additional PSR financial opportunities do not form part of the financial business case we do believe they demonstrate the potential for real and large-scale opportunity from our Greater Nottinghamshire proposal.

## 7. Local Engagement

As part of our response to the Government's statutory invitation for proposals on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement was undertaken. This was designed to meet the Government's criteria for meaningful consultation with local partners, businesses, and communities, ensuring that the views of those most affected by potential changes were heard and considered.

The Government's guidance emphasises the importance of seeking local views, addressing any concerns, and evidencing how proposals will improve local governance. In response, we adopted a structured and inclusive engagement approach to gather a wide range of perspectives from across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

### *Public engagement*

All the nine current local Authorities across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham agreed to work together to coordinate and develop this important element through a public engagement survey, delivered through an independent organisation, Public Perspectives.

The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through each councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity, including a [dedicated website](#), as well as outreach events and engagement with stakeholders.

The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats on request, such as paper copies, alongside e-mail, phone, BSL and translation support and was conducted over a six-week period ending on Sunday 14 September 2025.

In addition to the survey, during the engagement period, four focus groups were conducted involving 34 local residents reflecting the diversity of Nottinghamshire and organised by urban and rural areas. In total, the engagement questionnaire received 11,483 responses. This represents less than 1% of the population of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The highest proportion of respondents to the survey proportionally were from Rushcliffe (25%) followed by Broxtowe (22%). The survey report and addendum is included in appendix G and H.

### *Supplementary Engagement – strategic stakeholder engagement*

In addition to the public survey, Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council undertook supplementary engagement, with strategic stakeholders. These included representatives from the education sector, business and development communities, voluntary and community sector organisations, and public service partners. Senior officers, including Chief Executive leads, facilitated direct engagement through formal meetings, interviews, and written submissions to explore the implications of LGR on service delivery, partnership working, and local priorities. Appendices I and J outline engagement undertaken.

### *Supplementary Engagement - Community-Based Engagement*

To ensure local voices were captured, engagement was undertaken with more locally based stakeholders such as Town and Parish Councils, grassroots voluntary organisations, and local businesses. The engagement programme included:

- Over 665 young people consulted through 45 focus groups across all districts
- Targeted sessions with education leaders, SEND professionals, and alternative providers.
- Engagement with voluntary and community sector (VCSE) organisations via focus groups and interviews.
- Consultation with developers and business leaders at a questions and answers event. Also views sort from a questionnaire sent to businesses currently supported by the County's Economic Development business advisers.
- Member engagement workshops and surveys, alongside outreach in local areas
- One Joint and multiple separate engagement sessions with Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council workforce, both in-person and online
- The Mayor, MPs and Commissioners
- Trade Union briefings

## Summary of the Findings

A summary of the key issues to address arising from the engagement exercises taken together were:

- **Boundary Coherence:** Ensure there is geographic logic and alignment with operational structures e.g. policing, education.
- **Financial Transparency:** Address concerns about Nottingham City's finances and cross-subsidisation
- **Local Representation:** Safeguard the communities' voice, especially in rural areas
- **Partnership Continuity:** Maintain effective collaboration with VCSEs, businesses, and public services
- **Youth Engagement:** Involve young people meaningfully in shaping reforms
- **Operational Readiness:** Plan for shared services, system integration, and workforce transition
- **Urban–Rural Balance:** Tailor services and governance to diverse community needs
- **Communication & Engagement:** Ensure transparency, early consultation, and inclusive decision-making
- **Cultural Identity:** Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood to remain as key cultural reference points for the new Councils

### a. Public Engagement Survey Findings

The following table provides a summary of the key points and issues to address arising from the public engagement survey:

| Theme                              | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sense of Place and Identity</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Residents identify strongly with Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, and local towns</li><li>• Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood are widely referenced cultural landmarks</li><li>• People rarely identify with their local authority's name, preferring geographic or cultural references</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through the core focus on the delivery of neighbourhood services, based upon neighbourhoods that residents recognise as "home", The new councils will ensure that the places and communities that mean most to residence are recognised and valued</li></ul> |

| Theme                                                   | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Priorities for the design of the future councils</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core services (roads, clean streets, crime)</li> <li>Value for money</li> <li>Local responsiveness</li> <li>Neighbourhood engagement.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These priorities are written through the proposal, particularly the focus of the sections on Neighbourhood Public Service which aims to improve local responsiveness as well as strengthen neighbourhood engagement. There is a focus on core services in the Connected Place section, whilst the financial case focuses on value for money.</li> </ul>                                                                                                     |
| <b>What makes somewhere a good place to live</b>        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping the streets and public areas clean and tidy</li> <li>Maintaining roads and pavements</li> <li>Tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing crime</li> <li>Public transport, roads and parking</li> <li>Refuse collection, recycling, parks, sports and leisure facilities</li> </ol>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The section on Creating a Connected Place has a strong focus on those services identified that make somewhere a good place to live.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Priorities for improvement</b>                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintaining roads and pavements</li> <li>Tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing crime</li> <li>Keeping the streets and public areas clean and tidy</li> <li>Public transport, roads and parking</li> <li>Health services such as mental health services and promoting healthy lifestyles</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above, the section on Creating a Connected Place has a strong focus on those services identified that make somewhere a good place to live. The neighbourhood public service model outlined focusses on the building blocks of good health.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Most important for the new councils</b>              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing good value, reliable services</li> <li>Meeting local needs and being fair to all parts of the area</li> <li>Saving money and using Council Tax wisely</li> <li>Ensuring services work together</li> <li>Working with local neighbourhoods and communities</li> </ol>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the overarching ambition of the proposal to create two new unitary councils that provide good value, reliable services that meet the needs of the whole area of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Opportunities are identified to save money, and the model of neighbourhood public service delivery outlined is based upon services working well together to meet people's needs, informed by structures that enable local decision-making.</li> </ul> |

| Theme                                                               | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>How to involve people in local decisions</b>                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working directly with neighbourhoods</li> <li>2. Public meetings or drop ins</li> <li>3. Local councillors visiting communities</li> <li>4. Online surveys &amp; polls</li> <li>5. Social media and feedback</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal includes a model for working more directly with neighbourhoods and proposes an outline for a future neighbourhood governance structure to be developed. Further development work will take place on this with residents as part of implementation planning.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Comments, concerns and suggestions regarding the “1b” option</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that proposed boundaries are illogical or unfair due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of some neighbouring areas (eg West Bridgford, Hucknall)</li> <li>• Inclusion of outer lying and more rural areas with less links to the city</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Concern over joining with Nottingham City</li> <li>• Urban-rural imbalance</li> <li>• City supporting rural areas</li> <li>• County-wide council too large and diverse</li> <li>• Some explicit support relating to geography and combining areas with common links, and in the potential benefits of efficiencies, cost-savings, streamlined local government and potentially improved services and outcomes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is government policy and criteria that require the 9 councils in Nottinghamshire to reorganise and to establish a larger unitary authority involving the city area. While this concern cannot be avoided, the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal aims to address it through thorough planning for governance, finance, and service quality.</li> <li>• Government guidance is for proposals to be built on district building blocks unless there is a <i>“strong public services and financial sustainability related justification...due to the likely additional costs and complexities of implementation”</i>. Including Broxtowe and Gedling in the city unitary is considered sensible due to their population’s connection to the city, while Rushcliffe’s more rural character and separation by the River Trent suggests it should remain distinct.</li> <li>• The development of the neighbourhood public service model outlined in this proposal, supported by new models of neighbourhood governance, will be key in ensuring that the needs of all residents in both urban and rural areas are met through the proposed unitary councils.</li> </ul> |

