Broxtowe Borough COUNCIL

Impact Assessment
Report

Potential Impacts of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on Broxtowe Borough Council and Its Residents

Contents

Executive Summary

This report assesses the potential impacts of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on Broxtowe Borough Council and its residents, with a particular focus on the implications of proposals that would align the Borough with Nottingham City Council. While national policymakers present LGR as an opportunity to improve efficiency, coherence, and strategic capacity, the local analysis and resident feedback highlight substantial fiscal, social, and governance risks for Broxtowe.

Key Findings

Strong Local Identity and Opposition to Merger

The Broxtowe Borough Household Survey conducted by Public Perspectives demonstrates overwhelming community resistance to reorganisation proposals. The clear majority of residents (71%), who responded to the questionnaire, do not support either of the two options, that were consulted on. Respondents emphasised Broxtowe's distinct local identity, community responsiveness and effective service delivery under the existing two-tier system.

Fiscal Risk and Regressive Impact

Aligning Broxtowe with Nottingham City Council would likely trigger upward council tax harmonisation and less generous Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) arrangements. Average Band D households would face annual increases of around £175, while low-income residents and households could lose significant levels of relief. These changes would disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, contradicting the Government's principle of equitable service delivery.

Financial Instability and Cross-Subsidisation

Concerns regarding Nottingham City Council's financial position, marked by a long-standing Section 114 notice and ongoing fiscal recovery, creates a significant risk that Broxtowe's assets and reserves could be redirected to address City Council financial deficits. Evidence from the District Councils' Network indicates that larger unitary authorities do not demonstrate greater efficiency or resilience, rather, they are more likely to require exceptional financial support.

Cultural, Community, and Identity Impacts

Broxtowe's strong record of cultural investment, community grants, and civic participation could be eroded within a larger, centralised structure. Reductions in discretionary spending would likely affect local events, heritage programmes, and voluntary sector grants, diminishing community cohesion and wellbeing. Residents have expressed particular concern about the loss of local accountability and visibility in decision-making.

Environmental and Spatial Pressures

Under a City-led planning framework, Broxtowe's Green Belt coverage (61%) will likely come under increased development pressure as Nottingham City seeks to expand housing supply. This will risk undermining environmental sustainability, local planning autonomy and the distinct character of Broxtowe's towns and villages.

Introduction

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has been positioned by central and regional policymakers as a means of achieving greater efficiency, simplification and strategic coherence across local authorities. However, beneath these intended benefits lie potential complex risks for Broxtowe Borough Council residents, particularly under proposals aligning the Borough with Nottingham City Council. This report highlights the everyday implications of the current proposals being submitted for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, all of which raise fundamental questions about fiscal responsibility, service equity, and the preservation of local identity and priorities.

The proposed changes carry significant potential consequences across several key areas of local governance. Harmonisation of Council Tax and Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) schemes could increase financial burdens on Broxtowe residents, given the Borough's current lower tax rates compared to those in the City. Similarly, adjustments to social housing and rent levels will risk exacerbating inequalities and undermining affordability. Beyond the fiscal sphere, there are wider social and cultural implications. The City's historical and ongoing financial constraints could result in reductions to discretionary spending, affecting local events, cultural programmes, and grants to voluntary and community organisations that are central to Broxtowe's civic life.

All the proposals present potential pressures on Broxtowe's green spaces, as future housing development may extend beyond the current City boundaries to meet urban growth targets. This could undermine long-term environmental and community objectives, eroding the distinct character and sustainability of the area.

This report provides a critical analysis of the potential adverse consequences arising from the LGR proposals being developed in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, which could see Broxtowe integrated with Nottingham City Council. The analysis is based on current assumptions and existing levels of local charges, recognising the differences between the councils. It takes into account the likelihood that, over time, Broxtowe residents, currently subject to lower charges, may be harmonised upwards to align with Nottingham City Council's higher rates. The report also draws on findings from the District Councils' Network and the report published on 20 October 2025 concerning the size of new councils.

Resident Perspectives and Local Impact

(Broxtowe Household Survey Findings)

The Council undertook a dedicated household survey across Broxtowe in summer 2025. In addition to this, all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire authorities completed a standard engagement process. The details in this report focus on the responses provided by Broxtowe residents to both surveys.

Community Identity and Local Pride

Broxtowe residents display a strong sense of belonging to their Borough. The standard engagement survey found that 74% of respondents are proud to live in their local area, identifying primarily with local towns and villages such as Beeston, Eastwood, Kimberley, and Stapleford rather than towards Nottingham City. This deep-rooted local identity underpins residents' scepticism towards reorganisation and reinforces the value placed on community-based decision-making.

