# Town and parish council presentation bullet point version

Thank you

Proposal is to abolish all five councils to create a new one, using the best of each

Town/ Parish councils key partner to a new Buckinghamshire-wide council

Why:

* Increases in demand on public services
* 50,000 new homes by 2033/ population over 65/ disability increasing
* Local government funding - £88m in 2010, zero in 2020
* County Council already saved £145m - further savings for County/ Districts of £30m by 2020.

Engagement carried out:

Residents/ businesses/ town and parish councils.

* Parish/ town feedback: Simpler/ one voice and strategy/ central place/ cutting bureaucracy/ opportunity and choice to take on more services where appropriate.
* Challenges: Huge range in capability of town and parish councils – one size doesn’t fit all/ need to avoid it being remote/ planning decisions outside area/ disruption during transition/ scepticism/ hot air

Strategic options appraisal

One unitary council for the whole of Buckinghamshire/ a North and South unitary/ a three-unitary model/ combined authority with multiple unitaries

Reviewed by Grant Thornton

Single unitary council: £18.2m per year/ £45.4m over five years

The North/South: £10.3m/ £17.3m over five years

Other options significantly less.

Non-financial: One unitary: Clear accountability, simplified arrangements for partners, and a strategic focus to maximise opportunities for communities and businesses.

Challenge: would be to develop a model that balances strategic coordination with local need.

A multiple unitary: Clear accountability, focus on the distinctive characteristics and challenges in different parts of the county.

Challenges: Increase complexity/ disaggregation of critical child and adult safeguarding services. Not the scale and capacity to offer significant efficiencies or longer term sustainability.

‘Combined Authority’: Balances benefits of multiple unitaries with county-wide scale for strategic services such as social care and strategic planning.

Challenges: Model offers the lowest level of savings and risks recreating the issues of a two tier system, with reduced local accountability. Could governance arrangements allow quick and effective decisions and balance potentially conflicting interests to mutual benefit. Untested.

Overall, the single county-wide model performed the best out of all the options.

Vision

Local/ empowering communities through:

19 Community boards (executive powers, £2million budget plus others)

19 Community hubs

5 planning committees

**Offering** more devolved services to towns and parishes, on a case by case negotiation

Single voice with clout

Quality, easy to access services

Efficient and value for money

Efficient

Greatest potential to cut bureaucracy and release efficiency savings

£18.2m ongoing annual net revenue savings.

Transition costs of £16.2m repayable within three years, resulting in a return on investment of £45m in net revenue savings over the first five years of the new council.

Together, the five councils hold up to £1bn in assets. A recent property review highlighted the potential for net capital receipts of up to £48m by rationalising the county council’s assets alone. This could be significantly enhanced by looking at the opportunities across the wider public estate.

Council tax can be equalised at the lowest level in the first five years of a unitary, meaning council tax payers in the Chilterns, South Bucks and Aylesbury Vale would have their bills reduced to the level paid in Wycombe.

A single unitary council would not only be able to maximise the resources available to local government but would release efficiencies across county-wide partners, including housing associations and local charities, who allocate considerable resource in navigating their way through the different operating models of five councils.

Proposal has been endorsed by the County Council

Being submitted to government

DCLG will make a decision whether to support this (or any other) business case. We are expecting a decision on this by January 2017.

Thank you