## b. Supplementary Engagement Findings

The following table provides a summary of the key points and issues to address arising from engagement with stakeholders:

| Stakeholder                                 | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Public</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of the need for reform, particularly among those dissatisfied with the current system</li> <li>• Perceived unfairness in boundaries and lack of geographic coherence in respect of the areas surrounding the city</li> <li>• Distrust in Nottingham City Council's financial management</li> <li>• Loss of local identity and representation, especially in rural areas</li> <li>• Scepticism about promised benefits i.e. cost savings, service improvements</li> <li>• Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood were frequently cited by residents as important cultural reference points when describing where they live, especially to people unfamiliar with the area particularly mentioned by residents in rural areas or towns not immediately adjacent to Nottingham City.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rationale and evidence base for proposed changes is in the <i>Options Appraisal</i> section.</li> <li>• Plans to strengthen local engagement mechanisms to maintain community voice in larger councils is in the <i>Our proposition for neighbourhood working in Greater Nottinghamshire</i> section..</li> <li>• Concerns about cross-subsidisation and transparent financial planning are addressed in the <i>Financial Case</i>, specifically regarding reduction in overall costs, asset &amp; property rationalisation and the Fair Funding review.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Education Sector – Schools, Colleges</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong partnerships with schools and SEND teams</li> <li>• Importance of partnerships to support learners with additional vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Fair and effective EHCPs, safeguarding, and support services</li> <li>• Retain district-level teams for local responsiveness.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intent to build on existing strong relationships with education partners is set out on in the section on</li> <li>• Intent to consider implications for critical services including those for children with SEND or social care needs is set out in the implementation plan.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Stakeholder                                         | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Voluntary &amp; Community Sector</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widespread uncertainty due to limited communication, fears of losing trusted local relationships, and potential service disruption</li> <li>• Organisations emphasised the value of existing partnerships with District and Parish Councils, highlighting the importance of local knowledge and responsiveness</li> <li>• Fear of centralisation would dilute local representation and reduce accessibility, particularly for rural and vulnerable communities.</li> </ul>                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans to strengthen local engagement mechanisms to maintain community voice in larger councils is in the <i>Our proposition for neighbourhood working in Greater Nottinghamshire</i> section.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Developers and Construction Business Sectors</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns about boundary changes disrupting strategic alliances and access to funding</li> <li>• Strong support for shared services (e.g. highways, waste) to reduce duplication and improve efficiency</li> <li>• Risk of inconsistency in contracts post-merger</li> <li>• Support for local area committees and revised meeting systems to maintain agility</li> <li>• LGR must align with EMCCA priorities (e.g. Freeport, STEP Fusion)</li> <li>• Fears of funding delays due to structural uncertainty.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans to develop neighbourhood governance structures is outlined in <i>Our proposition for neighbourhood working in Greater Nottinghamshire</i> section.</li> <li>• The implementation plan will incorporate consideration of opportunities for shared services. Some opportunities are identified in the Connected Places section.</li> <li>• Proposal section on economic growth reflects alignment with EMCCA priorities</li> </ul> |
| <b>Businesses Supported by NCC Advisers</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value local advisers, enterprise support partnerships, and current grant schemes</li> <li>• Streamlined application processes and a single, accessible 'front door' for support</li> <li>• More grants for digital upgrades, employment, and sustainability</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The commitment to supported businesses is outlined in the section on Driving Economic Growth.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

| Stakeholder                   | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help businesses reduce carbon emissions and invest in green technologies</li> <li>• Maintain district-level presence to ensure local knowledge and relationships are not lost.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Nottinghamshire Police</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly favour LGR models that align with existing policing boundaries to:</li> <li>• Preserve established safeguarding and community safety partnerships</li> <li>• Maintain consistency in performance reporting and data comparison</li> <li>• Ensure seamless service access and accountability for residents</li> <li>• Minimise disruption to operational structures and resource deployment.</li> <li>• Do not advocate for a specific LGR model but stress the importance of considering public safety and operational practicality in any decision</li> <li>• willingness to engage in ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to support effective service delivery under any future governance structure.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This proposal uses the districts as building blocks hence will minimise disruption through implementation.</li> <li>• The section on Public Safety details the opportunities to strengthen joint work in this area through the proposal</li> <li>• Commitment to partner engagement in developing future structures through implementation plan.</li> </ul>                                                                                       |
| <b>Young People</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health emerged as the top priority across all districts, with calls for early support, calm spaces in schools, and reduced academic pressure</li> <li>• Youth safety concerns included anti-social behaviour, drugs, and the need for better lighting and police presence</li> <li>• Transport was a major issue, especially in rural areas—young people want cheaper, more reliable services</li> <li>• Youth Spaces were seen as vital for wellbeing and inclusion</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal incorporates a focus on early help through proposed neighbourhood public service structures, a key focus on public safety, and mechanisms to strengthen people's voices in local decision-making. We have added in mental health as a priority within the area of focus for neighbourhood public services.</li> <li>• Opportunity through implementation planning to do some further engagement work with young people to</li> </ul> |

| Stakeholder                                                 | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of Living &amp; housing, environmental concerns, and homelessness were also raised</li> <li>Young people want a stronger voice in decision-making, with transparent feedback loops (“You said, we did”).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | design their involvement in future neighbourhood governance structures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Town &amp; Parish Councils</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGR is viewed primarily through a risk lens, with opportunities less explored</li> <li>Considered there was Low proactive planning and limited strategic discussion at parish level</li> <li>Lack of clarity around roles, responsibilities, and impact of LGR</li> <li>Concern that the digital engagement limited broader community input</li> <li>Felt there was ambiguity around grants, council status, and public perception under LGR</li> <li>Uncertainty about costs, debt, precept increases.</li> <li>Loss of identity reduced decision-making power.</li> <li>LGR could be strain on capacity as volunteer reliance</li> <li>Challenge of Integration i.e. IT, branding, elections, forums</li> <li>Concern over association with city finances.</li> <li>Uncertainty about LGR’s impact on partnerships.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposal includes a section on working with town and parish councils to shape the joint working including neighbourhood governance arrangements. Proactive work with town and parish councils will be a key priority under the next phase of planning as part of the “democracy” workstream outlined in the implementation plan.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils (NALC)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Felt preparation was uneven across districts; RBC and Gedling benefit from RCAN support and external support from NALC and RCAN was essential for successful transformation</li> <li>Asset transfer opportunities exist but require addressing skills and capacity gaps</li> <li>Unitary councils must lead on shaping local democratic structures</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposal includes a section on working with town and parish councils to shape the joint working including neighbourhood governance arrangements. Proactive work with town and parish councils will be a key priority under the next phase of planning as part of the “democracy” workstream outlined in the implementation plan.</li> </ul> |