Satisfaction with the Current System

More than half of respondents (54%) consider the current two-tier system of local government to be effective. Many highlighted the responsiveness, accessibility and reliability of Broxtowe Borough Council, citing the efficient refuse collection service, well-maintained parks and visible local councillors as evidence that the current structure serves residents well. Respondents generally viewed Broxtowe as well-managed and attuned to local priorities. Where dissatisfaction was expressed, it typically related to wider financial pressures on local authorities or concerns about Nottingham City Council's fiscal position, rather than Broxtowe itself.

Concerns About Reorganisation

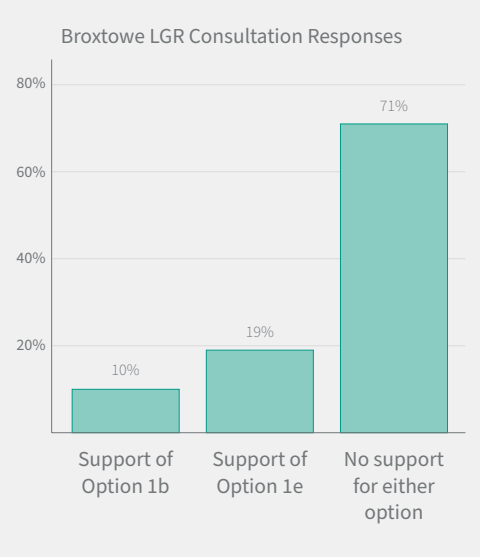
Concerns about LGR are dominated by fears of being merged with Nottingham City Council. Respondents repeatedly cited the City's financial instability and perceived record of poor management as major risks. Many expressed concern that Broxtowe's own resources could be diverted to address City Council deficits, leading to higher Council Tax and declining service quality. Others feared that a unitary authority, including the City, would dilute local representation and make governance more remote.

The survey revealed strong opposition to the idea of being absorbed into a larger, urban-focused authority. Residents emphasised that Broxtowe's suburban and semi-rural character is distinct from Nottingham City's and that local decision-making should remain rooted in Borough-level governance.

Support for the Proposed Options

The Broxtowe-specific survey concluded with three direct questions on support for the two main options under consideration. The results were unequivocal:

Qualitative responses provide further context. Many residents felt constrained by a lack of alternatives, noting that both options involved joining Nottingham City. Respondents expressed a preference for retaining the status quo or exploring a county-wide model that would maintain Broxtowe's identity within Nottinghamshire, rather than merging with the city. Those who did support reorganisation did so conditionally, citing potential efficiency gains or service integration benefits, but emphasised that such outcomes were uncertain.



(Source: The future of local government in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Household survey report: Broxtowe Borough Council October 2025)

The survey findings demonstrate that Broxtowe residents anticipate negative impacts from LGR, particularly on representation, service quality and community identity. While some acknowledge theoretical efficiencies, most doubt these would materialise in practice. Instead, residents foresee higher costs, weakened local accountability, and reduced influence over decisions affecting their neighbourhoods.

Policy and Financial Context

Central government is framing LGR as a tool for improving efficiency, reducing duplication and strengthening local leadership. Within the Levelling Up and Devolution agenda, unitary authorities are expected to provide clearer accountability and strategic capacity over areas of roughly 500,000 people.

However, the District Councils' Network (DCN)'s independent analysis (October 2025) challenges this rationale. Its findings show:

Key Finding (DCN 2025)	Summary
No evidence that larger councils are more efficient	Most data show no positive correlation between population size and outcomes.
Financial instability more common in large councils	Larger unitaries are more likely to require Exceptional Financial Support.
Larger councils charge higher council tax	Average Band D bills £250 higher in councils > 500k population.
Smaller councils perform better on service delivery	On 10 measurable metrics, smaller councils outperform larger ones.

(Source: DCN 2025 – Summary of Analysis on Council Size and Performance)

These findings undermine the assumption that merging Broxtowe (population ≈ 115,000) with Nottingham City (population ≈ 320,000) would produce efficiencies. In practice, merging a financially prudent district council with a Section 114-restricted City introduces risk rather than resilience.

Nottingham City's Financial Position

Nottingham City Council issued a Section 114 notice in 2023, effectively declaring itself unable to set a balanced budget. This triggered central oversight, spending controls and an obligation to prioritise statutory duties. A merged authority inheriting these pressures would inevitably place fiscal recovery ahead of local investment priorities.