| Stakeholder                                                                                                      | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighbourhood Committees need clearer definition within governance arrangements</li> <li>Digital engagement tools like “Go Collaborate” offer scalable consultation models.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Parkwood Leisure (management company for Rufford Country Park and provider of Rushcliffe Leisure Centres)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-vesting implementation planning is critical</li> <li>Risk that larger contracts may exclude medium-sized providers</li> <li>Need to balance resource allocation across urban and rural areas based on need.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These points will be considered as part of implementation planning.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>NHS Nottingham &amp; Nottinghamshire ICS &amp; ICB</b>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of continuity in relationships and seamless service alignment</li> <li>Need to define and validate ‘neighbourhoods’ with communities</li> <li>Team structures should be community-centric, not organisation-centric</li> <li>Voluntary sector should be central to a supportive, not directive culture</li> <li>Neighbourhood focus and broader determinants of health are key.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This feedback has shaped the section of the proposal: <i>Our proposition for neighbourhood working in Greater Nottinghamshire section</i>, as well as the early thinking around matrix working model under the Operational Excellence section.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Elected Members</b>                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong focus on improving core local services e.g. road maintenance, housing, education, anti-social behaviour, transport, and support for local businesses</li> <li>Emphasis on connected communities and enhancing Nottingham’s reputation</li> <li>Mixed views on reducing the number of councillors—concerns about increased workloads and reduced local representation</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback has shaped the emphasis on specific outcomes within the proposal, particularly in respect of public safety and creating connected places.</li> <li>Feedback has shaped the early proposal for democratic structures including neighbourhood governance committees, but it is recognised that there is significantly more work to do to fully develop this</li> </ul> |

| Stakeholder      | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | How we address these points in our proposal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for Neighbourhood Governance Bodies (NGBs) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on local issues (e.g. parks, events, road maintenance)</li> <li>Collaborate with partners (e.g. police, NHS, schools)</li> <li>Have their own budgets but not influence strategic planning or overall budgets.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recognition of differing service demands in urban and rural settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban areas: higher needs for waste services, social housing, and infrastructure</li> <li>Rural areas: concerns about equitable access and representation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Difficulty reaching older residents (digitally excluded) and young people (low participation).</li> </ul> | <p>model therefore this will be key workstream taken forward as part of implementation planning.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Workforce</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGR presents opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve leadership consistency and internal communications</li> <li>develop integrated teams and inclusive leadership programmes</li> <li>Streamline governance and decision-making</li> <li>Enhance digital systems, data integration, and AI use</li> <li>Plan for system migration and continuity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>There should be an emphasis on Community-centric design and co-production, Holistic wellbeing (housing, education, transport). inclusivity, digital access, and green spaces with hyperlocal service alignment and cross-sector collaboration</li> </ul>                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This feedback has shaped the section of the proposal: <i>Our proposition for neighbourhood working in Greater Nottinghamshire section</i>, as well as the design principles and key features of the future council operating models.</li> <li>A number of the points raised relate to implementation and so will be addressed in the relevant phase of activity. We are committed to maintaining regular workforce engagement throughout the design of and transition towards new unitary councils.</li> </ul> |

| Stakeholder | Key Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | How we address these points in our proposal |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks were seen as job security, service disruption, funding competition, and governance clarity</li> <li>• Urban vs. Rural considerations were raised including a need for tailored service delivery and decision-making and a desire for local influence, transparency, and hybrid engagement.</li> </ul> |                                             |

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## 8. Planning for implementation and wider transformation and public service reform

This section sets out a high-level overview of the key phases of activity to ensure a safe transition to Vesting Day and then onto wider transformation in order to take advantage of all the opportunities that local government reorganisation presents.

### *A Partnership Approach to implementation*

We propose a joint governance arrangement towards implementation, with representatives of the nine councils playing lead roles in different workstreams where they hold specialist expertise. We are committed to working together during the process of establishing the new councils to enable the sharing of knowledge, expertise and best practice around the effective delivery of all the services that the new Councils will be delivering. This approach will harness existing knowledge around how services can best be delivered to meet local needs.

We recognise the complexity of this transition, bringing together multiple districts, disaggregating county services, and integrating an existing unitary council into two coherent unitary structures. Partnership governance will ensure that these complexities are managed collaboratively, drawing on the strengths of each organisation and maintaining service continuity for residents. Whilst all councils are equal partners in the implementation, given the differentiated budget, risk and statutory service responsibilities held by each of the nine councils, we propose a proportionate approach to identifying lead roles and responsibilities for implementation. Within this, we propose that Nottinghamshire County Council can play a leading role, convening the implementation arrangements. This recommendation is based on:

- Organisational effectiveness: We want the programme to be led by organisations which hold externally validated accreditations in key functions such as Legal, ICT, Finance, Health and Safety, demonstrating the technical capabilities required to deliver significant change.
- Proven transformation capability: the programme needs to be led in a way that builds on successfully delivered major organisational changes, including large-scale employee transfers and service transitions without disruption.
- Established system leadership: A number of organisations in our system are in intervention and/or have interim leadership in place. The programme will need clarity and coherence during a complex change process.
- Strong talent pipelines and high levels of workforce confidence in management relationships: Trade Union feedback will be sought to help manage workforce transition effectively.

Our proposal is predicated on all Councils playing an active, constructive and valued contribution. Our experience of creating EMCCA demonstrated collaboration was key, and we have learned a great deal through that process. We would propose to replicate that successful model in implementing the Greater Nottinghamshire Proposal, with a shared transition programme team.

### **Governance Structure**

There is real complexity in our current operating circumstances, with a unitary Council under Best Value intervention, differential performance in statutory services and two tier local government. As such, in our implementation planning, we have given careful thought to how best to minimise risk to our residents, particularly those vulnerable children and adults in receipt of statutory services, and how best to guarantee an efficient and effective transition.

We believe we know our area and our context best. During our work with MHCLG on our devolution programme, we successfully and effectively worked with officials on drafting of the secondary legislation that brought the first ever Combined County Authority into force. Learning from this, we have worked with Browne Jacobson to develop a proposed draft of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (Structural Changes) Order 2026 to accompany our Greater Nottinghamshire proposal – this is in Appendix K.

The draft SCO has been carefully produced with a view to setting out not just the areas envisaged as single-tier local government areas following reorganisation but the process for transition. We strongly believe that reorganisation should happen in a way that minimises risk and cost to residents. For that reason, we make a case that the legal vehicles for the creation of the Nottinghamshire Council and the Greater Nottingham Council are built on the legal foundations of the current upper tier councils, whilst emphasising that we are indeed proposing to create two ‘new’ unitary councils through this process, with new political and managerial leadership, new operating models and ways of working as next-generation unitary councils.

We recognise that this approach has typically been used where former County councils became unitary councils on the same geographical footprint. Nevertheless, we believe that the Greater Nottinghamshire reorganisation proposal is sufficiently simple that the same approach can be taken. Our external legal advice gives us confidence that this approach is lawful and consistent with current legislation (see in particular the breadth of section 11,12 and 15 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

By establishing the two new unitary councils in this way, we would be able to:

- **Avoid additional transition costs** by avoiding the need to establish new legal entities
- **Streamline the transition process** for workforce and services between all authorities, assuring us around pace of delivery
- **Reduce friction** during the transition for contracts, procurement, and alternative delivery methods

- **Ensure clarity** of governance per unitary, meaning that hyper local decision-making can be built in from the start with strong accountability
- **Simplify** the transition of the Nottinghamshire Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as the Administrative Authority would continue under Nottinghamshire County Council

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### *Implementation Considerations relating to crucial people services*

A key challenge in implementing proposals for Greater Nottinghamshire is the complexity of disaggregating and aggregating social care services, particularly where operating models, commissioning arrangements, and system maturity differ. This complexity will be present regardless of the chosen model, it would however, be further exacerbated by any approach that disaggregates districts or boroughs.

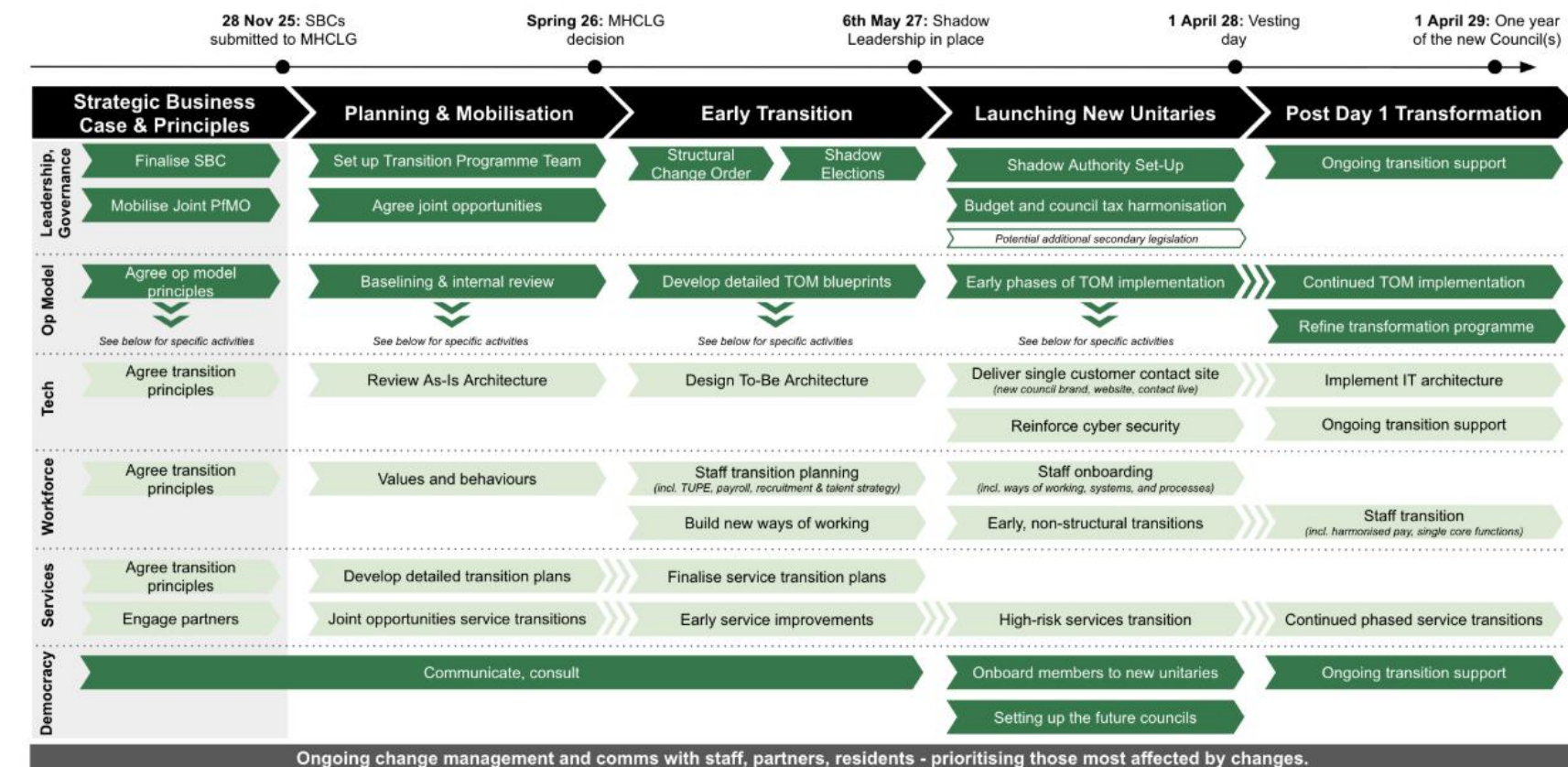
Children's services within Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire currently have different Ofsted judgements: Nottingham City is rated inadequate (July 2022), with improvements overseen by commissioners and a full reinspection pending, while Nottinghamshire was rated good for overall effectiveness and outstanding for leadership in 2024. Ongoing interventions in Nottingham City mean the Local Area Partnership has not yet been inspected for SEND by Ofsted/CQC. In January 2023, Nottinghamshire's Local Area Partnership was judged to have systemic failures, but by July 2025, monitoring inspections confirmed effective action had been taken.

Nottinghamshire County Council People Services (Children and Adults) have a strong record of leadership, financial management, and partnership working, particularly examples are the Integrated Care System, Better Care Fund, and integrated neighbourhood teams. These strengths position us to lead future improvements across the area.

Decisions on local government reorganisation must consider the impact on national reforms, including the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, Families First Partnership Programme, SEND reforms, Integrated Care Boards, and the forthcoming Casey Review into Adult Social Care. Stable leadership, clear accountability, and consistent practice standards will be essential during this period of change. Risks—particularly around workforce stability, provider confidence, and continuity of care—should be managed through a phased, co-designed transition plan, clear communication, and retention of experienced Officers.

Key strategic partners, including the Police, Integrated Care Board, NHS providers, district and borough councils, and the voluntary sector, already operate across Greater Nottinghamshire. Establishing single, system-wide governance arrangements for both adult social care and children's services will enable early joint planning, provide strategic oversight, and support safe transition to new arrangements. Cross-authority governance will offer a stabilising framework, unify leadership and practice standards, and help retain expertise and workforce confidence during organisational change.

## Implementation Plan



Implementing this proposal requires sequenced planning and transformation to achieve the best results. We have divided implementation into five key phases, each tackling a different aspect of reorganisation so that Day 1 and beyond is a success.

- **Up to 28th November 2025:** Strategic Business Case & Principles. *This activity has been completed as part of this proposal.*
- **28th November 2025 to Spring 2026:** Planning & Mobilisation
- **Spring 2026 to 6 May 2027:** Early Transition
- **6 May 2027 to 1st April 2028:** Launching New Councils
- **1st April 2028 onwards:** Post Day 1 Transformation

Each phase has concentrated activity across an indicative 6 workstreams, from programme management and internal delivery to change and models of service delivery as well as stakeholder engagement and communications

- **Leadership & Governance:** *Management covers the internal management of the transformation process and leadership of the organisations overall. As a core programme management team, this workstream includes coordinating strategic comms and engagement with residents, businesses, partners, and members. This workstream also focuses on structural and leadership changes under the reorganisation process (e.g. Shadow Elections) and undertakes gateway reviews between each phase of implementation.*
- **Operating Model:** *Operating Model covers any changes to the way the council operates internally and externally with its different functions and partners. This workstream will coordinate activity across the Technology, Workforce, and Services workstreams (below).*
- **Technology:** *Technology refers to any system-wide technology transformation, including data and system architecture.*
- **Workforce:** *Workforce activities to support transformation for employees, including onboarding, communications, and actual transition between organisations.*
- **Services:** *Services cover the changes for People & Place services. This will focus on the actual transition, prioritising services for vulnerable people before Day 1, and on direct communications for those who will be most impacted by the change.*
- **Democracy:** *Support, engagement and communications as well as logistics to support Members and create the right democratic governance and oversight arrangements for all stages of implementation.*

## ***Phase 2 - Planning & Mobilisation: 28th November 2025 to Spring 2026***

We recognise the need to begin the transition process as soon as possible to be able to successfully reach Vesting Day in 2028 and create the conditions for longer term transformation and public service reform. We will use the time before now and the formal decision from Government to begin preparations, including agreeing goals and principles of how we will work immediately after an option is chosen as well as preparing for some of the system implementation challenges.