Broxtowe's Financial Position

Broxtowe has maintained a stable financial outlook with moderate reserves, low levels of taxation and a balanced budget over successive years. Integrating with a financially stressed partner could lead to reallocation of Broxtowe's assets and reserves to stabilise wider deficits.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

The fiscal dimension of LGR is the most visible and immediate for residents. Two mechanisms including Council Tax harmonisation and LCTS alignment will have direct effects on household budgets.

Council Tax Harmonisation

Under reorganisation, all residents of the new unitary authority will eventually pay a single harmonised Council Tax rate. Given Nottingham City's higher tax rates, harmonisation would likely result in an upward adjustment for Broxtowe residents.

Table 1: Council Tax Harmonisation – Annual Impact based on 2025/26

Band	Broxtowe £	Nottingham £	Annual Difference £
A	1,653.86	1,770.80	116.94
B	1,929.50	2,065.93	136.43
C	2,205.14	2,361.06	155.92
D	2,480.78	2,656.19	175.41
E	3,032.06	3,246.45	214.39
F	3,583.35	3,836.71	253.36
G	4,134.64	4,426.99	292.35
H	4,961.56	5,312.38	350.82

(Source: Broxtowe Borough Council)

For example, a Band D household would therefore pay around £175 more per year. Across the Borough's Band D equivalent tax base, this represents approximately £6.9million in additional annual taxation transferred from residents to the new authority. This calculation is based on the Band D equivalent Broxtowe Borough Council Tax Base multiplied by the Band D charge differential between the two Councils.

The DCN analysis shows that larger unitary councils already charge higher Council Tax per resident, undermining claims that scale yields savings.

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Harmonisation

Broxtowe's LCTS scheme currently provides up to 100% relief for eligible low-income households. Nottingham City caps support at 80% of Band B liability, requiring all claimants to contribute at least 20%.

Table 2: Comparison of Local Council Tax Support Schemes

Feature	Broxtowe Borough Council	Nottingham City Council
Maximum entitlement	Up to 100 % of liability	80 % of Band B liability
Minimum payment	None	All claimants pay ≥ 20 %
Property band limits	No limit	Capped at Band B
Minimum award	No minimum (1p/week)	£5/week minimum entitlement

(Source: Broxtowe Borough Council)

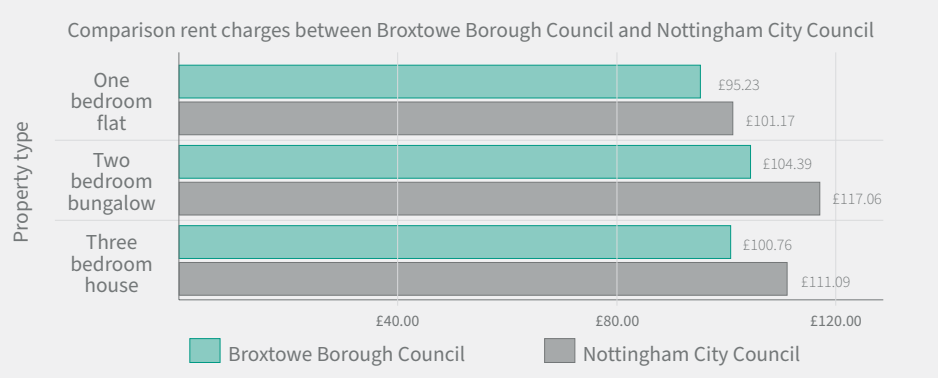
The potential adoption of Nottingham City's scheme would impose new annual liabilities of between £600 to £800 for some low-income households. Around 186 households could lose eligibility altogether as they fall under the £5 minimum entitlement.

This impact runs counter to central government's principle of equitable service delivery. It would also increase the likelihood of arrears, enforcement action and demand on discretionary hardship funds.

Rent Harmonisation

Both Council's must set their rent annually in accordance with the formula set out in the in both the MHCLG Rent Policy Statement and the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard. Currently, annual rent increases would only be allowed to continue in line with this guidance. However, it is anticipated that guidance will be amended to allow further rent increases to align rents charged. This is in addition to the current proposals for rent convergence between social landlords, which could also increase tenants' rents. Therefore, tenants may see rents increase significantly, and demand for financial inclusion service support could increase. Broxtowe Borough Council has a dedicated Financial Inclusion team. Nottingham City does not offer the same service.