### **Leadership & Governance**

- **Transition Programme Team (TPT):** We propose to set up a cross-authority Transition Programme Team that the County Council would be willing to resource and host, to work with all other councils and oversee reorganisation. This will be responsible for the other workstreams, including coordinating engagement with MHCLG. The initial TPT will divide following the MHCLG decision into two teams across the two proposed Continuing Authorities, who will work together to coordinate activity. This will involve representatives from all councils for each respective unitary boundary.
- **Agree Joint Opportunities:** The TPT will first convene to assess where early transformation, within or between councils and other partners, could be carried out before the decision from Government to support reorganisation regardless of the option chosen. For example, councils could begin to rationalise their contracts internally and undertake an activity analysis to assess where service synergies could be made.

### **Operating Model**

- **Baselining & Internal Review:** To plan and prioritise transformation activities, we will conduct a baselining exercise across councils and establish how our current operating models align. This review will cover all core aspects for the operating model, including structure, workforce, performance processes, service best practice and opportunities for public sector reform.

### **Technology**

- **Review As-Is Architecture:** The time between the preferred option submission and a decision from Government will be utilised to map out the current technology architecture of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils. This will set the grounds for transition planning, highlighting where streamlining will be more complex. A core activity here will involve systematic contract rationalisation. With an ongoing

SAP transformation in the County, plans will be developed for keeping activity going while looking into where the transformation could be extended to help rationalise technology systems.

## **Workforce**

- Values and Behaviours: Following on from the development of organisational principles, the workforce workstream will design the organisation values and behaviours desired in the unitary structures. This should be co-designed across councils to ensure that decisions here can be applied to any option that could be selected.
- Communication: We have a proven track record of workforce engagement in shaping the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal. It would be our intention that this engagement continue so that our talented, skilled and experienced workforce remain committed to delivering high quality services day to day, whilst shaping and planning to mobilise the new Councils in the future.

## **Services**

- Develop Detailed Transition Plans: Services will be the most visible, high-risk part of local government reorganisation. Detailed plans for transition will be developed where possible before pre-decision to ensure the transition process is underway as quickly as possible.
- Joint Opportunities Service Transitions: The time before a decision being published will be used by the TPT to find opportunities for councils to collectively prepare for reorganisation. These will include changes which can be implemented before Summer 2026 and reduce transformational load later in the timeline. This could include coordinating contracts across the area or collaborating on services in areas that will be grouped into a unitary regardless of the option - e.g. across Nottingham and Broxtowe, or Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Ashfield, and Bassetlaw.

## **Democracy**

- Communicate, Consult: Members have a critical and democratic role in providing leadership to and having oversight of all stages of implementation and we will continue to engage with and support Members as planning progresses. Communications will concentrate on the detailed planning for transition and the pending elections. There will also be regular updates at relevant democratic and committee meetings, where concerns, and risks can be aired and addressed. Prior to the MHCLG decision, this will be led by each council respectively with their own Members.

- Design, Deliver: Members will play a crucial role in the upfront design of robust and effective Neighbourhood Governance Models building on their deep understanding of the unique challenges and priorities that are faced in their areas.

## **Ongoing Engagement**

- We will engage with our residents, partners, and workforce at every stage. On an ongoing basis, we will communicate the existing options to our residents, partners, and officers to keep them informed on our future plans. We will specifically engage our partners to explore how we can best transition without disrupting services and to work together to realise the ambition we have set out in this proposal. Following a decision, we will update our workforce to keep everyone informed and engaged in developing the plans to realise our vision and the immediate transition plan for 2027-2028.

## **Phase 3 - Early Transition: Spring 2026 to 6th May 2027**

Once the MHCLG decision has been published, we can begin transformation at pace. In the Early Transition phase, we will set up the legal structures needed to move to a two unitary structure. We will use the previous phase's plans, principles, and review work to develop detailed plans and shift some services to the new structure where possible.

## **Leadership & Governance**

- Structural Change Order (SCO): The leadership of the relevant councils and the Transition Programme Team will liaise with MHCLG to ensure the SCO reflects our shared priorities to develop the right legislation for this change. This will include the boundaries of the new councils, the number of Councillors, and the legal structure of the new councils.
- Shadow Elections: we will prepare for the Shadow Authority elections that are expected to take place in May 2027.

## **Operating Model**

- Develop Detailed Target Operating Model (TOM) Blueprints: Once a decision has been published by MHCLG, we will develop a detailed plan for the future operating model, taking into account current set-up and future ambitions. This will design future governance structure, process design, workforce shape, and preserve any existing best practice.

## Technology

- Design To-Be Architecture: After an option has been selected, the team will then design the future architecture, aligned to the chosen unitary divide. This will include data architecture, communication methods, and shared systems. This is an area of significant opportunity to align business systems across the legacy organisations and ensure that fragmentation and inefficiencies are tackled early creating a better customer experience.

## Workforce

- Workforce Transition Planning: Once a decision has been made, the workforce transition workstream will begin planning the officer transition. This includes considerations for: pay harmonisation, TUPE, Officer and management structure, location.
  - Recruitment and Talent Strategy: In a period of major change, retention and long-term talent strategies are critical. The workstream will use this planning opportunity to boost retention during transition and ensure that recruitment and promotion processes reflect the core skills required by a unitary council.
- Building New Ways of Working: As we develop plans for workforce transition, we will work internally to build new organisational values and behaviours set out in our principles work in the previous phase. The workforce transition workstream will set out methods to support these values, rewarding key behaviours and creating an identity for the new organisations.

## Services

- Finalise Service Transition Plans: The detailed delivery plans above will be tailored, finalised, and agreed by all parties to kick off the transition process.
- Early Service Improvements and identification of opportunities for public sector reform or system change: While the wider transition is being mobilised, we will work to move low-risk services that are already shared between some councils. We will transition and extend existing shared services early, following the MHCLG decision, including alternative delivery methods such as Inspire and Via. These are services provided through a charity or commercial function that are operated by councils.

## Democracy

- **Communicate, Consult:** Members will be engaged in the design and development of the operating model. Members will have a leadership role in the governance and oversight of the transition and implementation of organisational change and any changes to service delivery.
- **Design, Deliver:** Members will continue to play a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of our Neighbourhood Governance Models.

### Ongoing Engagement

- We will engage with our residents, partners, and workforce at every stage. Following an MHCLG decision, we will communicate the chosen option to all groups, including a transition plan. More detailed plans will be shared with groups that come into regular contact with the council and may face more significant changes to their daily lives. For example, we will ensure that those who receive Adults, Childrens, and Housing services are aware of the changes going on.

### Phase 4 - Launching New Local Authorities: 6th May 2027 to 1st April 2028

One year into the transition process, we will shift to focus on change and public service reform at pace. We will use the detailed planning of the previous phase to kick off transitions in operating model, technology, and services. We have brought forward all transitioning for high-risk services to mitigate any risks on Day 1. This includes all preparations for Day 1, such as setting up single customer access so that contact on Vesting Day is as easy as possible.

### Leadership & Governance

- **Shadow Authority Set Up:** The Shadow Authority and supporting internal teams will set up core political governance within the new structure and begin the appointments process for senior officer roles.
- **Budget and Council Tax Harmonisation:** The Transition Programme Teams will develop the budget harmonisation framework for the new unitary structures, ensuring there is a balance between funding streams and level council tax within each area.
- *Potential additional secondary legislation: This could be required for a variety of reasons that would arise during the planning and transition process, for example pension realignment.*

## Operating Model

- **Early Phases of TOM Implementation:** This is the beginning of the transition process, implementing key areas of the design, phased by complexity and risk. Internal organisation structures will begin transitioning to the two unitary structures. This includes the activities below: implementation of tech strategy and cohering systems, onboarding and transitioning of some employees.

## Technology

- **Deliver Single Customer Contact Site:** Taking the transition as an opportunity to reform how we contact our residents and other stakeholders, we will implement a single front door before Day 1 to capture Day 1 queries and triage future contact. Given the complexities of back-end data and system architecture, front end components will be prioritised here including building on the MyNotts app to provide seamless digital access.
- **Reinforce Cyber Security:** A large-scale transformation like reorganisation may increase the risks of cyber-attacks during and after Day 1. We will mitigate this risk by reinforcing our cyber security approaches, systems, and education.

## Workforce

- **Employee Onboarding:** Our workforce need to be confident they know who they report to and who their teams are before Day 1. Proactive communication will support employees onboarding to our new organisations, teams, and ways of working. This will require a nuanced workforce communication strategy, especially as the change experienced by colleagues outside of the current unitary could be substantial. Here, we will encourage self-serve to manage further common questions.
- **Early, Non-Structural Transitions:** Any early opportunities for internal workforce transitions will be carried out as soon as possible before Day 1. This will ease the level of change experienced on Day 1 and allow the councils to begin developing their own cultures sooner rather than later. This could include, for example, officers from shared services that operate in a different setting to the two unitary councils. Up to Tier 4 of the workforce will be appointed by Day 1.

## Services

- **High-Risk Services Transition:** As the key priority for continuity, high-risk services will transition to the new unitary structure as soon as possible. This will include Children's Social Care, Adults Social Care, and Housing Repair Services. These will be transitioned before Day 1, with some reform activities underway, so there is no disruption in continuity of care.

## **Democracy**

- **Induction programme for newly elected Councillors:** A Shadow Authority is established, with a new constitution, democratic structures and local governance in place. Through our Member engagement, Councillors have told us about their support needs. This will be provided for Members in their new roles through a comprehensive induction programme working in partnership with partners such as the Local Government Association where appropriate to ensure there is a comprehensive understanding of all statutory responsibilities and that we build on best practice from across the sector.
- **Setting up the new local authorities:** With Members elected, we will create the structures and supporting resources needed for the new councils to support community and council democratic processes. This will include coordinating meeting spaces for the larger council meetings; supporting links to Town and Parish Councils; and developing launching stronger Neighbourhood Governance Models with a view to involving partners and local community based organisations. Close working with Town and Parish councils will ensure local insights and expertise are integral to the new authorities.
- **Building on existing strong relationships** will ensure local voices are heard and communities are represented at the hyperlocal level.

## **Ongoing Engagement**

- We will engage with our residents, partners, and workforce at every stage. At this stage, we will regularly share transition plans with all groups and contact individuals directly who use council services.

## **Phase 5 - Post Day 1 Transformation: 1st April 2028 onwards**

After Vesting Day (1st April 2028), all councils in the area will transition to the two unitary councils. Workforce and Services will be moved to the newly designed structures - transitioning the majority of organisations on Day 1, with follow up changes in the next 12 months. Further transition

will take place after Vesting Day, e.g. to bring together technology systems within each unitary. We will continue to transform services following Vesting Day and build a stronger, unified culture within each organisation.

### **Leadership & Governance**

- Ongoing Transition Support: The Transition Programme Teams will continue to coordinate Day 1 transitions and post-Day 1 transformation to ensure services are stable and operating at their best by April 2029.

### **Operating Model**

- Continued TOM Implementation: We will continue to implement the TOM for those with longer term transformation timelines or that were deprioritised for Day 1.
- Refine Transformation Programme: Given changing realities across the council reorganisation, Day 2 will provide a strong opportunity for reflection. The operating model transformation team will use this to refine the post Day 1 implementation programme, evaluating where further support or time is required.

### **Technology**

- Implement IT Architecture: Post Day 1, we will continue technology transformation with a renewed focus on digital and we will rationalise our IT infrastructure and build on existing cloud-based strategy.
- Ongoing Transition Support: We will continue to support the transitioning council areas on and after Day 1 as systems move between organisations and data transfers to centralised platforms.

### **Workforce**

- Workforce Transition: On Day 1, all Officers will transition to the new unitary structure. On-the-day and ongoing support will be provided to ensure every member of our workforce is confident in their role.

### **Services**

- Continued Phased Service Transitions: All further services will be transitioned either on or after Day 1. Visible services will be a priority for Day 1 to ensure residents know their council structure has changed and understand the new contact streams. Further transformation of services will continue to implement the propositions in this proposal, following a clear transformation plan developed before Day 1.

## **Democracy**

- Ongoing Transition Support: From Day 1, the Transition Programme Team and wider council leadership will be focussed on continuing to support Members to lead complex change. This includes communicating transition plans, briefings on services that could previously have been outside of their remit (e.g. for a member transitioning from County or District Councils to the unitary structure) and a forward look at wider transformation.

## **Ongoing Engagement**

- We will engage with our residents, partners, and workforce at every stage. On and after Day 1, we will host regular contact to remind residents, partners, and employees of the transition and what to expect next. We will use a single helpline to ensure contact on Day 1 is simple and accessible for any concerns and to address unforeseen disruption.

## ***Making Day 1 a Success***

We will bring our collective and long-standing experience in major transformation to implement reorganisation that is:

- Visible,
- Safe,
- Seamless,
- and Coherent.

## **How we will make Day 1... Visible**

- On Day 1, we will prioritise overt changes so residents and stakeholders feel the effect of the change and can see that they are now being served by two new councils. We will radically improve our customer experience providing seamless digital access building on the MyNotts app. This will act as supporting comms to all residents who may not interact with the council regularly. We will ensure all residents know who their council is and how to contact them on Day 1.

### **How we will make Day 1... Safe**

- We will prioritise having high risk services transitioned to the new unitary structure by Day 1. Childrens, Adults, and Housing Repair services will be in operation by Day 1, so reform changes will not affect service.
- We will make sure any pressing contact will be simple and accessible through a specific hotline for Day 1 as communication pathways shift.

### **How we will make Day 1... Seamless**

- Across the partnership we have a proven track record of transformation both internally and supporting other councils. For example, a recent transition to Vertas for school catering was completed without a single school meal being missed due to strong contingency and pre-transition planning. This involved the transfer of 2000 employees between organisations, with 97% being paid correctly on Day 1. Rushcliffe BC successfully relocated approximately 200 employees via a detailed change management programme to a new facility at Rushcliffe Arena. Such change management programmes have informed this implementation plan and will provide drive and rigour to future, detailed planning.
- Internally, 80% of our workforce report they are confident in their relationship with their line manager. We have a history of supporting strong talent pipelines and retention in fluctuating workforces which includes in areas such as social care and other roles where there is high demand for these skills nationally. We will bring this experience into our workforce transition planning, ensuring that every member of our workforce is confident in who their line manager and team is before Day 1.