Comparison between rents charged, shows that Nottingham City Rents are significantly higher than Broxtowe Borough Council, for example:



(Source: Broxtowe Borough Council)

The key difference between the approach to rent collection, is the number of chargeable weeks. Tenants of Broxtowe Borough Council benefit from four 'rent free' weeks, two at Christmas and two in March. Nottingham City Council only have two 'rent free' weeks. Feedback from tenants is in support of Broxtowe Borough Council's approach to this, and many tenants would be concerned if 'rent free' weeks were reduced or removed.

Risks to partners

Nottingham City Council published the Option Bii (Composite Proposal) Comparative Analysis. This work, with PwC highlights:

"there may be additional financial complexities for the wider public service delivery system where partners currently organise or deliver services aligned to a district footprint."

None of these financial complexities are evidenced or exampled within the report, leading to significant questions over the potential risks. Many public sector partners, including health, police, fire, housing providers and voluntary sector organisations, currently base their locality structures, joint-commissioning arrangements and pooled budgets on existing district geographies. Changes to these boundaries under an LGR proposal may require partners to reorganise services, realign funding streams and absorb additional transition costs, creating a risk of inefficiencies.

Cultural and Community Impacts

Broxtowe has built a reputation for its creative, inclusive cultural services that support wellbeing, learning, and civic pride. These programmes depend on discretionary funding, which typically suffers first under fiscal cost-cutting.

Cultural Events and Heritage Services

Broxtowe delivers around 12 core cultural events annually, attracting over 35,000 attendees in 2024/25. The Borough also manages the D. H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum and a successful international cultural exchange programme through the C-City Charter.

Table 3: Cultural Event Attendance and Subsidy Trends

Year	Total Event Attendees	Subsidy per Head £
2019/20	16,427	4.86
2022/23	24,624	3.92
2023/24	30,993	2.94
2024/25	35,886	2.80

(Source: Broxtowe Borough Council Key Performance Data)

This trend shows rising participation and improving cost-efficiency. Under a single unitary authority constrained by statutory priorities, such discretionary investment would likely diminish.

Table 4: D. H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum Performance

Year	Visitors	Subsidy per Visitor £	Volunteer Hours
2019/20	5,116	18.23	774
2022/23	3,497	31.07	348
2023/24	4,428	16.17	273
2024/25	4,544	15.10	392

(Source: Broxtowe Borough Council Key Performance Data)

The Museum's reach and educational role have expanded significantly through outreach, university partnerships and international collaboration. These community-based benefits will be difficult to replicate in a large, centralised structure.

The risks identified include the potential downgrading or merging of local events, which could result in a loss of distinctive community identity. There is also a risk of volunteers and sponsors withdrawing their engagement if they perceive that local services are being undervalued. In addition, the capacity for local heritage interpretation and outreach could be reduced, limiting opportunities for community engagement and education. Collectively, these factors may lead to diminished wellbeing, learning, and civic participation outcomes across the affected areas.

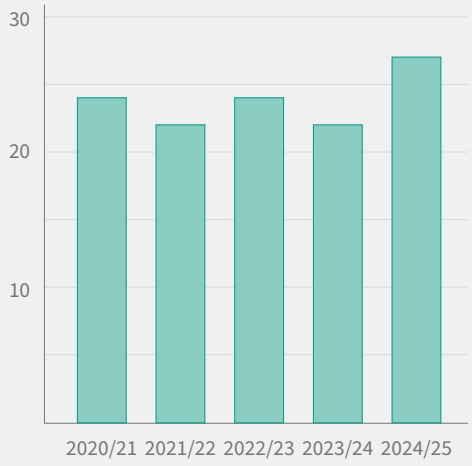
Beyond social and cultural impacts, there are also important economic considerations. Local events and heritage activities play a significant role in supporting town centre economies by attracting visitors who spend money in shops, cafés, and other local businesses. Similarly, museums and cultural venues contribute to tourism by drawing in both local and regional audiences, supporting employment and investment in the area. If such activities were reduced or centralised as part of reorganisation, the loss of footfall could negatively affect high street vitality and local business confidence. Maintaining a strong programme of community and cultural events is therefore not only a social priority but a key driver of local economic development and resilience.

Grant Aid to Voluntary and Community Organisations

Broxtowe's Grant Aid Scheme sustains a thriving voluntary and community sector by supporting more than 20 local organisations each year, including Citizens Advice, Hope Nottingham, The Helpful Bureau, and Age Concern Eastwood.