### **How we will make Day 1... Coherent**

- Maintaining and building on our system leadership experience across Nottinghamshire is a priority for us. This will be used to lend strength and simplicity to our relationships with partners throughout the transition, benefitting from a single voice before, during and after new structures are fully implemented.
- The consultation and convening the partnership councils have already conducted has helped use develop this robust approach which will account for the complexities across our area.

### *Requirement for Successful Transformation*

#### **Investment**

While the long-term efficiency and effectiveness of restructuring to two unitary councils in the Nottinghamshire area will benefit the local population for years to come, the initial transition costs are not insignificant. As transition costs will sit alongside normal running costs in an already tight fiscal environment, early investment will be required to support the reorganisation programme.

Transition costs cover a range of activity including:

- **New unitary set up and close down costs:** Spend to design the new UAs and manage the change (including training, comms, process redesign).
- **IT & Systems costs:** Spend on new and upgraded systems to support the new UA structure.
- **External transition, design and implementation support costs:** Resources needed to run the transformation programme (eg. Project Management).
- **Redundancy costs:** Payments and support for employee reductions due to structural changes.
- **Contingency:** A buffer for unexpected costs, reflecting risk and complexity.

A full breakdown of transition costs is included in the financial case (Section 6).

## Skills and Infrastructure

Significant capacity will be required for the transition to support across the core workstreams.

Many will be transitioning to a new scale of organisation, with increased complexity across the board. We will use our internal programme management capabilities to guide the transitions but require specialised skills in:

- Major programme management across the two unitary councils
- IT design and implementation skills and capacity
- Organisation design and development for both operating model and workforce transformations

## 9. Asks of Government

In order to ensure the success of local government reorganisation and unlock the potential of the new councils to become 'next generation' Councils, we respectfully set out a series of asks for Government engagement and support. These proposals are designed to enable the new councils to deliver the highest quality public services, drive innovation, and respond effectively to the needs of our communities.

### **Support for devolution**

Firstly, we endorse the requests previously made by the Mayor to the Secretary of State for EMCCA to be given Established Status. This will strengthen leadership, coherence, and capabilities in the region. It will harness the full potential of the Government's English devolution agenda and send a clear signal to investors that the Government, Mayoral Strategy Authority and local Councils have a shared commitment to the region, with clear plans in place.

The East Midlands has a shared interest with national government in bringing forward the full benefits and flexibilities as early as possible. This is needed to demonstrate a full and shared commitment to deepening devolution and delivering prompt, and meaningful change for the East Midlands. EMCCA could utilise and benefit from Integrated Settlement flexibilities from 2026-27 in a number of ways. We support EMCCA's view that Established status can help in unlocking the growth potential of the Trent Arc by allowing up to 10% of our Investment Fund to switch from capital to revenue, by converting 10% of Transport for City Regions (TCR) capital to revenue will allow us to provide better bus services and fare incentives, with similar approaches for the Brownfield Housing Fund allocation and consolidating skills and employment funds into a single pot. Furthermore, a multiyear settlement investment in housing retrofit would improve the quality of people's homes and boost the supply chain, and securing the benefits of investment in flood protection would be enhanced through a multiyear settlement for EMCCA to develop high-quality projects.

### **Funding arrangements**

We welcome progress made by MHCLG and Treasury in the Fair Funding Review and in rolling specific grants into the Local Government settlement. Through the tapestry of Combined Authorities there is a further opportunity that more specific grants can be rolled into main grant with the flexibility given to the Combined Authority to drive and deliver on growth, transport, infrastructure, housing and town centre improvements, removing the need and additional cost of annual bids for grant. This should also provide an opportunity for Government to roll more specific grants into main grant for unitary councils and as the overall number of councils will be less. The ability to use updated data analysis should be the driver for the distribution of all funding for local authorities whilst maintaining flexibility for use and meeting need at the local level.

## **Approach to implementation**

In terms of structural change, we propose the adoption of our model set out in our implementation plan and supporting appendix for an efficient and effective legal vehicle for transition. Continuing authority status as the legal mechanism to transition from nine councils to two new will be simpler, more efficient and cost less, expose our programme and our residents to less risk, and increase confidence of deliverability to timetable.

## **Neighbourhood governance**

We seek Government engagement regarding the role of Neighbourhood Committees in the planning process. Strengthening these committees would amplify the voice of local people and Councillors, whilst maintaining the integrity of Planning Committees as quasi-judicial bodies.

In support of democratic participation, we ask Government to consider actions that would widen opportunities for people to stand for election, such as bringing forward pension eligibility for Councillors and other enabling measures. For example, shifting to evening meetings can make council roles more accessible to working people, a practice already common in unitary councils.

## **Delivery of national reforms**

We ask for the extension of the Neighbourhood health pilot and the Test, Learn, Grow programme that are currently being delivered in Nottingham City to both new councils and across the entire locality, supporting innovation, learning and improved health outcomes for all residents.

## **Civic arrangements**

We further ask for Government support with respect to the lieutenancy and civic functions, ensuring that these roles continue to contribute effectively to local leadership and civic pride.

## **Assessment of financial cases**

We request a detailed Government assessment of the financial assumptions, transitional costs, and risks associated with implementing significant boundary changes during local government reorganisation, to ensure decisions are fully informed and sustainable.

## **Children's services**

We are collectively committed to improving outcomes, help and protection for children and families. We invite Government to sponsor the County Council in becoming the appointed Sector Led Improvement Partner to our colleagues and partners at Nottingham City Council's Children Services, should they remain subject to an Inadequate graded judgement by Ofsted in 2026. This partnership would enable the cross fertilisation of proactive 'outstanding leadership' locally and drive consistent outcomes for children and their families across the greater

Nottinghamshire footprint whilst also allow for early progress towards disaggregation, thereby reducing long-term risk to children and families. Should this be agreed, it would further be an opportunity to work collaboratively on implementing DfE reforms proactively.

With regard to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), we believe there is a case to be made for an appropriately timed reinspection and seek clarity and support from Government in this respect.

### **Standards in local government**

Finally, we urge Government to prioritise bringing forward the legislation around standards, which was referenced in the white paper but has yet to be included in a Bill. Such legislation will help maintain the highest standards of conduct and accountability in local government.

Together, these asks form a coherent package designed to maximise the effectiveness, inclusivity, and future-readiness of our new councils, and we hope Government will work collaboratively with us to realise this vision.

## 10. MHCLG Checklist

| <u>Invitation Letter – Guidance &amp; Criteria (05/02/2025)</u>                                                                                                    | <u>Relevant section within the proposal</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| Criteria 1 – A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.                         | This is set out as headlines in Section 2., <b>Executive Summary</b> , noting that both councils have a balanced tax base with neither dominant nor disadvantaged. It is also referenced in Section 4., <b>The Options Appraisal</b> , and is expanded upon in the full options appraisal (Appendix A). Further information is set out in the full financial case section regarding council tax modelling (Appendix E).                                                                                                                           |
| a. Proposal should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area. | This is set out as headlines in Section 2., <b>Executive Summary</b> , with specific reference to working with EMCAA to meet housing supply targets and need, and our commitment to developing our services with and for communities. It is also referenced in Section 4., <b>The Options Appraisal</b> , and is set out in more detail in section 5.d.iv; <b>Delivering Affordable Homes and Tackling Homelessness</b> .                                                                                                                         |
| b. Proposals should be for sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.                                                     | Evidence and analysis is set out in the options appraisal section, specifically on and is expanded upon in the full options appraisal (Appendix A). Outcomes to be achieved are set out in section 5. Evidence of estimated costs/ benefits is set out in section 6., <b>The Financial Case</b> and in the full financial case (Appendix E). Evidence of local engagement is set out in Section 7., <b>Local Engagement</b> on pages and in the <b>Member Engagement Report (Appendix J)</b> and <b>LGR Stakeholder Engagement (Appendix K)</b> . |
| c. Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to                                      | The proposed two new councils are described in Section 5a., <b>Greater Nottinghamshire – safer, simpler, stronger: our purpose and ambition for two next-generation councils</b> Governance structures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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| achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.                                                                                                                                            | are described in Section 5c., <b>Our proposition for neighbourhood working</b> . The way that we will achieve desired outcomes is also set out in Section 5c, and in Section 5d.,                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| d. Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Criteria 2 - Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| a. As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.                                                                                                                                  | Section 5b., <b>Two new Unitary Councils for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire</b> , states that Nottingham Council will be 565,821 rising to 583,258 by 2030. Nottinghamshire Council will be 622,269, rising to 641,107 by 2030.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| b. There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.                                             | Not applicable.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| c. Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.                                                        | Section 5d.vi, <b>Operational Excellence</b> sets out our ambition to deliver services in the most cost-effective way and making the best use of public funds, particularly referencing data, digital and information and commissioning and procurement. Evidence of financial benefit from transformation is set out in section 6., <b>The Financial Case</b> and in the full financial case (Appendix E). |
| d. Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future services                                                                                                     | The full financial case (Appendix E) explores transformation scenarios to model different phasing of transition costs and also                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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| transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | identifies additional transformation stretch targets to maximise potential public service reform savings. Section 8., <b>Planning for implementation and wider public service reform</b> references how we propose to reduce transition costs through a Continuing Authority model. In section 6.,                                                                                                         |
| e. For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.                                                                            | This is set out as headlines in Section 2., <b>Executive Summary</b> which confirms that <b>Commissioners have been engaged</b> throughout and care has been taken to ensure a positive path to the future for the Council in Best Value intervention in our partnership. <b>The Financial Case</b> describes how both councils will achieve financial viability and the transformative activity required. |
| f. In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation. | This is addressed in <b>The Financial Case</b> which describes how both councils will achieve financial viability and the transformative activity required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Criteria 3 - Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| a. Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Hyper-local service delivery and governance is evidenced in Section 5c., <b>Our proposition for neighbourhood working</b> . Avoiding unnecessary fragmentation is referenced in Section 4., <b>The Options Appraisal</b> and is expanded upon in the full options appraisal (Appendix A).                                                                                                                  |

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| <p>b. Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.</p>                                                                                                             | <p>Opportunities for public service reform are set out in section 5., describing a complete reset of how local public services work together, reducing duplication and achieving good outcomes (and therefore reduced costs) through the right support delivered at the right time.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>c. Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.</p>                                              | <p>Consideration of crucial services is set out in Section 5., <b>Our Proposal for You</b>, with particular reference to the following sub-sections:</p> <p>5.d.i: <b>Giving Children the Best Start in Life</b> pages</p> <p>5.d.ii: <b>Supporting Adults to reach their Full Potential</b> pages</p> <p>5.d.iv: <b>Supporting Independent Living and Vulnerable Residents and Tackling Homelessness Through Integration and Prevention</b></p> <p>5.d.v: <b>Public Safety</b></p> <p>Impacts are also considered in the implementation plan.</p> |
| <p>Criteria 4 - Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views (including a: meaningful and constructive engagement should be evidenced).</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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| <p>a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.</p>                                                                                     | <p>All 9 councils agreed to commission an external partner, <i>Public Perspectives</i>, to conduct a local engagement exercise to inform final proposals. (Appendices G and I). A joint website was also set up to keep residents informed of progress. This can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.</p>                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Consideration of regional diversity can be seen in Section 3a., <b>Our People</b>; the <b>Options Appraisal</b> concluded that the Greater Nottinghamshire model recognises the differences in local identity between the largely urban and the largely rural councils, and how this can be leveraged to shape targeted service delivery (Appendix A). Our heritage, history, culture and sport are referenced in Section 3b., <b>Our Place</b>. In Section 5b., <b>Two new Unitary Councils for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire</b> we describe the key cultural differences between the two councils and how the model will leverage these. There is also a section on Civic Pride and traditions.</p> |
| <p>c. Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.</p>                                                                                                   | <p>Section 7., <b>Local Engagement</b>, describes the stakeholder engagement that has been conducted both collectively across the 9 councils, and also by both Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council. Broader detail is included in the <b>Engagement Appendix (I)</b> and the <b>Members Engagement Appendix (J)</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p>Criteria 5 - New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements (including b: how the proposal will unlock devolution where no CA or CCA exists currently).</p>                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>a. Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that</p> | <p>The East Midlands Combined County Authority is referenced in Section 3c., <b>Our Place</b>; the <b>Options Appraisal</b> concludes that the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal 'maximises the potential for delivery of EMCCA's regional growth and devolution framework in</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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| institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA/Mayor. | Nottingham and Nottinghamshire' in Appendix A; Section 5.d.iii., <b>Driving economic growth</b> describes in detail how the model will support the delivery of EMCCA's inclusive, sector-led, place-based growth ambitions and Section 5.d.iv., <b>Delivering Affordable Homes and Tackling Homelessness</b> sets out the opportunity work with EMCCA to secure investment and devolved funding and develop a new local planning authority to deliver housing growth and critical infrastructure targets. |
| C. Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.                           | As set out in the <b>Executive Summary</b> , the proposal has responded to all of the Mayor's asks with regards to creating viable principle Councils that don't require change to EMCCAs governance and can deliver growth and spatial priorities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Criteria 6 - New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| a. Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.                                                                                                                  | Hyper-local service delivery and governance is evidenced in Section 5c., <b>Our proposition for neighbourhood working</b> , which describes the establishment of Neighbourhood Public Service Committees (NPSCs).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| b. Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement                                                                           | Section 5c., <b>Our proposition for neighbourhood working</b> describes how local leadership and neighbourhood empowerment will be delivered through strong local democratic representation, the establishment of Neighbourhood Public Service Committees working alongside existing Town and Parish Councils, and greater focus on community voice.                                                                                                                                                      |

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## **11. Appendices**

Appendix A: PwC LGR Options Appraisal (July 2025)

Appendix B: KPMG LGR Options Appraisal (July 2025)

Appendix C: PwC LGR Options Comparative Analysis – Nottingham City (September 2025)

Appendix D: Neighbourhood Public Service and Neighbourhood Health

Appendix E: PwC Financial Case

Appendix F: CIPFA Financial Case Template

Appendix G: Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LGR Engagement Report September 2025

Appendix H: Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LGR Engagement Report – Methodology and Clarifications October 2025

Appendix I: DRAFT Stakeholder Engagement Report

Appendix J: DRAFT Member Engagement Report

Appendix K: Draft Structural Change Order – to follow