Table 5: Revenue Grant Support (2020/21 – 2024/25): Total amount used to support organisations in Broxtowe.

Table 6: Groups Supported (2020/21 – 2024/25): Total amount of groups supported by Broxtowe Borough Council.



The scheme's increasing investment and participation reflect Broxtowe's commitment to social resilience. In a reorganised authority, there is no guarantee this locally ringfenced funding would continue. The result could be the closure or contraction of critical services such as foodbanks, debt advice, and youth programmes.

(Source: Broxtowe Borough Council)

Citizens Advice

Broxtowe Borough Council has maintained a long-standing partnership with Citizens Advice Central Nottinghamshire, providing residents with independent advice on benefits, debt, housing, employment, and consumer rights. In 2025/26, the Council allocated £73,750 to support the service, including £10,000 towards accommodation at the Beeston office. This local office not only reduces operational costs but also ensures residents have a visible and accessible point of contact within the borough. This arrangement is potentially vulnerable under an LGR merger with Nottingham City Council. Changes to funding priorities or centralisation of services could threaten the dedicated grant aid, and potential relocation should the Beeston office close. This could reduce the local visibility and accessibility that residents currently rely upon.

In 2024/25, Citizens Advice assisted 7,589 Broxtowe residents, handled 19,078 enquiries, facilitated £4.3 million in additional benefits, and achieved £0.85 million in debt write-offs. The scale and impact of this support demonstrate the critical role the service plays in the borough, and the strength of a partnership built over many years. Disruption to these arrangements through service consolidation, funding shifts, or loss of local office space could weaken outcomes for vulnerable households, reduce timely access to advice, and undermine the continuity of support that is central to community resilience.

Environmental and Spatial Impacts

Development Pressure and Green Belt Integrity

Broxtowe's Local Plan identifies sufficient sites to meet its housing requirement of 649 dwellings per year up to 2041, maintaining 61 percent Green Belt coverage. Nottingham City, by contrast, faces severe land constraints and has relied heavily on brownfield and student accommodation developments. To meet city-driven housing growth, Broxtowe's Green Belt could be targeted for development.

Key Environmental Risks:

- Loss of protected open space and biodiversity.
- Increased traffic and infrastructure strain.
- Erosion of local character and sustainability commitments.

The DCN (2025) notes that smaller councils tend to outperform larger ones on planning efficiency and environmental responsiveness, due to proximity to local communities and better understanding of spatial context.

Synthesis and Discussion

The cumulative evidence suggests that the proposed merger would likely produce net disbenefits for Broxtowe residents in several domains:

Dimension	Likely Impact on Broxtowe Residents
Fiscal	Increased council tax and reduced LCTS; regressive effects on low-income households.
Cultural	Loss or dilution of local programmes; reduced discretionary funding.
Community	Curtailment of voluntary grants; weakened civic participation.
Environmental	Greater development pressure on Green Belt; diminished local control.
Housing	Risk of rent inflation; affordability and arrears pressures.

Each of these impacts arises not from inefficiency within Broxtowe but from systemic imbalance in the proposed partnership.

Risk Mitigation and Transitional Measures

If LGR proceeds with Broxtowe merging with Nottingham City Council, a series of mitigations should be embedded in the Implementation Plan to protect residents and local services.

- **Phased Council Tax Harmonisation (2–3 years):** Smooths adjustment for residents and mirrors previous precedents.
- **Temporary Retention of Broxtowe LCTS Scheme (1 year):** Maintains protection for low-income households during the transition.
- **Local Hardship Fund:** Provides targeted relief and reduces the risk of arrears.
- **Ringfenced Cultural and Grant Aid Budgets (3 years):** Preserves community assets while new frameworks are developed.
- **Broxtowe Area Committee or Charter:** Retains local representation and advisory input.
- **Environmental Safeguard Policy:** Protects the Green Belt and sustainability targets.
- **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** Ensures compliance and identifies vulnerable groups.

Implementation of these measures would not remove all risks but could moderate the pace and severity of disruption to households and community infrastructure.

Conclusions

This impact assessment concludes that the proposed reorganisation, particularly the alignment with Nottingham City Council, presents significant risks to Broxtowe Borough Council's residents, finances, and identity.

- Fiscal harmonisation would shift costs upward for residents and reduce protection for those on low incomes.
- Cultural, voluntary, and environmental assets, hallmarks of Broxtowe's quality of life, could be deprioritised.
- Although mitigation measures may lessen the impact on Broxtowe residents, the process of local government reorganisation is still likely to have negative effects.

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